

MARCHING IS FOR THE BRAVE – VICTORY BELONGS LORD (EUPF)

ሰልፍ የጀግና ድል የአግዚኦብሔር ነው (ኢ.አ.አ.ግ)።

By Wondimu Mekonnen

The Ethiopian Unity Patriotic Front (EUPF) had another successful meeting in London on Sunday 29 May 2005. Going back to 14 years, the Ethiopian intellectuals were head locked in two camps arguing about how to get rid of the newly created ethno-apartheid regime of TPLF – by armed struggle or peaceful means? The peace camp seemed to win the argument of the day but did not deliver the goods to date. The aftermath of May 2005 national election gave a decisive answer to the puzzle. Woyyane did not come to power to create democracy or peace. It rose to power with the diabolic intention to dismantle Ethiopia but not to build or develop. The May 2005 Election initially gave the mask of democracy but when the people took it seriously and went for an all out victory, Woyyane's took on its real face – murder, torture, arrest and detention. Ethiopians in London have eventually come to realise that Woyyane cannot be removed by a peaceful means alone, unless it is threatened by other means. For the first time, organisations like EUPF are now receiving support and encouragements from the public. The London EUPF Sunday meeting was held in that spirit.

The meeting started with a field video file of revealing activities of the EUPF. The determined patriots were seen marching and hungry to free Ethiopia from tyranny. The current leader was seen editing directives and encouraging the patriots to stand up before history and follow the route their forefathers took to save Ethiopia destruction. One can see from the faces of those patriots the determination and enthusiasm to go foreword and redeem the honour of motherland.

After the film show, the audience sat to listen to the speakers of the Patriotic Front. Truly, those in charge of the Front in London were patriots at heart. On the tribune sat a delegate from Amsterdam to make the day worthy of attending.

The Chairperson called upon Ato Esubalew Chane to address the audience. Ato Esubalew asked the audience to stand up for minute silent prayers for those brave Ethiopians who sacrificed their lives for freedom and democracy and those who were unjustly tortured and jailed. Once that was done, Ato Esubalew went straight to the message he wanted to deliver. He said the dictatorial regime of Meles Zenawi and gang were on the verge of crumbling. Just like all dictators, it was refusing to go down quietly. Since it came to power it had been making messes and now poised to cause as much destruction as possible. Naturally Woyyane is tyrant regime. Ato Esubalew Chane saw the ugly face of Woyyane turning even uglier lately. Had it been possible to remove Meles the tyrant and his gang by the known peaceful means, no one would have considered alternative means of struggle. Dictators are cowards. They flex their muscles on defenceless civilians. Woyyane would cling to power by any means necessary and attempt to stay there unless pushed by the people's power. Ato Esubalew underscored that the Woyyane army could not be considered as an Ethiopian national army. According to Ato Esubalew, the real patriotic national army had been purged and now only hand picked trusted loyalists are serving the regime, rather than the country. Therefore, Ato Esubalew saw the urgent need of creation of a national defence force that is loyal to the country not to individuals or groups with a

narrow interest. The force of EUPF could be the germ seed for such a future patriotic army.

The removal of the threat of dismantling of Ethiopia should come first before considering anything else. Once that is secured, the people would be given to elect their own leaders paving the way for democracy. Ato Esubalew stressed on the immediate goal of EUPF – the salvation of Ethiopia!

Woyyane, alerted by the EUPF’s determination to free the country from the ethno-apartheid tyranny, had unleashed its reign of terror on the innocent civilians of Ethiopia. Ato Esubalew Chane reported that only 4 days earlier, on 16 Ginbot 1998 (24 May 2006), the regimes soldiers attacked and destroyed a village in Gambella and drove away 10,000 heads of cattle belonging to the massacred villagers.

As the struggle had reached its decisive and no-turning-back stage, Ato Esubalew Chane asked the audience to be the backrest of EUPF by providing moral and material support for the sacrifice to bear fruit.

Ato Esubalew also touched on the fact that just 2 days earlier, from 26 to 27 May 2006, four patriotic Ethiopian fronts met up in Stockholm, Sweden and formed an alliance under the banner of Ethiopian Patriotic National Unity Force (የኢትዮጵያ አርበኞች ብሔራዊ አንድነት ኃይል). The four united patriotic fronts are:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Ethiopian National Unity Patriotic Front (ENUPF) | የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ አንድነት አርበኞች ግንባር |
| Ethiopian Democratic Unity Front (EDUF) | የኢትዮጵያ ዲሞክራሲያዊ አንድነት ግንባር |
| Ethiopian Unity Patriotic Front (EUPF), and | የኢትዮጵያ አንድነት አርበኞች ግንባር |
| Tatek Ethiopian Unity Front (TEUF) | ታጠቅ የኢትዮጵያ አንድነት ግንባር |

There was a fifth front, but unfortunately decided to decline.

Within the next 3 months the modalities of the union will be finalised.

The audience accepted that news with clapping and approval cheering. The future is bright. The future is all patriotic.



Next, the chairman called upon Dr Guenet, the EUPF delegate from Holland. Many of us knew that patriotic sister, loved and respected her for unwavering stand on the burning issue of our motherland but she introduced herself in a very humble way. She said that she was a medical doctor and medical doctors did not make public speeches. Doctors examine their patients on a one-to-one basis, find out the problem, prescribe

the medicine and send away the patient. Therefore, she warned the audience not to expect a moving speech from her unlike the honed politicians. In fact, not to go astray from the main topic that she was given to speak, she said she was going to read what was written on paper. Regardless of what she was trying to say, Ethiopians in the hall could see a burning flame in the heart of that sister, who was speaking passionately about her country, her disgust with what Woyyane did to Ethiopia and the people and explained what EUPF stood for, as she understood it. Dr Guenet might have claimed she did not know how to make a moving speech, but truly she did move everyone's heart in that hall.

Dr Guenet put straight the aims and objectives of EUPF, as she understood it. The primary goal of EUPF would be to save the country from the determined enemies to break her up. EUPF strongly believed in the Ethiopian freedom, her people's unity and the territorial integrity. Dr Guenet told her audience that she was not going to bore them by enumerating the catalogues of crime committed by the regime in power. The murder, torture and detention were out there in the open, well-documented, leave alone to the Ethiopians but even to the international community. She was in London to contribute her part in the call to support the patriotic front, as there is no other way of convincing Woyyane to behave like civilised human beings. To stop the daily murder, torture and harassment, the only way Woyyane would understand would be if there were an active resistance to its tyrannical rule in the very language it understands fluently. The slaughter of innocent people like lambs should stop. People should not be guided to their sacrificial altar without resistance. Dr Guenet said that The EUPF was up to stop such barbaric act of Woyyane and pleaded with the audience to back it up (ድጅግ ሁኑለት።).

From her private talk with Ato Thowat Pal Chay, the current Chairman of EUPF, Dr Guenet recalled that EUPF believed in democracy and longed for peace and stability of Ethiopia. In the hay days of early may, on the verge of the election, she talked to Ato Thowat and expressed her excitement that Kinijit (CUD) could win the election and Ethiopians would get a chance to remove Woyyane peacefully. Thowat shared her joy and prayed for that to happen as nobody would want to be killed but return home from exile safely to lead peaceful life in beautiful Ethiopia. That did not materialise. Of course, CUD and EUDF did win the election, but Woyyane wouldn't give into people's wishes. With that the peaceful transformation of Ethiopia was dashed out. Now, the alternative means should be encouraged and supported.

Dr Guenet reiterated the EUPF's beliefs. EUPF would not rely on outside help apart from Ethiopians. In her hard days, Ethiopia had no one to turn to apart from her children in the past and it wouldn't any different this time. EUPF strongly believed in the unity of the Ethiopian people. United, there will be no chance Woyyane would continue tormenting the lives of millions and threatening the survival of Ethiopia. Dr Guenet referred to the audience as "patriots". She said that all the people in that hall were patriots for her.

Dr Guenet's speeches were accepted with loud cheers and applaud.

The floor was then opened to questions and discussions.

An audience asked how far would EUPF go to unite with other fronts. To that, both Ato Esubalew and Dr Guenet responded that they were ready to unite with those patriotic forces that believed in Ethiopian unity and territorial integrity. The union of four in Stockholm held 2 days earlier was the evidence to that. Both the speakers reiterated that EUPF believed that the power that would save Ethiopia should come from within and not from the third country. Therefore, the EUPF was ready to unite and work with those realistically willing to fight Woyyane.

To the question whether EUPF would accept the existing constitution, Ato Esubalew commented that the first aim of EUPF was not about the constitution but salvation of Ethiopia from those who were poised to dismantle her. While a tyrant stands in power and rules the country with iron fist, there is no point in talking about a constitution that it is irrelevant. If Woyyane had respected its own constitution, innocent people would not have been murdered in broad daylight. The constitution is not the main problem but Woyyane, the author, is the problem. If the existing constitution was respected, those who committed genocide and treason should not have been left to roam free and the innocent should not have been jailed in stead. If one takes Woyyane's constitution, it could be possible to find good articles in it, particularly with reference to human rights that were copied directly from the United Nations Human Rights Convention. EUPF will not call for destruction of that. However, equally, one could find malicious and destructive articles in that constitution, like Article 39. Once Ethiopia is saved, the people would decide what kind of constitution would suit Ethiopia. First thing first! Rescue Ethiopia from her tormenters - was the Esubalew Chane's answer!

To the tricky question, what EUPF thought about the alliance created in Amsterdam between CUD, OLF, ONLF, EPPF and SLF, the chair did not want to go in detail into it. It had to be seen whether the alliance would work or not. If it worked, the Front would accept it with open arms. However, considering the towering Sha'abiyya's shadow behind the deal in the creation of the alliance, members of the EUPF would take the alliance with a pinch of salt. And yet, this had to be seen in the future. For now, the members of the EUPF could only ask the audience to do what they had to do – help the patriotic front that is not shadowed by any third party outside Ethiopians.

After a short break, Ato Thowat Pal Chay was connected to the hall through a mobile phone from the field.

Ato Thowat Pal Chay thanked the audience for sacrificing their time and money to attend the meeting in support of the Ethiopian Unity Patriotic Front (EUPF).

Any one who had met Thowat Pal Chay would know what kind of an Ethiopian he is. For Thowat, Ethiopia is his alpha and omega - the beginning and the end. Every solution to Ethiopia's problem is in Ethiopia. He wouldn't stop talking the amazing events in Ethiopian history to back up his claims. For Thowat the salvation of Ethiopian is in the hands of her people and God but nobody else. He would not even consider for a moment turning for help to the outsiders. History had proved to him that the outside world always let Ethiopia down. He would refer to Adwa just to prove what Ethiopians could do if united. If united, it is not Ethiopians that would go

looking for help from the outside, but the outside would run to volunteer offering all sorts of help. He strongly believed in Ethiopiawinet as a great source of energy to purge her enemy power. That spirit again prevailed in that hall on Sunday as Thowat Pal Chay of Ethiopia was passionately speaking to his compatriots. He said that the EUPF, the organisation he had been elected to lead believed in one country, one people, one flag and one common goal. He pleaded with the audience to stand together and be counted as patriotic sons and daughters of the proud nation, just like their forefathers. He recounted the blood that was lit and the bone that was crushed in the past to protect the country's unity and territorial integrity. We inherited a free country and a proud nation from our forefathers. What have we got to offer our children?" ask Thowat Pal Chay his audience. The forefathers safeguarded Ethiopian Ethiopia with their lives. The current generation should follow that route if it wanted to avert the pile of shame. Ato Thowat Pal Chay could not hide his disgust with narrow nationalist's attempt to taint the beautiful history of Ethiopia and the threat with dismantling of the motherland. He just could not come to terms with those narrow nationalists who argue for their weak and divided villages (ለመንደራቸው) while their Ethiopia should be protected. No tiny village would survive outside Ethiopia. A divided house is prone to crumble. Thowat Pal Chay put the responsibility of salvation of Ethiopian straight in the hands of united children of Ethiopian.



Ato Esubalew Chane and Ato Thowat Pal Chay

Ato Thowat designated that particular day, not the next day after, but that particular day, as the day everyone should renew his/her vows for the motherland.

Ato Thowat then concluded his short but powerful speech by saying:

ሰልፍ የጀግና ነው! ድል የእግዚአብሔር ነው!

“Marching is for the brave! Victory belongs to the Lord”.

This brings to mind the words of Jamie Owens-Collins in the church hymn: “The Battle belongs to the Lord”

*In heavenly armour we'll enter the land
The battle belongs to the Lord
No weapon that's fashioned against us shall stand
The battle belongs to the Lord
We sing glory and honour
Power and strength to the Lord*

*The power of darkness comes in like a flood
The battle belongs to the Lord
He's raised up a standard, the power of His blood
The battle belongs to the Lord
When your enemy presses in hard do not fear
The battle belongs to the Lord
Take courage my friend, your redemption is near
The battle belongs to the Lord*

Thowat Pal Chay was asked what he would advise to secure the freedom of the detained, the return the stolen ballots, bring the murders before the court of justice, the return of the misappropriated money and pave the way for democracy.

The answer was to the point. The problem is in the weakness of the opposition's determination and unity of faith in Ethiopiawinet. Thowat saw the mother of all problems in the laissez-faire approach to philosophy of Ethiopiawinet. If the compatriots approached Ethiopiawinet with seriousness of zeal and determination, had Ethiopians united and marched on Woyyane with one heart and one soul, the traitors of Ethiopian national interest would have no chance of surviving a single day in power. Woyyane survives on the weakest link – division among the people of Ethiopia. The division was deliberately implanted by the divide and rule tyrant. The people happened to be too weak to lift the curse from their shoulders. In order to achieve the enumerated above questions, Thowat demanded first to break away and free ourselves from the ethnic enclosure we are caged in, and rally together first to rescue Ethiopia from the clutches for the national disgraceful regime. As long as that regime is in power, it would not allow the above demands to take place. Allowing those demands would destroy the evil. And the evil knows the source of its destruction. Ato Thowat believed in the change of attitude in each and every Ethiopian heart. One needs to check his/her heart and soul to find the medicine for the cure of the disease. We have to establish first the survival of Ethiopia on a solid ground. Otherwise, all those demands would be like an empty rhetoric (የቀራ ጩኸት ይሆናል።) In order to achieve what was wanted for Ethiopia, Mr Thowat Pal Chay called on every Ethiopian to guard their lions and stand up as patriots to defend the honour of Ethiopia as the fathers before them did.

One individual asked Ato Thowat if he could put a weight on a scale of 1-10 the assistance his Front received so far against the front's own performance.

Ato Thowat Pal Chay responded to that by saying last time he met the public in London, both parties had taken division of labour and parted. Those in the field were doing their part and asked the audience to do their part. One thing Ato Thowat warned the audience was: Ethiopians should never rely on external solution to the problem at hand. According to Thowat the solution to the Ethiopian problem is in the hands of Ethiopians and nobody else. He said: “You get on with your duty and we will get on with ours.” The front-runners and the logistic support team (**ተዋጊና ደጃን**) should co-ordinate their efforts to achieve results.

Someone had a question to ask Mr Thowat Pal Chay his opinion on the Alliance Created among OLF, CUD, ONLF, SLF and EPPF, but unfortunately at this point a technical hitch disrupted the communication between the hall and Ato Thowat. And yet, the people felt happy with what they had heard.

A moving Amharic poem calling people to unite for the rescue of Ethiopia was read by one of the Ethiopians in that hall.

Then came the final and concluding part of the event - musical show by *The Ethioband* in London. The group was truly artistic and patriotic to the bone. They sang in Amharic, Tigrigna, Ormigna (Oromiffa), Wolayitigna and Guragigna. Take the following song, for example:

**ተከብረሽ የኖርሺው፤ በአባቶቻችን ደም፤ በአባቶቻችን ደም
እናት ኢትዮጵያ የደፈረሽ ይውደም፤ የደፈረሽ ይውደም
ለበጎ ከሆነ ለቁም ነገር ጉዳይ፤ ለቁም ነገር ጉዳይ
ጎራቤት ወዳድ ነን፤ እንግዳ ተቀባይ፤ እንግዳ ተቀባይ
ግን አገራችንን ክፉ የሚያስባት፤ ክፉ የሚያስባት፤
ቆራጥ ነን ልጆችዋ፤ አንወደም ጥቃትን፤ አንወደም ጥቃትን።**

The above song is warning to the enemies of Ethiopia, praise to our forefathers that safeguarded the unity and territorial integrity and a guideline for the current generation to repeat just that.

Even the innocent “ወገኔ” (mate) was armoured with patriotic gear.

**ወገኔ!
በናት በአባታችን፤
ወገኔ!
የጠራን አበሻ፤
ወገኔ!
አንድ ናት ኢትዮጵያ!
ወገኔ!
እስከመጨረሻ።**

The *kirar* was electrified to produce better than guitar sound. The drums lead rhythm. The girls and the boys of Ethioband danced as if there were no bones in their body. Their **እስክሱታ** (traditional amara dance) was out of this world. The audience had to clap continuously in appreciation of the beautiful youth on the floor that had been taking them to heaven and bring them back through music, patriotic songs and dances.

The Wolayitigna dance performed by a girl and a boy of the band was breath taking. The flexibility was hard to believe. The Oromiffa songs moved the people from their seats. Then the Guragigna was full of energy and rocked the place. God bless Ethioband. Next time, we will bring their pictures.

In the final, the Ethioband team came out with fittings adored with the Ethiopian flag and the Lion. When the girl with a heavenly sound came out singing “Ethiopia, My Country”, the crowd spontaneously sprang to their feet and started signing along:

ኢ.....ት...የ..ጵ.ያ
ኢ.....ገራ!
ኢ.....ት...የ..ጵ.ያ
ኢ.....ገራ!
መ.....መ...ከ...ያ.ዩ!
ነሽ ክብራ!
መ.....መ...ከ...ያ.ዩ!
ነሽ ክብራ!

ኢትዮጵያ አገራችን፤ ለምለጃ ምድራችን
ለነሳነታችን ይፈሳል ድማችን
ኢትዮጵያ!
አገራችን!
ኢትዮጵያ!
አገራችን!

It feels like concluding this report with verse from this reporters poem “The Scar” written in November 2000.

*Our flag has the power;
The lion is her emblem;
Hoisted on the highest tower;
Heralding long freedom!
The Lion!
The sign of resistance,
Defeated but not conquered
The Symbol of defiance,
Tired but not surrendered.
Keep our flag neatly;
Enemies would love to burn,
Ethiopia waits patiently,
Her roaring lion's return.*

The struggle of Ethiopians for freedom and democracy shall triumph!!!