

Hizbawi Mekete Oslo's Seminar with Professor Gideon Abay Asmerom and Professor Embaye Asmerom.

Under the following slogan, Hizbawi Mekete Oslo conducted successful seminar with **Professor Gideon Abay Asmerom** and **Professor Embaye Asmerom**.

- Joint parry(mekete) for liberty and development of Eritrea
- Parry(mekete) for national safety and communal development
- Let our martyrs consolation practically
- Better lend hand than becoming an idle observer

Part one

The seminar opened by remembering our martyrs. Next information from the Eritrean council office in Norway was given by **Mr. Abraham Woldu**.

- He emphasized the year 2008 was a year of parry (mekete).
- It was a turning point for Eritrea in constructing infrastructures that leads for future development.
- Eritrea is now harvesting its results in collecting its products.
- This time, it is better to lend our hands to shorten our journey to secured development of Eritrea.
- The extraction of our minerals is the result of the sacrifices of our martyrs.

The next speaker was representative of the Eritrean women's association in Oslo. Since the seminar was arranged by collaboration of hizbawi mekete and Eritrean women's association in Oslo, seizing the opportunity of the event, **Mrs Melete** elaborated the activities of the Eritrean women's association in Oslo. She said the history of the Eritrean women's is the history of Eritrea. She admitted that there is weakness in the association but this time their endeavouring to rectify the weakness and are working to come out as strong and viable organization. The Eritrean women's association in Oslo is established in 1979 and she mentioned among the ample works done one is the contribution against circumcision of female genitals in Eritrea.

The main event started when Professor Gidion Abay Asmerom took the panel and announced he preferred to speak stand by rather than sitting as he is practicing it when he gives lectures to his students. Professor Gidion is fluent in the mother language Tigriña. He is abundant in the knowledge about Eritrea. Particularly he engages in consolidating Eritrean nationalism and preaches loudly and clearly about Eritrean identity. His theme for the seminar was about Eritrean identity. He comes to Norway repeatedly and he liked Norway. He joked as is becoming now as pilgrimage to visit Norway. The main topics of his speech are as follows.

- He recognized the impact that brings to the Horn of Africa the strong Eritrean identity development.
- That developing strong Eritrean identity is not acceptable by the dominant powers.
- The dominant powers prefers to see disunited third world people as it fits to their divide and rule adventures.
- He recalled once President Iseya was conducting a seminar in Washington and one Tirigyan individual (he identified the individual by his accent) asked the president

why Eritrean claims that the west are against you. The president replied because we are strong.

- The west sabotages Eritreans not to develop self confidence.
- He recommends the youth to heritage the Eritrean identity.
- He mentioned the difference between the old generation and the youths born in Diaspora is that the old generation are equipped with the Eritrean identity they acquired in home land and still the strong Eritrean identity exists even in Diaspora. As for the youth are dominated by the identity of the land their growing in. There is of danger that the Eritrean identity to perish within the youths. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parents in particular and the communities in general to implant and strengthen the Eritrean identity to the young generation.
- He mentioned about a book written by a Norwegian and that is translated in Tigrigna by the heading “who are you?” The book tells western philosophy about identity.
- The core of identity finds in individuality, family, ethnicity, and colour of skin. That is the bridal of stems (merAt laKa), bridal of sisal (merAt Ika), and bridal of eye (merAt ayni) and the bridal of a nation is the identity of its people.
- He remembered that the colour of skin’s roll in identifying an identity of a person. Since **Professor Gideon** travels a lot he had different experiences in different countries. On example is when he was visiting a foreign country he was stopped by the authorities in the airport for a check. The police asked him if he posses a Kat. The professor was confused as he had not with him a cat. After puzzling for a moment he understood that the police is meant for chat (it is a leaf like narcotic used by some people in horn of Africa). The wonder her is why the police associates the professor with people who uses chat. Simply this shows the mixing of identities and lack of understanding in the west of the different identities in Africa.
- The professor mentioned the identity that finds in difference in sex, nationality, politics and religious identities.
- He realized that while others are to much obsess by other identity, Eritreans are known by their national identity.
- He mentioned about the problem in Darfur and Somali. He wondered about the Somali’s fighting. A people who owns the same culture, the same religion and the same people but lacks a strong national identity.
- One country and its allies that do not want to see a unified Somali is Ethiopia. They to exploit the resources of Somalia create divisions and havoc in Somalia.
- The professor acknowledged that from the experience he had in Kenya he observed that Kenyans concentrate too much on their clans than expressing the Kenyan identity.
- Eritreans emphasize strongly on Eritrean nationality due to the much paid sacrifices against different colonialists.
- Having an identity that is different from the whites and sitting beside them in church, they don’t believe that a person with an identity different from the west would go to paradise with them.
- Alemseged Tesfay an author of a book “Iynefelale” (Let us not be divided) describes in his book the sources of one people’s identity is its history.
- When it comes to the Eritrean identity, it is not only because we sacrificed together that we consolidate our identity, in addition it is because we work together for common goal in different sectors.
- Generally speaking civil war in Eritrea is unknown, except the single incident happened due to British divide and rule administration that they fabricated non existent problem among the Eritreans. And that incident was immediately rectified

thanks to the wise decision of the Eritrean concerned leaders at that time. It was of historic incident to remember as well the coarse movement during the armed struggle. That was a corrective measure and it proved the correctness of the journey at the end by culminating in the independence of Eritrea.

- It has to be remembered that we Eritreans able to defeat our enemies due to our stand in fighting by keeping our identity alive.
- If history is forgotten it repeats itself. Therefore, we have to be vigilant not to create cracks that our enemies cherish to get it.
- The professor remembered the message by News media of the Masses (Dimtsi Hafash) in may 25th, 1991. This is the day after Eritrea's liberation from Ethiopian colonialism. The message reads "Congratulation to the Eritrean people inside and outside Eritrea, even in harshest time you enabled the Eritrean identity to stand up high"
- The professor recalled about a book written by one Tigryan just before the outbreak of 1998 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The book tries to emphasize that the Eritrean identity is not rooted long but it is a future dream. For this the author elaborates about the interview he conducted with one elderly Eritrean man that sacrificed his two sons for the liberation of Eritrea. The man mentions that Eritrea is for the future generation. The saying of the old man was manipulated by the Tigryan author that there is no past Eritrean identity but a wish that the old generation dreams for the future generation. It is ironic that the war erupts just to destroy the Eritrean identity.
- Unlike others who claims that by telling fairytale like they are born from snakes or saying that their ancestors grew up by drinking the milk of a fox, the Eritreans do not have such fairytale,
- There is crisis about identity in horn of Africa. Eritrea being sandwiched between Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia still maintains strong Eritrean identity and unity of Eritrea. If the bridal of identity becomes the identity of the nation then development is feasible. Eritrea is not spoiled by corruption. As one foreigner said he tried to forward his cause for investment in Eritrea and didn't manage to get as what he wants. Then he said if it was other African country for sure by bribing the authorities by 15000 dollar I would have managed to fulfil my objects but not in Eritrea. Yes, it is true, there could be delay in processing in Eritrea but impractical to fulfil your case by paying bribes.
- Eritreans looks at better future. They deny to dependent on handouts from others. They stress on self reliance and self confidence. Economically Eritreans wants to stand by their feet.
- As one foreigner observer described it, he visited about 20 African countries before he arrived to Eritrea. He was frustrated as there is no futurity to the content by observing the lame excesses of the countries, but his hope revived when he saw the hard working Eritreans that there is futurity for the continent.
- The common tactics of the west to exploit the resources of Africa is by igniting conflicts among the people they control the conduit of transferring the wealth of the countries to their advantage. As an example is; once they send a researcher to study about potable water availability in Mali. But the researcher confessed that besides she was sent to study what differences found among the Mali people.
- The professor mentioned the source of the once repeatedly written article about the handing over of the Assab refinery to Iran by Eritrea. The main culprit was an Israeli man who works closely with the Ethiopian government. The aim of the writer was clear and that is to discredit Eritrea by the west and to pave a way for an excuse the Ethiopians to invade Eritrea.

- The professor remembered about a book written by one from the British administration era in Eritrea. It was in 1945 and the author claims that Eritrea is not viable and there is no hope for a people called Eritreans. Against the claims made by the author, now there are a people called Eritreans and a country called Eritrea.
- The professor wonders some time when they asked him where he is from and when he replies that he is an Eritrean they say to him that he looks like Ethiopian. But to the opposite when you say to an American you look like Canadian or to an African you look like Ghanaian it does not make sense. Here it shows that there is intentionally of denying once existence to its identity.
- When it comes to recognition of identity the intentionally belittling of Eritrea by its size and the number of its nationalities is of concern. While there are 9 nationalities in Eritrea there are about 70 nationalities in Kenya, 120 nationalities in Tanzania, 40 nationalities in Uganda and 80 nationalities in Ethiopia. When it comes to size there are smaller countries than Eritrea in Africa, Europe and Asia.
- The intrigues and intentions against Eritrea have to be watched carefully. If we look at a map published recently by some western magazines it is of great concern to Eritrea. While they show that dividing Iraq into three regions they depict Eritrea as future occupied by Ethiopia. It shows also the division of Somali to three parts and Sudan to two, even to three including Darfur.
- The professor says while African countries are suffering from lack of development of basic infrastructures the west tries to engage Africans their time and energy in unrealistic democracies and elections. The situation that is facing Africans is like a patient that needs operation from heart disease and as the west countries asking to do cosmetics in clipping his fingers.
- It is true that democracy is what we want, after we put the infrastructures in place that is going to lay ground for real democracies.
- Professor Gideon tells that there is difference being professor of mathematics and professor of history. In mathematics if some body tells you that something added to something is something then you can check what he said by subtracting something from something and you compare the results. Like wise, if some body tells you that something multiplied by something is something then you divided something by something and you can check the results. But when it comes to history that is different. The professor brought this argument to justify the following event. When representative of Djibouti government presented about 100 pages that accuse Eritrea the document was well prepared in February 2008. The so called clashes between Eritrea and Djibouti happened in June 2008. The extraordinary event in this situation was why Djibouti pushed to present its case in June at the Security Council. The reason is June month was the rotating seat of USA at the Security Council. It is remarkable that Ethiopia awards land for irrigation and residence to the president of Djibouti.
- If the Eritrean people continues with the path that is following by keeping its unity intact then there is possibility Eritrea to be an example for its neighbours.
- Eritrea believes that when its neighbours get development it will be positive to Eritrea. It is because of this Eritrea works peace to prevail in Sudan, Somalia and its neighbour countries. The professor says that a student do not become well when the others are bad. A student becomes good by his endeavour and hard working. That is why Eritrea wants to see well developed and economically strong neighbours. Contrary to Eritrea Ethiopians want their neighbours to be in disastrous situation them to flourish in the misery of their neighbours. Example what Ethiopians are doing to the Somali people?

To be continued.....

God bless Eritrea

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