

## **Let Our Common Destiny Prevail**

*By Samuel Estefanous 23 November 2017*

*“Fully cognizant that our common destiny can best be served  
by rectifying historically unjust relationships and by further  
Promoting our shared interests;”*

The fifth clause to the Preamble of the FDRE Constitution.

Semantically and in terms of idyllic language construction, the FDRE Constitution might not have the unique regal vibe that characterizes social contracts of this historical and legal magnitude. You might not be able to memorize a single definitive clause on account of the narrative character of the compositions. But did it break the deafening monotony of Ethiopia’s long drawn out history?

Absolutely!

Conspicuously enshrined in the preamble, the captioned is a lasting testimony to the fundamental break in tradition and in heralding a fresh beginning in a very unique way. It is indeed a unique Constitution for a unique Nation of Nationalities predating the Roman (Western) civilization by millennia.

Points worthy of mulling over...

1-Rectifying historically unjust relationships

The authors of the Constitution fundamentally reached a binding consensus that historically there had been unjust relationships between and among them and this fact makes it inevitable to invest in proactive endeavors in all aspects of our collective lives to rectify it. In a nutshell this clause summarizes the spirit of the FDRE Constitution, though few seem to be bothered by its significance and meaning. Question is- is it possible to rectify past misdeeds, if any, without sowing a fresh seed of malcontent for future generation to come? If you ask me point blank who caused the Second World War, out of hand, I would say the Versailles Treaty. I am not saying the monstrosity of Nazism didn't cause the carnage but the National Socialists made the best of the mistakes of Versailles Treaty. Without the latter the Nazi party wouldn't have won a county. It took the charisma and dogged commitment of Konrad Adenauer to bring Germany back in to the folds of European family of Nations.

Yes, that kind of historical crime needs to be rectified. But even the German basic law didn't make 'rectifying' the bed rock of the system. May be it should have made it so. It is still being debated.

Recently the flamboyant President of Oromia National Regional State positively countered the spirit of rectification. He was saying- I take lesson from history, I will not allow it to cast its dark shadow over my future. Recently, Reporter Amarigna carried a feature article that questioned the purpose and significance of the deputation of Oromia dignitaries to the court of ANDM...I gather the principal spirit of the mission was to issue a joint declaration-let us bury ancient hatches and trail blaze a bright future in pursuit of our shared common destiny.

## 2-Promoting our Shared Interest

Let us positively dwell on this. In the first place promoting our shared interest should have preceded dressing old sores. If the FDRE Constitution is ever to be amended this Preamble has to be rephrased to reflect the changing circumstances a quarter of a century later.

Folks, have you noticed we are setting bad examples to our brethren across the border? Now Raila Odinga is closely observing past and present events in Ethiopia

to foster secessionist tendency in Kisumu. We should work hard to put to shame opportunistic demagogue politicians of all cut.

Catalonia and Scotland can afford to be independent, and it matters little to them except perhaps for soccer fans. Incidentally, do you know why the Brits cleverly allow England, Wales, Scotland and North Ireland to have “Sporting Sovereignty” independently of the Union Jack? I will tell you why-most independence activists are sporting fans and their cohorts who are easily duped or tend to change jersey pretty easily. Now rooting for the Breakaway Republic wanna be; only to root for the Union the next season.

### 3-Lasting Peace under the Union Constitution.

The centuries old fabric of the American Union was put to acid tests lately, all on account of aging statutes of long buried Confederate Generals and a line or two in the lyrics of the Star Spangled Banner.

At least, none of us is taking a knee in protest disrespecting the National Color and anthem. See, we aren't really that bad off. As I always say, we do have the capacity to melt in one big pot indeed like a sergegna teff.

In the context America has found itself at cross roads lately, Trump's Chief of Staff, General Kelly made a very interesting statement to the effect that-though, Lee fought for slavery and owned some, he strongly believes that the General was most honorable American.

Many begged to differ. Following through, we all were treated to a true honorable giant of a man-Frederick Douglass- who had (prophetically) written and spoken at great length against future generations who might find it in their heart to work in defense of General Lee and his legacy-sometime in the 1880s.

I was positively marveled to learn the legacy of this General has been debated for the past 150 years and the Union has had the capacity to entertain and absorb it all without giving any cause for disintegration.

So let us be open to dialogue. We can forge a lasting peace under the Union Constitution only when we prove that we got the capacity to entertain dissent

and acknowledge that no one person is better loyal to the Constitution than another-something that eludes junior EPRDF cadres all the time.

#### 4-Opposition isn't Seditious.

I truly salute the courage of TOL to honestly report on the latest dramatic event that took place at Mekelle, courtesy of Arena. It chose to entertain difference and brave the stigma, if any, instead of kowtowing to the seasonal currents of 'public' opinion and compromise the basics of the fundamental right to take to the street to express discontent.

Early when I spoke about the visible lack of lofty expression in the FDRE Constitution, I didn't miss the importance of clarity before formality yet both can be captured in equal measure like in Voltaire's oft quoted ageless statement.

"I Disapprove of What You Say, but I Will Defend to the Death Your Right to Say It"

That is a gazillion times better than three dozen motivational books or a tome of legal treatise.

#### 5-Never take peace for granted

Never forget that, violent conflicts are started with raw primitive emotions but tend to be concluded with stone-cold sober reasoning, alas, at a staggering cost. I strongly believe there is just enough space to speak out and speak about.

Who doesn't regret the fact that OLF chose the den to the square when it walked out of the TGE? Who doesn't regret the fact that Kinijit squandered a golden opportunity in Ethiopian history bowing flat out to populism- disrespecting the voters who showed such remarkable fortitude in the face of naked intimidation- when it chose to abscond.

Who would have thought in his wildest dream that seasoned academics and politicians would go Rambo wanna be on us leaving all of Addis in administrative and political limbo? They kicked democracy in Ethiopia ten leagues backwards by

their raw emotion driven actions and inactions. It culminated in the 100% EPRDF Parliament seat, which is a disgrace to any Ethiopian.

#### 6-Heeding Lessons of History

When General Robert Lee tendered his resignation to Lincoln to join the ranks of the Confederate Army, he was said to have taken formal farewell of the President and had told him that he-Lee- was first a Virginian and on account of that an American. There is nothing subtle about this statement except that it kinda resonates with our own state of National affair relative to federalism. America has come a long way...but does that make General Lee anathema for generations to come...some say 'Nay' some say 'Yea' that is the beauty of democracy.

#### 7-I am the measure of Ethiopiawinet

Many would like to know how a good number of Diaspora politicians became such pitifully spent marginal force, considering in comparative terms, they are well educated, advanced in age, had the benefit of hindsight and prop up the National economy like none other through remittance. The answer is quite simple and uncomplicated. They have declared themselves self-designated exclusive measures of Ethiopiawinet, Oromuma, Tegarua etc...common folks don't say much but they know a cheat when they listen to one 'cos it is no brainer to bust a cheat.

8-God Bless.