

* Barruu ebbifamtoota Oromoo 2006 wayyaaneen saamte keessaa hamma tokko.

BAGA GAMMADDAN!

CONGRATULATIONS!

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Koree Qindeessituu / The Coordinating Committee

1. Abdii Bilisummaa	Dura Taa'aa
2. Boonaa Sabaa	I/A Dura Taa'aa
3. Tokkummaa Abdii	Barreessaa
4. Falmii Dhugaa	Maallaqa Qabaa
5. Jabeechaa Cinqaa	Fund-Raising
6. Boontuu Humneessaa	Fund-Raising
7. Hawwii Sabaa	Fund-Raising
8. Wabii Lammii	Editorial
9. Sonaa Bilisummaa	Editorial
10. Qorichoo Siifis	Auditor
11. Boonaa Qananii	Auditor
12. Abbaajoobir Guyyoo	Public Relations
13. Falmataa Sabaa	Public`Relations
14. Warraaqni Yoona	Public Relations

Galata

Barruulee kana fiixaan baasuuf namooti dhuunfaadhaanis ta'e gareen gargaarsa yaadaas (hamilees) ta'e maallaqaa nuu gumaachan hedduu dha. Hunda caalaa seenaan isaan haa yaadattu. Itti aansuudhaan maqaa eebbifamtoota Oromoo bara 2006tiin galata keenya isaanii dhiyeessina.

Dhaamsa Koree

Obsi Gabrummaa Hin Fixu!!!!

Uummata Oromootti gabrummaan yeroo dheeraaf fe'amee jira. Haa ta'u malee uummati kun yeroo itti inni kana tole jedhee fudhate hin turre, garafuulduraattis hin jiraatu. Falmiin bilisummaaf godhamu jaarraa tokko oliif itti fufee jira. Diinni keenya (gabroomfataan) lukkeewwan isaa nu keessa jiranii fi garagaarsa biyya alaa irraa argatutti dhimma bahuun sirna gabrummaa daran cimsee jira. Haala kana keessatti namooti keenya otoo fedhii qabanii obsuu filatan heddummaachuun isaanii hubatamaa dha. Obsi ammoo gabrummaa akka hin fixne erga hubatamee oolee buleera. Kanaaf, gabrummaa faccisuu fi bilisummaa gonfachuuf hunduu harka wal-qabannee-haa-kaanu jenna.

Waxabajjii 2006
Finfinnee, Oromiyaa

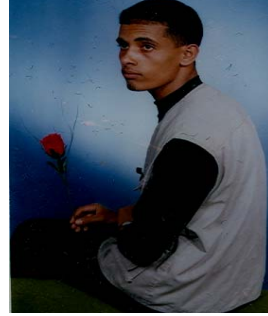
Barattoota Oromoo Rasaasa Diinaan Lubbuun Dabarte keessaa Hanga Tokko



Alamaayyoo Garbaa
(AAU-Psychology)
Kutaa 9ffaa)



Gaaddisaa Hirphasaa
(AAU-Civil Eng.)



Jaagamaa Badhaanee
(Amboo-Kutaa 11^{ffaa})



Yasiin Mohamed
(Haramayaa-)

Mee Haa Yaadannu!

Jaagamaa Badhaanee sabboonticha Oromoo
Eenyuu hin dagatu ifa baasaa qomoo
Goota seenaa qabu Alamaayyoo Garbaa
Diinaaf gad hin jedhu dhaadataa akka Arbaa
Gaaddisaatiin beektuu sabboonaa Hirphasaa
Qabsoo finiisuudhaaf wareege lubbuusaa
Yoo yaadanna taane Kabbadaa Badhaasaa
Diinaaf gad hin jennuun lolaase dhiigasaa
Wareege lubbuusaa

Haa yaadannu egaa sabboontota kana
Galmees qabsiifanna seenaa isaanii faana
Qabsoof wareegamuun isaaniif ayyaana
Qabsoon haa finiisnu akkuma isaanii kana
Qabsoohota Oromoo goota seenaa qaban
Kaayyoo isaanii ibsuuf baay'ee tattaafatan
Gonfoo *Bilisummaaf* lubbuun wareegaman
Sabboontoti kun mee haa yaadataman

Goota seenaa qabu Jaagamaa Badhaanee
Kabbadaa wajjiniin kaayyoof manaa baanee
Gabrummaa faccisuu harka wal-qabannee
Dhukaasa banani lukkeewwan Wayyaanee
Sammuu rukutani Jaagamaa Badhaanee
Seenaan haa yaadatu sabboontota kana
Qabsoo finiisuudhaaf isaaniif amala
Egaa haa yaadannu ganamaa fi galagala

Gumaachaan: Nugusaa Gobooshoo
Amboo irraa

LIBERATION TO OROMIA!

**Oromiyaan Dhiiga Ilmaan
isheetiin Ni Bilisoomti!!!!**

Interview with Mohammed Hassen, Associate Professor, Georgia State University, USA



Prof. Mohammed Hassen

We, Oromo Graduates of Higher Institutions (OGHI) of the year 2006, would like to forward our deepest gratitude and respect for your cooperation to conduct an interview with us. Thank you!

We strongly believe that the readers of our graduation bulletin will get valuable information and understanding on the Oromo history and politics from this interview.

OGHI: Prof. Mohammad would you like to outline your brief biography to our readers?

Prof. Moh: I, Mohammed Hassen, was born in a small village in the region of **Gara Mul'ata** (Hararghe) in eastern Oromia. I completed elementary education in the city of Harar and joined Debra Berhan Teachers' Training Institute. After graduation I taught for three years and then joined Addis Ababa University from where I graduated in 1973. I taught at Jimma Teachers' Training Institute and then served in the *Idigat be Hibert Zamecha* of 1975/76. Then, I Joined University of London in 1977 from where I graduated in 1983.

While in graduate school I served in different capacities in the Union of Oromo Studies in Europe. I was also the chairman of Union of Oromo Students in England and the editor of its journal, *Saba Oromo* (1979-1983). Since 1985 I have been teaching African and world history at a number of universities in the United States. I enjoy teaching history of the peoples of the Horn of Africa, including the Oromo and other peoples of Ethiopia. I was a founding member of Oromo Studies Association in 1986, its president (1994-1996) and currently am a member of its Board of Directors. I was also a founding member of the Journal of Oromo Studies and regular contributor to its publication. Currently I am an Associate Professor of history at Georgia State University in Atlanta, USA.

OGHC: Prof. Mohammad, would you briefly summarize the Oromo history?

Prof. Moh: The Oromo nation has a long, rich and fascinating history-history of greatness, independent existence, stable democratic political culture based on the rule of law and democratic governance. The Oromo have also history of conquest, occupation, subjugation, political domination, economic exploitation and cultural dehumanization.

The Oromo, who constitute more than forty percent of the population of Ethiopia, belong to the Cushitic language-speaking family of peoples who are known to have lived in the Ethiopian

region for thousands of years. Historical evidence and linguistic data establishes beyond an iota of doubt that the Oromo are one of the indigenous peoples of Ethiopia, original inhabitants of that country. For centuries the Oromo lived as a free, powerful independent nation in the Hon of Africa.

Up to the seventeenth century, all Oromo lived under the *Gada System*. Even after the seventeenth century, most Oromo continued to live under the republican form of *Gada* government, in which leaders were elected every eight years. However, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Oromo who lived in the regions of Wallo, Wallaga and the Gibe region slowly abandoned the republican form of government and adopted a monarchic institution. This was brought about by complex developments which cannot be discussed in this brief answer. Here let it suffice to say that there were six small Muslim Oromo states in Wallo alone, ruled by their own kings and queens. Of all the Oromo states in Wallo, *Warra Himano* was the strongest and it lasted the longest.

In the Gibe Region, there were five Oromo states, two of which-*Limmu-Ennarya* and *Jimma Abba Jifar*, were the richest kingdoms in the Ethiopian region. There were also two Oromo states in Wallaga and two others in the process of formation there. These Oromo states were engaged in a continuous struggle with each other for the formation of a single Oromo state. Interestingly this development coincided with the struggle among the Amhara-Tigray princes for the unification of historical *Abyssinia*, the land of Amhara-Tigray people. Before the conquest of the Oromo in the 1880s, Abyssinia produced nothing which the Oromo of the Gibe Region were not already producing or capable of producing more than Abyssinia itself. These two developments indicate that on the eve of the conquest and colonization of Oromia: “. . . the Abyssinian and Oromo societies were roughly at similar stages of development, one society more advanced in some areas, but less so in others” (Hassen 1990, p. 92).

Up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, whether they lived under the republican form of government or monarchy, all Oromo led an independent life, as masters of their destiny and makers of their own history. They had their own political and religious institutions, which flowered in patterns of their own making and nourished their spiritual and material well being. The independent existence of the Oromo was brought to an end rapidly by the creation of the modern Ethiopian empire in the 1880s and after. It was Menilek, the Amhara King of Shawa (1865-1889) and the Emperor of Ethiopia (1889-1913) who created the Modern Ethiopian Empire. It was Emperor Menilek who conquered and colonized Oromia. With that the Oromo nation lost its sovereignty, freedom and independence, the ability to make history and to control their resources.

The Oromo also lost something very crucial: they lost their leadership. Consequently, from the 1880s to the early 1960s, the Oromo suffered a great deal from lack of central leadership: A leadership vacuum was created and maintained in order to divide and weaken Oromo unity. Deprived of leadership and prevented from leading a free social existence, the Oromo were subjected to long oppression which assumed a multi-dimensional thrust attacking simultaneously Oromo national identity, cultural heritage, religious and political institutions(Hassen 1990, p. 10) .

OGHI: What was the Relationship between Ethiopia and Oromia?

The relationship between the Ethiopian Empire created by Emperor Menilek and that of Oromia was and still is colonial. It was the relationship of colonizers and the colonized, the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, the masters and the subjects. As with all forms of colonialism, the driving social force behind Menilek's colonialism was economic. ". . . the green lush lands of the Oromo and their boundless commodities (gold, civet, ivory, coffee and [their] prosperous markets) were the economic motives" (Hiwet 1975, p. 4). To these may be added ". . . the search for new sources of food for Menilek's soldiers, the plunder of Oromo property, free labor, and the expropriation of Oromo land were the primary economic motives (Hassen 1990, p. 198). Some aspects of Menilek's colonialism in Oromia have similarities with European colonialism in other parts of Africa.

As European colonists dominated the economic resources and controlled the politics of their colonies, Menilek's armed settlers in Oromia dominated the economic resources and totally controlled the military, judiciary and political power, institutionalizing the monopoly of the settler's advantages. The armed settlers in Oromia were and still are known as *Neftanya* (*Nafxanyaa*). Emperor Menilek alienated Oromo land and gave it, together with the people, to the *Neftanya*, who owned land, cattle, and slaves (Hassen 1990, p. 93). In the sacred land of their birth, the Oromo lost their rights to their own lands and became landless *Gabars* (serfs) who were ". . . physically victimized, socially and psychologically humiliated and devalued as human beings"(Ibid). The *Neftanya*, who exploited, brutalized, and dehumanized the *Gabars* had no interest in recognizing the humanity of the Oromo. "The purpose was to break the Oromo in body, soul and spirit and reduce them to the condition of helplessness and dejection" (Ibid).

As if what has transpired thus far was not enough, systematic efforts were made to destroy Oromo cultural heritage, political and religious institutions. No stone was left unturned to destroy Oromo unity and national identity. All Oromo kingdoms, even the three kingdoms that purportedly had local autonomy, were abolished.

Before their conquest the Oromo maintained contact with each other through the famous pilgrimage to the land of their spiritual leader in southern Ethiopia. The pilgrimage served as the focal point of their spiritual and national unity. After the conquest of Oromia, Menilek officially banned the Oromo pilgrimage (Knutsson 1967, pp. 147-155), so as to weaken Oromo unity. He went further and banned *Gada* elections and the gatherings of the *Chafe* Assembly.

Once elections to the political offices and the gathering of the *Chafe* Assembly were banned, the *Gada* system lost the *raison d' etre* for its political existence (Hassen 1990, p. 95). The system had lost all of its political significance. It was only the memory of the system that continued to exist. In short, after the conquest and annexation of Oromia, the Oromo lost their sovereignty, their land, their democratic political institution and their basic human rights. Thus, contrary to the claim that Emperor Menilek "united Ethiopia", he created an empire ". . . of which all the members were subjects rather than citizens, but in which almost all the Oromo were colonial subjects" (Baxter 1978, p. 288) .

It is fair to say that the modern Ethiopian state was not brought about by natural growth of united peoples. It was the product of colonial conquest. Since its creation, the Ethiopian state became the

state of the ruling Abyssinian (Amhara-Tigray) elites . . . [who] dominated the political, military, economic, cultural, religious and social life of the Ethiopian state.

Deprived of all their rights and human dignity, the Oromo had no choice but to embark on the path of resistance. Thus from the 1880s when Oromia was conquered and colonized to the early 1960s, when the Pan-Oromo movement was created, there was not a single decade which was not characterized by resistance in different parts of Oromia. Many Oromo died resisting with arms in their hands rather than accept intolerable domination (see Cerulli 1922, pp. 46-52). However, owing to the lack of central leadership, the absence of communication, the long distance and the tight control of imperial government, the numerous Oromo resistances were uncoordinated and they were isolated.

After the above brief mentioning of some aspects of Oromo history, let me answer the other questions in the order in which they were presented to me.

OGHI: The so-called “Habasha Historians” have been saying the Oromo have no history. Some have been saying the Oromo are alien to Ethiopia. And others have been saying the Oromo came out of water. How can this be evaluated from historical point of view?

Prof. Moh: The Oromo have as rich and as complex history as other peoples of Ethiopian including the Abyssinians. However, due to lack of their own writing system, history of the Oromo was not recorded. Because the Abyssinians have had a very unique writing system, they kept records of the history of their great men and women for hundreds of years. Although some Amhara communities and some Oromo groups had contact with each other in the region of Shawa probably by around 1200, it was only during the 16th century that conflict between the two groups intensified. As a result of this conflict the Christian monks and court chroniclers depicted the Oromo as “enemies of the Amhara” and what they wrote about the Oromo mainly expressed the intense prejudice deeply rooted in the Abyssinian society. The monks and court chroniclers presented the Oromo as “new comers to Ethiopia” and as “people without history”.

Even some modern scholars (see Ullendorff 1960, p.76) repeated the silly stuff of court chroniclers as if they are gospel truth. Abyssinian monks and court chroniclers wrote about the Oromo for the purpose of denigrating them as people, and savaging their cultural creativity, their democratic heritage and their way of life. Since what the monks and court chroniclers wrote about the Oromo was the sources for the writing of Oromo history, no other people, in Ethiopia, had their history so distorted or ignored and their cultural achievements and human qualities undervalued as the Oromo have been in the Ethiopian historiography. Abyssinian view of Oromo history mainly reflects their prejudice against the Oromo.

The claim that the Oromo were “new comers to Ethiopia” and that they are people “without history” is historically nonsense. How could the people who have lived in Ethiopia for thousands of years suddenly become “new comers” to the same country?” People whose views are shaped by their own prejudice do not realize that there are no people without history in the whole world. The Oromo have fascinating history, which tells the story of their cultural creativity, political institutions which flowered in patterns of their own making and nourished Oromo political, spiritual and material well-being.

OGHI: Much has been said about the Ethiopian history. But there is still confusion on the understandings of the Biblical Ethiopia [the land of Kush] or/and the Modern Ethiopian empire. Would you explain their difference and oneness to our readers? How this name can be related to peoples of the Horn? Which Ethiopia can stand for Oromo?

Prof. Moh: The word Ethiopia was of Greek origin. Originally, it meant people with “burnt face” meaning black people. As a generic term, the term Ethiopia applied to all the lands west of Indian and south of Egypt. However, in time the application of Ethiopia was limited only to the country south of Egypt, which was known as *Nubia* or *Kush*. The three names Nubia, Kush and Ethiopia were used interchangeably to refer to the same country in what is today the Sudan. The blameless Ethiopians of Greek classical literature, to whose land the Greek gods traveled for their feast, the tall, beautiful and elegant Ethiopians of Greek history were all reference to the ancient Nubians who created one of the oldest civilization in Africa. In some respect the Nubian civilization was even older than that of the famous Egyptian civilization. As Egyptians colonized Nubia from around 1500-1000 B.C., the people of Nubia in turn colonized Egypt from around 750-663B. C. and established the 26th famous Egyptian dynasty that was known as the Ethiopian dynasty, meaning, the period when the Kushitic kings and queens of Nubia ruled over the entire Nile valley. In short, Ethiopia that was mentioned several times in the Bible, as well as by classical writers referred only to Nubia located in the northern region of the Sudan and not to the country that is today known as Ethiopia.

It was the Axumite Emperor Ezana (A.D. 330-360) who destroyed Meroe, the third capital city of the kingdom of Kush or classical Ethiopia in 350. Ezana celebrated his victory by adding to his many titles that of the “king of Ethiopia” thus making classical Ethiopia one of the territories over which he ruled. Shortly after the death of Ezana, the Axumite control over classical Ethiopia came to an end. However, with the translation of the Bible into Geez language during the 6th century, the name Ethiopia started to be identified with the Axumite Empire. What ultimately linked the term with Ethiopia of today was *Kebra Nagast* (the Abyssinian national epic) which was written during the early 14th century. Despite the strong link *Kebra Nagast* had established, Abyssinian leaders rarely referred to their country as Ethiopia. They continued using Habasha, which was indigenous self-designation for the Semitic language-speaking Christians- the Tigrayans and the Amhara population of Ethiopia. As a result from 14th century to the first half of 20th century the country was known internationally as Abyssinia, which was European version of Habasha. In 1923 that country became a member of the League of Nations as Abyssinia. For the first time, it was Emperor Haile Selassie’s constitution of 1931 which made Ethiopia the official name of the country and defined its people as Ethiopians. “And yet, up to 1942, the British Foreign Office records continued to refer to Ethiopia as Abyssinia”. The foreign office records of several European countries including those of the United States did likewise.

OGHI: Some of the so-called “Ethiopian Historians” continue writing the Oromo history following the policy of their predecessors advocating an anti-Oromo prejudice. The recent work of Sintayehu Kassaye of Mekelle University can be cited as the best example. Do you think such individuals are loyal to their professional ethics? What will be your advice to

young Oromo intellectuals, especially historians to re-write the ignored and prejudiced Oromo history?

Prof. Moh: Until recently Ethiopian history had always been “state centered” and the essential aspect of that history has been “political and ideological control”. This is because those who controlled the Ethiopian state controlled to a large measure what was written about the Oromo. Controlling what is written about the past is part of the attempt to shape the vision of the future. That is why the contest over Ethiopia past is perceived as much a contest over the future.

It is about the future of Oromia-to be controlled, dominated and exploited by the ruling Tigrayan elite or to be the land where its people decide their own destiny without any interference or control either by the Tigrayan or the Amhara elites.

The current attack on Oromo history at Mekelle (*Maqalee*) University is part of Tigrayan elite’s ideological warfare against the Oromo. With material support from the administration of *Maqalee* University, a history teacher prepared 75 page documents that are entirely devoted to distortion of Oromo history. From beginning to end this document is collection of anti-Oromo diatribe written in the past four hundred years. Teaching such outdated and valueless material is a great disservice to the students whose mind will be poisoned and it is a great disgrace to the institution that finances the production of such material motivated primarily by hatred and fear of Oromo potential for the future.

It appears that anti-Oromo prejudice is spreading sickening hatred that has engulfed the mind, the body and soul of some individuals on the campus of *Maqalee* University. Hatred is the cancer that eats the vital organs of any society as it pollutes the mind, and pollution of the mind is inseparable from the pollution of the human spirit, and the protection of human life depends on the preservation of generous human spirit. I hope the unfortunate Oromo students in the campus of *Maqalee* University will not be the victim of the hatred generated by what is taught in class.

OGHI: The Oromo have been struggling for self-determination for decades. Do you think the Oromo struggle for self-determination is legitimate? What should the Oromo society at different levels do to enhance the struggle and achieve its goals?

Prof. Moh: The Oromo struggle for self-determination is just and legitimate. It is the struggle that has lasted for three decades. This struggle has the support of the overwhelming majority of the Oromo. Since 1974 this struggle has been led by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) . The OLF has clearly defined the ultimate goal of the struggle, articulated its vision for the realization of the goal of self-determination. The OLF has played a decisive role in transforming the Oromo perception of themselves and how they are perceived by others. Through three decades of ideological, political and military struggle, the OLF has placed the Oromo demand for self-determination on world stage.

The OLF has earned the leadership and trust of the Oromo nation. For the Oromo the OLF is much more than an organization. It is an idea that has captured the imagination, the heart, the soul and the spirit of the Oromo. From my extensive reading and discussion it appears to me that

in the Oromo mind, the OLF is an idea and an organization that tirelessly works for the self-determination of Oromia.

This is clearly expressed in the OLF program. The main objective of the program is to create a democratic republic of Oromia. The program also makes it clear that the OLF supports voluntary unity of the peoples of Ethiopia. OLF leaders know fully well that demography, history and geography have placed the Oromo in a unique position to play a uniting as well as a democratizing role in Ethiopia. No other nationality in Ethiopia has forged close cultural, historical and blood ties as have the Oromo with almost all of the other nationalities in Ethiopia. The bonds between the Oromo and other nationalities can form the basis for closer friendship and cooperation thus avoiding coercion, monopolization of political power, minority dictatorship things of the past.

Educated Oromo, including those who are graduating from various colleges and universities in Ethiopia must realize that our political imagination will have to go beyond the old ways of thinking, old ways of doing politics, old ways of dealing with rival organizations, Oromo or otherwise, and old ways of communicating the cause for which our people have been struggle for over three decades. This means there is an urgent need for Oromo nationalists to shift their paradigm. At the forefront of this paradigm shift, which among others, involves the placing of our struggle for self-determination within the African and global context, developing better ways of resolving internal conflicts, and creating a democratic language for articulating Oromo yearning for self-determination and their willingness to be a force for change and progress for the peoples of Ethiopia.

The Oromo elite must not only take the lead in exposing the current Ethiopian regime as the source of instability in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, but also they must project the Oromo national movement led by the OLF as the stabilizing force within Ethiopia and beyond. In other words, we have to study how to build bridges of understanding and cooperation with other peoples of Ethiopia. The main challenge for our leadership is to articulate a democratic language that combines the Oromo struggle for self-determination with the struggle for democracy in Ethiopia.

OGHI: How has the international community, especially the western world, been viewing the Oromo struggle? Has it (the international community) made any significant support to the Oromo struggle?

Prof. Moh: Before the 1970s, Oromo invisibility and powerlessness within the Ethiopian political landscape was largely unknown in the western world. This was partly because of the Ethiopian government propaganda which masked the Oromo and kept secret their colonial subjugation and economic exploitation. It was caused partly by the Oromo lack of effective political organization that would bring the suffering of its people to the attention of western world. It was caused partly because the Oromo did not have influential friends who would introduce their cause to the western world. Since the 1980s, the OLF has done its best to make the Oromo issue visible on the international stage.

During the same time, the Oromo Diaspora in the western world has brought to the attention of the western public and governments the plight of their people. However, there is a lot to be done in this regard. We must realize that moral, political and financial support from the western world is gained the hard way-secured by the progress of our struggle in Oromia. This means we have to tirelessly fight for every little gain. It is the little gains, in military, diplomatic and intellectual discourse that will earn recognition and support for our struggle for self-determination.

We must realize that if we are organized better, resist more effectively and challenge the enemy on several fronts; our voices will be heard and respected in the international arena. We have to make it clear to the western world both in words and action that the Oromo want to be free and live in peace and democracy with other peoples of similar disposition. Slowly but surely the Oromo are being recognized as a major force for change in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

OGHI: A lot have been said on the May 2005 election in Ethiopia. Can we say the May election was genuine? Have the Oromo been given the chance to vote for the party that can represent them?

Prof. Moh: Since 1992 the TPLF dominated EPDRF regime has been interested in elections mainly for the purpose of getting political and financial support from the western countries. For that the regime wanted to gain legitimacy and recognition through organizing periodic elections in order to claim that it has the mandate of the people. The regime did organize and rigged elections in 1992, 1995, and 2000. In May 2005 the regime was not able to rig the elections as it did three times previously. As a result the people voted against the regime. However, the regime rigged the result of the election thus exposing to the world its tyranny, under which the Oromo people have been suffering since 1992. Now it is clear to the outside world that there has never been any free and fair election in Ethiopia. If condition for a free and fair election is created in Ethiopia, the OLF must be encouraged to participate in it. It is good politics internationally and smart strategy for mobilizing our people.

OGHI: How do you observe the current political situation in Ethiopia? If the chaos will continue what do you think will be the fate of the Oromo? What do you advice all the Oromo nationals in order to make things on their side?

Prof. Moh: The May 2005 election and its aftermath have destroyed the credibility of the EPRDF regime. The regime has lost the moral and political support from the western world. What remains is to dry-up the financial sources the regime receives from the western world. If the regime loses financial support its days will be numbered. The best way of drying-up the financial sources of the regime is by creating an alternative force that is capable of replacing the regime. From this perspective, the recently formed “**Alliance for Freedom and Democracy**” is a good step in the right direction. However, whatever happens with the alliance our people must never forget that our self-determination will be achieved mainly through our efforts, sacrifices and determination.

OGHI: How do you evaluate the progress that the Oromo struggle has made?

Prof. Moh: Though at very slow pace the Oromo struggle has scored some significant progress. Today it is widely recognized around the world that the Oromo are the single largest national group in Ethiopia, who are political minority in that country. The Oromo have an inalienable right to struggle for their self-determination.

Through words and actions, we have to demonstrate to the international community that our struggle is for self-determination - the struggle for freedom, democracy, peace, and the rule of law.

It is the absence of the rule of law which has exposed our people to massive human rights violations. **The OLF is internationally recognized as the legitimate voice of the Oromo nation.** What remains is for our leadership to demonstrate its capacity by designing new strategies and tactics for mobilizing support for our cause, marshalling resources, winning friends, neutralizing potential enemies and isolating the real enemy internationally.

OGHI: It is well known that ``unity is strength`` in order to keep unity and harmony of our people what is really expected from Oromo political Organizations at home and abroad?

Prof. Moh: All Oromo forces agree on the need for Oromo unity. Without unity the future of our people will not be different from what they have experienced since the 1880s. People who fail to learn from the lessons of their history are always punished. Since their conquest during and after the 1880s, our people have been punished severely for their failure to learn the lessons of their history. These lessons are many, but let me mention only two. First, it was with the resources of Oromia, including manpower and materials that emperor Menilek completed the conquest of Oromia. Then the Oromo's lack of unity and modern weapons facilitated their conquest and the occupation of their land. Second, Oromo enemies have always turned the Oromo against each other. People who allow themselves to be the instrument of others and easily turned against each other are their own worst enemies and they have no one but themselves to blame.

People who are not united in the face of common danger hasten their own destruction. Unity is not only the strength, but it is also the key for our survival as a great nation in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Oromo leadership and the educated class must tirelessly show in words and action that Oromo cultural container, i.e. Orommumaa is wide and big enough to take in all religious and regional differences within the Oromo society.

OGHI: How do you explain the exaggerated propaganda that few individuals and the EPRDF agents propagate on the conflict among few former OLF leaderships?

Prof. Moh: Every national movement faces all kinds of challenges including conflict within its own leadership. This happens for many reasons including ideological conflict and power struggle. Available evidence clearly indicates that the conflict within the OLF leadership is greatly exaggerated, as there were only few individuals who left the organization. ***That conflict appears to have been inspired by power struggle though it is presented under the cover of ideological conflict.*** Like all other conflicts, time and patience will heal the conflict generated by power struggle. What is important on the part of the OLF leadership is not to indulge in an

insidious propaganda with those who left the organization. It is useless to waste energy, time and resources on attacking each other.

OGHI: The OLF has made a call for the Oromo mass to conduct a popular uprising against the injustice of the TPLF led-Ethiopian government in November 2005. Since then, the Oromo mass are peacefully resisting the TPLF regime. Do you think the call is timely and has contributed to intensifying the Oromo struggle for self-determination?

Prof. Moh: The Oromia wide resistance that started in November 2005 and still continues reflects the maturity and the staying power of Oromo national liberation struggle led by the OLF. The current resistance clearly demonstrates Oromo determination to free themselves from the shackles of subjugation. The Oromo want to be free to administer themselves as they have the right to do so and enjoy the fruits of democratic governance, which they have been denied for over a century. The OLF call for resistance was necessary. It was timely. It energizes the long struggle for self-determination. It increases political awareness both in Oromia and among the Oromo in the Diaspora. The continuation of this resistance will shorten the long journey for the self-determination of Oromia.

OGHI: The TPLF-led Ethiopian government has got two opposite personalities. On one hand, the regime is trying to appear to the international communities and the western world as democrat. On the contrary, the regime is committing a gross-violation of human rights in the home country. How do you explain the evolution of such a habit?

Prof. Moh: The leaders of the EPRDF regime claim to be democrats, but in reality they are tyrants who are presiding over the destruction of our people. Their contradictory character was initially hidden from the outside world because they displayed considerable capacity for producing promising rhetoric about democracy and respect for human rights in Ethiopia. It was this rhetoric which transformed the closet communists into new “democrats”, who have been very successful in using democratic trappings for abusing human rights in Oromia and other parts of Ethiopia.

It is precisely for this reason that the new Ethiopian rulers who loudly shout about democracy and human rights one day, the next day massacre innocent people for no other reason than participation in peaceful demonstration. In Ethiopia governments have changed. Leaders have changed. But the abuse and misuse of power remain constant (Hassen 1999, p. 248).

In 1994 the EPRDF leaders artfully drafted their own constitution which promised democratic governance and federal system in Ethiopia. “To have their own constitution is good politics and useful propaganda for the TPLF leaders, but their failure to abide by it is the worst form of deception and hypocrisy”(Hassen 2000, p.178).

Since 1995 the EPRDF regime has claimed that it has established a democratic federal system in Ethiopia. But the system in Ethiopia is neither democratic nor federal. It is a tyrannical system in which the minority dictates the fate of the majority. The TPLF leaders who control the EPRDF

regime are closet communists, who use democratic façade for obtaining moral, political and financial support from the western world. The trick worked for them for years. However, since 2005 their fraudulent claim about federalism and serious human rights violations in Oromia and other parts of Ethiopia have been exposed and condemned as moral outrage by several western governments and human rights organization. As a result today the tyrannical character of the EPRDF leaders is widely recognized. It is foolish to expect democratic governance from tyrannical leaders, who came to power through the barrel of the gun and rule through brute force.

The prospect for democratic governance in Ethiopia will be greatly enhanced if the Oromo and other oppressed peoples of Ethiopia are united in their opposition to the current regime. The recently formed “**Alliance for Freedom and Democracy**” appears to me a good step in the right direction. The goal of the alliance should be to bring together the various stakeholders to chart a roadmap for better future for all the peoples of Ethiopia. This will be further enhanced if western governments extend their moral, political and financial support for the newly formed alliance. Such support will alter the political landscape of Ethiopia.

OGHI: In the end, we like to hear your timely message for the Oromo people.

Prof. Moh: Educated Oromo, especially those who are graduating from various colleges and universities in Ethiopia have to understand the political world as it is and not as we wish it to be. In our analysis we have to take into consideration our lack of friendly governments in the Horn of Africa, our enemy’s vicious tactics of dividing us among ourselves, the impact of geo-politics on our national movement. This means to a large measure, we have to depend on our own political creativity, material and spiritual resources and organizational capability for the realization of the self-determination of Oromia. We have to learn from our mistakes, improve our weakness and capitalize on our strength.

We have to realize that any liberation movement including the OLF, that does not learn from its mistakes, that does not improve its performance, that does not accept criticism, that does not have the intellectual wherewithal to reinvent itself from time to time, that does not alter its propaganda with a radically changing international political climate, that does not undertake the necessary paradigm shift when time demands it, that always reacts to events instead of being proactive, that blames others for its failures, that does not accept responsibility for its action and that always follows old ways of doing things instead of designing new strategies and tactics for mobilizing people, marshalling resources, winning friends, neutralizing potential enemies and isolating the real enemy is doomed to facing repeated setbacks.

Those who are for self-determination of Oromia should not waste their energies on attacking each other. Rather they have to direct their anger against the common enemy. Those who have always thrived on dividing the Oromo are planting poisonous seeds of clan politics, which did not exist among our people previously. As clan politics destroyed Somali nationalism, our enemies are hoping that clan politics will dissolve the staying power of Oromo nationalism, thus eliminating the potential threat to the colonial status-quo in Oromia. OLF leadership, its members and supporters must go the extra mile to heal the wound of conflict and correct mistakes if they have been made.

All must have commitment to overcoming conflict, the courage and imagination to be part of a healing process and to have the wisdom and patience to work together for the common good of our nation, thus re-energizing the struggle in unison, revitalizing commitment to the struggle and uplifting Oromo spirit to accept sacrifice to liberate themselves. Their sacrifices are their strength, a measure of their worth as a nation. The secret of their strength is their unity and their ability to learn from the past and their political maturity, to collectively mobilize all their material and spiritual resources for the realization of their God given right to be free, enjoying the blessings of democratic governance in Oromia and live in peace, freedom and harmony with other peoples of Ethiopia.

OGHI: Thank You!

Quotable Quotes

The secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom is courage

Thucy Dides

O liberty! O liberty! What crimes are committed in your name!

Madame Roland

Carelessness about your security is dangerous; carelessness about your freedom is also dangerous.

Adlai Sternson

I only ask to be Free. The butterflies are free

Charles Dickens

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.

Abraham Lincoln

Contributed by: Anonymous

The Best Choice of All

When I was a teenager I used to like studying history. However, this is not to imply that I currently hate the discipline. But, it is meant merely to emphasize that making history is by far better than studying history. “Making history? How?” this might be ones question. This can briefly be summarized in the words of Fredrick Douglas as “Those who profess freedom and depreciate agitation are people who want crops without ploughing the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightening; they like ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one or it may be both. But, it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand; it never has and it never will.

Contributed by GZ (FVM)

“The days we see the truth and cease to speak is the day we begin to die”

Martin Luther King

You should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth”

Henrik Ibsen

“Blood is thicker than water”

South Africans

Diinqa Seenaa Keessaa! Kana Beektuu Laata??

1. Waggaa dhibba toorbaan dura Oromoon afaan Arabaatiin barreessaa akka ture.
2. Oromoon kaleendara waggaa kuma sadiin dura qabaachaa akka ture. Yeroo sana warri kaleendara qaban Chaayinaa, Hinduu, Maayaa fi Oromoo qufa akka turan.
3. Masaraan Abbaa Jifaar kan ijaarame muka naannoo sana jiranii fi mismaara Jimmatti biyyee sibiilaa keessaa sibiila ongololuun ture. Abbaa Jifaar Masaraa sana ijaaruuf waan tokko illee alaa hin galchine ture.
4. Jalqaba konkolaataa biyyaa kana kan galche Abbaa Jifaar ta'uu quba qaduu laata? Haa ta'u malee konkolaataan sun Zeeyilaa hanga Jimmaatti kan fudhatame gatiittii namaatiin ture.
5. Biyya jirru kana keessatti, manni barumsaa ammayyaa jalqaba kan baname bara 1898 Boojjitti (Wallaggaa) ture. Itti aanee bara 1904 Onosimos Najjootti mana barumsaa lammaaffaa bane. Manni barumsaa Finfinneetti bara 1907 yeroo banamu, manni barumsaa Boojjii barsiisota sadarkaa tokkoffaa leenjisu jalqabee ture.

Holqa Falaasamaa Keessaa

Falaasaan bulchaa ta'uu qaba.

Sooqraates

Lubni bulchaa ta'uu qaba. Bulchuuf uumaan isaa filachuu qaba.

Oromoo

Waantin beekuu hoo jiraate wallaalummaa koo ti.

Sooqraates

Wallaalaan waan beeku dubbata, beekaan waan dubbatu beeka.

Oromoo

Gumaachaan: Sonaa Bilisummaa