

# Ethiopia: being build up or breakup?

## The AST Solution

By obo arada aba shawl alias Wolde Tewolde

August 5, 2018

Who builds a nation? Is Ethiopia a nation? This question has been asked for half century. But there seems no clear answer. Political scientists and philosophers of all ages agree on certain ideologies, the role of a leader and his followers. In other words, nation building depends on both agreement of the leadership and its nationals though the consent must be depended on **legitimacy of power**.

How did the legitimacy of power come into play after the Great Ethiopian Revolution? Herein lies the key to Ethiopia's buildup or break up question. I will briefly attempt to explain as follows: -

### The beginning

Until 1972, Ethiopia was considered as a nation with its nationals. But the nationals were not citizens. By citizens we mean a position of choosing one's identity to be sustained by the voting rights.

All Ethiopians had no identity card except their facial and their physical location. They can travel from **Moyale** in the south to **Assab** in the east to **Karora** in the north and to **Kurmuk** in the west, i.e. MAKK. To travel from one point to another was not of any problem. No ID was needed. The only problem was lack of modern transport. Otherwise everyone used to travel domestically as he/she was being treated as a national of Ethiopia.

On the issue of travelling abroad, a travelling document known as a passport was needed, even then all Ethiopian nationals could go abroad without a visa. Here is how. All the 14 provinces except for 3 have links to the outside world. They were known as the AST regions of Ethiopia. And they are the provinces of Arussi, Shewa and Tigray.

Apart from these three nationalities, all the rest residents of Ethiopia had/has the perception if not the actual access to go abroad peacefully or escape through these routes without notice. (see map of Ethiopia without ከሌላ)

I have done this myself without any passport or visa.

### The middle – the Revolution

The Ethiopian Revolution was about citizenship not about leadership. But habits die hard, as the saying goes. Ethiopian nationals flock to the outside world. Only three Ethiopian nationalities

stuck with mother Ethiopia. The Arussans, the Shewan's and the Tigran's aka AST became the cause for revolution and counter revolution.

If anyone wants to understand the real cause and counter cause of the Derg revolution, it was about AST. In AST, there was economic, political and national question mixed up. The Mengistu regime with its advisors and members exploited Arussi province for economy; massacred the residents of Shewa for political purposed and suppressed the Tigrian nationalities for national agendas.

It was on this basic premises of revolution that thousands of Ethiopians have left their country. Political, economic as well as cultural history had devastated the community and societies of all Ethiopians. It is sad to say that the Weyanes followed the same pattern of the DERG. Let us hope that the Aby, the Isaias and the Debretsion would not repeat the same pattern of struggle.

#### Ethiopia's future

Gone are the days for Ethiopians to travel without ID or passport. The Shewan want to participate in all aspects of politics of the country, the Arussans want economic liberalization and the Tigrians want citizenship status. In other words, all Ethiopians are currently demanding political participation, economic liberalization and equal citizenship.

The question is whether the Aby and Isaias agenda will align with these demands of the people.

There are active actors and participants to implement the AST program or the Aby & Isaias agendas. Both programs are necessary and doable. But who will coordinate them and that is a big question!

The answer lies on Coordination and Organization i.e. Company.

To be continued ...