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Oromo National Liberation Struggle in Retrospect and Prospect

The Past

The Present

The Future

PART THREE ( Series--- 3 of 3)

10.1 A new style of leadership.

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t has been widely discussed that national liberation struggle is directed not from outside but from within with the leadership accepting its full share of risks involved. In our case, we are not psychologically ready to abandon peacetime practices and join the national liberation army. So we urge all militants to leave the cities and join our national liberation army – WBO. This is first of all a security measure, assuring the survival of our political leaders. We have to take this decision very seriously. OLF has to transform itself to cope with demands of objective reality. It has to replace its old structures, leaders with young men directly involved in the national liberation struggle. The reconstitution of OLF thus goes hand in hand with its rejuvenation.

In Oromia today, wherever armed struggle is on the order of the day, there is a close tie between biology and ideology. However absurd or shocking this relationship may appear, it is non-the less a decisive one. An elderly man accustomed to a city will no easily adjust himself to the mountain nor – thought this is less so to underground activity in the cities. In addition to the moral factor – conviction – physical fitness is the most basic of all skills needed for waging national liberation struggles, the two factors go hand in hand.

A perfect political education is not at the outset, an imperative condition, physical aptitude is the prerequisite for all other aptitudes; a minor point of limited theoretical appeal but the national liberation struggle appears to have a rational of which theory knows nothing.

10.2 A Modern Organization.

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he reconstitution of OLF into an effective directive organism, abandoning its peacetime nature and curtailing its peacetime practices are burning issues. Faced with a state of emergency and a militarily organized enemy such transformations are very crucial in their effects. It is the cause of the vice of

excessive deliberation and Obsession in agenda for peace, charter making and unmaking, which happened and retarded the process of national liberation struggle. In military field the tradition of democratic centralism and bureaucratic controlling mechanism hampered executive, centralized and vertical methods combined with large measure of tactical independence of subordinate groups in our liberation army which is demanded in the conduct of military operations. The effect of making liberation through mental telepathy and methods of remote control on the part of our political leadership worth mentioning. This reconstitution requires the temporary suspension of mechanical discipline and bureaucratic centralism on the part of OLF leadership. We recommend while remaining voluntary and deliberate, more so that ever-organizational discipline becomes military discipline. All subordinate units in pursuance of general strategic line, should be granted to the rights to utilize the best of their ability and the greatest margin of initiative

The last not the least, at the present juncture the principal stress must be laid on the development of the national liberation warfare or the consolidation of politico-military leadership not on the strengthening of peace-time Organizations or the creation of new pacifist apparatuses. That is why insurrectional activities are to day in Oromia are number one political priority.

## 11. Conclusion

Hence an historic responsibility which the Oromo national liberation struggle should never hesitate to accept.

a. The setting up of politico military not peacetime organization is decisive for the future of Oromo national liberation struggle.

This distinction, crucial in terms of its practical consequences, is much more than a practical consequences, is much more than a simple difference. Between peaceful and non-peaceful organization there is not only the difference between the less and the more urgent, the less and the more decisive, more urgent, the less and the more decisive. This difference will be conceded by every one, beginning with those who have to think they could free Oromia by opening diplomatic front of negotiated settlement. Now it is a matter of dynamic tasks of history. In order to express it schematically let us suppose one must go from the organization of military activities to a peacetime political movement – a natural extension of an essentially political armed struggle; but only very exceptionally does not go from pure and pacifist political movement to the military activities.

It is naive to think that we could vanquish the Abyssinian colonialism on its own strong hold. Hence the often-repeated traditional hullabaloo – a new leadership with agenda for peace appeared on the scene. From its very inception it started to aspire to legal existence and then to participation in the Ethiopian colonial bureaucracy for a certain time in order to consolidate and make a name for itself and thus prepare the conditions for armed struggle. From 1991 – 1992 charter experiences we could be able to learn that peacetime organization has gradually been absorbed, swallowed up by the routine of this

public political life, which becomes the stage for its normal activities. We recruited hundreds and thousands of members, few activists, held meetings after meetings and lamentations after lamentations.

The prospect of insurrectional struggle diminished, dwindled, delayed first for a few months then for years. Time passed, with its vicissitudes and there is an increasing tendency to view the opening of hostilities as somewhat a kind of adventurism perennially premature. True, the militants who grew restless and started to challenge the status quo have been pacified by some reforms. The militants must understand that to enter into armed struggle at a given moment would be to destroy the sacred unity of the organization, to sabotage its legality to provoke repression's against its leaders.

In short, OLF as a political organization has become an end in itself. It always procrastinates to pass over to armed struggle because it must first wait until it establish itself solidly as an organization of vanguard even though in reality it can not except through armed struggle. This vicious cycle of psychological unpreparedness to persistently wage war of national independence has plagued the struggle into stagnation for years. Consequently it is useless to create antibodies in the heart of existing political structure, the opportunist infection the defeatist proliferation far from being halted, will be aggrieved, exacerbated. It has been proved that the premature rivalry for power have retarded the movement and delayed the opening of mass struggle. The creation of one more Oromo political organization did not bring the solution but the addition of another problem. The creation of one more peacetime organization mobilizes only the mobilized a number of hand full old leaders are siphoned off from one to organization to another. Subtle internal divisions are most frequent, In its wake this conduct of affairs tend to degrade the national liberation struggle to the secondary position, since the struggle is not based on genuine positions. Gossip, animosities and power wrangling took the place of genuine struggle for liberation.

Anti bodies must be created at the base, at the level of the masses, by offering them a real alternative within their reach. Only then the existing traditional leadership be changed into new politico military leadership. In Oromia today it is only when the armed struggle has been or is about to begin the process of moving national liberation struggle from its ghetto, from the level of academic talk test, from a caste of permanent globe-trotters can get underway. In philosophical language a certain way of posing questions which governs the meaning of all possible answers. And its is not the answers must be changed, but the questions themselves. These traditional leaders operate within the problematic which is imposed by the Ethiopian colonial class, instead of transforming it, they have contributed to its firmer entrenchment; hey are bogged down in false entrenchment and the accomplice of the opportunistic problematic, quarrels over precedence or position holding in the organizations. Charters, blackmail against the militants.

This is what is called quite simple politicking. In order to escape it there must be a change of terrain in every sense of the word.

The so-called new political leadership of OLF have been formed to "stamp out the brand of terrorism" and get recognition of international legitimacy by declaring peaceful agenda".

According to their claims for the purpose of precipitating the peaceful negotiation, which the 'authoritarian leadership had sabotaged' they have not achieved their objective. In condemnation of the

rival group, the renegade clique find itself on the same side with its predecessors – verbal adversaries but partners in fact, playing the same game. If there were an arithmetic peculiar to Oromia, we would say that division equals multiplication.

This false alternative redoubles the evils it claims to oppose. Verbally both groups oppose division but accelerate the pace of division in practice. At first stages these groups are able to attract honest and resolute militants and Oromo nationalists, thanks to their deceiving promises of independence. Very soon, however, their methods of work, the defeatist position their political line, the hypocritical sabotage of their own official line on the armed struggle, led the vast majority of the members to abandon them.

Sad to say, presently, Oromo national revolutionaries who are in the midst serious preparations for the armed struggle are under observation and are more persecuted by Oromo pacifist cliques from which many of them came, than they are even by the repressive agencies. In any case, we could be able to recognize that the split among the Oromo nationalist has occurred on the wrong issues. The true historic division between national revolutionaries on the one hand, and reformist, revisionist, defeatist on the other is of another nature and operates on another perspective. To condemn opportunism in the form of pacifism is not then, to endorse one political leadership or one ideological position as against another; it is to condemn a method, a form of struggle as being sterile and ineffective, dilatory and contradictory to its alleged goals. It is to point a warning finger at a dead-end street and to indicate a short cut.

In Oromia to day wherever an armed political vanguard exists in the form of Oromo fighting forces there is no longer a place for verbal-political relation to the Oromo national liberation struggle nor for certain type of polemics. We are on new ground; we are dealing with new issues. Wherever Abyssinian colonialism is actually challenged, opportunists and defeatists are re-absorbed in the colonial bureaucracy and national revolutionaries unite on methods and objectives tied to the national war of resistance.

Let us indulge in a little sociology. Defeatist elements, the so-called "peace-makers", the Charterists , otherwise do not exist where an active national liberation movement is found in Oromia. They existed to some extent when armed struggle was on the agenda of history. They really amount to something only in those circumstances and places remote from the armed struggle where there is no clear-cut national revolutionary vanguard in action. In other words, the importance of pacifists is inversely proportional to the development of national revolutionary situation. That is why it is necessary to avoid the diversion of efforts and resources to ward "pure" political "pure" diplomatic fronts and avoid the dissipation of national energies in sectarian rivalries or feuds – national energies in sectarian rivalries or power squabbles. That is why, in Oromia today, many nationalist think that in as much as an insurrectional outlook can activate national revolutionary movement for Oromia.. Efforts must be concentrated on political-military organization. Oromo national revolutionary politics, if it is not to be blocked, must be diverted from peacetime politics as such. Political and economic resources must be thrown in an Oromo organization, which is simultaneously political- military and tries to do away with all existing weaknesses.

b. Without national revolutionary armed struggle, there will never be well-defined national revolutionary vanguard.

Everywhere in Oromia, wherever armed struggle does not exist in spite of propitious conditions, the reason is that there is still no effective political vanguard. If it were equally possible for all to make the grade, it would not speed the formation of a really representative vanguard to maintain relations with only one among them. Under such conditions, sectarianism would be both ridiculous and baseless. We openly declare we do not belong to any power sect; we do not belong to any religious- or regional sect but belong to the family of Oromo national revolutionaries. Oromo Organizations those do not fulfill their national revolutionary obligations must be prevented from setting themselves up as an association for the protection of sectarian interests, thereby impeding the inevitable rise the best forms of organizations and revolutionary action.

By the name they bear and the ideology they proclaim, they occupy de jure the place of the popular vanguard if they do not occupy it de facto, they must not be permitted to keep the post vacant. There is no exclusive ownership of Oromo national liberation struggle. It is very difficult for Oromo Organizations to crystallize before seriously engaging into armed struggle. If they are to be genuine national liberation fronts and not an alliance set up for the duration of an election of pact among Abyssinian colonialist to recapture their lost power they have to dismantle the colonial government by force. The formation of anti-Abyssinian colonialism strategic alliance is realized through the people's war. In contrast to Oromo reformist, we Oromo national revolutionaries unambiguously declare: a claim to the vanguard role can be established only by confronting Abyssinian colonialism with acts and not merely with words. Oromo dedicated nationalist should also apply the following precept to himself or herself: In order to know what the Oromo nationalists are thinking watch their hands, not their mouths.

c. No one can avoid seeing that in Oromia today the struggle against Abyssinian colonialism is decisive.

If it is decisive, then all else is secondary. If the armed struggle for the independence against the Abyssinian colonialism and its by-products is capable of creating by itself, in the long run, a vanguard capable of leading the people to liberation can not define itself in terms of its relations to reformism or any other existing political organizations. Fundamentally it has to define itself in terms of its relation to Abyssinian colonialism. To regulate our pace of action by comparison with in action of reformist or evolutionist is not only to lose our time; it is to paralyze the decisive in the name of the secondary.

Further more, the best way of putting an end to vacillations is to pass over to the attack of the Abyssinian colonialism and its local agents wherever conditions are ripe. In this way the problem is inverted. It will be up to the conciliators in our ranks to determine their position vis-à-vis the Oromo militants not vice versa. It is they who must define themselves in terms of the reality and with relation to a fait accompli. If they join in the struggle against the Abyssinian colonialism so much the better for everyone if they hold back so much the worse for them – history will see to it that they are left by the sideways.

A successful ambush, a torturer cut down, a consignment of arms captures – these are the best answers to any reformist faint heartiness which may arise in our course of struggle. Since the inception of our national liberation struggle, the newly emerging Abyssinian class has lost no opportunity in brutally suppressing Oromo national revolutionaries. The innocent victims executed and disappeared regardless of organizational affiliation. For reasons of both emergency and principle, the armed national revolutionary front is a must. Wherever the Oromo national liberation struggle has followed an ascending line, wherever the popular forces responded to the emergency, the Oromos have moved into the magnetic field of unity. Elsewhere they are scattered and weak. Events would seem to indicate the need to focus all efforts on the practical organization of the armed struggle with a view to achieving unity on the basis of the principle of Oromo nationalism. Those who are ready to take up arms in Oromia today, should rally around this line of action. All Oromo groups that come closer to the armed struggle should converge on this line.

This encounter owes nothing to chance, still less to conspiracy. No one has given a signal

as the opportunists pretend to think. This encounter is simply rational. In a given historic

situation, there may be a thousand ways to speak of liberation; but there must be one

necessary concordance among all Oromo national liberation revolutionaries all those who

have resolved to make it. As medical therapy is to patient suffering from a chronic ailment, politico-military organization of national revolutionaries is to our problems!

Down with Abyssinian colonialism!

Death to the Wayyane government!

Opportunists shall fail!

National Revolutionaries shall prevail!