

## TECOLA HAGOS: A HORSE IN A DIFFERENT COLOR

### I. Introduction

Our society gives more emphasis and respect—probably too much -- to what the *Shemagiles* (the elderly) and people with perceived higher education would have to say on important issues. This is based on a simple premise that these groups of people, based on their respective experience, would exercise sound judgment, and disseminate only the truth. And, at face value, such expectations may not be farfetched, or at least until one reads a recent editorial article composed by Tecola Hagos, entitled “The CUD/Kinjijit Opposition Leaders: Life Sentence/Pardon.”

In his article, Tecola Hagos, a self-proclaimed Ethiopian scholar, tells us that short leaders are prone to all sorts of crimes on humanity, and the fact that Prime Meles Zenawi’s height is under “six feet” makes him an insecure leader. Good heavens! Is this guy’s mind wandering, not sure what he should write on his infamous website? Or, is he run out of his usual “make believe” stories on Ethiopia? Is he jealous of the great works of the *Shimagles* in mediating the release of the defunct CUD party leaders? Whatever his problem might be, he ought to see his doctor to make sure he does not have undiagnosed brain tumor that may have impaired its victim’s thinking aptitude. A severe form of brain tumor, such as the one possibly affecting Tecola Hagos’ brain, by all indications, should be checked before it metastasizes to neighboring organs—destroying the whole body: The sooner, the better.

Even though cancer is believed to be non-contagious, Tecola’s brain tumor seems to be a rare one that is capable of infecting others. It is an anomaly of an anomaly. Disseminated by a cyber vector known as “www.tecolahagos.com,” the disease has a potential of infecting many unsuspecting individuals. The agent carries out its dirty work by injecting its venomous secretions into brains of its hosts, the innocent readers. If continued unchecked, the already immuno-compromised Diaspora community is at risk from the disease. This new malignancy is believed to have originated from analogous ‘loci’ of genes of the *Shewakenas’* and the *Al-Mariams’*, but its high degree of relapse puts it apart from its league. Fortunately, unlike the *Shewakenas’* and the *Al-Mariams’*, Tecola’s cancer is treatable (at least there is hope of containing it in the original tumor, *i.e.* Tecola’s body) by administering a dosage of targeted therapy of response articles, such as this one. Let’s hope so.

### II. The Release of the CUD Leaders

The recent release of the so-called CUD leaders should come as welcome news to all peace loving Ethiopians, and special thanks should go to the *Shimagles* who showed us Ethiopia can solve its problems, without outside interference. This unprecedented attempt of bridging the political and legal divide between the government and the opposition leaders by the *Shimagles* deserves nothing but admiration and praise. They have done a wonderful job! However, their well-intentioned efforts were blemished by the very people they helped leave the Kaliti prison. Within few hours of his release, Hailu Shawel

disclosed to the ‘BBC’ that he and his comrades signed the petition under duress. Such irresponsible statement, on his part, has a damaging effect on the *Shimagles*’ credibility in the eyes of the government for which they (*shimagles*) attested the prisoners’ remorse for the crimes they have committed against the Ethiopian people, the constitution, and the duly elected government.

Hailu Shawel’s foolish claim reminded me of something that I have heard during my childhood. The story goes like this: Two mentally challenged individuals were sentenced to ten years in jail for crimes they had committed together, and started serving their terms in the local prison. Five years into their prison time, one of the prisoners brought an idea for discussion; escaping from prison. The plan was also supported by the other inmate, branding it as a noble scheme. At this point, both inmates were ready for the big day. On Sunday morning, while the prison guards were asleep, the inmates escaped from the prison successfully. But, one of the fugitives was not happy with the “technicalities” of the escaping process. He was worried that the fact that they escaped from the prison while the prison guards were asleep was not brave enough, and that would make them less manly in the eyes of their friends. “We should do it while the guards are awake, and present at the gate,” they concluded.

Therefore, they decided to go back to the prison to start the whole process again. Upon their arrival at the prison, of course, they were caught by the authorities in the prison and the rest is history. The moral of the story is that Hailu Shawel et al and their Diaspora supporters are making nonsense statements for the sake of manliness. Whatever they bluff, however, I pray that they don’t initiate going back to the prison like the people in the story. Just to remind them what a self-inflicting endeavor that would be, here is a saying in the language they understand most, Amharic “*Kewedeku wedia meferaget lemlalat*”. That would be a typical happenstance of what the Americans passionately call, “cutting off one’s nose to spite one’s face.”

To add insult to injury, people like Tecola Hagos are entertaining mixed feelings on the actions of the *Shimagles*. At one point, Tecola accuses the *Shimagles* of serving the needs of the “dictator”. He tries to speculate what was going on in the minds of *Shimagles*, and asks a hypothetical question, “What will you do if you are faced with a possibility of saving the lives of several individuals even if you may have in the process serve the corrupt interest of a dictator?” It is unfortunate that these fine children of Ethiopia are being judged and criticized by a do-nothing professor whose philosophy sees “No one knows more than Tecola Hagos when it comes to the desire of the Ethiopian People.” The main flaw of his philosophy is that he lives in his comfortable place, the United States of America, and, of course, the Ethiopians live in their country—Ethiopia. However, he dares tell them how to live their lives, while never contributing a penny to alleviate their abject poverty. He even regrets that there is no Ethiopian that could willingly blow up himself/herself to kill the enemy. And yet, he desperately blames the government of killing its citizens. That is where the absolute hypocrisy lies. What has he done thus far to help Ethiopia, besides composing numerous nauseating articles that are devoid of Ethiopian decency—bordering demagoguery?

### **III. The Height of Leaders, and Effective Leadership**

With no iota of feeling of disgrace, and lacking any data to back up his assertions, Tecola recklessly argues that physical stature of leaders influence their quality of leadership. “In almost instants, short leaders are insecure leaders as a result of such pathological condition not only they want to prevail over their enemies but they also want to capture and hold their enemies under conditions humiliating and torturing them,” he declared. And that, according to the good doctor, the prime minister of Ethiopia, is a case in point. In order to prevent this leadership calamity, therefore, he proposed that it is incumbent upon all Ethiopians to make sure that any Ethiopian who aspires to be a leader should be at least “six feet” tall. His nonsense line of reasoning is a typical sign of intellectual bankruptcy, and the professor may be qualified to file Chapters 7 and/or 13 under the “Exceptions Clause” of the Federal Bankruptcy laws.

Before I venture further into the matter, I would like to clearly state that the argument “short leaders are somehow insecure leaders” is ridiculous at best and asinine at worst. It doesn’t even deserve a response. However, coming from the professor as it did, it deserves what it is worth. In a stark contrast of the professor’s crude ultimatum on the ability of short leaders to lead ones’ country superbly, history tells us there were many short leaders who exemplified good, and quality leadership. Take, for example, the 4<sup>th</sup> US president James Madison who was only 5 foot 3<sup>1/2</sup> inches, and yet is known as the “Father of the Constitution”. However, it is said that Madison protested this title by stating that the constitution was not the “offspring of a single mind”. Certainly, such quality does not remotely resemble that of an insecure leader, but he is approximately seven inches below the prescribed height by the good doctor.

In fact, if Tecola’s suggestions were to be followed, we would eliminate numerous outstanding leaders such as George W. Bush (5’ 11”), Benjamin Harrison (5’ 6”), Mahatma Gandhi (5’ 3”), the financial guru Alan Greenspan (5’ 9”), and, of course, the current prime minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi. On the other hand, Cuba’s Fidel Castro (6’ 3”), though not by any means representative of tall leaders, is one of the brutal dictators in the world still in power since 1976. How about the con artist to the North, the tall and handsome man, Isayas Afewerk himself? Does his towering height spare him from becoming the world’s worst dictator that he is? The man has killed unspecified number of his perceived opponents and is presiding over a country with no constitution. He is the president, the supreme judge, and the patriarch of the country. He is sick of the fair and fair elections Ethiopia has held thus far, while holding his people hostage, with no single election day since he ascended to power in the early nineties. If that is what a tall person can do to his country, I want no part of it. Therefore, the bottom line is that one’s height is not directly related to his/her leadership skills. At this point, I would like to respectfully remind the professor that what leaders need is a sharp cerebrum for reasoning and learning activities, and a good heart for forgiveness. Such qualities are evident in the body of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a person whom the professor loves despising day in and out, with no reason. Like James Madison, the Premier shall be remembered as the “Father of the Constitution” for generations to come for his active

involvement in the ratification of the Ethiopian Constitution that guaranteed unprecedented freedom for all Nations, and Nationalities of Ethiopia.

### **III. Conclusion**

For all practical purposes, what Ethiopia needs now is peace, democracy and development. The recent release of the CUD leaders from Kaliti prison is good step towards reconciliation between the government and the Opposition. As has been said over and over again, Ethiopia's ardent enemy now is its proverbial poverty.

Love of one's country without merit is useless to say the least. Hence, people like Professor Tecola Hagos should contribute tangible bequest, rather than writing diatribes on people who are relentlessly working to improve the lives of millions of Ethiopians. After reading Tecola's recent piece, the article under discussion, the author finds the professor unfit for his academic status. He is a horse in a different color, indeed.

If need be, the author can be reached as [emaa\\_go@yahoo.com](mailto:emaa_go@yahoo.com)

Mezgebe Gebrekiristos