

ORANGE TURNED BITTER LEMON

It is important to learn from the experience of others and if possible, to copy and apply it to ones advantage. But, as there is a time and a place for everything, not all copies are genuine, and do not always produce the same result. In this connection let us examine why the so called, “**Orange Revolution**” in Ethiopia failed to materialize, and why it did not give the result that were achieved in Ukraine and in other countries.

Civil disobedience and demonstrations are very important and legitimate tools of any opposition to be used to embarrass a government when all other means have failed. But civil disobedience should only mean refusing to work, refusing to provide “non-essential” services of society, and peacefully assembling to demonstrate and show solidarity with a cause and its leadership. All these should be done in an orderly and peaceful manner.

The pictures we saw of Addis Ababa during the confrontations between stone throwing mobs and armed riot police and the pictures we see below of Ukraine during the Orange Revolution show stark differences. In Ukraine people were playing musical instruments, singing and dancing, lighting candles, while in Ethiopia it was a totally different story.



Some two hundred people died, many cars and buses were set on fire, many stores were looted, and six policemen are known to have been killed. That is totally unacceptable. It shows of poor planning and preparation by those who organized and called for the event.

One can go back and learn from documentary films of the 60’s and watch how Blacks in the US during the Civil Rights struggles carefully prepared and rehearsed, for weeks at a time, on how to conduct themselves peacefully. In any confrontation between the police and demonstrators, one thing is absolutely certain: ***The police have the right to use force, but the demonstrators do not!*** That is the law. That simple fact is the reason why every confrontation with the police should be avoided and every move taken in an unequivocally peaceful manner. One should never give the police an excuse to use force.

We can now see why a purportedly “**Orange Revolution**” deteriorated into bitter lemon. We hope both sides have learned an important lesson, and that this mistake will never be repeated. Those who organize and call for civil disobediences and demonstrations should make sure they remain peaceful. Let us also work with a clear goal towards replacing the present government peacefully, and not through violence.

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