

TIGRAY TRAGEDY

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(2021)

ON NOVEMBER 3RD, 2020, THE EYES OF THE WORLD WERE SET ON THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THAT SAME NIGHT, IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA, THE TIGRAY PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (TPLF) LAUNCHED WHAT IT CLAIMED WAS A PREEMPTIVE ATTACK ON THE ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE'S (ENDF) NORTHERN COMMAND AND ON A SERIES OF ITS BASES IN THE TIGRAY REGION. THIS WAS THE FORMAL START OF A FRATRICIDAL WAR THAT HAS PLUNGED THE COUNTRY AND THE REGION IN A DANGEROUS PATH OF DESTRUCTION AND FRAGMENTATION. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONDED WITH A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK ON TPLF'S FORCES, SUPPORTED BY MILITIAS FROM THE NEIGHBORING REGIONS, AND THE COVERT BUT CRUCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE ERITREAN DEFENSE FORCES (EDF).

GIVEN THE SPEED OF THE GOVERNMENTAL MILITARY REACTION AND THE COORDINATED CHARACTER OF ITS COUNTERATTACK, THERE IS A STRONG SUSPICION THAT AN ASSAULT ON TPLF WAS INDEED BEING

PREPARED FOR A LONG TIME. UNTIL THE NOMINATION IN 2018 OF ABIY AHMED AS HEAD OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT (EPRDF) - A COALITION OF REGIONAL PARTIES - AND CONSEQUENTLY THE COUNTRY'S PRIME MINISTER, TPLF HAD BEEN THE DE FACTO RULING ELITE OF ETHIOPIA. THE NEXT YEAR, ABIY AHMED EXTINGUISHED EPRDF AND TPLF REFUSED TO INTEGRATE INTO THE NEW PROSPERITY PARTY, WHICH EMBODIED THE CURRENT PRIME MINISTER'S CENTRALIST VIEWS AND HIS INTENTION TO WEAKEN THE ETHNIC FEDERALIST SYSTEM THAT WAS INSTALLED IN THE COUNTRY AFTER THE FALL OF THE COMMUNIST MILITARY REGIME IN 1991, AND THROUGH WHICH TPLF (REPRESENTING THE SMALL NORTHERN REGION OF TIGRAY) MANAGED TO DOMINATE ETHIOPIAN POLITICS AND ECONOMY FOR 27 YEARS.

AFTER BECOMING PRIME MINISTER, ABIY AHMED SET IN MOTION A SERIES OF ACTIONS AND REFORMS THAT WERE HAILED INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY: LIBERATION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,

RESTRUCTURING OF THE NATIONAL DEBT, NEGOTIATION OF SLOTS IN VARIOUS NEIGHBORING SEAPORTS (ETHIOPIA BEING A LANDLOCKED COUNTRY), AND A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ERITREA THAT ENDED THE STALEMATE OF THE ETHIO-ERITREAN BORDER WAR, IN 2000. FOR THIS INITIATIVE, HE WAS AWARDED THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE IN 2020 (WHICH, INTERESTINGLY, DID NOT INCLUDE THE INITIATIVE'S OTHER PARTNER, ISAIAS AFEWORKI, THE ERITREAN PRESIDENT).

AS MUCH TOUTED AS THIS PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO "ESTRANGED BROTHERS" WAS INTERNATIONALLY, IT IS NOW UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE BEEN THE SPARK FOR THE EMASCULATION OF TPLF'S HOLD ON POWER IN ETHIOPIA, AND A PRELIMINARY STEP IN A MUCH-WAITED REVENGE AGAINST IT ON THE PART OF THE ERITREAN LEADERSHIP. THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA IS COMPLEX. TPLF'S PUSH FOR A FEDERAL REGIME IN 1991 WAS SEEN BY ITS THEN SENIOR PARTNER, THE ERITREAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (EPLF) AS AMOUNTING TO BETRAYAL, SINCE THEIR SECRETLY AGREED PROSPECT WAS FOR THEM TO CREATE A SEPARATE NATIONAL ENTITY - GREATER ERITREA OR GREATER TIGRAY. ERITREA REGAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1994, AFTER A REFERENDUM, WITH TPLF STICKING TO POWER IN ADDIS ABABA, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MELES ZENAWI.

ERITREA IS PARTLY A COLONIAL CONSTRUCT, CEDED TO ITALY BY THE ETHIOPIAN KING MENELIK II IN 1889. UNTIL THEN, IT HAD BEEN AN AUTONOMOUSLY RULED

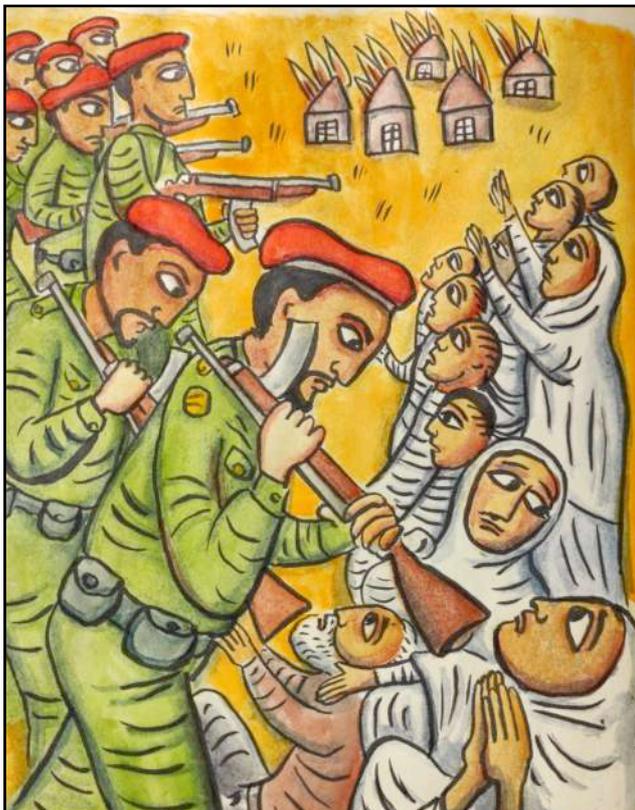
REGION OF THE ABYSSINIAN HIGHLANDS, AT TIMES OCCUPIED BY THE OTTOMAN TURKS, WHICH INCLUDED EASTERN TIGRAY. AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE ITALIANS IN WWII, A TEMPORARY MANDATE OF OCCUPATION BY THE BRITISH CAME TO AN END WITH A UN-CONTROLLED INDEPENDENCE AND FEDERALIZATION WITH ETHIOPIA. KING HAILE SELASSIE DISSOLVED ERITREA'S PARLIAMENT AND ANNEXED THE COUNTRY IN 1962. THE MILITARY OCCUPATION SPARKED A NATIONALIST RESISTANCE MOVEMENT THAT WAS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KING'S DEMISE IN 1974, AND THEN FOR THE FALL OF THE MILITARY JUNTA IN 1991. BEING ETHIOPIA'S DOOR TO THE RED SEA, ERITREA HAS ALWAYS BEEN CRUCIAL TO THAT COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS.

THE PROSPECT OF INTEGRATION OF ERITREA INTO THE ETHIOPIAN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, POSSIBLY VIA A CONFEDERAL ARRANGEMENT, AND THE PRESENT-DAY REGIONAL REALIGNMENTS INVOLVING THE GULF COUNTRIES BUT ALSO TURKEY AND EGYPT, MAY HAVE BEEN THE DECIDING FACTOR IN ABYI AHMED'S INTENDED CRUSHING OF THE TPLF AND SUBMISSION OF TIGRAY. BUT REACHING OUT TO THE ERITREANS TO INTERVENE IN AN OTHERWISE INTERNAL CONFLICT AND BRINGING IN AMHARA MILITIAS (AMHARAS HAVING BEEN THE HISTORICAL RULERS OF ETHIOPIA), RISKS TRIGGERING A DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF FURTHER FRAGMENTATION, WITH OTHER REGIONS - FEARFUL OF THE RETURN OF AMHARA RULE - RISING AGAINST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, SPARKING BORDER CONFLICTS WITH SUDAN, AND DERAILING THE GREAT ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) PROJECT WHOSE FURTHER FILLING IS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY EGYPT.

MANY TEGARU PEOPLE ESCAPED THE CITIES. THEY ARE RUNNING FROM MEKELE, FROM WIKRO, FROM ADIGRAT, TO HIDE IN THE MOUNTAINS. BUT THE ARMY IS CHASING THEM. THAT IS WHY THE SOLDIERS CAME HERE, BUT WE ARE SIMPLE FARMERS.



TEGARU: TIGRAYAN.

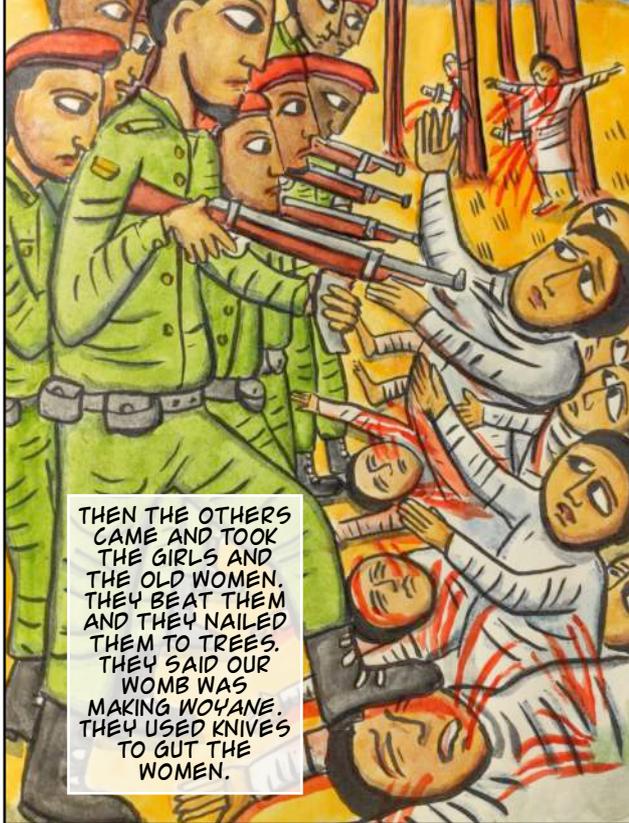


THEY MADE US STAND TOGETHER OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE. THEY BEAT US WITH THE MACHINE GUNS AND SHOUTED WE WERE HYENAS AND HAD TO DIE. THEY SAID OUR YOUNG BOYS WERE WOYANE, THEY WERE FIGHTING THE GOVERNMENT. THEY SPOKE AMHARINYA BUT THERE WERE OROMO AND OTHERS TOO.

WOYANE: TIGRAYAN REBELS (NAMED AFTER A RURAL YOUTH COMPETING GAME).

A TIGRAYAN WOMAN TALKS

THEY TOOK THE BOYS TO THE SIDE OF THE RIDGE, BEYOND THE EUCALYPTUS FOREST. WE HEARD MACHINE GUNS AND SHOUTS "DON'T KILL US, DON'T KILL US!" AND WE STARTED TO CRY. THE ONES THAT WERE ON GUARD BEAT US BADLY.



THEN THE OTHERS CAME AND TOOK THE GIRLS AND THE OLD WOMEN. THEY BEAT THEM AND THEY NAILED THEM TO TREES. THEY SAID OUR WOMB WAS MAKING WOYANE. THEY USED KNIVES TO GUT THE WOMEN.

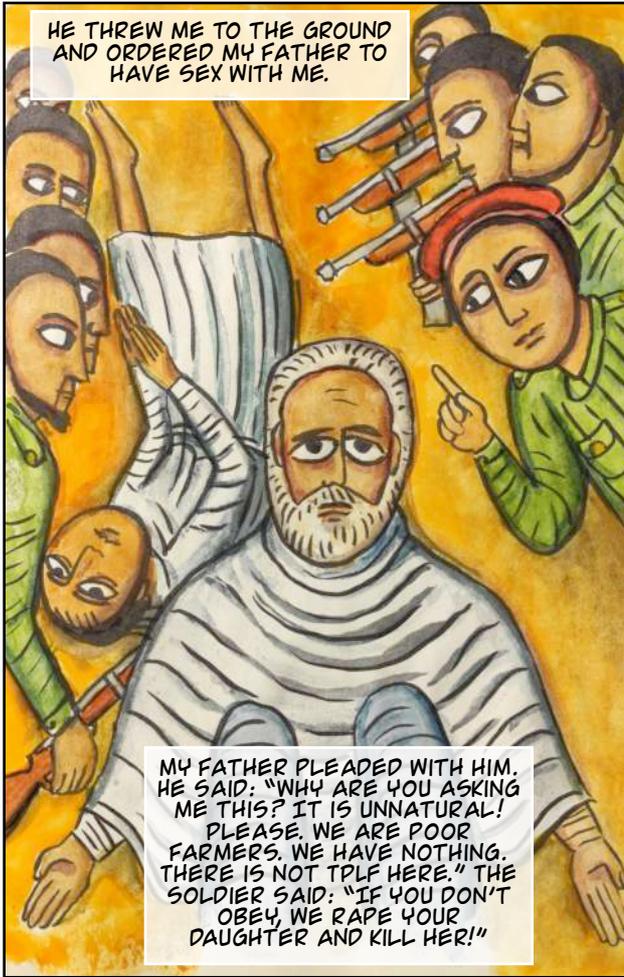
THEY HAD CRAZY EYES AND WERE RUNNING AROUND BEATING AND KILLING EVERYONE. ONE CAME TO MY FATHER WHO WAS CRYING AND SAID "WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? WHERE ARE THE GUNS?" AND THEY KICKED HIM HARD. HE FELL TO THE GROUND AND WAS BLEEDING. I RAN TO HIM BUT THE ASIRALEQA TOOK ME BY MY NETELA AND WAS CHOKING ME.



ASIRALEQA: "COMMANDER OF 10"; CORPORAL.
NETELA: WOMEN'S SCARF

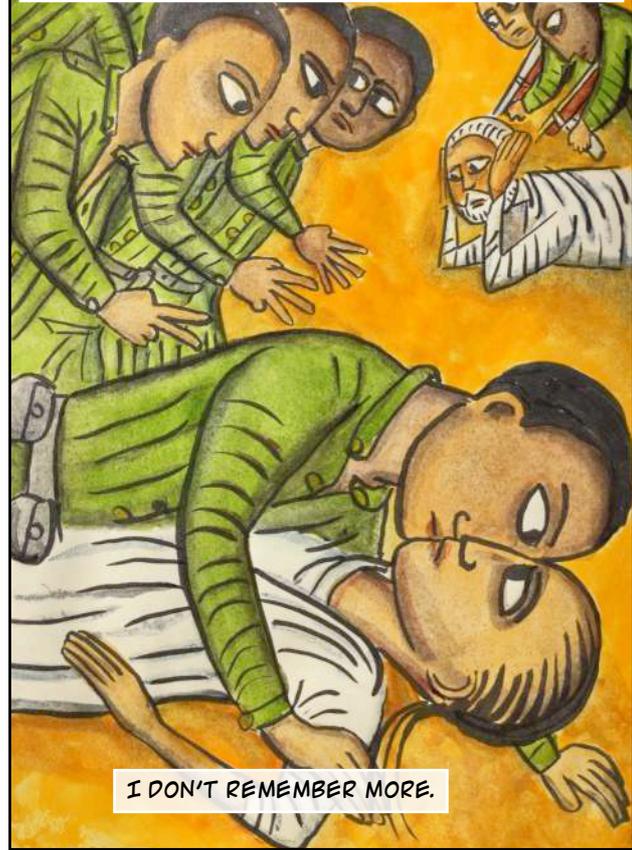
A TIGRAYAN WOMAN TALKS

HE THREW ME TO THE GROUND AND ORDERED MY FATHER TO HAVE SEX WITH ME.



MY FATHER PLEADED WITH HIM. HE SAID: "WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THIS? IT IS UNNATURAL! PLEASE, WE ARE POOR FARMERS. WE HAVE NOTHING. THERE IS NOT TPLF HERE." THE SOLDIER SAID: "IF YOU DON'T OBEY, WE RAPE YOUR DAUGHTER AND KILL HER!"

SO, THEY FORCED MY FATHER TO RAPE ME AND WERE LAUGHING AND SHOUTING. BUT MY FATHER COULDN'T DO IT, SO THEY PUSHED HIM AWAY AND THEN THEY RAPE ME, ONE AFTER THE OTHER.



I DON'T REMEMBER MORE.

A TIGRAYAN WOMAN TALKS

OUR TROOPS ARRIVED IN THE CITY WITH TRUCKS AND GEAR TO DISMANTLE MACHINERY. THEY COULDN'T STOP US ON THE ROAD, WE WERE STRONGER. THEY LOST MANY MEN, AND TANKS TOO. WE ROUNDED UP PEOPLE TO TAKE TPLFS PRISONER. BUT THEY DIDN'T COLLABORATE, SO WE HAD TO BEAT THEM.



THEIR WIVES WERE CURSING US WITH MAGICAL WORDS. THEY ARE LIKE BUDA: THEY CURSE, AND THEY SEND US EVIL EYE. THIS IS OUR REVENGE FOR BADME, AND IROB AND ASSAB. IT IS OUR REVENGE AGAINST TPLF THEY MADE TIGRAY RICH WITH ETHIOPIAN MONEY; THEY BECAME VERY RICH, AND ERITREA BECAME POOR.

BUDA: THE POWER OF THE EVIL EYE AND THE ABILITY TO CHANGE INTO A MAN-EATING HYENA.

AN ERITREAN SOLDIER TALKS

THIS IS WHY WE TAKE THE LOOT.
WE TAKE IT BACK TO ERITREA:
MOBILES, ENGINES, COMPUTERS,
FURNITURE, FOOD. OUR
PRESIDENT AGREED WITH ABYI:
WE WIN, WE TAKE THE LOOT.



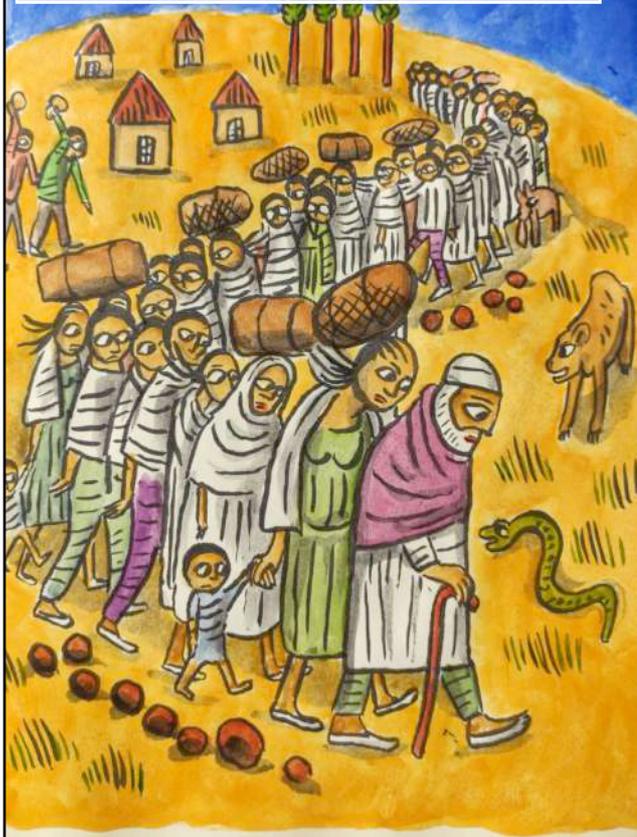
WITHOUT THE ERITREANS COMING TO HELP THE
ETHIOPIAN ARMY WAS GOING TO LOSE THE
BATTLES AGAINST THE WOIANE. THEY WERE
VERY STRONG; THEY HAD THE BEST WEAPONS
AND THE BEST SOLDIERS IN ETHIOPIA. BUT THEY
GOT RICH, AND THEY GOT FAT. SO, THEY LOST.

WHEN TPLF QUARRELED WITH ABYI AND
RETRATED TO THEIR LANDS, ISAIAS
WAS WORRIED THEY COULD INVADE
ERITREA AGAIN. THEY HAVE THE
DREAM OF GREATER TIGRAY, THEY
DIDN'T FORGET. BUT WE ALSO DON'T
FORGET WHEN THEY STOLE EVERYTHING
FROM US AND EXPELLED THE 77
THOUSAND FROM ETHIOPIA.



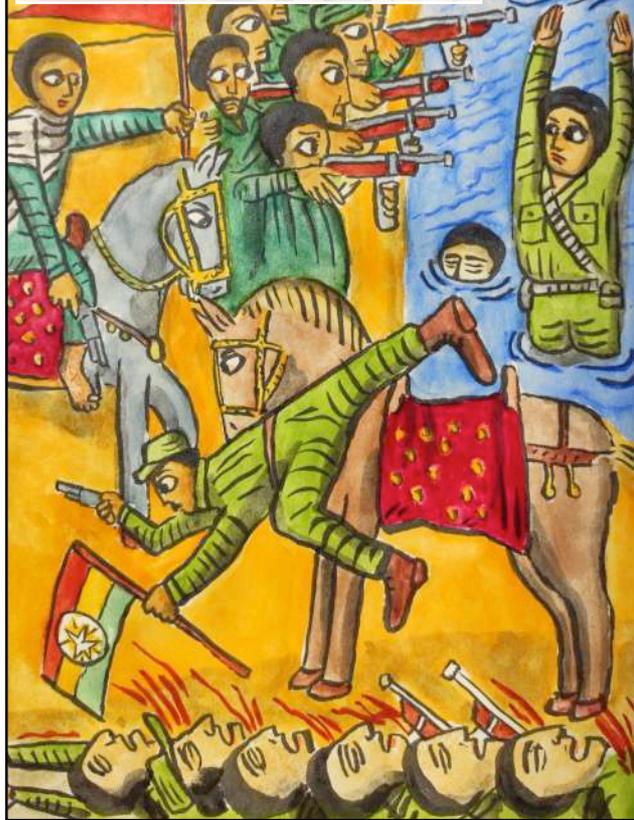
AN ERITREAN SOLDIER TALKS

THAT WAS HEDAR 1990 [1997]. THAT WAS A GREAT HUMILIATION FOR OUR FATHERS AND MOTHERS. THEY CAME BACK WITH ONLY THEIR SHAMMA IN THEIR BODIES. ETHIOPIANS ARE NOT OUR ENEMIES; ABYI IS NOT OUR ENEMY. BUT WE ARE NOT SLEEPING.



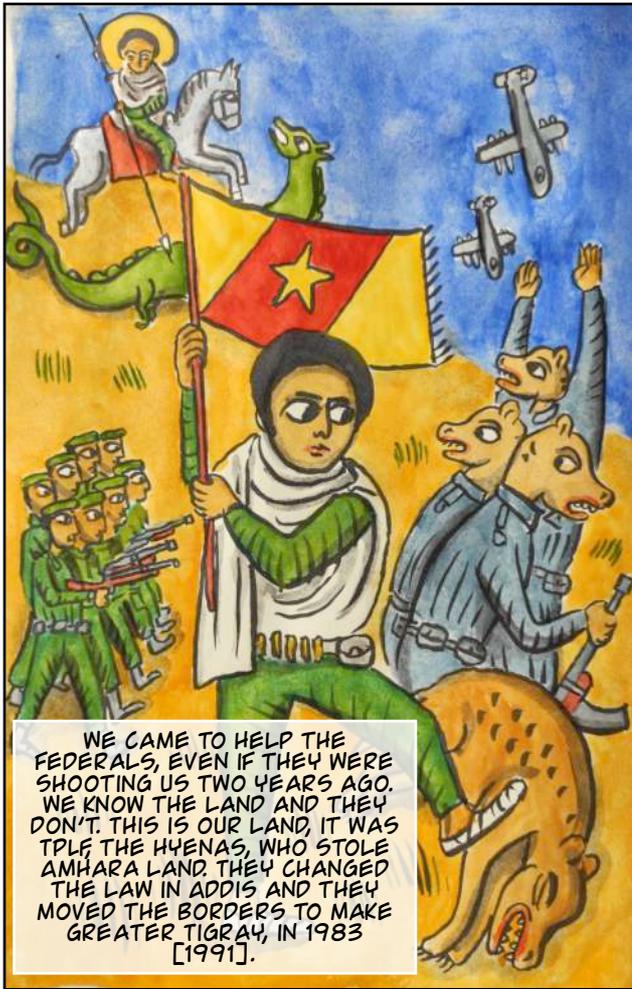
HEDAR: THE THIRD MONTH OF THE ETHIOPIAN CALENDAR (NOVEMBER 10TH TO DECEMBER 9TH).

WE KNOW ETHIOPIANS: WE REMEMBER HAILE SELASSE THE SNAKE, AND MENGISTU THE SNAKE; WE REMEMBER THE GAS AND THE KILLINGS IN CHURCHES, IN ASMARA. WE ARE MEDRI BAHRI AND WE DON'T WANT KINGS, NOT EVEN THE SEVENTH KING.



MEDRI BAHRI: A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS MEDIEVAL KINGDOM SITUATED IN MODERN-DAY ERITREA.

AN ERITREAN SOLDIER TALKS



WE CAME TO HELP THE FEDERALS, EVEN IF THEY WERE SHOOTING US TWO YEARS AGO. WE KNOW THE LAND AND THEY DON'T. THIS IS OUR LAND, IT WAS TPLF THE HYENAS, WHO STOLE AMHARA LAND. THEY CHANGED THE LAW IN ADDIS AND THEY MOVED THE BORDERS TO MAKE GREATER TIGRAY, IN 1983 [1991].



BUT THIS IS THE LAND OF AMHARA, THE LAND OF GONDAR, THE LAND OF KINGS.

THEY KILLED SO MANY OF US. THEY STARVED US, THEY FORCED US OUT, THEY MADE US LOSE OUR LANGUAGE. BUT NOW WE TAKE OUR LAND BACK. THIS IS WHERE OUR ANCESTORS BURIED THEIR [UMBILICAL] CORD. SO, NOW IT'S TEGARU BLOOD THAT MUST BE SACRIFICED TO CLEAN THE LAND. LET THE TEKEZE RIVER BECOME RED.

AN AMHARA MILITANTIAN TALKS

AN AMHARA MILITARIAN TALKS

ALREADY DURING THE FALL OF THE DERG WE KNEW THEY WANTED TO BRING BACK THE DISSENSIONS OF THE ZEMENE MESAFINT ["ERA OF PRINCES"] TO ETHIOPIA. AND WHEN THEY CAUSED THE MASSACRE IN GONDAR, THAT SEALED OUR HATRED FOR WAIANE.



MELES [ZENAWI, LATE PRIME MINISTER] KNEW THAT TO MAKE TIGRAY GREAT, HE HAD TO MAKE AMHARA SMALL. THEY STOLE ELECTIONS, THEY CONTROLLED OUR MINDS.

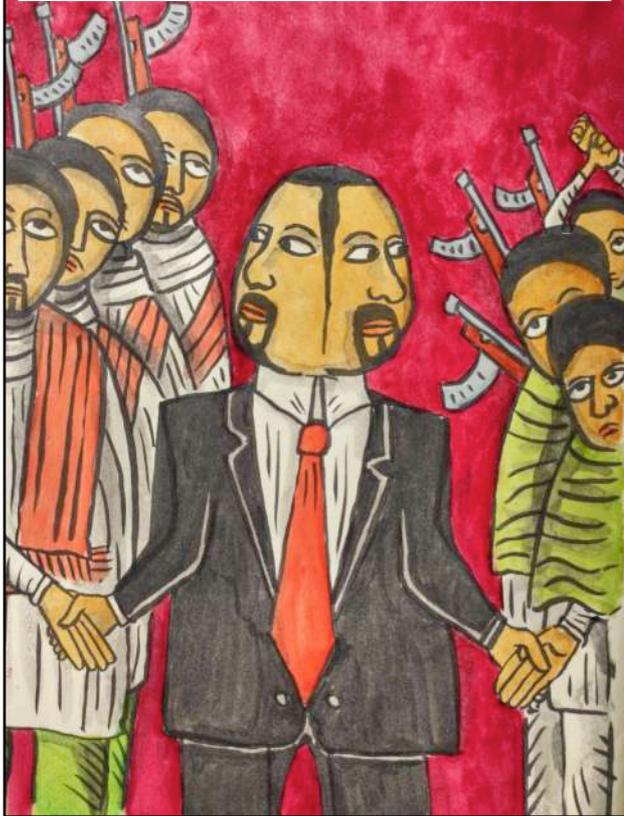
DERG: THE MILITARY JUNTA THAT OVERTHREW THE ETHIOPIAN MONARCHY AND RULED ETHIOPIA FROM 1974 TO 1991.

AFTER THE WOYANE, WE WILL DEAL WITH THE SHANE SHIFITAS. THEY SAY WE ARE NEFTENYOCH, BUT WE DON'T MIND. THAT MEANS WE DEFEND ANDE ITHIYOP'YA, LIKE THE KINGS DID.



SHANE: O.L.A., AN OROMO SPLINTER GROUP ALLIED WITH TPLF SINCE AUGUST 2021.
NEFTENYOCH: "RIFLE BEARERS", NAMED AFTER THE 19TH-CENTURY AMHARAS THAT SETTLED IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA.
ANDE ITHIYOP'YA: "ONE ETHIOPIA", A CENTRALIST VIEW OF ETHIOPIA, OFTEN COMPOUNDED WITH ABISSYNIANISM.

BUT NOW THEY ARE FINISHED. ABIY HAS AMHARA BLOOD FROM HIS MOTHER, HE KNOWS THAT POWER MUST COME BACK TO AMHARA. WE DON'T TRUST HIM: HE IS OROMO, AND SO HE LETS OUR BROTHERS IN THE SOUTH BE SLAUGHTERED BY OLA SHIFTAS



SHIFTA: ARMED BANDIT OR OUTLAW.

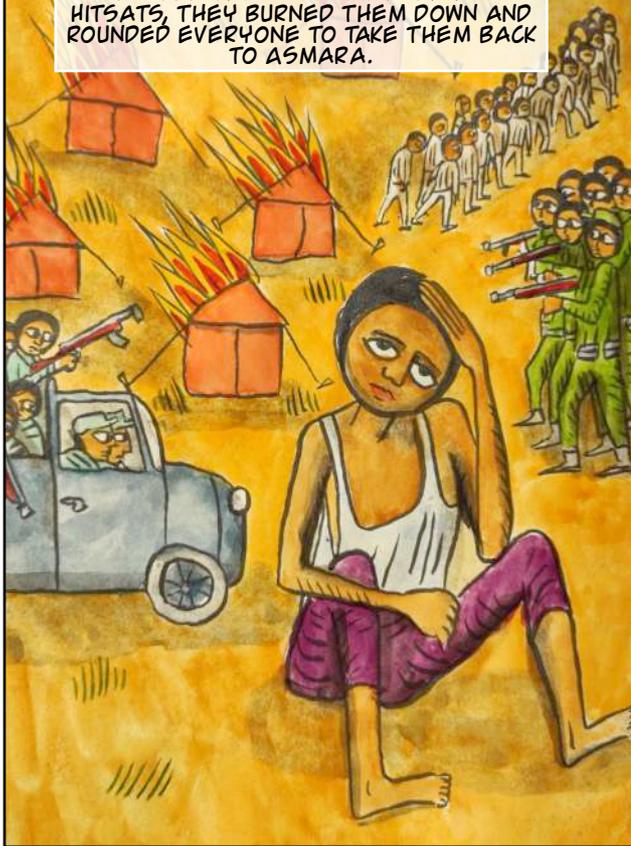
WE FANO STARTED BY DOMESTICATING THE SEMANT DOGS IN METEMMA; AND NOW WE COME FOR THE TEGARU, LET THEIR BODIES BE EATEN BY HYENAS AND VULTURES.



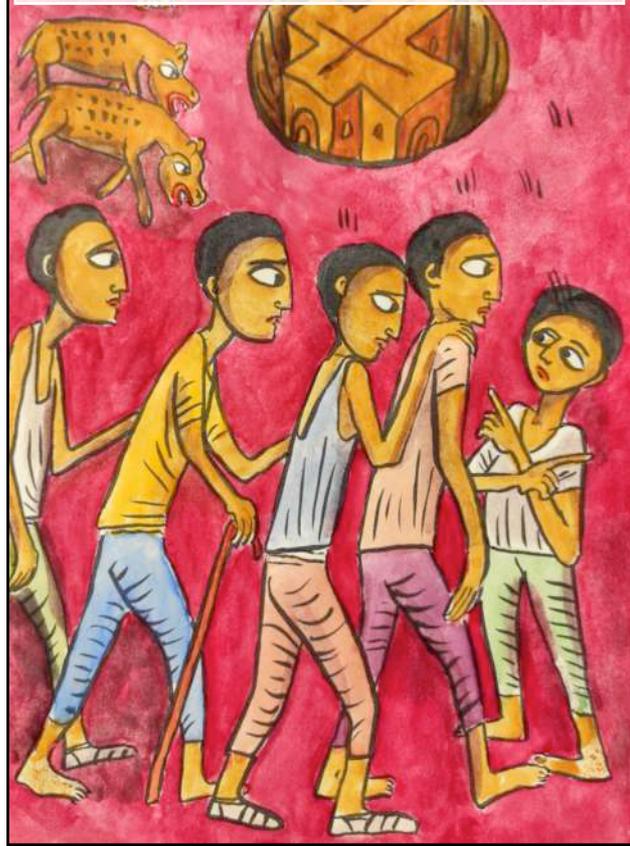
FANO: AN ARMED YOUTH MILITIA FIGHTING FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE AMHARA REGION.
SEMANT: AN AGAW SPEAKING RURAL COMMUNITY INHABITING WESTERN GONDAR.

AN AMHARA MILITANTIAN TALKS

I HAVE BEEN ON THE RUN FOR MANY, MANY DAYS. I HAVE BEEN WALKING WITH NO FOOD, NO MONEY, NOTHING. WHEN THE ERITREAN ARMY TOOK OVER THE UN REFUGEE CAMPS IN SHIMELBA AND HITSATS, THEY BURNED THEM DOWN AND ROUNDED EVERYONE TO TAKE THEM BACK TO ASMARA.



MANY WERE KILLED ON THE SPOT BUT SOME MANAGED TO ESCAPE. GOING SOUTH, OUR GROUP PASSED AS BEGGARS OR SOLDIERS BUT, WHEN WE ARRIVED IN AMHARA WOLLO, WE SPLIT. I HAVE FRIENDS IN ADDIS, THAT IS WHY I AM GOING THERE.



AN ERITREAN REFUGEE TALKS

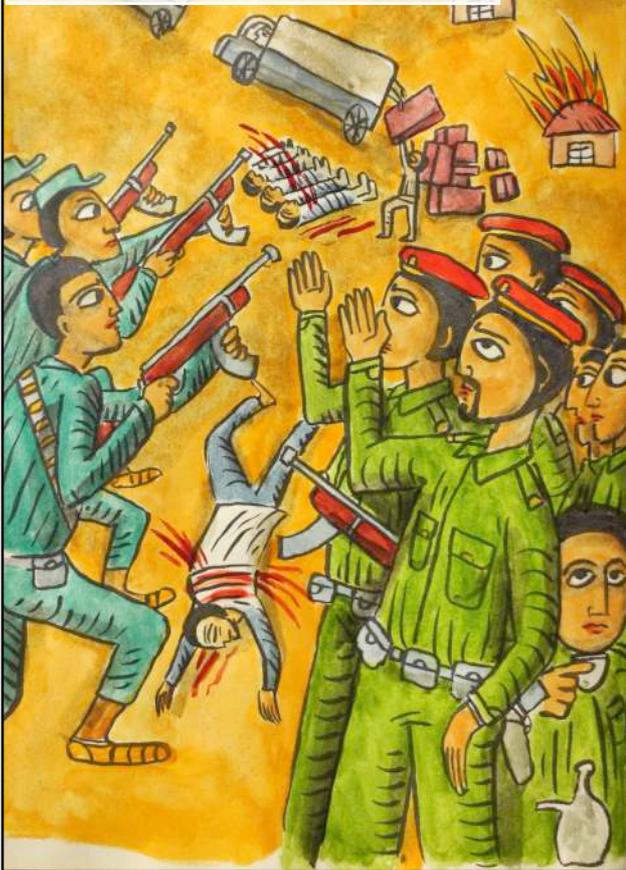
I GOT ILL BUT COULDN'T GET ANY MEDICINE. I WALK AT NIGHT BUT THAT IS VERY DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF HYENAS AND SNAKES. I DON'T DARE GO IN THE ROAD BECAUSE, IF I'M CAUGHT, THEY WILL SAY I'M AN ERITREAN SPY OR A TPLF SOLDIER.



IT'S VERY HARD: I CAN'T GO BACK TO ERITREA; I CAN'T BE IN TIGRAY. WHERE CAN I GO? IF I GET TO ADDIS, MAYBE I CAN WORK OR MAYBE I CAN MAKE THE JOURNEY TO ARABIA.

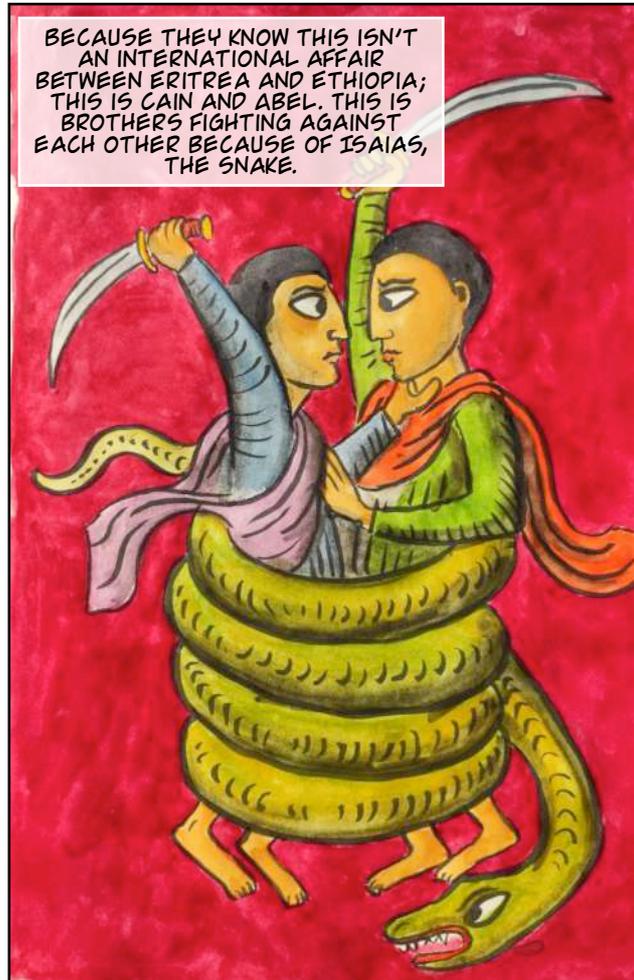
AN ERITREAN REFUGEE TALKS

SHABIA ARE EVERYWHERE IN TIGRAY.
THEY ARE LOOTING AND KILLING AS
THEY WISH, AND THE ETHIOPIAN
SOLDIERS JUST LOOK AND LET THEM GO.



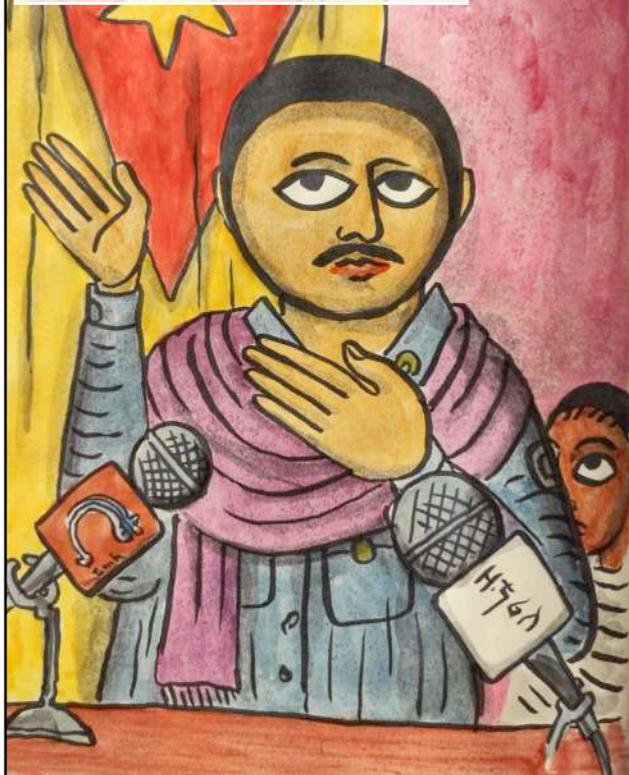
SHABIA: THE PEJORATIVE TERM FOR THE ERITREAN
PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT, THE ERITREAN ARMY.

BECAUSE THEY KNOW THIS ISN'T
AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR
BETWEEN ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA;
THIS IS CAIN AND ABEL. THIS IS
BROTHERS FIGHTING AGAINST
EACH OTHER BECAUSE OF ISAIAH,
THE SNAKE.



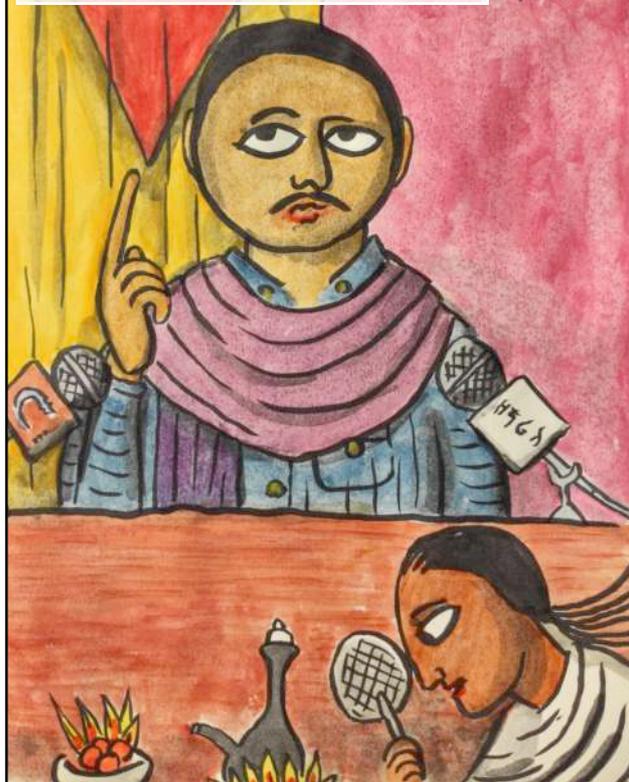
AN ERITREAN REFUGEE TALKS

BECAUSE OF GOVERNMENT SPYING,
WE HAVE PROBLEMS WITH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS. THEY SAY
SAMRI YOUTHS ATTACKED THE
VILLAGE AND THAT IS POSSIBLE. THE
AMHARA FARMERS WERE THERE TO
CLAIM THE LAND AND FANO WERE
SUPPORTING THEM.



SAMRI: TIGRAYAN ARMED YOUTH MILITIAS.

BUT OUR YOUTH IS WELL TRAINED,
THEY DON'T GO AROUND KILLING AND
MAIMING WITH MACHETES. WE DON'T
RAPE WOMEN. WE DON'T LEAVE
BODIES UNBURIED TO BE EATEN BY
DOGS AND HYENAS. WE ARE NOT
INTERAHAMWE. WE ARE NOT
SAVAGES.



INTERAHAMWE: THE HUTU MILITIAS INVOLVED IN THE RWANDAN 1994 GENOCIDE.

A TIGRAYAN POLITTIAN TALKS

THERE NEEDS TO BE AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CRIMES THAT ARE BEING COMMITTED BY THE FEDERALS AND THE BANDA ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THAT VILLAGE IS INSIDE TIGRAY ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE AND WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO UPHOLD THE LAW INSIDE OUR BORDERS.



WE HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE. 99% VOTED FOR US, IN FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. WE HAVE A POPULAR MANDATE, UNLIKE ABIY AND HIS IMPERIALIST CLIQUE.



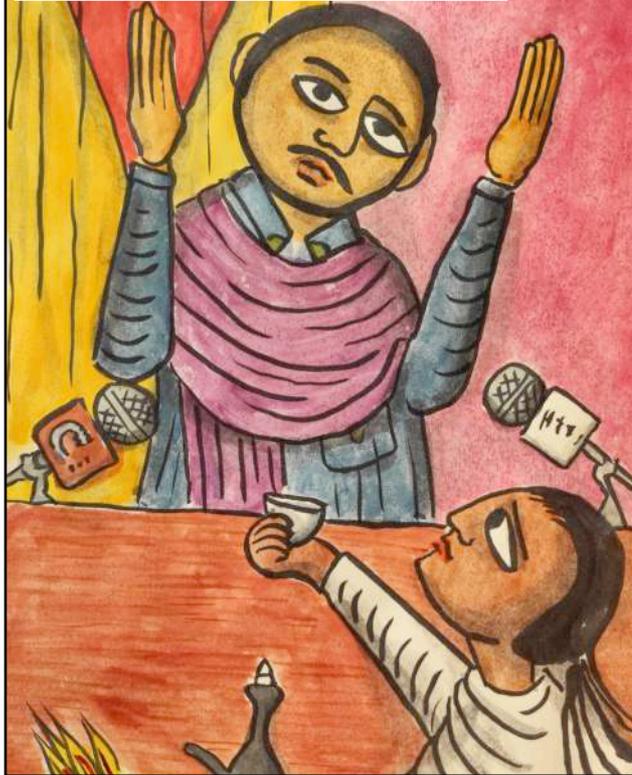
THE MAN IS CRAZY, HE EVEN SAYS HE IS THE SEVENTH KING OF THE BIBLE PROPHECY. HIS MEDEMER IS NOTHING BUT A COVER TO PUSH THE AMHARA AGENDA AND DESTROY THE FEDERAL SET-UP.



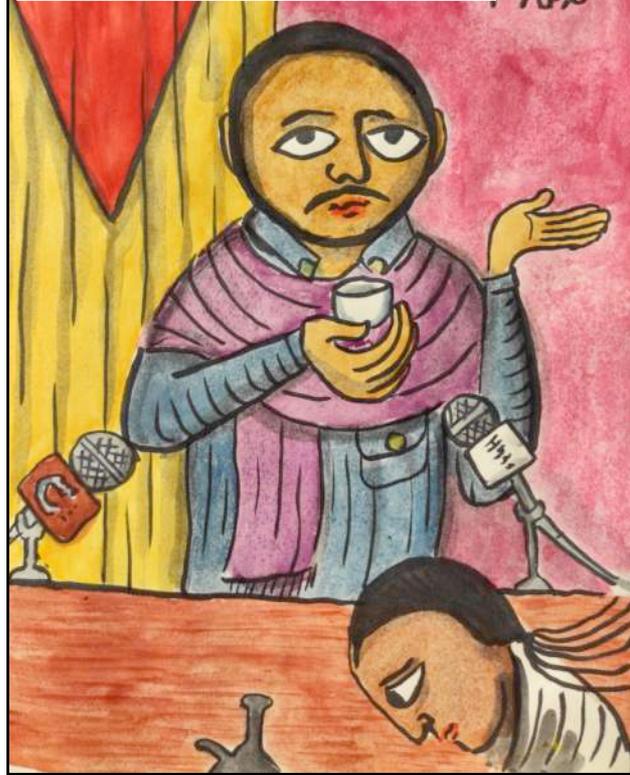
MEDEMER: "TO BE TOGETHER"; AN AMHARIC CATCHWORD CENTRAL TO ABIY AHMED'S POLITICAL WRITINGS.

A TIGRAYAN POLITTIAN TALKS

PEOPLE ARE RISING AGAINST
DICTATORSHIP IN BENISHANGUL, IN
GAMBELA, IN BALE, IN WALLEGA, IN
AFAR, IN OGADEN. HE IS GETTING
WEAKER AND WEAKER, AND EVEN THE
SUDANESE ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE, IN
AL-FASHQA. IF THE SHABIA LEAVE
TIGRAY, THAT WILL BE THE END OF ABİY.

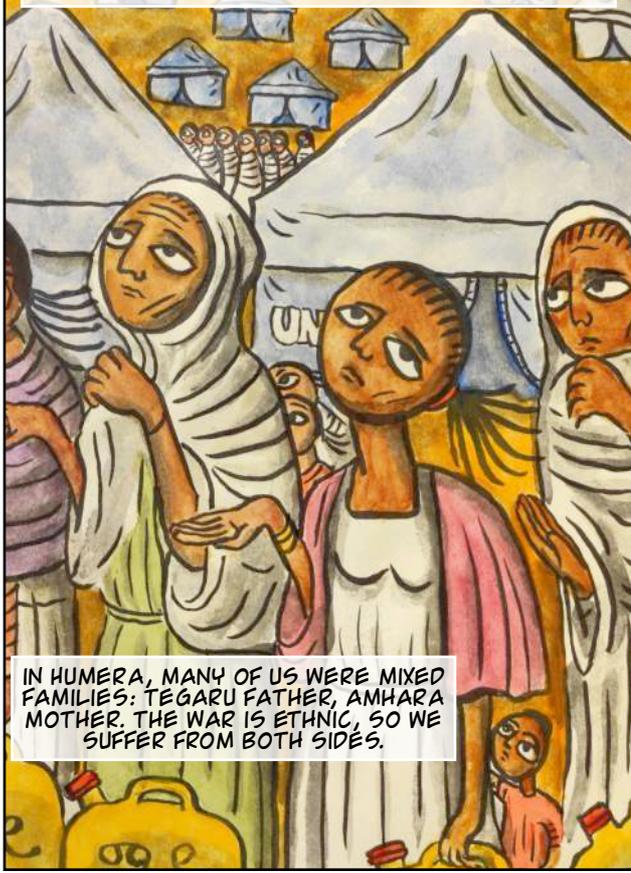


THAT IS WHY WE ARE HELPING OUR
BROTHERS INSIDE ERITREA TO FIGHT
AGAINST THE FASCIST HYENA. IF NEED
BE, THE SOLUTION IS TO SECEDE. THE
AMOUNT OF HATE ABİY CREATED
AGAINST US MEANS WE CAN NO
LONGER LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF IF
WE'RE TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER.



A TIGRAYAN POLITTIAN TALKS

YES, I ESCAPED FROM HUMERA AND CROSSED THE RIVER TO SUDAN. I HAVE NOTHING. MY MOTHER DIED AND MY FATHER WAS TAKEN BY THE FEDERALS, OR MAYBE BY FANO.



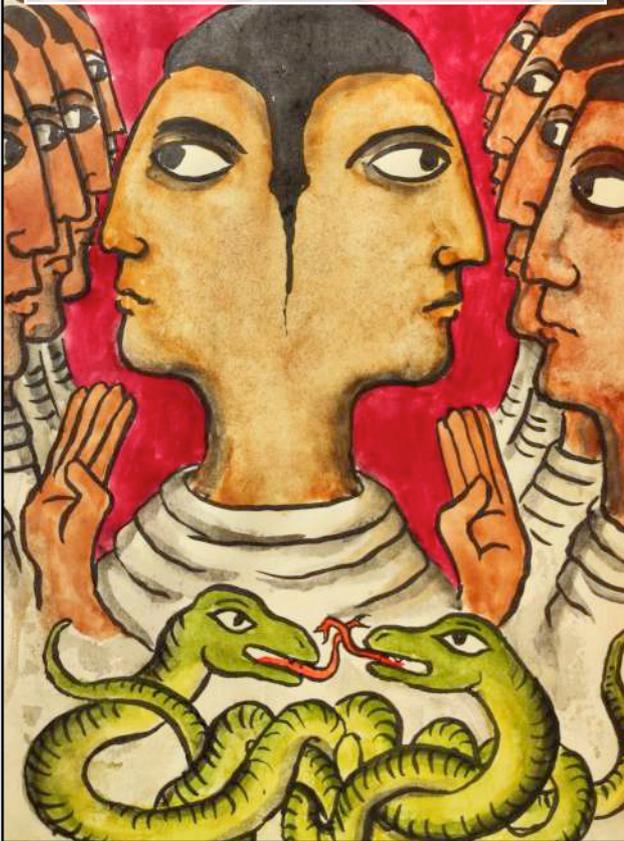
IN HUMERA, MANY OF US WERE MIXED FAMILIES: TEGARU FATHER, AMHARA MOTHER. THE WAR IS ETHNIC, SO WE SUFFER FROM BOTH SIDES.

IN ETHIOPIA, ALL BLOOD IS MIXED BUT WHEN THERE IS HATE, PEOPLE LIVE IN FEAR AND DENY ONE PART OF THEIR ANCESTRY. IT IS LIKE CUTTING ONE LEG TO STAND ON THE OTHER. AND WHEN YOU CUT YOUR LEG, YOU WANT EVERYONE TO DO THE SAME.



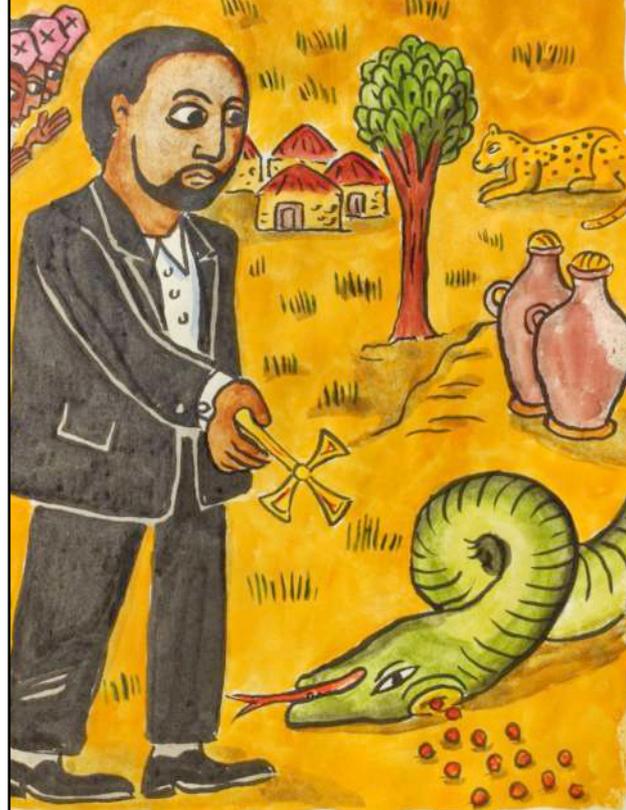
A PENTECOSTAL GIRL TALKS

IF YOU LIVE IN A WAREDA THAT IS CONTROLLED BY AMHARA, YOU SHOUT: LOOK, I HAVE A RIGHT LEG. BUT IF YOU LIVE IN A TEGARU WAREDA, YOU SHOUT: LOOK AT MY BEAUTIFUL LEFT LEG.



WAREDA: AN ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION ROUGHLY CORRESPONDING TO A COUNTY.

WHEN THE PENTE [PENTECOSTAL] PASTOR CAME TO PREACH IN OUR VILLAGE, WE ENJOYED HIS WORDS. HE TAUGHT US THAT JESUS DOESN'T CARE FOR BLOOD TYPE. IT'S LIKE WITH T'EF: IT CAN BE WHITE, BROWN OR BLACK BUT IT ALL CAME FROM ARWE'S HEAD.



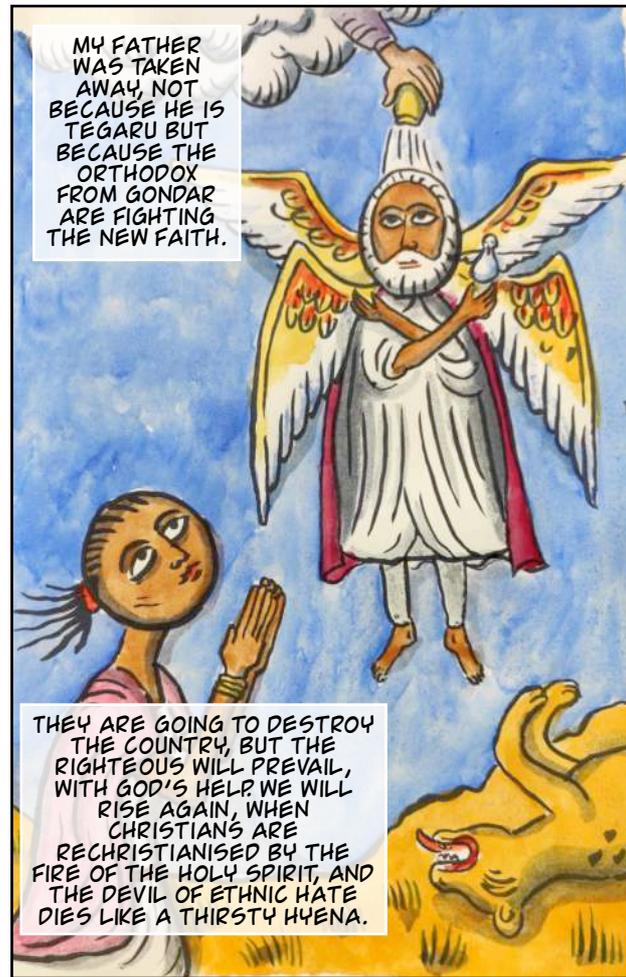
ARWE: "WILD BEAST" OR KING-SNAKE; A LEGENDARY GIANT SERPENT THAT RULLED THE COUNTRY IN ANCIENT TIMES.
T'EF: THE MOST IMPORTANT CEREAL CROP IN ETHIOPIA.

A PENTECOSTAL GIRL TALKS



SEMIEN LE IHESUS!
THIS IS THE NEW WAY.
WE MUST PURIFY
OURSELVES TO
RECEIVE CHRIST'S
BLESSING. OUR FAITH IS
SPREADING AND THIS
WORRIES THE
ORTHODOX CHURCH AND
THE POLITICIANS THEY
CONTROL.

SEMIEN LE IHESUS: "THE NORTH FOR JESUS"; PENTECOSTAL PROTESTANTS EVANGELISING IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA.



MY FATHER
WAS TAKEN
AWAY, NOT
BECAUSE HE IS
TEGARU BUT
BECAUSE THE
ORTHODOX
FROM GONDAR
ARE FIGHTING
THE NEW FAITH.

THEY ARE GOING TO DESTROY
THE COUNTRY, BUT THE
RIGHTEOUS WILL PREVAIL,
WITH GOD'S HELP WE WILL
RISE AGAIN, WHEN
CHRISTIANS ARE
RECHRISTIANISED BY THE
FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND
THE DEVIL OF ETHNIC HATE
DIES LIKE A THIRSTY HYENA.

A PENTECOSTAL GIRL TALKS

"AND THERE ARE SEVEN KINGS;
THE FIVE ARE FALLEN, THE ONE IS,
THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME;
AND WHEN HE COMETH, HE MUST
REMAIN ONLY FOR LITTLE WHILE."



REVELATION OF JOHN: 17:10

SUCH AN AMAZING COUNTRY, ETHIOPIA. IT'S A VERY ANCIENT CIVILISATION. AND A VERY COMPLICATED PLACE. I'VE BEEN LIVING HERE FOR A LONG TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER REALLY GRASPED IT. WE, FOREIGNERS, CAN'T EVER CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GOES ON HERE. WE ARE USUALLY MISLED AND MISINFORMED.

ETHIOPIA IS BOTH A CALEYDOSCOPE AND AN ONION: IT'S EXTREMELY VARIED AND THE GHOST OF FRAGMENTATION IS ALWAYS PRESENT; BUT IT'S ALSO A VERY CENTRALISED COUNTRY WHERE POWER IS ALMOST MYSTICALLY MULTILAYERED, AND ITS CORE IS SHADOWY AND UNDISCRUTABLE.

IN RECENT YEARS, IT HAS BECOME A CAULDRON OF MULTIPLE REBELLIONS, AND THE CENTRALIST POLITICAL SOLUTION THAT IS BEING TRIED CAN'T ACTUALLY ANSWER THE MANY GRIEVANCES AND ASPIRATIONS COMING FROM THE REGIONS.

HATE IS NOW RUNNING AMOCK AND IS BEING FUELED BY IRRESPONSIBLE ELITES. I'D CHARACTERISE THE PRESENT ENVIRONMENT AS ALMOST PRE-GENOCIDAL. IT'S SO SAD TO SEE THE COUNTRY ON THE BRINK OF DESINTEGRATION. ETHIOPIA IS IN A SPIRAL OF SELF-DESTRUCTION AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS NO CLUE ABOUT HOW THIS COLLECTIVE SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED. THERE ARE INNUMERABLE REASONS FOR THIS, BUT IF I HAD TO ELECT ONE AMONG MANY, I'D SAY THAT, AS WE HAVE SEEN IN THE PAST, THE ADVOCATES OF ABYSSINISM START DEVOURING THEMSELVES ONCE THEY HAVE DEVoured ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE POOR PEOPLE THEY CLAIM TO SERVE.

A FERENJI TALKS