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The Urgency of Building Oromo National Consensus

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An open padlock is shown on a textured, light brown surface. The padlock is metallic and has the word 'ADLAMI' engraved on its body. The background of the slide is a gradient of blue and purple.

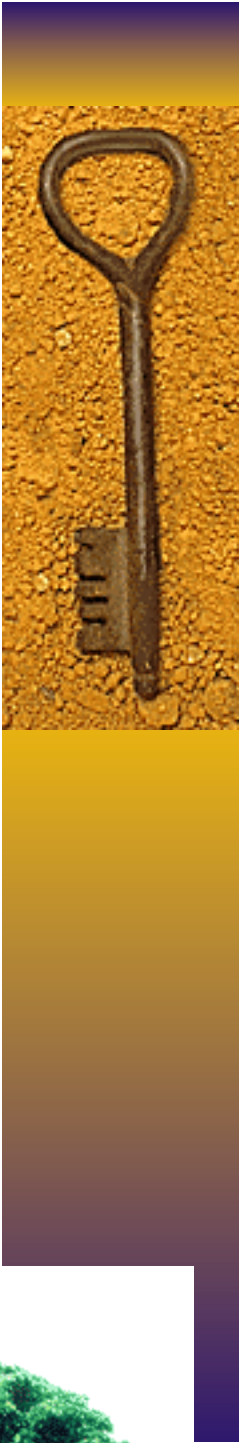
THE URGENCY OF BUILDING OROMO NATIONAL CONSENSUS

Asafa Jalata

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**The 2010 OSA Annual Conference, Howard
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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ 1) What should be done to overcome the politics of fragmentation and internal crises in the Oromo national movement?
- ❖ 2) What are some external and internal factors that have hampered the development of the Oromo national consensus?
- ❖ 3) What should Oromo activists and political leaders and their organizations do to overcome their political ineptness and ideological and political weaknesses to develop a national declaration?
- ❖ 4) What are the roles of all Oromo nationalists and the public in building the Oromo national consensus?



Achievements and Challenges - 1

- ❖ **The birth of the MTSA and the OLF and the restoration of the humanity and dignity of the Oromo nation**
 - ❖ **Before the birth of the MTSA and the OLF the Oromo were removed from their history, culture, and identity and used as firewood by others in building their nations**
 - ❖ **Unfortunately, the creation of the MTSA and the OLF could not restore the humanity of certain Oromos who continue to serve the interests of the enemies of the Oromo nation**
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Achievements and Challenges - 2

- ❖ Since the breakdown of the *gadaa* system subservient and dehumanized or opportunist Oromos have joined the enemy because of opportunism and/or lack of political consciousness to promote their personal interests at the cost of the Oromo nation
- ❖ A nation that cannot control its traitors cannot maintain its freedom and sovereignty; the Oromo nation has failed to control its internal enemy for more than a century

Achievements and Challenges - 3

- ❖ Consequently, the OPDO serves the Tigrayan Mafia in attacking and destroying Oromo society; most powerful individuals in the OPDO are Oromo speaking colonial settlers
- ❖ Since the OLF was not strong enough, it could not defend the Oromo nation from internal and external enemies; political fragmentation has contributed to its weaknesses
- ❖ Why do Oromo activists and leaders engage in the politics of fragmentation rather than building a strong organization and national consensus?





External and internal factors for undermining Oromo Consensus-1

- ❖ Ethiopian colonial elites denied formal education to Oromos to keep them in darkness of ignorance
- ❖ The majority of few Oromos who were educated were melted in Ethiopian society through cultural and marital assimilation; a small size of educated Oromos resisted Ethiopianization and maintained their national identity and pride; the fathers and mothers of modern *Oromummaa* emerged from such educated conscious Oromos
- ❖ They were the founders the MTSHA in the 1960s and the OLF in the 1970s; there have been educated Oromos who have joined Ethiopian organizations and opposed independent Oromo political forces

External and internal factors for undermining Oromo Consensus-2

- ❖ Ethiopian colonizers have been worried about the size of the Oromo population and the possibility of an Oromo insurrection; their cultural memory brings to them Oromo heroism prior to colonialism
- ❖ They have tried to keep Oromos ignorant and divided by colonial regions, religions, and clans so that the Oromo forget their nationhood, sovereignty, and fight among themselves
- ❖ Habashas have struggled to prevent the development of national leadership and unity in Oromo society; they have mobilized Oromos against one another through different mechanisms



External and internal factors for undermining Oromo Consensus- 3

- ❖ There are still many Oromos who can be manipulated by Habasha political games and engage in clan, regional, and religious politics
- ❖ *Moreover, Oromos did not yet develop institutional or educational forums that would help them to learn critically about their national culture, history, philosophy, belief systems, and values*





External and internal factors for undermining Oromo Consensus- 4

- ❖ Consequently, most Oromos are more familiar with their clans, colonial regions, and religious identities; in absence of strong organizations and institutions, external and internal factors increase political fragmentation and the complexity of Oromo liberation politics
- ❖ These conditions have opened doors for enemies to infiltrate Oromo communities, organizations and institutions; nowadays in the Oromo Diaspora there is no clear boundary between Oromo nationalist and the agents of Meles
- ❖ I argue that the political ineptness of Oromo activists and leaders is having a devastating effect on the Oromo struggle



Recognizing and Overcoming political Ineptness -1

- ❖ Oromo activists and leaders pay less attention to workable political models and policies; their practices are based on trial and errors and not on scientific study and pragmatism; they only give lip service to our collective democratic *gadaa* principles
- ❖ They are dogmatic and undemocratic; they limit the role of members and supporters to financial contributions and unproductive propaganda roles
- ❖ Contradictory principles and values – talking about Oromo nationalism and engaging in the politics of sub-identities



Recognizing and Overcoming political Ineptness -2

- ❖ Lack of practical measures of performance of activists and leaders
- ❖ Lack of understanding of team and collective work
- ❖ Ignoring our proven political models and leaders
— Gadaa and the role of Haile Mariam Gamada and Baro Tumsa
- ❖ Lack of critical assessment of the Oromo national movement



Toward Building National Consensus -1

- ❖ Political fragmentation, lack of national consensus, and fighting among Oromo groups and organizations are symbols of national disgrace when the survival of the Oromo nation and its struggle are facing danger from a genocidal minority regime that is financed, armed and supported by the corrupt international system
- ❖ We have to learn from proven models of Haile Mariam Gamada and Baro Tumsa who reinvented our democratic models in building Oromo national institutions and organizations



Toward Building National Consensus -2

- ❖ Recognizing failed models and rejecting them
- ❖ Believing in our people and empowering them to liberate themselves; activists and leaders only agitate, educate, organize people to insurrect against the unjust system
- ❖ Internally, the only force that Oromos must reject and dismantle is the Oromo collaborative class



Toward Building National Consensus -3

- ❖ *Oromo activists and leaders must declare urgently their national consensus on (1) the question of Oromia national sovereignty, the essence and characteristics of Oromia state in a multinational context, (2) the revitalization of Oromo democratic traditions, and (3) building of an Oromia national assembly called Gumii Oromiyaa*
 - ❖ *Building one Gumii Oromiyaa and creating a national defense force that is currently called WBO*
 - ❖ *Building a solidarity movement with all political forces on minimum and maximum programs with forces that struggle to end the criminal Tigrayan-led government*
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