THE OROMO: TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF LIBERATION AND OROMO EMPOWERMENT

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Toward A Psychological Liberation and Oromo Empowerment

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Introduction

**THE CURRENT CRISSES OF OROMO LEADERSHIP:**

- Sources of the crises: external and internal forces –
  - (1) External forces -- the Tigrayan-led government and its global and regional supporters (several books and articles written);
  - (2) Internal forces -- 1) Oromo collaborators; 2) the crisis of Oromo leadership; 3) the crisis of Oromo society (issues focused on);
Introduction - 2

- **ADDRESSING FOUR MAJOR ISSUES:**
  - (1) Background; (2) Colonialism underdeveloped Oromo leadership; 3) Connections among (a) inferiority complex, (b) Knowledge for mental liberation, and (c) the development of a revolutionary consciousness; and
  - (4) Ways of forging a united vibrant leadership;
Background-1

- **OUR LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT WHEN WE WERE FREE** – the gadaa republican system;

- (1) The rule of law; (2) strong defense force for national security; (3) the establishment of *Biyyaa Oromoo* (Oromia); (4) rigorous training of young people for leadership;

- (5) Sustenance and reinvention of leadership through the rule of law and democracy
Background-2

- Political platform: *caafee* or *gumii* assembly;
- Strong political and military leadership for defeating traitors and national enemies;
- The capitalist world system and internal divisions caused the colonization of the Oromo;
- The underdevelopment of Oromo leadership;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership - 1

- The destruction of Oromo leaders and institutions;
- Building foreign institutions in Oromia;
- Creating and perpetuating Oromo collaborative leaders who have been committed to satisfy their personal interests and the interests of their masters.
Colonialism and Underdevelopment Leadership - 2

✧ The establishment of (1) colonial government, (2) the Orthodox Church, and (3) the colonial education to mislead and to miseducate the Oromo children;

✧ The establishment of (1) garrison towns and cities, (2) slavery, (3) the colonial landholding system, (4) the nafxanya-gabbar system, (5) the Oromo collaborative class; (5) the intensification of psychological war on the Oromo;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership

- (1) The intensification of economic exploitation;
  (2) the mutilation of Oromo history, culture, and language;

- (1) Oromo-ness was targeted for destruction;
  (2) the Oromo identity was localized;
  (3) Oromos were separated from one another;
  (4) they were turned on one another;
  (5) prevented from having organizational and institutional forums;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership - 4

- (1) The Oromo were exposed to other cultures and identities; (2) started to develop an inferiority complex; (3) began to change religions, identities, names, etc.

- (1) Revolutionary nationalist elements emerged and challenged these trends in the 1960s and the 1970s; (2) several resistance and cultural groups also emerged to demonstrate Oromo interest and awareness;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership -

- (1) The Oromo national movement has been confronted by the external and internal enemy enemies; (2) the Oromo struggle has failed to solve its internal problems; (3) an intermediary class has continued to serve its master;

- (1) Most Oromo collaborators have become tools; implemented terrorist and genocidal policies, and (2) have continued to attack and destroy the revolutionary leadership;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership - 6

- (1) Today the Oromo collaborators are the numerical majority in the so-called Tigrayan parliament, administration, and the army; (2) the are participating in imprisoning and killing Oromo nationalists;

- (3) (Frantz Fanon); these intermediaries have brought violence to their own people; (4) they maintain Ethiopian colonialism in Oromia; (5) they wear ETHIOPIAN MASKS;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership

- These collaborators imitate their masters; (2) these “house niggers,” to use Malcolm X’s phrase, currently imitate their Tigrayan masters; (3) a few of them are “rewarded extravagantly with fame, fortune and celebrity status”;
- Collaborators are less competent and less intelligent individuals; (5) They only promote their personal interests at the cost of the Oromo national interest;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership - 9

 bè (1) The Oromo collaborative elites have internalized their masters’ worldviews – the oppressor within; (2) they suffer from immense political ignorance and an inferiority complex;

 bè (1) Oppression and dehumanization have disconnected them from their society; (2) their understanding of their individual biographies and collective Oromo history is limited;
Colonialism and Underdevelopment of Leadership - 10

- Oromo collaborators have damaged psyches;
- (1) The Amhara-Tigrayan colonizers were not satisfied by colonizing Oromia and its resources; (2) they have opened a war on Oromo psyches;
- (3) Consequently, millions of Oromos today carry the badge of shame and wear Ethiopian masks; (4) they more reflect Habasha culture and worldviews;
Psychological wars on our psyches have created auto-oppressors or the oppressor within;

(1) The Oromo collaborative elites feel inferior and do not manifest self-confidence; (2) most Oromo nationalist elites are also suffering from psychological problems and inferiority complex; (3) Passing through colonial institutions have serious consequences;
(1) Most Oromo elites did not yet equip themselves with liberation knowledge; they do not adequately know their history, culture, and worldview; (2) they have limited critical knowledge and political consciousness;

They give lip service to the Oromo national struggle, and their contributions to the Oromo struggle is very limited;

Since their psyches have been affected they usually focus on petty issues and self-promotion;
The Psychological Legacy of Ethiopian Colonialism - 1

- Ethiopian colonial education mis-educated Oromo elites and disoriented their understanding of reality;
- They have learned the culture and history of the colonialists without learning their own history and culture;
- Our oppressors have tried to control our minds and psychology; this has caused personal and collective damages;
The Psychological Legacy of Ethiopian Colonialism - 2

spark Most founders of the MTSA and the OLF were mentally liberated; however, Oromo nationalist leaders and followers who have allowed the partition of the Oromo national movement today are not mentally liberated;

spark (1) The usage of Oromo sub-identities and cliques demonstrate this reality; (2) lack of commitment to promote liberation knowledge for consciousness-raising is another.
The Psychological Legacy of Ethiopian Colonialism - 3

- Mental liberation requires (1) liberation knowledge, (2) overcoming inferiority complex, and (3) developing commitment for team and organizational work;

- (1) We still face psychological crises that are complicated by political ignorance; (2) hence, our political leaders and intellectuals have failed to build a united national movement;
(1) The Oromo are chained mentally, physically, socially, culturally, and politically in Oromia; (2) they live under political slavery;

- We are not willing to learn about all these problems;

- Conscious elements need to understand these complex problems, find solutions, and teach their people;
(1) We need to come to terms with ourselves by learning about our crises; (2) coming to terms with one’s self requires developing political consciousness and achieving psychological liberation;

Psychological liberation enables to fight against the external oppressor and the internalized oppressive values and worldviews;
At this moment, we know the impacts of the external oppressor, but we do not adequately know the oppressor within;

(1) The institutionalization of the oppressor within and the enslavement of our mentality have prevented us from critically understanding and solving our political problems; (2) until now, our struggle is focused on the oppressor without;
Liberation Knowledge, Consciousness-building, & Politics of Empowerment -4

✧ Liberation requires a battle on two fronts: the oppressor without and the oppressor within;

✧ (1) Our enemies incapacitated us in two ways: (a) by denying education to almost all the Oromo, (b) by denying those few educated critical education and knowledge for liberation; (2) our intellectuals and leaders are disconnected from their socio-cultural bonds; hence they are disorganized and disoriented;
(1) Most of our intellectuals and professionals lack liberation knowledge and critical consciousness; (2) they are conflict-ridden and fight among themselves;

If they are politically conscious they turn their internalized anger, hostility, and violence against the oppressor without;

Ethiopian colonialism has denied us “essential human needs and essential human powers” that are required to fully develop as free human beings;
Liberation Knowledge, Consciousness-building, & Politics of Empowerment

- (1) we have been disconnected from our cultural and social roots; (2) our self-hood has been attacked through colonial education, religion, and the media; our worldviews and perspectives have been distorted;

- Our self-reproduction in praxis has been stifled; our people have been denied the right to know and express themselves;

- Our people have been denied to learn and teach about themselves in Oromia;
Liberation Knowledge, Consciousness-building, & Politics of Empowerment - 7

✧ (1) Our people have been denied to organize ourselves to fight for their rights; (2) our people live in darkness and political slavery; (3) they have been denied to develop their human possibilities;

✧ What about the Oromo in the Diaspora who are beyond Ethiopian political slavery?
(1) Because of the oppressor within us, we have failed to solve our political crises in the Diaspora; (2) we must overcome our political ignorance and inferiority complex to defeat the oppressor within;

(3) our struggle must be intensified on three levels: (a) the level of personal biography, (b) community level, (c) institutional and organizational level;
The liberation of the mind = knowledge of liberation, political consciousness, and the power of self-definition;

(1) Without the liberated and free mind, we cannot resist oppression on many levels; (2) we must reject the knowledge for domination; (3) revolution begins with the self, in the self; (4) every Oromo must fight for the liberation of self and the emancipation of the Oromo;
Domination only continues through controlling the mental power of our people;

Our enemies disrupt our consciousness building processes through: (1) killing leaders, (2) infiltrating our communities and organizations, (3) dividing and turn us on one another; (4) war and terrorism;
Discussion and Conclusion - 2

- (5) Controlling our thinking process;
- (6) Limiting the expansion of Oromo consciousness and self-knowledge;
- (7) Preventing the restoration of our heritage, culture, history, and civilization;
- (8) Disseminating of lies or distorted information through the media, education, and religion;
Discussion and Conclusion -3

✧ (1) Every Oromo must know the correct Oromo history, culture, heritage, worldview, and civilization from antiquity to present; (2) if we do not know all these things we are mentally dead and anybody can implant any information in our minds; (3) knowledge is power and we must empower ourselves; (4) we must identify our achievements and celebrate them; (5) we must break the chains of mental slavery;
(6) Mental liberation requires courage, hard work, discipline, and commitment; (7) it involves individuals, family, and community; (8) we must build our brains and communities; (9) stop waiting for leaders and organizations and educating and organizing ourselves; (10) we in the Diaspora should overcome our passivity, political ignorance, individualism, anarchism, fatalism, arrogance/inferiority complex, and community divisions;
We must engage in community building and creating a united Oromo movement;

Building ourselves from bottom-up, restoring gadaa democracy, and creating organizational federations to build a national and global Gumii Oromia;

How can we achieve all these?