

The EPRP: Prof. Begashaw Has Been a Loudspeaker for a Plagiarist!

By LJDemissie

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“A sign of a lover of wisdom is his delight in not running his mouth about things he doesn't know.” — [Criss Jami](#)

Author's note: I respect freedom of speech. I don't personally know the people I mentioned by name in this analysis, including Prof. Getachew Begashaw and Prof. Ghelawdewos Araia – who wrote forewords for a poorly written book titled “ፍጹም ነው እምነት” by Ato Nesibu Sebat. However, I will say this much, based upon a portions of their writings or interviews I read or listened to online, I know some of their contributions. I respect and appreciate their struggle against a failing totalitarian regime known as the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (the TPLF).

Put differently, when reading my analysis of Begashaw's foreword, it's important to differentiate the analysis vis-a-vis his contribution for the struggle. I said the preceding to say the following: I'm not intending to discredit his contribution for the struggle. And I'm not attempting to divert readers' attention with this issue for a second time at this critical moment of our country either.

Why I shared this now?

I penned this critique now because I have a good opportunity to follow-up my February 16, 2017 critical analysis of the book “ፍጹም ነው እምነት” by analyzing the foreword Begashaw wrote for it. To explain, the international media, including the BBC and AP are reminding their readers and/or listeners the atrocities committed during the 1977-78 G.C Red Terror campaign:

1. [According to the BBC](#), “The war crimes trial of an aide [Eshetu Alemu] to Ethiopia's former communist ruler [Mengistu Haile Mariam] has begun in the Netherlands.” “Eshetu Alemu, 63, is accused of ordering the execution of 75 people during Ethiopia's "Red Terror".” “His trial begins at The Hague [on October 30, 2017].”
2. [On one of its October 31, 2017 articles, AP stated](#) “Human Rights Watch has described the 1977-78 campaign known as the Red Terror as "one of the most systematic uses of mass murder by a state ever witnessed in Africa.”



Furthermore, I wrote this analysis now because it is a good moment to inform Begashaw that his deafening silence in regards to my critique of the fraudulent book he endorsed is unprofessional. His awkward silence shows he is unaccountable for his act. It reflects his contempt for the Ethiopian reading communities. It echoes his lack of respect for one’s history, including my family and me, Red Terror victims. It also reveals his provocative behavior to get attention.

To illustrate, after the author of “ፍጹም ነው እምነቴ”, Nesibu Sebhāt, claimed he was locked up in a cell for months and severely disabled, he made himself “virtually omnipresent” everywhere across Ethiopia, including a torture room and execution sites. Then, from an omniscient point of view – which is “a style of telling a story in which the narrator ... knows everything that happens and what all the characters experience, think, and feel.” he narrated stories by fictionally dramatized the real life inhuman atrocities the Derg committed against Ethiopians, including the Higher-15’s detainees. And he recognized the characters for contributing their stories for his book (pp. V) although several of the characters didn’t know he was writing a book.

Worst yet, Begashaw wasn’t detained at the Higher-15; he didn’t witness the crimes against the detainees firsthand; he didn’t have evidence on the atrocities either. He overlooked the omniscient author’s inconsistent settings, plot lines and scenes. And then, in a way to make readers believe the authors stories reflects his (Begashaw’s) own experience, he made unfounded assertions in his foreword that the author with his unique writing skills presented the fascist inhuman actions committed against the detainees without making mistakes on his stories’ settings, plot lines and scenes.



This what he claimed in Amharic “ነሲቡ በለው ልዩ የጽሁፍ ውበትና ችሎታ፣ የጊዜንና የተደራገቶችን ቅደም ተከተል ሳይስት፣ በዚያ በጨለማ ፋሽታዊ ጽልመት ጊዜ በከፍተኛ ውስጥ ለማመን የሚያስቸግሩትን የትግል መስዋዕትነትንና የተፈጸሙትንና አረመኔያዊ ድርጊቶች በትይይነታቸው ከአጠቃላይ የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ትግል፣ በተለይም ከኢሕአፖ አለማና ከፋሽታዊው ደርግ የማጥፋት ዘመቻ ጋር በማያያዝ ለማቅረብ ችሏል።” ገጽ 382

Furthermore, without providing any supporting evidence, he confirmed the author’s sensationalized fictional stories as the detainees’ true stories. Worst of all, since February 16, 2017, he has been ignoring strong evidence I provided against the stories he approved and endorsed. For my analysis of the book, and by extension, his foreword, his “answer is a deafening silence” which provoked me to focus my analysis on his foreword.

If Professor Begashaw reads this analysis with an open mind, I'm confident that it would benefit him to realize the following: he doesn't have a legitimate reason to vouch for the author's fictional stories on the inhuman crimes committed against the Higher-15's detainees, except deceiving. He doesn't have authority to authenticate the EPRP's nationwide struggle operations, except by misleading readers. He lacks expertise to recommend a history text book for history professors and students.

I'm optimistic he would exhibit wisdom by admitting this analysis provided him a "flash of insight" which helped him to realize the inaccuracies in his foreword. I'm also hopeful he would find courage to revoke the foreword he gave for the author and offer his apology to those his reckless comments insulted, including my family and me. He owes the Ethiopian reading communities an apology for his unsubstantiated claims and misrepresentation in his foreword and for helping the author to spread disinformation by giving him a confirmation for his fictional dramatization of the Higher-15 detainees' real life suffering.

What is Begashaw's rightful place in the Higher-15 detention camp?

To answer this question, I extracted Begashaw's assertions from his foreword for Sebhat's book titled "ፍጹም ነው እምነት" and translated my understanding of his (Begashaw's) message from Amharic into English. And then I analyzed his message.

Begashaw asserted: "ይህ የተደረሰው ፍጹም ነው እምነት የከፍተኛ 15 ቀይ ሽብር እዉነተኛ ታሪክ ለታሪክ ዋቢነት የሚያገለግል የኢሕአፓና የወጣት ሊጉ ኢሕአወሊ እምነት፣ ትግልና መስዋዕትነት መረጃ ነው። ገጽ 382 ...

Translation of Begashaw's assertion from Amharic into English: the book, "ፍጹም ነው እምነት", is the Higher-15's Red Terror true history. It serves as an evidence for the EPRP and its youth league's ... believe, struggle and scarification.

Examination of Begashaw's assertion: Begashaw wasn't detained at Higher-15 so he didn't eyewitness the situation there. He didn't have inside information either. Hence, he has no place with regards to the Red Terror at the detention camp. However, to provoke reaction, he confirmed the book's omniscient narrator fake stories without evidence. As the Ethiopians saying goes, his validation of the author's stories is **የአይጥ ምስክራ ድንብጥ።** Consequently, his confirmation regarding the truthfulness of the author's story is unfounded. Therefore, it is deceptive, improper and invalid.

Why is Prof. Begashaw silent on his professorship or association with the Higher-15 in his foreword?

First things first, Prof. Begashaw is an economics professor. In his endorsement of the book, he simply described himself as professor. In the context of his foreword, professor implies his professional training and experience are related with history and history literature.

He is silent on his professorship because he needed to extend his expertise from teaching economics to history. To explain, since knowledgeable readers, specifically history teachers or

students, wouldn't buy and read a history text book an economics teacher recommended, he used his generic title professor. He remained silent whether he had a personal experience with the detention camp because he wanted to give the idea that he has a personal knowledge in the atrocities committed at the detention camp. Since he didn't make it clear he is an economics professor and state his association with the Higher-15, his foreword is deceptive. It is improper and invalid.

Was Begashaw the EPRP's politburo member or director of operations?

In his foreword, Begashaw asserted “ከሁሉም በላይ አንባቢው ... ኢሕአፓ ለእንቅስቃሴው ዉጤታማነትና አመቺነት ስለዘረጋው ድርጅታዊ መዋቅር ሙሉ ግንዛቤ እንዲያገኝ በሚያስችል መንገድ ለማቅረብ ችላል።” (ገጽ 383)

Translation of Begashaw's claim from Amharic into English: above all, to the reader ... the organizational structures the EPRP used for its operations, results and conveniences are presented in a way they give readers complete awareness.

Analyzing Begashaw's assertion: I need to provide some information in order to properly analyze his assertion:

First, a dictionary definition of operation and operations; Longman Advanced American Dictionary defined operation and operations as follows:

- ✓ Operation: “a business, company or organization, especially one with many parts.”
- ✓ Operations: “the part of a business or organization that controls the planning and practical running of its work.” For example, a person who runs the operations is called the director of operations.

Second, Begashaw said he didn't have full knowledge of how the EPRP conducted its operations. He mentioned the following in his foreword: “ስለ ከተማዉ የኢሕአፓ ትግል ብዙ እንድማርና እስካሁን ለመረዳት ስላልቻልኳቸው ድርጅታዊ ሁኔታወች ጥሩ ግንዛቤ እንዲኖረኝ ረድቶኛል።” (ገጽ 383)

In a context of his foreword, I translated his Amharic statement into English as follows: reading the manuscript helped me to learn a lot about the EPRP's urban struggle and to have good awareness about other organizational situations [operations] I was unable to understand to date.

Third, the author stated, in his book, he was the EPRP's youth league member (pp. 297) – which simply means he was an ordinary member who didn't have knowledge and experience in the party or its youth league's operations - planning and running of its work - that he described and flowcharted in detail. (pp. 59-68)

Fourth, it is a fact that the EPRP was an underground party. Its members worked in a small covert cell group. Apparently, they were thought discipline to be secretive about

what they know, including their intention and activities for their safety and security, and by extension the party's.

Given the above facts, Begashaw neither was the EPRP's politburo member nor the director of operations. His and Sebhat's knowledge of or experience in the party and its sister organizations' contribution to struggle against the Derg were minuscule because they were only allowed to know their cell's activities. Thus the material Begashaw confirmed with regards to the EPRP's and its sister organizations operations that the author described and flowcharted in detail is plagiarized or invented. Therefore, Begashaw's foreword – stamp of approval for the author's material – is deceptive. It is also improper and invalid.

Is an economics professor qualified to recommend a history textbook?

Begashaw, the professor of economics, paid the author a compliment for his contribution and recommended his book for history text book. In Amharic he said: “ነሲቡ ይህን መጽሐፍ ለሕትመት ከመለኩ በፊት ለማንበብ እንድችል እድሉን ስለሰጠኝ ከልቤ አመሰግናለሁ። ስለ ከተማዉ የኢሕአፓ ትግል ብዙ እንደማርና እስካሁን ለመረዳት ስላልቻልኩቸዉ ድርጅታዊ ሁኔታወች ጥሩ ግንዛቤ እንዲኖረኝ ረድቶኛል። መንገድም አመለክቶኛል። ይህ መጽሐፍ ጠቃሚነቱ የኢሕአፓ አባላት ለነበሩት ብቻ ሳይሆን ለመላዉ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ተማሪዎችና የአዲሱ ትውልድ ተሳታፊዎች ጭምር ነው። ታሪክ በእውንተኝነቱ ከባለታሪኮቹ ቢያንስ ለተከታይ ትውልድ ለመተላለፍ ሲችል ታላቅ አገራዊና ብሄራዊ ኃላፊነትና አስተዋጽዖ ይሆናል። በዚህ ረገድ ነሲቡ አገራዊና ብሄራዊ ኃላፊነቱን በሚያስመሰግነዉ ደማቅ መንገድ ተወጥቶታል።” (ገጽ 383)

Translation of Begashaw's compliment for the author's contribution and recommendation of his book for history text book from Amharic into English: I thank the author from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to read his manuscript. Reading it helped me to learn a lot about the EPRP's urban struggle and to have a good awareness about other organizational situations I was unable to understand to date. It also showed me a way [*he meant for the struggle against the TPLF*]. This book's usefulness isn't only for the EPRP's former members, but it is also for all Ethiopian history students and the new generation. When true history is passed down from the history makers to at least the next generation, it will become a great contribution for the nation and nationality. With this regard, Sebhat fulfilled his nation and nationality responsibility radiantly and meritoriously.

Analysis of Begashaw's recommendation of the book for history textbook: although teaching economics has little to do with teaching history, Begashaw as if he is a history literature expert highly praised the author and his work and made unfounded assertions that the book would be beneficial for history students and the new generation. And he recommended it for a history textbook. His assertion and recommendation are fallacious because he is unqualified to recommend a history textbook for history professors and or students.

Though the author's plot lines are full of holes, Begashaw praised the author's writing quality to the skies which made me wonder whether he comprehends features of good

writing. And it reminded me of the Ethiopian saying "ሥጋ ቁጠር ቢሉት ጣፊያ አንድ አለ።" I challenge him to refute my statement against his comprehension skills.

Doesn't it make sense why Begashaw wrote the foreword?

Yes, it makes perfect sense. It was a win-win situation for both, Begashaw and the author. To explain, on the one hand, the author is unknown outside of his circle. He didn't have authority on most story lines he wrote; for example, the EPRP's operations. In this situation, it is a fact that people buy a book based on different factors. One of the factors they consider is the foreword. So, he needed Begashaw's confirmation to give credibility for his fake stories because readers could trust him for his fancy title, professor.

On the other hand, Begashaw saw an opportunity that writing the foreword would give him free publicity. As a result, he used the generic title professor and wrote the foreword to introduce the new author, to persuade readers to accept the book's facts as true, to encourage them to buy and read it and to publicize himself as an expert on the 1966 E.C Ethiopian revolution and history books/ literature.

Why it mattered to analyze Professor Begashaw's foreword?

Well, analyzing Begashaw's foreword mattered because he put his thumb on history's scale using his prestigious social position which carries a lot of weight. For instance, he is a professor of economics and a chairperson of the economics department at Harper College, according to Harper College's website. I also evaluated his foreword because he plays a noticeable political activist role in our communities. For example, he is the president of Vision Ethiopia which I highly regard.

Moreover, I examined his foreword because he indirectly presented himself as an expert with respect to literature and the Red Terror at Higher-15. Due to his imposing titles, his seal of approval could mislead ordinary readers. Consequently, he should be held accountable for giving confirmation for the book's narrative without having personal knowledge, expertise or proof although the book is inconsequential. The book is irrelevant because the author has no authority or didn't cite his sources on the convoluted plot he wrote. Besides, the book is poorly written, and it is littered with inconsistent stories.

Calling Begashaw to account before the Ethiopian reading communities

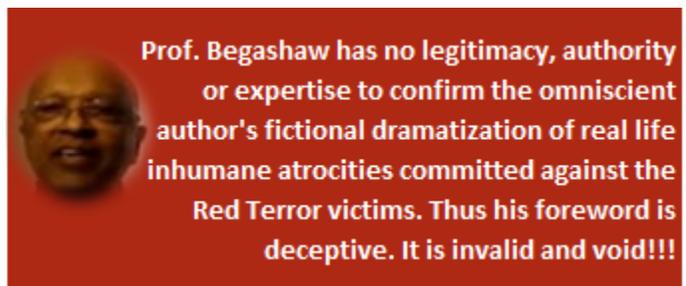
Begashaw didn't have authority over the EPRP's operations. He neither had personal knowledge of nor experience in the Higher-15's detention camp reign of terror. He neither had firsthand knowledge of the detainees' stories nor verified it. Yet he claimed the manipulated stories of the detainees' the omniscient author provided in his book are absolutely true. And then, using his fancy title, he approved the book's stories without evidence. He also recommended it for history textbook. His act is wholly inappropriate; thus his foreword's claims are invalid. Therefore, I encourage him to revoke his improper foreword and apologize for his reckless act for those

insulted by it who sacrificed with their “life, blood, sweat, tears and precious time in defense of freedom.”

My benefit or profit on this analysis?

My dividend on this analysis is that I did my best to settle the matter without analyzing Begashaw’s reckless foreword and distracting the Ethiopian reading communities again with the same issue. However, he ignored the strong evidence I provided to him against the book’s stories he confirmed as true stories for more than nine months. Consequently, I wrote this analysis of his foreword in which I provided proofs that show his foreword is deceptive, improper and invalid. By doing so, I stood for the truth. And I stuck to my words.

In conclusion, unless unsubstantiated assertions and misrepresentations of facts by those who have prestigious social positions are scrutinized and challenged head-on, meddlesome and/or false authorities such as Prof. Begashaw and Prof. Araia would keep meddling in others affairs and give more reasons for those who allege Ethiopia’s history is fake history. They would also make it appear that Ethiopians are incompetent when it comes to knowing the merits of good writing as well as documenting and guarding their own history.



To explain, as if the detainees, including my relatives don’t know their own experience at the detention camp, Begashaw – who didn’t have firsthand knowledge or experience with the crimes committed at Higher-15 – preached to them about their ordeal. He lectured them that the author’s fictional and inconsistent stories of their suffering are fabulously written and absolutely true. To appear he supported his assertion, without including his comparison and/or reasons, he claimed that the book is equivalent with “TOWER IN THE SKY”, a book by Hiwot Teffera. Furthermore, he preached the EPRP’s former members a sermon on the greatness of the book, “ፍጹም ነው እምነቱ”, and its usefulness to them. This is what he sweet talked them in Amharic: “ይህ መጽሐፍ ጠቃሚነቱ የኢሕአፓ አባላት ለነበሩት ብቻ ሳይሆን ለመላዉ የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ተማሪዎችና...” (ገጽ 383) which means: this book’s usefulness isn’t only for the EPRP’s former member; it is also for all Ethiopian history students... What more could Begashaw do to insult our intelligence than what he asserted in his foreword?

If Prof. Begashaw thinks he can keep ignoring the fact I presented to him that he confirmed an omniscient writer’s fictional stories as truth, he is mistaken because it is on his conscious. It is also on the consciousness of those Ethiopian elite he is leading at Vision Ethiopia. I count on them that they wouldn’t allow him to keep ignoring the strong evidence I keep providing to him because it weakens his moral authority, and by extension, Vision Ethiopia’s.

A Recap of the Book's Plot Line I Analyzed

Editor's note: This section is a [highlight of the critique](#) I wrote on the book in February 2017. I included it with this analysis to give the overall picture of the matter and as a quick reference to my first critique on the book.

I'm not arguing against the Red Terror stories of “ፍጹም ነው እምነቴ”. In fact, I think Ethiopians might not have enough resources: time, writers, paper, ink, producers, etc. to share the inhuman crimes Mengistu Haile Mariam's thugs committed against them with the world. For example, [according to AP](#), “Human Rights Watch has described the 1977-78 campaign known as the Red Terror as” "one of the most systematic uses of mass murder by a state ever witnessed in Africa."

Within the 1966 E.C Ethiopian revolution context, Sebhat intended his book to be his autobiography. His main story line where: he was detained at the Higher-15 detention camp because he was the EPRP's youth league member. He was brutally tortured for ten hours in a fifteen hours period. He was incapable to take a step due to the torture wounds he was forced to suffer and severely disabled. Due to that, he had to answer Mother Nature's call with a help of his cellmates in a bucket in front of his 30 cellmates for months (pp. 179-198).

Based upon the above plot, a reader would expect the author's detention stories to be his eyewitness accounts and experiences at his cell. However, his stories were from across Ethiopia, including executions sites. How did he make all that possible? Well, among others, he retold hearsay stories he gathered from others. He imagined the evil torturers/executioners acts and the detainees' deadly situations. And then he speculated on the outcome.



For instance, he gave the following specific visual details of an execution process from the beginning to the end: around dawn 3 a.m. to 4 a.m., the chaos around room #3 and room #4 increases. Those to be executed get out by turn and get their hands tied behind their back. They used the garden to the left and the field in front of the detention for an execution (pp. 206). Since the killers get nervous after they spilled human blood, their guards are expected to help them mask their fears by providing them with happiness and hospitality. So they loudly chatter and roll with laughter to encourage the killers to relax. Following a long period of chaos, about sunrise, we (the detainees, including Sebhat) hear the sound of a truck. As soon as the truck arrives, the usual detainees [he named names] kept on standby throw our brothers and sisters bodies on the truck (pp. 206-207).

Why Sebhat falsely claimed his stories are his eye witness report?

Well, who knows! But, in hindsight, it seemed to me he falsely claimed his stories are true because he thinks time is against him; he is getting old. He only has ten more years to get his

turn to rule Ethiopians. He needed to invent his politician resume for his hidden agenda to announce his own political party. For that he wanted to appear, he knows-it-all; he did it all, and he is an experienced politician. So, in his fake story factory, he manufactured his stories and made up his politician resume in a hurry. Then he announced his new political party. And he claimed it is different from the other Ethiopian political parties [one of countless one man parties] because it stands for the Ethiopian minority ethnic groups.

What was Sebhat's Role to bring Worku to justice?

Sebhat didn't contribute anything to bring Worku to justice, but ever since Sebhat learned Worku was arrested he (Sebhat) was on an ego trip. For example, he dishonestly claimed that he always talked about Worku in the Assimba paltalk room for five consecutive years. And he (Sebhat) pleaded with the audience for information on Tufa/Worku before he was found. Sebhat made it sound like it was his paltalk room effort that helped to find Worku. It wasn't Kiflu Ketema's friends and families' resolute effort (pp. 357). After Worku was arrested, Sebhat wanted to appear he played the lion's share for getting Worku the maximum sentence possible. Hence he (Sebhat) deceptively made up another lousy story.

His inconsistent tall tale goes like this: it was necessary and so he was looking for a witness who saw Worku killing detainees [*noted Worku wasn't charged with murder*]. While he (Sebhat) was looking for a witness, a female witness who saw Worku killing was looking for help on how to be able to testify against him. With her effort, she reached out to Sebhat. He made an arrangement for her to speak with the authorities the FBI, ICE and/or H.S.I. And she testified against Worku. (pp. 367)

In Sebhat's tale, the hidden message he is giving to his ordinary readers is that without him Worku's prosecutors wouldn't get the maximum sentence they asked for. The humble, poor lady wouldn't get an opportunity to share her horrifying experience with the world without his help. The truth is the lady didn't need him. She found a way to reach the authorities. She testified convincingly. She intensely moved the court's audience, including OSCAR winning documentarian - who offered to make a movie of her story - when she gave her victim's statement to the honorable judge,

His claim that he made an arrangement for the lady to testify is A SHAMELESS LIE. It led me to conclude he is a habitual liar. I have facts to prove my statement against his character. If I need more evidence, I will go to great lengths to provide. I challenge him for the second time to refute my statement against his moral fiber!

I don't know why Sebhat fraudulently claimed his role in the case against Worku. I know some observed him shaking and smoking a cigarette at the court during the trial. Others saw him craving for media attention. I hate to speculate but it appears to me that Sebhat thinks that one day one would be awarded a Medal of Honor along with acres of prime farmland for contributing

the most for the case against Worku. For that Sebhat dishonestly presented himself as a man who did the most in the case against Worku.

Noteworthy: although Sebhat claimed it was necessary to find someone who saw Worku killing people, his case wasn't a murder case. [It was an immigration case by the U.S. Attorney's Office, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's \(ICE\) and Homeland Security Investigations' \(H.S.I's\)](#). He is sentenced for twenty years for unlawful procurement of citizenship, making false statements on immigration documents and identity theft. After he finished his term, he will be deported to Ethiopia where he was sentenced to death in absentia by the TPLF more than two decades ago, including for executing prisoners during the Red Terror.

In the final analysis, Sebhat invented and/or manipulated his former prison mates' hearsay stories and attributed his doctored facts to them without their knowledge. To make it appear they contributed their stories for his book, he recognized them for their contribution. A handful of detainees I spoke with, including my family member told me they chitchatted with him at the coffee table about various things, including their prison ordeal at the detention camp. They said they weren't aware he was going to publish their stories. Some think his dishonest act proves that he was prying into their private lives. Worst yet, without having knowledge, evidence or legitimacy, Prof. Begashaw engaged himself in the Higher-15 detainees' situation and confirmed Sebhat's invented, manipulated and inconsistent stories.

Though I wished all my words were enlightening and heartening, I used vicious words like pry, plagiarist, liar, false authority and thief for the lack of better words to make my point. I called the author a thief because he stole my friends, family and my stories which we sacrificed our sweat and time.

The images in this analysis were adapted from Google's Images.

Bibliography

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