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**Article**

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## The Fall of *Tsähafé Te'ezaz* Wäldä-Giyorgis: Reminiscences of the Victim<sup>1</sup>

BAHRU ZEWEDE, Addis Ababa University

### I. The Context

The year 1955 is remembered not only for the spectacular Silver Jubilee commemoration of Haylä-Sellase's coronation but also for the downfall of one of the most powerful political figures of post-War Ethiopia. Since his attachment to the office of the *tsähafé te'ezaz* in the early 1930s, Wäldä-Giyorgis Wäldä-Yohannes had gradually won Emperor Haylä-Sellase's trust and confidence to the point where he almost came to impersonate him. His career demonstrated the height to which a person of otherwise humble origins could rise in imperial Ethiopia. Contributing to his meteoric rise must have been precisely this humble background, which, by depriving him of any powerful traditional base, made him attractive to the emperor who could use his talent and then dispose of him if and when it became necessary to do so. His industry, discretion, and mastery of detail were additional assets.<sup>2</sup> His closeness to the emperor during the five years of exile (1936–1941) must also have contributed to a special rapport and mutual appreciation between the emperor and his loyal servant.

In Haylä-Sellase's restored government, Wäldä-Giyorgis came to occupy two ministerial portfolios: that of the Pen and Interior. He had to give up the latter in 1949 for Justice, which he kept until his demise. Ministerial appointments were rarely attended with power. It is thus a measure of Wäldä-Giyorgis's political skill that he could invest his office, particularly the thitherto purely clerical one of *tsähafé te'ezaz*, with so much power and consequence. As *tsähafé te'ezaz*, he controlled ministerial access to the emperor and transmitted orders emanating, sometimes in the form of vague intimations, from the sovereign. The arrangement, Clapham observes, suited both

<sup>1</sup> The first part of this article is a condensed version of a paper that I presented with Mekonnen Tegegn the Seventh Seminar of the Department of History of Addis Ababa University, held in Jimma in March 1997. I am grateful to Mekonnen Tegegn for putting a copy of the document presented in the second part of this article at my disposal.

<sup>2</sup> His diligence and mastery of detail are attested to by many who knew him, including Ato Emmanuel Abraham, who described him soon after his fall as "the only Ethiopian minister at all capable of running his office efficiently": FO 371/113517, Killick to Ramsden.

the *tsähafé te'ezaz* and the emperor: “to one it gave the exercise of power, to the other the avoidance of responsibility”.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to his mediation of royal appointments, he was able to place his protégés in key positions in the bureaucracy. Even the brothers Aklilu and Akaläwärq Habtä-Wäld grew into prominence under his patronage, although in the end they sided with their brother, Mäkonnen, when the two former allies became bitter enemies.

Given this dominant position that Wäldä-Giyorgis had come to acquire, therefore, his abrupt fall from grace in April 1955 was bound to be a matter of some surprise. With not too much exaggeration, the British ambassador called it “a serious political crisis”, comparing it to the resignation of Malenkov on the Soviet political scene.<sup>4</sup> True to Ethiopian political tradition, speculation became rife as to the cause or causes for this sudden turn of events. Political analysts of the event also advanced various possible explanations for Wäldä-Giyorgis’s demise. Quite a few of these centered on the inevitability of the occurrence in view of his ultimate dispensability and the alarm engendered by his growing powers. Like all powerful politicians, he had created many enemies. Resentment of his closeness to the emperor and opposition to the power that he consequently managed to concentrate in his hands had been endemic among the traditional aristocracy. This resentment came to the surface when the idea of Wäldä-Giyorgis’s marriage to the emperor’s eldest daughter, Princess Tänañäwärq, was mooted in the early 1940s. The balance was decisively tilted against Wäldä-Giyorgis when Mäkonnen Habtä-Wäld, his erstwhile ally, joined that opposition sometime in the early 1950s, possibly in 1953.

In a way, one can say that there was an inherent vulnerability in Wäldä-Giyorgis’s position. Both Clapham and Markakis point to the way in which Wäldä-Giyorgis served as the emperor’s mud-guard, so to say. As Markakis writes, “Imperial dignity and Haile Selassie’s monumental egotism require scapegoats, and the brash Minister of Pen served that purpose for a long while”.<sup>5</sup> “Not least among the Emperor’s achievements,” Clapham concurs in a more charitable vein, “was the way in which he caused resentment both of the nobility and of frustrated reformers to be directed against Wäldä-Giyorgis rather than himself, thus remaining detached from policies for which he was essentially responsible.”<sup>6</sup>

The British embassy report on the event probably went further than most in trying to give a multi-dimensional explanation to the event. The financial scandals of Wäldä-Giyorgis’s brother, Mäkonnen, who reportedly used his

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie’s Government* (New York, 1969), p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> FO 371/113517, Busk to Macmillan, 6.5.55.

<sup>5</sup> John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford, 1974), p. 218.

<sup>6</sup> Clapham, p. 22.

position as Custodian of Enemy Property to enrich himself, was one factor. Wäldä-Giyorgis's known friendship with the Italian Embassy, the report continues less convincingly, might also have been used against him. The report also gives the threat posed by Wäldä-Giyorgis to his opponents a progressive content by speculating that he might have been "discovered ... slowly gathering round him a group of younger men to whom he preached not sedition but discontent with the slow progress of the present regime [urging] his appointment as Prime Minister and virtual dictator, but always under the Emperor, who would remain as a figurehead".<sup>7</sup>

Significantly, the report ascribes to the Crown Prince Asfa Wäsän, who reportedly had "his own following of younger men", an important role in bringing about Wäldä-Giyorgis's downfall. The former presumably confided to Busk that "he was very pleased with the changes that had been made".<sup>8</sup> In a subsequent "long private conversation", he explained that Wäldä-Giyorgis had been dismissed because "he had been intriguing for twelve years", adding that "while he was good at his job, it was impossible to continue to endure a man, who could never play straight".<sup>9</sup> The British, who were confidently anticipating an enhanced role in state affairs for the crown prince in the revised constitution that was due to be proclaimed as part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations, even ventured the thesis that Wäldä-Giyorgis was probably the victim of the growing reconciliation between the previously estranged father and son.<sup>10</sup>

It is conceivable that the crown prince was voicing the prevalent aristocratic opposition to Wäldä-Giyorgis rather than merely his own private opinion. For the fall of Wäldä-Giyorgis in 1955 was the climax of a long period of political struggle in the upper echelons of power. The struggle could be described as one between "hardliners" and "moderates". The former group had such stalwarts as *Ras Kasa*, *Ras Abbäbä*, and *Bitwäddäd Mäkonnen Endalkachäw*, the prime minister, while Wäldä-Giyorgis led the latter. The struggle appears to have first surfaced in 1947, a year that witnessed the first major radical opposition to Haylä-Sellasé's regime, thereby forcing the ruling class to react and make adjustments in differing ways. This was most dramatically reflected in two memos presented separately to the emperor by Wäldä-Giyorgis and the conservative group. The former, while arguing for a harmonious fusion of the traditional aristocracy and the educated elite, underlined the need for strengthening the role of parliament. The

<sup>7</sup> FO 371/113517, Busk to Macmillan, 6.5.55.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> FO 371/113517, Busk to Macmillan, 19.5.55.

<sup>10</sup> FO 371/113517, Busk to Macmillan, 6.5.55; Ramsden (FO) to Busk, 3.6.55, quoting a conversation with the Ethiopian ambassador in London, Abbäbä Rätta.

latter emphasized the traditional prerogatives of the aristocracy in all tiers of provincial administration and argued that the important ministries of defence and interior should be permanently reserved for it. In a veiled attempt to frustrate Wäldä-Giyorgis's ambition, it also argued that the emperor should keep the post of prime minister to himself.<sup>11</sup>

The two groups seem to have differed not only in the kind of recommendations they made for governmental reform but also in their perceptions of the Eritrean issue, with Wäldä-Giyorgis wary of the annexation agenda that was being adumbrated soon after the establishment of the federation in 1952. Wäldä-Giyorgis had a special relationship with the Eritrean chief executive, *Däjjazmach* Tädla Bayru. It was probably no mere coincidence that the latter was dismissed from his post only a couple of months after Wäldä-Giyorgis's fall. Confirmation of Wäldä-Giyorgis's more cautious, and ultimately wiser, stand on Eritrea is provided in a 1993 interview of a former Unionist, *Qäññazmach* Gila-Mikaél Bahta:

Before this problem [i.e. of Eritrea] was created, *Tsähafé Te'ezaz* Wäldä-Giyorgis urged on the emperor and the government that the matter had to be handled with care and that the federation should not be dissolved. But no one was prepared to listen to him. And, as we have seen, the war continued.<sup>12</sup>

Both groups, that of Wäldä-Giyorgis and the aristocracy appear to have engaged in a prolonged contest to win over the emperor to their side. Seasoned power broker that he was, Haylä-Sellásé appears to have tried to maintain the balance until he was finally forced to move against Wäldä-Giyorgis. The road to Wäldä-Giyorgis's demise might very well have started in 1949, when the important ministry of interior was taken away from him and given to his opponent, *Ras* Abbäbä.<sup>13</sup> Another significant move in the erosion of Wäldä-Giyorgis's power was the take-over of control of propaganda and the press by Mäkonnen Habtä-Wäld, who increas-

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed discussion of this, see Mekonnen Tegegn, "A Short Biography of Tsehafe Tezaz Wäldä-Giyorgis Walda-Yohannes (1901-1976)" (Addis Ababa University: History, 1992), pp. 41 ff. Of particular interest are the documents in Appendices II and III, representing the two memos submitted to the emperor in March and April 1947.

<sup>12</sup> *Muday*, Magabit 1985 Ethiopian Calendar, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> British records portray this as having been engineered by, or at least done with the consent of, Wäldä-Giyorgis, who was happy "to relinquish a post which he had found increasingly embarrassing" as well as "to bring about the eventual discredit of Ras Ababa", who had proven himself to be rather incompetent in administration: FO 371/73676, Lascelles to Bevin. But this interpretation of the event is far from convincing. The appointment of Wäldä-Giyorgis's protégé, Kefle Ergatu, as vice-minister in the same ministry seems to have been designed to act as a check on the new minister, however.

ingly emerged as the rallying point of the conservative opposition. This was finalized by September 1954 but the process might very well have started earlier.<sup>14</sup> Finally, the long absence of Wäldä-Giyorgis from Addis Ababa in 1954, when he accompanied the emperor on his tour of the United States and Europe, provided his opponents with the opportunity to consummate their plot for his downfall. The special attention that Wäldä-Giyorgis got in the Western press as well as in official receptions might also have swayed the emperor into finally moving against his powerful minister.<sup>15</sup>

The 13-page document printed here deals with the events of April–May 1955 – the finale, so to say, of Wäldä-Giyorgis’s downfall. It is extracted from the 127-page memoirs of *Tsähafé Te’ezaz* Wäldä-Giyorgis. It is in Wäldä-Giyorgis’s own hand-writing and has some later additions and interpolations, as well as some underlining with red ink, all reportedly by the author himself.<sup>16</sup> The document is written with a degree of detachment that is all the more remarkable in view of the agony that the event must have caused the author. Interestingly, he entitles the section dealing with the crisis that relegated him to the political backstage: “New Era”. It sets the atmosphere of crisis that prevailed on his return from the American tour, faithfully records the forces ranged against him, and reaches its high point with the second of three memorable audiences the author had with the emperor.

The document leaves one in no doubt that Mäkonnen Habtä-Wäld was the mastermind of the whole plot. Yet, the two antagonists, Mäkonnen and Wäldä-Giyorgis, maintained an outward show of decorum, choosing to fight it out mainly through surrogates. There was apparently also a commercial dimension to it, the pro-Mäkonnen Harari merchant Abdussamad ranged against the pro-Wäldä-Giyorgis Eritrean Unionist businessman, Kékian.

The Church, more specifically the two archbishops *Abunä* Basilios and *Abunä* Téwoflos, appear to have played something of a mediating role. As the tension started to build up, first to broach the issue was *Abunä* Basilios, who asked Wäldä-Giyorgis if there was something wrong in his relations with the emperor. The *abun* was the only other person present during two of the three audiences (on April 25, May 6, and May 13) Wäldä-Giyorgis had with the emperor and in fact arranged the second and most important one. *Abunä*

<sup>14</sup> See, respectively, Taddasa Nagash, “The Office of the Sahafi Tizaz and the Personality of Walda Giyorgis, 1941-1955”, BA thesis (Haile Sellassie I University: History, 1973), p. 23, and Mekonnen, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (London, 1967), p. 296; Taddasa Nagash, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> The leather-bound document was kept with the author until his departure for England (after suffering a stroke) in 1974, when he bequeathed it to his eldest son, Ato Assäfa Wäldä-Giyorgis.

Téwoflos was also one of the few people who visited Wäldä-Giyorgis when he fell ill the day after his dismissal. He did this after consultations with the emperor. During the final departure of Wäldä-Giyorgis, he felt clearly distressed and told Wäldä-Giyorgis that he had expressed his feelings to the emperor in tears.

Undoubtedly, the document's greatest merit is in the insight it gives us into the relationship between emperor and *tséhafé te'ezaz* and the trauma the separation after so many years of working together must have represented to both.<sup>17</sup> A creation of the emperor, Wäldä-Giyorgis could not believe that his master, whom he trusted so much, could turn his face against him on the basis of what he considered were mere slanderous allegations. If he provoked hatred, it could only be in the course of working unreservedly for him. Least of all did he expect him to give so much weight to the accusations of Mäkonnen, Aklilu, and *Ras* Abbäbä.

What exactly severed the relations of the two partners in political power is far from clear. In their first audience, the emperor presented the case as follows:

Although We Ourselves told you that both your heart and feet have become increasingly distant, you do not seem to have given it much weight. You have ignored Our repeated request to divulge what it was you promised to tell Us in London. You have neglected your work and your character has changed. Since this might be because of overwork and in order that you might correct yourself, We have decided to transfer you to another post.

The "London promise", which apparently perturbed the emperor very much, remains something of a puzzle in the whole episode. At the beginning of his account, Wäldä-Giyorgis writes that the emperor had raised the matter as they were travelling from Malta to London. The minister had replied that all the essential matters had been exhaustively discussed. In the course of the May 6 audience, however, he revealed that he was only speaking in exile code language about certain government affairs.

This, admittedly, is not very helpful. But the fact that the issue was first raised following Wäldä-Giyorgis's report to the emperor on his conversation with *Däjjach* Tädla Bayru raises the possibility that it might have had something to do with the Eritrean question. There are three other points raised in Wäldä-Giyorgis's memoirs – all related to the European trip – that seem to help explain the troubled relationship between the emperor and his most powerful minister. First, it was alleged by his opponents that Wäldä-Giyorgis

<sup>17</sup> Busk, who wrote that Wäldä-Giyorgis's dismissal was "to be regretted", added: "He is one of the few ministers of any capacity, industry or intelligence ... it must have been a great wrench to the Emperor to part with him": FO 371/113517, Busk to Macmillan, 6.5.55.

had been given precedence over Prince Mäkonnen in decorations. Secondly, and even more seriously, they accused him of communicating secretly with Churchill. Thirdly, he reminded the emperor in the course of his long defence of his earlier statement that he stood to gain nothing from all the attention shown him at Brown Hotel in London. All the above seems to underline the rather subterranean level at which the battle was fought. A few other points that Wäldä-Giyorgis makes in his eloquent defence of his conduct and career are also comprehensible only to the initiated. In other respects, however, that self-defence is quintessential and poignant.

The fall of Wäldä-Giyorgis was attended by three *shum sher* (as cabinet reshuffles were known in imperial days): the first in May 1955, which removed him from his powerful post and the other two in June and July, when the power realignment could be said to have been consummated. Mäkonnen replaced Wäldä-Giyorgis as power broker. But he did not last long in that position. He fell victim to the abortive coup of 1960, ironically led by one of the beneficiaries of the 1955 reshuffle, Brigadier General Mängestu Neway. He endured long enough, however, to help his brother Aklilu rise to the post of prime minister which he continued to occupy until 1974. But Aklilu scarcely attained the stature of Wäldä-Giyorgis. As for Mäkonnen, no sooner had his ascendancy been established than expressions of concern and alarm were heard from various quarters.

The document presented here is one of rare historical value. It is not very often in Ethiopian history that a political figure of Wäldä-Giyorgis's calibre and consequence gives his own personal account of his downfall. Like all personal accounts, it can not be taken too literally. Recorded as they are after the event, some of the conversations may have too much of the author's own projections. Yet, it is this very same personal touch that conveys more eloquently than the best historical narrative the human drama involved in such an event.

Moreover, its personal angle aside, the document gives us a rare insight into the politics of Haylä-Sellasé's Ethiopia as well as the personality of the emperor himself. The alignments in the power struggle that went on in the upper echelons of power, the mediating role of the Church, the balancing act of the emperor, the anguish of the estranged partners in power (emperor and *tsähabfé te'ezaz*) - all these are illuminated through the pen of someone who was so close to the event described. Above all, it is the sense of decorum that prevailed throughout the whole crisis that forces us to reflect on the changing political cultures of 20<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopia. In comparison with the unceremonious disposal of undesirable political elements in post-1974 Ethiopia - be they actual or potential opponents or loyal servants who have outlived their usefulness - the dismissal of Wäldä-Giyorgis, on the basis of his own account, strikes us by its comparative civility.



II. The Document

፲፱፻፵፯

አዲስ ዘመን

መቅደም ።

ከአሜሪካ መንገድ ከተመለስን በኋላ ትንሽ የጠቆረ ዳመና ይታይ ነበር ። ወዲያው ወደ አውሮፓ መንገድ ለመሄድ መዘጋጀት አስፈላጊ ሆነ ። ስለፕሮግራሙ በውጭ ጉዳይ ሚ. መመላለስ ነበረብኝ ። መከራን ሀ.ወ. አክሊሉ ሀ.ወ. ዘወትር እንገናኛለን ። ከመከራን ሀ.ወ. ጋራ ቀደም ብሎ በኬኪያንና በአብዱ ሰመድ ምክንያት የተነጋገርነው ነገር አለ ። ይኸውም እርሱ በድብቅ ስለሚሠራው ነው ። በድብቅ የሚሠራውንም ለአክሊሉ ሳልገልጥለት አልቀረሁም ። ለራሱም ለመ.ሀ.ወ. ነግራለሁ ።

መጀመሩ ወደ አሜሪካ ለመሄድ የመንገዱ ሥራ ሁሉ ተደራጅቶ ካለቀ በኋላ ተከታይ ሰው ሲመረጥ ስለራሴ መቅረቴን መርጬ አመለከትሁ ። እናቴ ቀባሪ እንዳታጣ ነው ፤ አልተቻለም ። በሁለተኛውም መንገድ ማለት ከአውሮፓ ለመቅረት አመለከትሁ ፤ አልተቻለም ።

በመንገድ ከማልጣ ወደ እንግሊዝ ሲኬድ በመርከብ ውስጥ ስለ ኤርትራ ከደ. ተደላ ባይሩ ጋራ ቢሾፍቴ ተነጋግራው የነበረውን አንድም ሳላስቀር አስረዳሁ ። ከአክሊሉ ስንገናኝ የሚጨረስበት መንገድ እንዲፈለግ ታዘዝሁ ። መንገዶቼም ለማመራረጫ በማስታወሻው ተመልክተዋል ። ወዲያውም በሎንዶን እንነጋገራለን ብለህ የነበረው ምን ኖሯል የሚል ጥያቄ ቀረበልኝ ። ንግግር ያልተደረገበት ነገር ስላልነበረ ምንም ተጨማሪ የማይገኝለት መሆኑን ተናግሮ ቢቀርም የሚያገዝድ ነገር እንደሌለበት አመለከትሁ ፤ በበሴም(?) እንደዚሁ ተረስቶ ቀርቷል ።

ገና ወደ እንግሊዝ አገር ሳንሄድ ከመከራን ሀ.ወ. ከሃህሉ ድፋዬ ፣ ከአክሊሉ ሀ.ወ. ስለእኔ ጉዳይ ብዙ ቆይታ መደረጉን ሰምቻለሁ ። ራ. አበበ ቢ.ወ. መከራን ፣ ራስ ካሣ ፣ ቢ.ወ. አንዳርጌ የነገሩ ተካፋዮች ነበሩ ። አባ ሐና በብዙ አሸርሻሪነት አየሁባቸው ።

ሃህሉ ድፋዬ ይጠበቃል እኔም እንድከታተለው ታዘዝተዋለሁ ሲል ለፊ. ፈለቀ ነገረው ። አነጋገሩም ራሱም እንዲርቀኝ ፣ ሌላም ሰው እንዳይቀርበኝ ነው ።

መ.ሀ.ወ. ለዘበኛ አለቃ ወደእኔ ቤት የሚመጣውን ሰው ለመቆጣጠር አዘዘ ተባለ ።

ሚስተር ሮበርትና ግራብዋስኪ የተባሉ የከፍተኛ ፍ/ቤት ፕሬዚዳንትና ዳኛ በመ.ሀ.ወ. ተጋብዘው የሰለላ ሥራ እንዲሠሩ መጠየቃቸውንና ደግሞ ዛሬም የሚያውቁትን እንዲናገሩ መጠየቃቸውን ተናግረዋል ።

ነገር እየበሰለ ይሄዳል ። ለገሪ. መርድ መከታን ወ.ዩ. ለቢሾፍቱ አቶሞቢሉን አዋሰው ፤ ብዙ ዓይነት አሳብ ፈጠረ ። ለመርድ በኩ. አሰፋ ም/የልፍኝ አስከልካይ በኩል ተጻፈ ። ነገር እየተጋነነ ሄደ ፤ ለራስ አደፍርሰው ስሞታ ተነገረ ። ብፁዕ አቡነ ባስልዮስ ጠርተው በጃንሆይ የተቀያየምሁት እንዳለ ጠየቁኝ ። ምንም የማውቀው እንደሌለ ፤ ነገር ግን አንድ ቀን ጃንሆይ ልብህም እግርህም የራቀ ስለመሰለን ነው ብለው ቢጠይቁኝ ፣ ሳይጠሩኝ መጥቼ የማላውቅ መሆኔን ፤ በቢሮዬ ግን ገና ዱሮ ልሠራው የተገባኝ የነበረውን የፍ. ሚኒስቴርን ሥራ በማጥናትና የሚሻሻልበትን በማዘጋጀት ላይ መሆኔን ገልጬ መናገሪን ነገርኋቸው ። በውጭ ግን የነመከታንን ሀ.ወ. ስብከት በነርሱ በኩል የሚደረገውን ክፋት ነገርኋቸው ።

ይህን ስናገር ከልቤ ነው ። ጃንሆይ(ይ)ን ብቻ የማምን በመሆኔ የሚጠላኝም ቢኖር በርሳቸው ምክንያት በማደርገው በመሆኑ የሰው ነገር ሰምተው ይጥሉኛል ብዬ አልጠረጠርሁም ። ያውም የነመከታን ሀ.ወ(ል)ድና የነአክሊሉ የነራስ አበበ ነገር!!!

በሌላ በሁለተኛ ቀን አቡነ ባስልዮስን ምናልባት የተገለጠላቸው ነገር እንዳለ እንዳይደብቁኝ ብጠይቃቸው ምንም ነገር እንደሌለ አባ ሐና ግን ጸ.ት. ወልደ ጊዮርጊስና መከታን ሀ.ወ. ተጣልተው ጃንሆይ ተጨንቀዋል ብለው እንደ ነገሯቸው ብቻ ነግረውኝ ተለያየን ።

ይህ ሁሉ ነገር ሲሆን ፣ አንድ አንድ ጊዜ ተጠርቼ ስሄድ ማዕረጌ ቦታዬ ፣ ንግግሩ ሁሉ አንድም ሳይጓደል እሸኝ ነበር ። የነበረኝ እርዳታ ፤ የሁዳዴ ጾም ድርጉ አልታገላም ። ምንም እንዳልጠረጠር ነው? በእኔ በኩል የምጠብቀው ቀድሞም ባላጋራዎቼ ሲፈታተኑኝ ጃንሆይ ራሳቸው በነገሩ ለመድረስ ራሴ ሞክሯ ነበር በማለት ጥቂት ቀን ፊት ነስተውኝ እንደነበረ ወዲያው ገልጠው ያስረዱኝ ነበርና በዚሁ ዓይነት ብቻ እጠብቅ ነበር ። በሰው መታመን ከንቱ መሆኑን መጽሐፍ ይናገራል ።

በነመከታን ሀ.ወ. መሪነት በነአብዱ ሰመድና ሌሎች አደሬዎች ስብከት ብዙ ዓይነት ሀሰተኛ ወሬ በከተማ እንዲወራ ተደረገ ። ይህም ከሕዝቡ ለማራራቅ ታስቦ ነው ። ፬ ሚ ብር በፈረንጅ አገር ተገኘ ፤ መከታንን ወ.ዩ. ፯ ሚል. ብር ተገኘበት ተባለ ። በነላማ ወ. ገብርኤል በኩል የሌለ የመከታንን ነውር እንዲነገር በምርመራ የተያዘ መሆኑን ጭምር ተወራ ።

የእኔም አንድ ጊዜ መያዝ ፣ አንድ ጊዜ መታሠር ፣ አንድ ጊዜ ከቤት አትውጣ ማለት በየተራ እየተነገረ ራእክሲዮን እንዲታወቅ ተደረገ ። በእኔ በኩል በሌላም ምንም የለም ። ማነው በገንዘብ ሊጠረጠርስ ሊከሰስስ የሚገባው ኖሯል? በቅጩቱ(?) በትኩሳቱ እንኳ ቢሆን ፤ በክሎፎርም ለአፔራሲዮን ተኝቼ እንኳ ቢሆን ፤ እነሆድ አምላኩን ፤ ኢትዮጵያን እየሞሸለቁ ብቻቸውን ለመክበር የሚፈልጉና ገንዘብ ጣዖታቸው የሆኑትን እነዚያን ሌቦች በሳብኩንሲያንሴ ሳይቀር ከመርገም ያላቋረጥሁ ይህን ሰው ያምናል ተብሎ መነገሩ ሲገርመኝ ከሕሊናቸው የተለያዩ ፣ በክፉውም

በደጉም ቀን የማውቃቸው እነጊዜ ዘመዴ ምንጮች በመሆናቸው ሳልደነቅ አልቀረሁም ።

በእንግሊዝ አገር በነበርሁ ጊዜ በኒሻን ከልዑል መኰንን በሌለ ነገር አፎካክረው በከተማ ያስወሩብኝ ወሬ ወልደ ጊዮርጊስ ከቸርቺል ጋራ በምስጢር ሲነጋገር ተደረሰበት የሚለውን የሀሰት ወሬ እንዲያስከትል ተደረገ ።

በሕማማት ታመምሁ ፤ ለትንሣዔ ወደቤተ ክርስቲያን ለመሄድ አልቻልሁም ። በቤቴ ለሌላ ሰው በሽታ እንዳልሆን ሰው እንዳይመጣ ከለከልሁ ። በቢሮ ግን ዘወትር ባለጉዳይ ተቀበልሁ ። የምገባበት የምወጣበት እንዲታወቅ መደረጉን ሰማሁ ። በስልክ ከጃንሆይ በኩል መኰንን በኩል ተሰናብቼ ወደ ቢሾፍቴ ሄድሁ ። በዚያ አንድ ሳምንት ተቀመጥሁ ። አንድ መላክተኛ የፌርፊልድ ቪላ ጠባቂ አባ ሐና ደውለዋል ብሎ መጥቶ ጠየቀኝ ፤ ባልጋዬ ላይ ነበርሁ ። እንደዚህም ታምሜ ስለ ፍርድ ሚኒስቴር የሥራ ማሻሻያ ስሠራ ቆይቼ ነበር ።

ሚያዝያ ፲፮ ቀን ሰኞ ወደ አዲስ አበባ በቀጥታ ሄጄ ወደ ቢሮ ገባሁ ። ጥቂት ሠርቼ በቢሾፍቴ ያዘጋጀሁትን የፍ.ሚ. ሥራ ወደ ጃንሆይ እንዲቀርብ በአንቦሊብ አዘጋጅቼ ትቼ ወደ ግቢ እጅ ለመንሳት ገባሁ ። በዚያም ጃንሆይ ከነዚያው ጋራ ከልዑል ራስ ካሣ በቀር መሰብሰባቸውን ሰማሁ ። በውጭ ስጠባበቅ ተጠርቼ ገባሁ ። ጃንሆይ ከብፁዕ አቡነ ባስልዮስ ጋራ ብቻ ነበሩ ። አረንጓዴ ሳሎን በሚባለው ነው ።

ጃንሆይ ጥቂት ጊዜ ከቆዩ በኋላ ፤ ልብህም እግርህም መራቁን ራሳችን ብንነግርህ ሳይከብድህ ስለቀረ ፤ ደግሞ በሎንዶን እናገራለሁ ያልከውን መላልሰን ብንጠይቅህ ሳትነግረን ስለቀረህ ፤ ሥራህንም ችላ ስላልከውና ባሕርይህም የተለወጠ ሆኖ ስላገኘ ነው ምናልባትም በሥራ ብዛት የደረሰብህ ሆኖ ሊገኝ ይችላልና ራስህን አስበህ እንድታርም ወደ ሌላ ሥራ ልናዛውርህ ስላሰብን ይህን እንድታውቀው ነው አሉኝ ።

ስለ ሁለቱም ለመጀመሯቸው ሳልጠራ መጥቼ አለማወቁንና ለሁለተኛውም አንድ ጊዜ ተጠይቄ እንደነበረ መለስሁ ። ያውም የተለመደ ነገር በመሆኑ እየመላለስሁ ያንኑ የመንግሥት ሥራ በማመልከት ማሰልቸት እንዳይሆን አውቄ መተዋን ተናግሮ የታሰበው ሥራ እንዲቀርልኝ (ይቅርታ እንዲደረግልኝ) ለመንሁ ። አይሆንም (በታዘዝኸው ሥራ ከተገኘህ በኋላ ነው) ተባለ ።

ከዚህ ቀጥሎ ማንን ደስ ለማሰኘት የታሰበ መሆኑን ራሳቸውን ወይስ ሌሎችን ጠየቅሁ ። ራሳቸው ብቻ አስፈላጊነቱን አመዛዝነው ያደረጉት መሆኑን እንዲያውም ሌላ ሰው ደስ ለማሰኘት የሚያደርጉት ነገር አለመኖሩን «ታውቀኝ የለም እንዴ» በሚል ቃል አጋነው ነገሩኝ ። ከዚህ በኋላ እርስዎን ደስ የሚል ከሆነ መልካም ነው (ለዘለዓለም ያንግሥዎ) ብዬ ተቀበልሁ ። (ነገር ግን ቤት(?) ቅርስ የሌለኝ በጆሺ ብር የሚቆጠር ገንዘብ እንኳ የማላገኝ መሆኑን አረጋግጬ ገለጥሁ ።)

ወጣሁ ወደሹመት ቤት ተጠርቼ ገባሁ ። ራስ አበበ ቢ.ወ. መኰንን ገብረ ወልድ ነበሩ ። ገብረ ወልድ የጃንሆይ ቃል ነው ብሎ ጃንሆይ የነገሩኝን የወቀሳ ቃል አንቦ ያሩሲ ጠ. ገዢ ለመሆን መታዘዜን ነገረኝ ።

ቃሉ የሁለታችሁ ነው ልቤ አይቀበለውም ። መጀመሪያም የጃንሆይ ታማኝ ባሯ ነኝ አሁንም ነኝ ወደፊትም ያው ነኝ ። ትእዛዙን ቢሆን ተቀብያለሁ ብዬ እጅ ነስቼ ወጣሁ ። በዚያን ጊዜ ትዝ ያለኝ ቃል፡-

«እንደ ሌባ ልትይዙኝ በሰይፍና በጎመድ መጣችሁ ሁለጊዜ ከናንተ ጋራ እኖር ነበርሁ በቤተ መቅደስ ተቀምጬ ሳስተምር አልያዛችሁኝም» የሚለው የጌታ ቃል ነበር ።

ለማክላ(?) አይደለም ፤ የግቢው መናወጥ የዘበኛው ሹም መደናበር ፤ የክብር ዘበኞች በርከት ያሉ አፊሰሮች መሸባበር ፤ የደጃች መሥፍን ስለሺ ማገርገር ብዙ ነገር ያሳይ ነበርና ነው ። ሥዕሉን ለመተረክ ላውራ ያስቸግራል ። ሰዓቱ ሲደርስ ሁሉም ተፈጸመ (ከብዙ ዓመታት ጥረት በኋላ) ።

ከሹመት በኋላ የሲንዛኖ ግብዣ ተደርጎ ቤቴ ሄድሁ ። አዲሱ ጸ.ት. ተፈራወርቅና ከንቲባ ከበደ ወዲያው ወደቤቴ መጥተው ጠየቁኝ ። ባ. ማህተመ ሥላሴ መጣ ። ከሚኒስትሮች የመጣ የለም ከነዚህ በቀር ። የእኔ ባልደረቦች ብ. መርሥዔና ከ. ታምራት ግን መጥተዋል ። አክሊሉና አካለወርቅ ከደጅ ተመልሰዋል በማግሥቱ ማክሰኞ ። የግብር ይውጣ አመጣጥ መሆኑ ያስታውቅ ነበር ። ወዳጆቹ ሁሉ ወደቤቴ መጥተዋል ።

ማክሰኞ ሚያዝያ ፲፰ ወደ ግቢ በደንቡ ሂጃለሁ ። ለምሳሌ ተመለስሁ ። በዚህ ቀን ጧት የነደጃች ከበደ ተሰማ ሹምሽር ነበር ። ብላታ ዘውዴ ከንቲባ ሆኗል ። ቢ.ወ. መኰንን ራስ አበበ ባለበት ጠርተው ማኅተሙንና የምስጢር ወረቀት ሁሉ ላቶ ገብረ ወልድ አስረክብ ብለውሃል ብለው ነገሩኝ ። ከዚህ ስወጣ ለሚጠይቁኝ ሰዎች ይህንኑ ገልጬ ልንገራቸውል ስል ጠየቅኳቸው ። ዝም ስላሉ ወጣሁ ። ገብረ ወልድ ተከታትሎ መጥቶ መቸ ታስረክበኛለህ አለኝ ። ጌቶቹን አማክሬ ነው አልሁት ።

በዚሁ ተዘግቶ ወደ ቤቴ ሄድሁና ምሳ ስበላ ያልሆነ ምግብ ቀምሼ ብዙ የደም ተቅማጥ አመመኝ ። በሚያዝያ ፲፱ ፣፳ ፵ ዲግራ ነበረኝ ። በቤተ መንግሥትና በከተማ ውሸት ወይም የንዴት መስሎ መጠርጠሩን ሰማሁ ። ሮብ ሚያዝያ ፲፱ ከከለ ቀን በኋላ አያሌውን ጠራሁት ። ማኅተም ይዞልኝ መጣ ። ማስታወሻ ለመጻፍ አልቻልሁም ። ራሱን አጽፎ ምልክት አድርጎ ማህተሙን ሁሉ ላክሁ ። እኔ ስላመመኝ በተረከብሁት ዓይነት ተረካቢው ምሎ ይረከብ ምልክትም ይደረግለት ብዬ ነው የላክሁ ። አያሌው ማህተሙን እንደያዘ በቢሮው እንዲያድር ታዘዘ ። በማግሥቱ በሚያዝያ ፳ አባ ሐና እያስማሉ ማረካከባቸውን ሰማሁ ። ማህተሙንም የተረከበው ም/ ጸ.ት. የተባለው ገብረ ወልድ ነው ። ይህ ሰው መንግሥት ሳይጠፋ የጽ.ሚ. ዋና ጸሐፊ ነበር ። ከጠፋ በኋላ የጠቅላይ ቢሮ ለተባለው የዱሮ አለቃው ጸ.ት. ወ.

መስቀል ቢትወደድ ተብለው እርሱ ዋና ጸሐፊ ሆኖ ይሠራ ነበር ። የነፍራንካን ጠባይ የቀዳ በሙሉ የተዳቀለ ነው ። በጨፌ ደንሳ ሻምበል አስፋው የተባለ አርበኛ አግኝቶት መትረየሱን አሸክሞ ሸንኝ ቢለው ሲያለቅስ በጥፊ ጠፈጠፍኩና አባረርሁት ብሎ ተናግሯል ።

ወደ እኔ ለመመለስ ታምሜ እንዳለሁ አቡነ ቴዎፍሎስ መጥተው አዩኝ ። ከጃንሆይ ከተነጋገሩ በኋላ ነው የመጡት ።!!! ደህና ሆኜ ወጣሁ ። ጃንሆይ አዩኝ ፤ ሰውነቴ ተለውጦ ነበርና ጃንሆይ ሀዘናቸውን ገለጡ ። ለማረፍ ተመለስሁ ።

ከግቢ ስወጣ ግን ወደ አቡነ ባስልዮስ ሄድሁ ። እርሳቸውም ወደቤቴ ለመምጣት ጠይቀው ነበር ። አነጋገሩኝ የጃንሆይንም ስሜት ገለጡልኝ ። ያነጋግሩኝ አልጏቸው ። ቃል ሰጡኝ ።

በሚያዝያ ፳፯ ለበዓሉ ሄጃለሁ ። በቀድሞ ቦታዬ ቆምሁ ። አቶ መ.ሀ. ወልድ ከእኔ ቀጥሎ ነበር ። ምነው ደስ አለህ ሳትለኝ ብዬ ጠየቅሁት ፤ የመጡት ሲመለሱ አለ ። ማነጋገር አልፈለገም ። እንግዲያስ እኔ እንኳን ደስ ያለህ ልልህ በቤትህ እመጣለሁ አልሁት ።

ለማታ ግብር አገረ ገዢዎች ከሚገኙበት ቦታ ከራሶች ቀጥሎ ቆሜአለሁ ፤ ገበታዬ ከእንግሊዝ አምባሳደር ጋራ ባንድ ገበታ ነበር ። እንደምንም መሸና ወደቤታችን ሄድን ።

ሚያዝያ ፳፰ አርብ ከጃንሆይ እጨጌ ባሉበት ተነጋገርሁ ። የነገርጌቸው ቃል ቀጥሎ ያለው ነው ።-

1. ስለተደረገልኝ ችግርታ አመሠገንሁ ፤
2. ስሾምም እንደ ልጅ ተነግሮኝ ስሻርም እንደ ልጅ ተነግሮኝ ስለሆነ አመሰግንሁ
3. ቅሬታችንን ከምንም አልቆጠርኸው ለተባለው ያልጠረጠርሁት ከተለመደው የወጣ ነገር መሆኑን አስረዳሁ ፤
4. የተለመደው ያለጎደለበት ፤ በጾም የሚታሰብልኝ ፤ በበዓሉ (በገና) ያልተዘነጋሁ ፤ በችግርታ የሚደረገው ያልጎደለብኝ ስለሆነ እንዴት ልጠረጥር የሚቻል ነበር ፤ እንግዲያውማ ቅሬታ ለመግፈፍ የምሰጠው አይደለሁምን ብዬ ገለጥሁ ፤
5. እንዲያውም የፍ/ሚኒስቴርን ሥራ ለማቃናት የምደክመው ደስ ያሰኘ መስሎኝ ነበር በማለት ገለጥሁ ፤
6. በሎንዶን አመለክታለሁ ብዬው የነበረ ያንኑ የመንግሥት ጉዳይ በስደተኛ ቋንቋ ለመናገር ነበር ስል መለስሁ ፤
7. እኔም ሌላውም ሕዝብዎ በእውነተኛ ዳኝነት ተመክተን የምንኖር ስለሆነ በስምዎ ግፍ እንዳይሠራ ብቻ ይጠብቁ አልሁ ፤
8. ስለእኔ በተለየ ሕይወት የምለው በጃንሆይ ክፉ ሲደርስ አለማየትን ፤ ለሐዘን ምክንያት አለመሆንን ነው ፤
9. ከዚህ ቀድሞ መላልሼ እንደተናገርሁት አዬ ጌታዬ በሚያሰኝ ጊዜ አያድርሰኝ ፤

- 10. ለመስዋዕትነት በሚመቸው መንገድ የጃንሆይ ልብ ሳይቆስል ፤ የእኔን የግል ጉዳይ እስከማሰላሰል ሳይደርስ ለመስጠት ፈቃደኛ ነኝ የሚለውን ገለጥሁ ፤
- 11. አሁንም ከጃንሆይ ከቀረ ራስ ካላንም ምሳሌ እየወሰድኩ እንኳ ን እኔን ማንም ቢሆን መለስ ብሎ የሚመለከተው እንደሌለ ገለጥሁ ። በብራውን ሆቴል ሰው እኔን ይወደኝ የሚመስል የነበረ ለራሱ ሲል መሆኑን ገልጬ የተናገርሁትን አሳስብኳቸው ፤
- 12. እኔን ጠላሁ የሚል ሰው በምን ተገናኝቼው ምን የግል ጉዳይ ገጥሞን ነው በማለት በዳኝነት እንዲቀጣ ባለሚልነት የጃንሆይን ምሕረት እንዲያገኝ ያልጠየቅሁለት ማን ይገኛል ። ከነጋድራስ አፈወርቅና ከአዛዥ ወርቅነህ በቀር አልሁ ፤
- 13. በፍጹም የሚያጠፋ ካልሆነ የሰውን ነውር መግለጥ ጌታን ከሰው ማለያየት ስለሆነ መተውን ካገልግሎት ቆጥራለሁ (R. እንደ አቶ መኰንን ሀ.ወ. እንደ አክሊሉ ሀ.ወ. ሌላም) ፤
- 14. ጌታዬንም ማገልገልና ክፋቴን ተቃዋሚነቴ ፤ የማይረሳ ቂም ፈጥሮ ለሚከታተለኝም አዛዥና አሳዛኙ እንደሆንኩ ጃንሆይ ያውቃሉ (R. እንደ ቢ.ወ. አንዳርጌ) ፤
- 15. የጃንሆይ መንግሥት አባቴን ወንድሜን ልጄን የገበርሁበት እኔም ማናቸውንም ሳልቆጥብ በሙሉ መስዋዕትነት የተሰጠሁበት መንግሥት ነው ። የቤተሰቤ ዕድል በጠላትም ጊዜ መሰደድ በጃንሆይም ዘመነ መንግሥት ያው የመሰደድ ዕድል እንዳይደርስበት ሊታሰብልኝ የሚገባ ሆኖ ቢገኝ ሰብሳቢ እንዳያጡ ይታሰብልኝ ፤
- 16. አንድ ጃንሆይን በማመን ፤ እግዚአብሔር የበለጠ እንደሚያውቀኝ ሳምን ጃንሆይ ከርሱ የበለጠ ያውቁኛል ብዬ ያደላሁ ፍጡር ነበርሁ ። የሰጡኝን አደራ መውሰድ ግን የጃንሆይ ፋንታ ነው ፤
- 17. ጃንሆይ አሽከር አያጡም እኔ ግን ጌታ አላገኝም ፤  
አሁን ይውደዱኝ አልልም አይጥሉኝ ፤  
ይመኑኝ አልልም አይጠርጥሩኝ ፤  
ይዘኑልኝ አልልም አይጨክኑብኝ ፤

ዛሬ ያለፈው የ35 ዓመት ካሪዬሬ የተናደና የወደቀበት ነው ። የኃዘን ዘመን ባሯዎ ነኝና ፊት አይንሱኝ ፤ ከስጦታዎ ሁሉ ፊትዎ ይብስብኛል ።

ከዚህ በኋላ ጃንሆይ የ36 ዓመት አገልግሎት ቅርስ በመካከላችን አለ ። በሎንዶንም እናገራለሁ ላልከው ሀሳቡ ይህ መሆኑን መልአክ አይደለን እንዴት ለማወቅ እንችል ኖሯል ፤ ሰው እንዳያጠፋኝ ላልከው ሰው ማለት አንተም ራስህ ነህ ስለዚህ ራስህ ራስህን እንዳያጠፋው ተጠንቀቅ ሁሉም ወደፊት በምትሠራው ይታያል ሲሉ መለሱ ።

እኔ የጃንሆይን መቀየም ይገዢ እኔም ሥራውም እንዲጋዝ አልፏልግምና በዚህ ዓይነት ወደ ሥራዬ እንዴት ለመሄድ እችላለሁ ስል መለስሁ ። አቡነ ባስልዮስ የመማር ያህል ነው የጃንሆይ ንግግር ሲሉ ተናገሩ ። እኔ ግን እንዲጣራ ጠንክራ ጠየቅሁ ።

ጃንሆይ ያለፈውም አገልግሎትህ የሚፋቅ አይደለም ፤ አሁንም በቅርቡ ለፍርድ ሚኒስቴር ሥራ ለማሻሻል ሠርተህ ያቀረብኸው በብዙ የሚጠቅም ነው ፤ ወደፊትም በሥራ እንዲውል ይሆናል ። አሁንም መልካም ነው ፊታችንን አናጠቁርብም ። ደግሞ ካንተ ጋራ በተቀያየምን ጊዜ ራሳቸው አባታችን ምስክር የሚሆኑበት እግዚአብሔር ሊጣላኝ ነውና ይዘኩልኝ ብዬ አልነገርኋቸው እንደሆነ ታዛቢ ናቸው ። አሁንም ብትርቀን አንተው ነህ ብትቀርብን ያው ቤትህ ነው ብለው ተናገሩ ።

ከዚህ ቀጥሎ እጅ ነስቼ ለመንገድ የሚያስፈልገውን ጉዳይ አቅርቤ በማስታወሻ እንድሰጥ ታዝገዬ ተመለስሁ ።

በሚያዝያ ፳፱ ቅዳሜ ማስታወሻዬን በግንቦት ፩ ቀን ሰኞ ጸ.ት. ተፈራ ወርቅና አቶ ገብረ ወልድ በሸክላ ቤት መጥተው በገብረወልድ አፍ ለያንዳንዱ ጉዳይ የተቆረጠው ተነገረኝ ።

የናዚና የፍራንካ ቃል አቀባይ ገብረወልድ የጠቅላይ ቢሮ ቢትወደድ ወ. መስቀል ዋና ጸሐፊ ዛሬ ደግሞ የጃንሆይን ቃል ለእኔ ተናጋሪ ገብረ ወልድ ። የረጋ ወሃ አላደፈርስም በማለት ወደ ጃንሆይ ቀርቤ እጅ እነሳለሁ የሚል ምላሽ ብቻ ሰጠሁ ። ስለወታደሮቹ 20 ብቻ በመሆናቸው ማነሳቸውን ብናገር በሌላ ጊዜ ታስታውሳለህ ተባለሁ ።

ከዚህ በኋላ እስከ አርብ ግንቦት ፭ ቀን ድረስ በቤቴ ሆኜ መዘጋጀት ብቻ ። በቤቴ ብዙ ወዳጆች ዘመዶች እየመጡ አለቀሱ ። የተጉዳሁ መስጻቸው ውስጡን ለመረዳት ያልቻሉ ናቸው ።

ግንቦት ፭ ቀን አርብ

ጧት ወደ ግቢ ሄድሁ ፤ ለመሰናበት ጠየቅሁ ፤ ወዲያው ተጠራሁ ። ቀጥሎ ያለውን ቃል ተናገርሁ ፤ ሁለታችን ብቻ ነን ።

መሄጃዬ ጊዜ ስለሆነ ለመሰናበት ነው ። ጃንሆይ ሁሉም ነገር ተደራጅልህ መቸ ለመሄድ ነው ያሰብኸው አሉኝ ። ነገ ቅዳሜ ለመሄድ ነው ስል ወዲያው ነገሬን ቀጠልሁ ።

መሄጃዬ ጊዜ ስለሆነ ለጃንሆይም በይመስልዋ(?) ከምናፍቀው ፊትም ስለይ እያዘንሁ ደግሞ በሌላ ወገን ፈቃድ በመፈጸሜ ደስ እያለኝ ስሰናበት እንደገና ለመተያየት በእግዚአብሔር እጅ ስለሆነ የዛሬን ተዝናኝቼ እንድናገር አለምናለሁ ።

1. ፈቃድ መሙላቴ ደስ ሲለኝ በነገብረ ወልድ አፍ ለሹመቴ መወቀሴ አሳዝኖኛል ፤ ደግሞ ጃንሆይ መንፈሴን ቢታየም ለማረም እንጂ የሞት ቅጣት እንዲደርስብኝ

የሚፈልጉ አይደሉም ። ወረቀቱን ለጃንሆይ ያስረከብኩት ጃንሆይን በመበደሉ አገሩን እንደ በደለ የቆጠርሁት ደ. ታክለ የኢትዮጵያን አስተዳደር በሚጠብቅበት ጊዜ የጠየቅኳቸው ለራሴ መጠበቂያ ይሆናሉ ያልኳቸው ወታደሮች ጎደሉብኝ ።

2. እኔ የእድሌን ተቀብያለሁ ። ለራስዎ ግን ሰው አይመኑ ፤ አደራዎን ሰው ለራሱ እንጂ ለሌላ አያስብም ፤ ይህን የምናገረው ምልክት ስላለኝ ነው ... መ.ሀ.ወ.
3. መትረየስ ሳስረክብ ፱ ሰጠሁ ። ፩ የወሃ ፰ ድግን ነው ። አንድም ለራሴ መጠበቂያ ስላልተቀበልሁ አንድ የቼክ ድግን መትረየስ ይሰጠኝ ። (ተሰጠኝ)
4. ደጃች ተድላ ባይሩ ወደ ቤቴ መጥቶ ከእኔ ጋራ መነጋገሩን ይህንኑም አስቀድሞ ለጃንሆይ መንገሩን እንደነገረኝ ገለጥሁ ።
5. ቤቴን ዘመዴ ስለሆነ ሺፊራ እንዲያስጠብቅልኝ አለቆቼን እንዳይሠጋ እንዲታዘዝልኝ ነገርሁ ። (እሺ ተብሏል)

ተሰናበትሁ ።  
 ቀጥሎ ግርማዊት እቴጌን ለመሰናበት ጠየቅሁ ፤ አባ ሐና በዚያው ቆመው ተሰናበትሁ ።  
 በመዘጋጀት ተሰናባች ሳሰናብት ዋልሁ ።

**ግንቦት ፮ ቅዳሜ**

ጧት እማሆይ መድኔን ፣ ራስ አደፍርሰውን ፣ ተሰናብቼ በሥላሴ አስቀድሼ ፤ አቡነ ቴዎፍሎስን ተሰናብቼ ፤ ቀጥሎ አቡነ ባስልዮስን ተሰናብቼ ወደቤቴ ሄጃለሁ ። በዚያም ብዙ ሰው ተሰብስቦ ሲላቀስ ነበር ፤ ተሰናብቼ ተነሳሁ ። ፊ. ፀሐይና እናቴ ወይዘሮ ፍቅርተ ፊ. ተሰፋይ ፣ አኸመድ ፣ ልጁ እስከ ነፋስ ስልክ በታች ደርሰው በጎዘን ተሰናብተውኝ ተመለሱ ።

አቡነ ቴዎፍሎስ እጅግ አዝናኞል ። ለጃንሆይም እንባቸውን አውጥተው እየረጨ መንገራቸውን እቤቴ ለማየት ሳይመጡ ጃንሆይን አግኝተዋቸው እንደነበረ ገለጡልኝ ።

በዚሁ ቀን ወደ ማታ በ፲፪ ሰዓት አሰላ ገብቼ አደርሁ ። ከተማው በአልልታ ተቀበለን ። ተከትለው የመጡ ሽማግሌችና ሠራተኞች መጠጥ ተጋበዙ ። (የክብር ዘበኞች ተከትለውኝ ቀድመውኝ አሰላ ገቡ ።



### III. Translation of the Document

1955

New Era

Preface

After we returned from our American trip,<sup>18</sup> the sky was slightly overcast. Soon after that, it became necessary to prepare for a trip to Europe. I had to go frequently to the Foreign Ministry in connection with the programme. Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld]<sup>19</sup>, Aklilu H[abtä]-W[äld]<sup>20</sup> and I meet fairly often. There was the matter of Abdussämäd and Kékiyan<sup>21</sup> that I had discussed earlier with Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld]. This was because he was doing it secretly. I must have told Aklilu what Mäkonnen was doing secretly. I have told it to M[äkonnen] H[abtä]-W[äld] himself too.

To begin with, after all had been set for the American trip, when the escort was being selected, I requested to be excluded; my mother should have someone to attend to her funeral. My request was denied. I asked to be excused from the second, i.e. the European, trip<sup>22</sup> as well. That too proved impossible.

On the way [to Europe], as we were travelling by ship from Malta to England, I reported everything that I had discussed with *D[äjjazmach]* Tädla Bayru<sup>23</sup> in Bishoftu<sup>24</sup> on the question of Eritrea. I was ordered to seek ways of concluding the matter when I meet with Aklilu. The options have been indicated in the memorandum. Then I was asked the question: "what was it that you had said we would talk about in London?" Since there was nothing that had not already been discussed, I replied that there was little of consequence to add. *Bäbäsé(?)*<sup>25</sup> has likewise been forgotten.

<sup>18</sup> A reference to Emperor Haylä-Sellasé's visit to the United States, which lasted from 19 May to 3 August, 1954, and also included Canada, Mexico, Greece and Yugoslavia.

<sup>19</sup> Minister of Finance and of Propaganda (as Information was then known). Wäldä-Giyorgis has the habit in the text of sometimes writing only the initials of names or titles, as H.W. for Habtä-Wäld in this case.

<sup>20</sup> Mäkonnen's younger brother and Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time.

<sup>21</sup> Heads of two rival merchant families, Abdussamad of Harar and Kékiyan of Arqiqo, homeland of the *na'ibs* entrusted with the control of Massawa in Ottoman times.

<sup>22</sup> This took place in October and November, 1954, and included France, Holland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Austria and Switzerland.

<sup>23</sup> Chief Executive of Eritrea under the federal arrangement until forced to resign in July 1954 and replaced by *Bitwäddäd* Asfaha Wäldä-Mikaél, who engineered the absorption of Eritrea into Ethiopia in 1961.

<sup>24</sup> Also known as Debre Zeit.

<sup>25</sup> An ambiguous reference.

Before we left for England, I had heard that quite a few audiences have been given [by *Janboy*] to Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld], [*Fitawrari*] Sahlu Defayé, and Aklilu H[abtä]-W[äld] regarding me. *R[as]* Abbäbä<sup>26</sup>, *B[itwäddäd]* Mäkonnen<sup>27</sup>, *Ras* Kasa<sup>28</sup>, *B[itwäddäd]* Andargé<sup>29</sup> were also privy to the matter. I found *Abba* Hanna<sup>30</sup> to be very much of an intriguer.

Sahlu Defayé told F[itawrari] Fälläqä: “He is being closely watched and I have been ordered to monitor his movements”. The implication was that Fälläqä should avoid me and others too should not get too close to me.

It was said that M[äkonnen] H[abtä]-W[äld] had ordered guards to watch all those coming to my house.

Mr. Robert and Mr. Grabwaski<sup>31</sup>, president and judge of the High Court, stated that they were invited by M[äkonnen] H[abtä]-W[äld] to do surveillance work and to transmit everything that they knew.

Things were ripening. Mäkonnen W[äldä]-Y[ohannes]<sup>32</sup> lent his car to G[eneral] Mär<sup>ed</sup><sup>33</sup>. Speculation ran rife. A letter was written to Märed through C[olonel] Assäfa, the deputy chamberlain. Everything was exaggerated. Complaints were made to *Ras* Adäfresäw<sup>34</sup>. His Holiness Abunä Basili-os<sup>35</sup> called me and asked me whether there was any bad feeling between me and *Janboy*<sup>36</sup>. I told him that there was nothing that I knew of, but that *Janboy* had summoned me once to tell me that he felt that both my feet and

<sup>26</sup> *Ras* Abbäbä Arägay, Minister of Interior at the time, appointed the first Minister of National Defence in the *shum-sber* of June 1955, which seems to have been a follow-up of that of May involving the fall of Wäldä-Giyorgis.

<sup>27</sup> *Ras Bitwäddäd* Mäkonnen Endalkachäw, the rather ineffectual Prime Minister at the time, given more to literary pursuits than to political activity.

<sup>28</sup> *Le<sup>ul</sup> Ras* Kasa Haylu, second cousin of Emperor Haylä-Sellasé and his close confidant and companion.

<sup>29</sup> *Ras Bitwäddäd* Andargachäw Mäsay, son-in-law of the emperor (married to his eldest daughter, Princess Tänaññäwarq) and his *endärasé* (representative) in Eritrea.

<sup>30</sup> The emperor’s father confessor and reputedly also keeper of his purse.

<sup>31</sup> It has not been able to establish the exact identity of these two apparently British judges.

<sup>32</sup> Brother of Wäldä-Giyorgis and who, as Custodian of Enemy Property, is reported to have amassed a huge personal fortune.

<sup>33</sup> Brigadier General Mär<sup>ed</sup> Mängäsha, made Chief of Security in the Ministry of Interior in the June 1955 *shum sher*.

<sup>34</sup> An elderly and respected member of the aristocracy.

<sup>35</sup> The archbishop who was to become Ethiopia’s first patriarch in 1959 when the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was freed from its centuries-old dependency on the Alexandrian patriarchate.

<sup>36</sup> A deferential term of reference to the emperor, used either in the second or third person singular.

my heart were becoming remote, and that I had replied that I had never come without being summoned and that I was on the other hand busy in my office doing something that I should have done a long time ago, that is devising ways to reform the operations of the Ministry of Justice. Outside, however, I told the *abun* about the intrigues and calumnies of Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld] *et al.*

I was saying this in all sincerity. Since I have put my entire trust on *Janhoy* and if I incurred the hatred of anyone it would be because of him, I did not suspect that he would abandon me on the strength of people's allegations, least of all those of Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld], Aklilu, and *Ras Abbäbä!!!*

On another day, I asked *Abunä* Basilios not to hide from me anything that he might have heard. He replied that there was nothing other than the fact that *Abba* Hanna had told him that *Janhoy* was distressed because *T[sähafé]* *T[e'ezaz]* Wäldä-Giyorgis and Mäkonnen H[abtä]-W[äld] had quarreled. Then we parted.

While this was going on, I was shown all the courtesy befitting my status and rank whenever I was occasionally summoned. My Lent *dergo*<sup>37</sup> was sent without fail. Was it to lull my suspicion? For my part, I was only expecting that, as was his wont when my adversaries were persecuting me, *Janhoy* would soon reveal to me that he had deliberately shunned me for a few days in order to find out the truth himself. The Book tells you not to put your trust on people.

Under the direction of Mäkonnen H[abtä] W[äld] and Co., Abdussämäd and other Adäre propagated all sorts of false allegations in the city in order to estrange me from the public. 4 mi[llion] Berr was alleged to have been kept in a foreign bank account; Mäkonnen W[äldä] Y[ohannes] was alleged to have embezzled 7 mi[llion] Berr. To tarnish his name, Lämna W. Gäbriél<sup>38</sup> and others were used to spread the rumour that the matter was under investigation.

To gauge public reaction, rumours were circulated first about my imprisonment, then about my being put under house arrest. But there was nothing on my part or any other person's part.<sup>39</sup> Who deserved to be suspected of or charged with [embezzling] money? I was surprised that they expected people to believe these allegations. Even as I was burning with fever,<sup>40</sup> lying down

<sup>37</sup> Previously referred to the provisions supplied by the populace to visiting government officials; in this context having the meaning of "bonus".

<sup>38</sup> Who was appointed Vice-Mayor of Addis Ababa in the *shum sher* that accompanied Wäldä-Giyorgis's downfall.

<sup>39</sup> Underlining in the original.

<sup>40</sup> The Amharic is ambiguous here, but the phrases that follow suggest fever rather than impetuosity.

under anaesthesia ready to be operated on, I did not stop cursing in my subconscious those thieves who idolized money and sought to enrich themselves by fleecing Ethiopia. I could not but wonder that the authors of these allegations were people whom I have known in times both of happiness and sorrow but whose conscience has now deserted them. Earlier, they had fabricated a rivalry with Prince Mäkonnen<sup>41</sup> over decorations while we were in England; this now graduated to the false allegation that Wäldä-Giyorgis was discovered communicating secretly with Churchill.

I fell ill during Passion Week. I could not go to church for Easter service. So as not to be a problem to others, I forbade people visiting me in my house. But I received visitors regularly in my office. I heard that all my movements were being monitored. I took my leave of *Janhoy* by telephone through Co[lonel] Mäkonnen<sup>42</sup> and went to Bishoftu. I stayed there for a week. A keeper of the Fairfield Villa visited me with a telephone message from *Abba* Hanna. I was in bed. Even while thus ill, I was working on the reform of the Ministry of Justice.

On Monday, Miyazya 17 [April 25], I went straight to my office in Addis Ababa. After working for a while, I put in an envelope for presentation to *Janhoy* the draft on the Ministry of Justice I had prepared at Bishoftu and went to the palace to pay my respect. I heard that *Janhoy* was having a meeting with them<sup>43</sup>, with the exception of *Le'ul Ras* Kasa. I stayed outside until I was called. *Janhoy* was alone with *Abunä* Basilios in what was known as the Green Salon<sup>44</sup>.

After a while, *Janhoy* said to me: "Although We Ourselves told you that both your heart and feet have become increasingly distant, you do not seem to have given it much weight. You have ignored Our repeated request to divulge what it was you promised to tell Us in London. You have neglected your work and your character has changed. Since this might be because of overwork and in order that you might correct yourself, We have decided to transfer you to another post."

I replied that, as for the first I had never come without being summoned, and as for the second, since it was routine government work I did not see the need to bore [*Janhoy*] with it. I asked for forgiveness and begged to be spared

<sup>41</sup> The emperor's second, and favourite, son, who died in 1957.

<sup>42</sup> Colonel Mäkonnen Dänäqä, Chief Chamberlain.

<sup>43</sup> A veiled reference to the author's enemies.

<sup>44</sup> One of the rooms in the Gänätä Le'ul Palace; it attained particular significance in the course of the abortive coup d'état of 1960 when Brigadier General Mängestu Neway and his brother Gärmamé Neway massacred the hostages that they had kept there.

from the planned assignment. I was told that that was impossible and that I must first report for duty at my new post.<sup>45</sup>

I then asked him whether the move reflected his wish or whether it was intended to please others. He told me emphatically, as if to say “Don’t you know me?”, that he had reached the decision on his own after a long deliberation and that there was nothing he would do solely to please someone else. Then I said: “If it is your pleasure, well and good; May you reign forever!” But I reiterated the point that I do not have any assets, not even money amounting to one thousand *berr*.

I went out. I was called to the “Appointments Room”. *Ras* Abbäbä, *B[itwäddäd]* Mäkonnen and Gäbrä-Wäld<sup>46</sup> were there. Gäbrä-Wäld read to me what he said was *Janhoy*’s word, repeating his complaints and appointing me as Governor-General of Arusi.

I said: “The word comes from you two and my heart refuses to accept it. I was, still am and will always be a loyal slave of *Janhoy*. I obey his command.” I bowed and left the room. At that moment, I remembered the words of the Lord: “You have come with swords and clubs to seize me like a thief. Yet I was always in your midst; you did not seize me while I was teaching in the temple.”<sup>47</sup>

This is no exaggeration (?).<sup>48</sup> The *gebbi* was in turmoil; the chief of the guards was all confusion; many Bodyguard officers were tensed up; *Däjjach* Mäsfen Seläshi<sup>49</sup> was ready to bolt. All this was quite revealing. It is very difficult to describe the situation. After many years of striving, everything was accomplished, in its own time. Following the appointment, Cinzano was offered; then I went home. The new *ts[ähafé] t[e'ezaz]*, Täfärawarq, and *Käntiba*<sup>50</sup> Käbbädä<sup>51</sup> paid me a visit soon after that. *B[alambaras]*

<sup>45</sup> The parenthetical phrases in the Amharic (in this and the following paragraphs) indicate later insertions.

<sup>46</sup> Made deputy *tsähafé te'ezaz* in the May 1955 *shum sher*, later to acquire prominence as owner of the first high-rise building (seven stories) in Addis Ababa.

<sup>47</sup> A rendering of Luke, chapter 22, verse 52: “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Everyday I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me.”

<sup>48</sup> The Amharic is not clear here.

<sup>49</sup> Governor-General of Kafa province, replaced *Ras* Abbäbä Arägay as Minister of Interior in July 1955.

<sup>50</sup> A title reserved initially to Gondär and later extended to Addis Ababa, equivalent to Mayor.

<sup>51</sup> Käbbädä Täsämma, replaced by *Blatta* Zäwdé Bälaynäḥ as mayor in the May 1955 *shum sher*.

Mahtämä-Sellásé<sup>52</sup> [also] came. None of the ministers came. In addition, my [baldäräboch]<sup>53</sup> *B[latta]* Märs<sup>54</sup> and C[olonel] Tamrat<sup>55</sup> came. Aklilu and Akaläwärq<sup>56</sup> returned from outside on the morrow, Tuesday. It was evident that it was a half-hearted gesture. All my friends had come to my house.

On Tuesday, Miyazia 18 [April 26], I went to the *gebbi* as usual and returned for lunch. That morning it was the *shum-sher* of *Däjjach Käbbädä*<sup>57</sup> and others. *Blatta Zäwdé* became *käntiba*. *B[itwäddäd]* Mäkonnen had me called in the presence of *Ras Abbäbä* and told me that I had been ordered to hand over the seal and all documents to *Ato Gäbrä-Wäld*. I asked him whether I should tell this to all who asked me when I went outside. As he did not respond, I left. *Gäbrä-Wäld* followed me and asked me when I was going to hand over to him. I told him that I would do that only after consulting the lord [i.e. *Janhoy*].

The matter was closed and I went home. During lunch, I ate something bad and I had bloody diarrhea. I had a temperature of 40° on Miyazya 19 and 20 [April 27 and 28]. I heard that in the palace and in the city it was interpreted as pretense or a sign of indignation. On Wednesday, Miyazya 19 [April 27], I had *Ayaléw*<sup>58</sup> called. He brought me the seal. I could not write a note. I had him write it for me. I put my initials on it and sent the seal, saying that, since I was ill, the person who receives it should do so on oath, as I had done, and that it should be initialled for him too. *Ayaléw* was ordered to spend the night in his office with the seal. The following day, on Miyazya 20 [April 28], I heard that *Abba Hanna* officiated the handing over [of the seal] on oath. The person who received the seal was the so-called deputy *ts[ähafé]* *t[e'ezaz]*, *Gäbrä-Wäld*. He was principal secretary in the Ministry of Pen before 1936. During the Italian Occupation, his former boss *Ts[ähafé]* *T[e'ezaz]* *W[äldä]-Mäsqäl* and himself served in what was known as *Taqalay Biro*<sup>59</sup> as *bitwäddad* and principal secretary, respectively. He took Franca for his model and had a hybrid character. He had stated that, at *Chäfé Dänsa*, he

<sup>52</sup> Mahtämä-Sellásé *Wäldä-Mäsqäl*, holder of various ministerial portfolios in the Haylä-Sellásé regime and author of the highly invaluable source book, *Zekrä Nägär*.

<sup>53</sup> sing. *baldäräba*, a person assigned to attend to one's petition or complaint.

<sup>54</sup> Märs<sup>e</sup>-Hazän *Wäldä-Qirqos*, court favourite and author of the standard book on Amharic grammar.

<sup>55</sup> Tamrat Yegäzu, made *endärasé* of Käfa in the July 1955 *shum sher*.

<sup>56</sup> Youngest of the Habtä-Wäld brothers, Vice-Minister of Education, to which he had added the post of Vice-Minister of Community Development in the July 1955 *shum sher*.

<sup>57</sup> A reference to *Käbbädä Täsämma*.

<sup>58</sup> Presumably *Wäldä-Giyorgis's* personal assistant.

<sup>59</sup> "Ufficio Generale" (?), the office set up during the Italian Occupation to deal with Ethiopian affairs in the capital.

had slapped and chased a patriot by the name of *Shambäl* Asfaw when the latter wept on being asked to carry his machine gun and see him off.<sup>60</sup>

To return to my fate, *Abunä Téwoflos*<sup>61</sup> came and visited me during my illness. He came after an audience with *Janhoy*!!! I felt well and went out. *Janhoy* expressed his sorrow when he saw how much I had changed. I returned to rest.

On leaving the *Gebbi*, I went to *Abunä* Basilios. He had asked to come to my house. He explained to me *Janhoy*'s feelings. I asked him to arrange an audience for me. He promised to do that.

On Miyazya 27 [May 5], I went for the celebration. I stood as per the former protocol. M[äkonnen] H[abtä] W[äld] was next to me. I asked him why he had not congratulated me. He replied that those who came [to my house] had to return [apparently because of the large crowd]. He did not wish to talk to me. I said to him: "In that case, I will come to your house to congratulate you".

During the reception in the evening, I stood in the place designated for governors-general, next to the *rases*. I shared a table with the British ambassador. The evening was mercifully over and we went home.

On Friday, Miyazya 28 [May 6], I had an audience with *Janhoy* in the presence of the *echägé*.<sup>62</sup> This was what I said to him:

1. I asked him for his kindness.
2. I thanked him because both my appointment and my dismissal were told to me like a child.
3. As for the statement that I had paid no regard to his displeasure, I had no inkling of what was out of the norm.
4. How could I suspect [that anything was amiss] when I did not fail to get what I was used to getting, when I was remembered during fast and not forgotten during feast (Christmas), when I was not passed [royal] munificence? Would I not otherwise have sacrificed myself to remove such displeasure?
5. I even went further and said that I had thought that my strivings to improve the workings of the Ministry of Justice had pleased [*Janhoy*].
6. I replied that when I said that I would point it out in London, I was only trying to talk about government affairs in exiles' code.<sup>63</sup>
7. I said that since I and your other subjects live trusting in fair judgement, please ensure that injustice will not be perpetrated in your name.

<sup>60</sup>The Amharic is ambiguous here.

<sup>61</sup>The second high-ranking bishop at the time and who eventually succeeded *Abunä* Basilios as patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

<sup>62</sup>A title historically reserved to the Ethiopian subordinate of the Coptic archbishop, apparently continued to be borne by *Abunä* Basilios even after he became archbishop.

<sup>63</sup>An allusion to the period of the emperor's exile in Bath, England, from 1936 to 1940, when Wäldä-Giyorgis was by his side as his private secretary.

8. Nothing is more precious for me than to avoid seeing anything bad happen to *Janhoy* and being the cause for any displeasure.
9. As I have repeatedly said in the past, I pray not to come to a time when I will have to say: "Were this not to happen!"<sup>64</sup>
10. I explained that I was willing to sacrifice myself in any way in order to spare *Janhoy* pain and being forced to dwell on my private affairs.
11. Taking the example of *Ras Kasa*, I explained that, once *Janhoy* has turned against someone, nobody would bother to look back at him, let alone [an ordinary mortal like me]. I reminded him of my statement that those who pretended to like me at Brown Hotel were actually doing it for themselves.
12. I asked if there was anyone, other than *Näggadras Afäwärq*<sup>65</sup> and *Azazh Wärqenäh*<sup>66</sup>, for whom I had not interceded to get *Janhoy*'s clemency, even when that person happened to have crossed me at some point .
13. Unless I deemed it to be totally destructive, I have felt it meritorious not to disclose someone's misdeeds, as that would estrange lord from servant (R.<sup>67</sup> unlike *Ato Mäkonnen HW* and *Aklilu HW*, etc.).
14. *Janhoy* knows very well that my service to My Lord and defense of His well-being has earned me quite a few enemies (R. such as *B[it]w[äddäd]* *Andargé*).
15. *Janhoy*'s government is a government to which I have given my father, my brother, and my son, and to which I have sacrificed myself unstintingly. The fate of my family was exile during the enemy occupation. I plead for some consideration lest they suffer the same fate of exile during *Janhoy*'s reign, for lack of a protector.
16. Against my better judgement, I was a creature who trusted that *Janhoy* knows me more than God. But I do not dispute *Janhoy*'s right to take away the trust he had reposed in me.
17. *Janhoy* would not lack a servant; but I would not find a master.

I do not ask you to like me now, only not to hate me;  
I do not expect you to trust me, only not to suspect me;  
I do not ask you to feel sorry for me, only not to be too cruel on me.

<sup>64</sup> A rather astute prognosis of the 1974 débacle.

<sup>65</sup> *Afäwärq Gäbrä-Iyyäsus*, a vitriolic intellectual of the pre-1935 period, who was incarcerated in 1941 because of his collaboration with the Italians.

<sup>66</sup> *Wärqenäh Eshäté*, another prominent intellectual of the early twentieth century, who was Ethiopian minister (ambassador) in London when the Italians invaded Ethiopia in 1935. Estranged from the emperor during his exile, *Wärqenäh* retired to India and prolonged his return to Ethiopia after liberation in 1941.

<sup>67</sup> The meaning of this initial, which recurs further down, is obscure.



Today is a day when my thirty-five year long career has come to naught. Please do not turn your face against me, as I was your servant in your hour of distress and sorrow. I need your countenance more than any of your gifts.

*Janhoy* then responded, saying: "There is a legacy of thirty-six years of service between us. How could We know that this was the intent of what you said in London; We are not an angel. As for your fear of a person destroying you, you yourself are a person; so take care that you do not destroy yourself. Everything will be revealed in your future work."

How can I work under the burden of *Janhoy's* displeasure, for that would banish me as well as the work. *Abunä* Basilios intervened to say that what *Janhoy* said was as good as granting clemency. But I insisted that it be clarified.

*Janhoy* then went on: "Your past service cannot be erased. The work that you have submitted recently to improve the operations of the Ministry of Justice is also very useful. It will be implemented. Alright, We will not darken our face against you. Our Father [i.e. *Abunä* Basilios] could bear witness that, when we became estranged, I told him to feel sorry for me as it was like being estranged from God. So, it is up to you: you could either distance yourself or you could feel at home as in the past."

After that, I bowed and took my leave with instructions to submit a memo detailing my needs for the journey.

[I submitted?] my request on Saturday, Miyazya 29 [May 6], and on Monday, Genbot 1 [May 8], *Tsähafé T[e'ezaz]* Täfärrawäraq and *Ato* Gäbrä-Wäld came to the clay house<sup>68</sup> and Gäbrä-Wäld communicated to me what has been decided on every issue.

[During the Italian Occupation,] Gäbrä-Wäld was the spokesman of Nasi<sup>69</sup> and Franca and *Bitwäddäd* Wäldä-Mäsqäl was secretary at Täqalay Biro. Today, Gäbrä-Wäld [becomes] the transmitter of *Janhoy's* order to me. In order not to disturb still water, I limited myself to saying that I shall render my obeisance to *Janhoy*. I was summoned forthwith and I rendered my obeisance and withdrew. When I stated that the soldiers [detailed to accompany me?] numbered only 20, I was told to raise the issue on another occasion.

Thereafter, until Friday, Genbot 5 [May 13], I stayed at home making my preparations. Many friends and relatives came to my house and wept, thinking that I was hurt; they have not fathomed the inside story.

<sup>68</sup> Another ambiguous reference.

<sup>69</sup> General Guglielmo Nasi, successively governor of Harär, deputy viceroy and governor of Shäwa during the Italian Occupation.

Friday, Genbot 5 [May 13]

I went to the Gebbi in the morning. I made a request to bid farewell. I was summoned immediately. I said the following words; there were only the two of us:

“I [have come] to bid farewell since the time of my departure has arrived.” *Janboy* enquired if everything has been ready for me and as to when I am leaving. I said that I was planning to leave tomorrow, Saturday, and went on:

“I beg leave to speak freely today as it is the time of my departure, since whether we are ever going to meet again is in God’s hands. Even if you might not believe it, I sad leave to part from *Janboy*’s face that I have always longed for and yet happy to fulfill his wish.”

1. While happy to fulfill [the imperial] wish, I am saddened that the reprimand has been communicated to me through Gäbrä-Wäld *et al.* I believe that *Janboy* would wish to correct me in a way that you deemed fit, not to pass a death sentence on me. I submitted the paper [because] at a time when *D[äjjazmach]* Takkälä<sup>70</sup>, whom I considered to have wronged his country because he wronged *Janboy*, is in charge of Ethiopia’s administration, I was not given enough troops to protect me.
2. I have got what Fate has decreed for me. But I beseech you not to trust people. Everybody is after his own interest. I say this because I have seen signs ... M[äkonnen] H[abtä]-W[äld].
3. I returned 9 machine guns: 1 water-cooled and 8 mounted on tripod. Since I do not have even one for my protection, I ask for one tripod-mounted machine gun of Czech make. (This was given to me.)
4. I revealed that *Däjjach* Tädla Bayru had come to my house and talked to me and that he had earlier expressed to *Janboy* his wish to do so.
5. I requested that, since he is my relative, Shiferaw be authorized to guard my house and that his superiors be instructed accordingly so that he may not have any worries. (This has been consented to.)

Then I asked permission to take leave of Her Majesty, *Etégé*<sup>71</sup>. I did so in the presence of *Abba* Hanna.

I spent the rest of the day preparing for my journey and meeting those who came to bid me farewell.

<sup>70</sup> Another enemy of Wäldä-Giyorgis, although no particular friend of Emperor Haylä-Sellasé, either; he was made Vice-Minister of Interior in charge of administration in the May 1955 *shum sher*.

<sup>71</sup> The traditional title (female counterpart of *Janboy*) by which the Emperor’s wife, Männän, was referred.

**Saturday, Genbot 8 [May 16]**

In the morning, in addition to attending Mass at the Trinity Cathedral, I took leave of *Emahoy* Mädené, *Ras* Adäfersäw, *Abunä* Téwoflos and *Abunä* Basiliös. When I reached my house, there was a large crowd weeping. I took leave of them and left. *Fitawrari* Tsähayu<sup>72</sup> and his mother, *Wäyzäro* Feqertä, *Fitawrari* Täsfayé, Ahmä<sup>73</sup> and his son saw me off beyond Näfas Selk<sup>74</sup> and returned in grief.

*Abunä* Téwoflos was extremely sad. He revealed to me that he spoke with *Janhoy* in tears when he had met him before he came to my house.

On this day, at 6 in the evening, I reached Asälla.<sup>75</sup> The town greeted me with ululations. The elders and workers who had accompanied me were treated to drinks. [Soldiers of the Imperial Bodyguard had entered Asälla before me.]

**Summary**

The fall in 1955 of *Tsähafé Te'ezaz* Wäldä-Giyorgis Wäldä-Yohannes was an event of special importance in the political history of imperial Ethiopia. For nearly a decade and a half after 1941, Wäldä-Giyorgis had exercised power and influence second only to that of Emperor Haylä-Sellasé. Yet, this very power and influence seems to have contributed to his undoing. Those who were shunted aside or feared his growing powers joined forces to estrange him from the emperor and bring about his downfall. The document printed here provides a personal account of the central character, Wäldä-Giyorgis himself, on the buildup to the final moment in May 1955, when he was removed from his powerful position to that of a provincial governor. It underscores the central role played in that downfall by his erstwhile ally, Mäkonnen Habtä-Wäld, as well as the attempt of Church authorities to mediate between the emperor and the powerful minister. Above all, the document gives us a rare insight into the relationship between emperor and minister and the trauma that the breach represented to both. Further, the outward decorum and civility that pervaded the entire proceedings of what must have been a grave political crisis provides a striking contrast to the brusqueness, not to say brutality, with which political opponents – real or imagined – were disposed of in post-1974 Ethiopia.

<sup>72</sup> Tsähayu Enqwä-Sellasé, a renowned patriot and notorious provincial governor, killed when he refused to surrender to the Därg in 1974.

<sup>73</sup> Probably a reference to a member of the Kékiyan family.

<sup>74</sup> The southern outskirts of Addis Ababa, which acquired its name from the wireless station set up there in 1935.

<sup>75</sup> Capital of Arusi, as it was then known.