

Conference of Midwest PFDJ Chapters
&
Public Seminar
Chicago
April 20-21, 2013

PFDJ members from the Midwest chapters, including Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and South Dakota, converged in the metropolitan Chicago to conduct a thorough meeting covering a wide range of topics. The atmosphere was congenial and the camaraderie reassuring.

During the opening session of the meeting, members of the central committee gave a report summarizing the feedback they received from the various chapters. This gave the attendees a glimpse about the achievements, shortcomings, challenges and future objectives of the respective chapters.

This segment was followed by Mr. Dawit Haile's presentation focusing on the organizational structure of PFDJ in the USA. The new structure is put in place to facilitate effective communication within the organization, to coordinate tasks that are of broad spectrum and to address pertinent issues in a timely manner. He highlighted mandates that are commensurate with PFDJ charter: bolstering the unity of the Eritrean people, encouraging every Eritrean to participate in the affairs of his/her country, preserving the Eritrean culture and national values, building bridges of communication with other communities and organizations, providing services ensuring social justice, enhancing professional and economic capabilities, etc.

The flow of cogent information was relentless. Dr. Bereket Feday tackled a very important topic, that of "Nation Building" within the Eritrean arena. This broad and unwieldy topic was reduced to a spotlight defining the uniqueness of the Eritrean provenance and perseverance. Eritrea owes its emergence or existence to what Dr. Berket called "inception of nascent ideas". First, Eritrea is a wonder, a miracle come true. While Ethiopia was flexing its military might and ratcheting up its tenacious grip on a usurped territory, an idea was born that hatching free and sovereign Eritrea was possible. Second, when the enemy was amassing huge arsenal, enlisting mercenary experts, mobilizing multi-pronged assault in an attempt to wipe the Eritrean resistance once for all, the nascent idea of hunkering down and weathering the tempest, of conducting controlled strategic withdrawal, on the part of Eritrean liberation forces was another wonder. Third, the Eritrean sovereignty is not a phenomenon acquired once for all. Without proper measures put in place, it can be lost or reversed in a heart bit. This brilliant idea warded off complacency and channeled resource for the setting up of the Sawa training camp.

Mr. Ogbazgy A. Asmerom gave presentation on the essence of Psychological Warfare. The enemy camp is now resorting to unleashing of an avalanche of misinformation to incriminate and ostracize the government of Eritrea and to instigate an uprising by the people. Albeit, without success. Ethiopia is enlisting the quislings of Eritrea to do its dirty work. Mr. Ogbazgi alluded to this bunch of traitors as victims of Stockholm Syndrome, that is, the abducted pleading the cause of or lending empathy to the abductor.

Mr. Berhane G. Solomon addressed not only the PFDJ conferees but also the attendees of the public seminar. He pointed out that 2013 is the year of shifting gears and gaining momentum on the economic front. Concomitant with this positive change, external meddling threatens to throw a monkey wrench in the gearbox. The imposition of sanctions, the accusation of human trafficking and the allegation of human rights violation are hurdles put on the road of progress. As the enemies try ceaselessly to foment an insurrection, it behooves Eritrean nationals to ensure internal stability, strengthen national unity and safeguard national sovereignty. The necessity of being enlightened and politically conscious cannot be overestimated.

Mr. Berhane emphasized that the Eritrean people perceive their history as a continuum of the past, the present and the future. By knowing and owning their past, they plant themselves firmly and confidently on the present. This posture enables them to gravitate towards the future not with myopia but with clear and discerning vision. Those that lack this understanding of history, “don’t know where they are going but they are going to get there faster.” [Victor Frankel]

Mr. Berhane underscored the fact that the task of building a nation is a continuous process that engages successive generations. Successes will be interspersed with challenges. Times and circumstances do change but the core values and interests of the people persist for posterity. Diaspora Eritreans would then be entreated to see themselves as part and parcel of the struggle and to play their role in nation building.

Mr. Berhane communicated the fact that the Eritrean economy will take off in the immediate future and advised his audience to do the prudent thing: save, get organized and invest.

Mr. Berhane brought to the attention of the audience that the Eritrean identity must be defined by Eritreans themselves and not by inimical propagandists like Dan Conel, Leonard Vincent, Martin Plaut, Paul Henze, Bereket Simon and Sebhat Nega.

Mr. Berhane’s presentation was very well received by the audience. It was characterized as enlightening, encouraging and fostering a sense of belonging.

The conference and the public seminar concluded successfully!

Awet Nhafash!!

Mihreteab Gebrehiiwet

Chicago