

Brief report of a successful Mekete in San Jose, CA. with Issayas Tesfamariam

On October 29, 2011, in continuation of Hizbawi Mekete, Eritreans in San Jose area shared a very educational and eye opening discussion under the title of “Culture and landscape as soft power: lessons for Eritrea” with historian and researcher, Issayas Tesfamariam. It was a standing room only event. The program started at 5:30P.M.

Here is a brief bullet point summary:

The discussion was a power point presentation which had three parts with ample examples.

- *Part one discussed theories of media, international relations, marketing, cultural studies, tourism, hard power, soft power, cultural production and etc.*
- *Part two discussed how the aforementioned theories apply to Eritrea and what Eritrea should learn from other countries. When it comes to soft power, Eritrea has all the ingredients (people, culture, and etc.) that should be enhanced, harnessed and challenged to make it more effective in this modern day and age. In other words, transferring Eritrea’s cultural capital to economic capital.*
- *Part three acknowledged that the topic is huge and long term, but discussed tangible short and long term suggestions as to how to “think big, start small” in terms of acquiring and transferring soft power to the best interest of Eritrea with the diaspora in mind.*
- *Finally, there was lively question and answer session (formally) which continued in an informal session until 1:00 A.M.(the following day)*

Wetru Awet N’Hafsh

Never Kneel Down

Hizbawi Mekete, San Jose and environs (California, U.S.A.)