

News

Commentary

this issue

News &amp; Commentary P.1

Events P.4

Announcement of a zoom meeting  
with Governor Gavin Newsom of CA.

P.5

September, 1, 2021 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the armed struggle for the independence of Eritrea.

EriAmPAC contributes to the campaign of Terry McAuliffe for the governorship of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Eritrean-Americans will be highly visible and active in the coming mid-term election across the United States.

Welcome to the first edition of Outreach the monthly newsletter of the National Council of Eritrean Americans (NCEA) Public Diplomacy Group. We also launched the first issue of Eritrean – American Harmony (Sept./Nov. 2021), an online quarterly magazine.

Even though Eritrea did not become officially independent until 1993, U.S. records indicate that the first Eritrean came to the United States in 1924. Therefore, as Eritrean Americans, we could argue that we have been in the U.S. for almost a century.

Every month has significant dates within it because of Eritrea's long history for independence. Sept./Nov. 2021 is chosen because of momentous events which affected U.S. – Eritrea relationship.

#### November 15, 1869

Giuseppe Sapeto, an Italian missionary, and ardent advocate of Italian colonization of Africa, purchased land near today's

Eritrean port of Assab on behalf of the Italian government. The total area that was purchased then was 18 sq. km. and it was sold for 47,000 Italian lire. Sapeto and the Italian Government had their eyes on Assab because of the area's proximity to the strategic strait of Bab-el-Mendab that joins the Red Sea with the Indian Ocean. The Italians used this purchase as their first foothold of colonialism in Africa that lasted until Italy's defeat 1941.

#### November 19, 1941.

John W. Swancara, in his book **Project 19: A Mission Most Secret**, wrote:

World War II was two years old and America was still described as a "neutral nation." By the fall of 1941, Britain was being pushed to the brink of disaster in North Africa. Time was running out and so were the combat ready planes of Britain.

Churchill asked Roosevelt for "some help." Roosevelt responded by authorizing a secret mission. Build an Air Depot, to be established and operated by American civilians under the direction of Douglas Aircraft Company. It would be classified "Secret" and given the title of "Project 19." Its location was 1,100 miles from the front lines in remote Eritrea, Eastern Africa.

“The Ultimate aim of the American effort in Eritrea, taken from the General Directive of the President of the United States, the Secretary of the War and the War Department through the North African Mission in Cairo and thence through the Army Corps Officers down to our organization, was to make Eritrea the ‘American Arsenal of Democracy’ in Africa.”

In November 1941, Johnson, Drake & Piper, Inc. signed a formal contract with the War Department and wrote a book entitled **Middle East War Projects of Johnson, Drake & Piper, Inc. for the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army 1942-1943.** During the secret “Project 19”, thousands of Americans came to Eritrea. In the book, Johnson, Drake & Piper, Inc. reported that:

The Ultimate aim of the American effort in Eritrea, taken from the General Directive of the President of the United States, the Secretary of War and the War Department through the North African Mission in Cairo and thence through the Army Corps Officers down to our own organization, was to make Eritrea the ‘American Arsenal of Democracy’ in Africa.

What was the impact of the General Directive of President Franklin D. Roosevelt? Despite being understudied, the effect was substantial. According to Douglas Porch, “the Eritrean campaign opened the Red Sea so that U.S. merchant shipping could supply Suez (*Canal*). Without the opening of the Red Sea these ships would have to travel thousands of miles around the Cape of

Good Hope.”

According to Peter J. Schraeder,

The War Department’s efforts in Eritrea were two-fold. First, in the aftermath of a secret meeting held in Washington on November 19, 1941, a Royal Air Force (RAF) support base was established at the Eritrean town of Gura. Codenamed “Project 19”, the purpose of the base was to repair and return damaged RAF aircraft to the North African battle zone with “minimum delay.” The War Department also refurbished the Eritrean port of Massawa to provide direct support for the British Mediterranean fleet, as well as to maintain a naval salvage operation to raise over forty ships scuttled by Italian Navy.

From 1941 until 1952, the British ruled Eritrea. And from 1952 to 1962, Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia under the auspices of the United Nations.

On November 12, 1947, the Four Powers Commission of inquiry consisting of delegates from France, UK, the USA and the former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) came to Eritrea to find out whether the people of Eritrea wanted independence or not. On September 15, 1948 the Four powers turned over the decision to decide the future of Eritrea to the United Nations. In December 1950, the United Nations

General Assembly imposed a federal arrangement of Eritrea with Ethiopia. On September 15, 1952, the UN imposed Eritrea-Ethiopia Federation took effect. However, on November 14, 1962, Ethiopia unilaterally abrogated the Federation and annexed Eritrea as its fourteenth province.

It is remarkable how within a decade, from the 1940s to the 1950s, United States policy on Eritrea shifted from making Eritrea the “American Arsenal of Democracy in Africa” to “the country [Eritrea] be linked with our [USA] ally Ethiopia.”

September 1, 1961

One year before the annexation of Eritrea by Ethiopia, on September 1, 1961, the armed struggle for Eritrea’s independence began and ended thirty years later in May 1991, making it the most protracted armed liberation struggle in Africa. September 1, 2021 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armed struggle.

From the 1960s

through the mid-1970s, thousands of U.S. military personnel were based in Eritrea. Similarly, many American Peace Corps Volunteers were stationed in Eritrea. The U.S. personnel had many impacts on Eritrea including education, music, sports, etc.

November 14, 1962, Ethiopia officially ended the Federation that was established by the United Nations' Resolution 390A(V) of December 2, 1950. That is, Eritrea was annexed as the 14th province of Ethiopia.

November 25, 1979  
The first Congress of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) opened in the liberated areas of Eritrea. NUEW is one of the largest and strongest civic groups in Eritrea whose main purpose is to educate the Eritrean public of the issues facing Eritrean women. NUEW has branches all over the world and these NUEW branches are probably the most efficient and well-organized associations of all Eritrean community groups around the globe.

November 22, 1980  
The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) announced that the Eritrean question

for self-determination can be solved through a Referendum where the Eritrean population is given a freedom to choose from independence, federation with or union with Ethiopia. At the time, the Ethiopian government, thinking it had the momentum and a military upper hand, rejected the referendum plan and the war continued for eleven more years. Ethiopia was forced to accept the offer after Eritrea was fully liberated on 24 May of 1991 and the Communist regime of Ethiopia collapsed days later. A referendum took place in April of 1993 where 99.83% of Eritrea's population voted for independence. The turnout of voters was 98.5%.

November 14, 2018  
The UN Security Council voted unanimously to end the unjustified sanctions it had imposed on Eritrea in 2009 and 2011. According to United States Embassy cables leaked by Wikileaks, these sanctions were choreographed and orchestrated by the USUN Mission in New York under the supervision of Ambassador Susan Rice, an avowed fan and supporter of the Tigray People's

Liberation Front (TPLF) that is now at war with the central government of Ethiopia.

To conclude, Eritrea is an old young nation. It is old because archeological evidence support that Eritrean history is as old as humanity. It is young because of its recent independence. The 1952 U.S. State Department Report of Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy states "[Culture] is a two-way street. [It] is a linchpin of public diplomacy, for it's in cultural activities that a nation's idea of itself is best represented".

As Eritrean Americans, our contribution to the U.S. culturally, economically, politically, militarily, and socially is testimony to our continued commitment and dedication. Eritrea's cultural and social history is based on win/win situation. Therefore, we, as Eritrean-Americans, would like to be the bridge between our adaptive country, U.S., and our country of origin, Eritrea.

For eighty years, the U.S. has been on the wrong side of history. Be on the right side! The U.S. should not continue to make the same mistakes over and over again.

We are a click away



Check us out @

<https://www.npdg.online>



Follow us on social media

**For eighty years, the US has been on the wrong side of history.**

**Be on the right side!**

**The US should not continue to make the same mistakes over and over again!**

## Events

The 47 annual Eritrean Festival 2021 was held in Washington, DC from August 14 to August 15, 2021.

The Public Democracy Groups from various cities across the US presented short video documentaries on eight different themes. The videos are available for viewing on EriXpress Media YouTube channel. From August 16 through August 20, the Festival continued virtually. Below was the schedule.

Virtual Festival Schedule				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Progress in Food Security (30 min)	Progress in Health Services (45 min)	Customary and Modern Eritrean Laws (90 min)	Progress in Educational Services (210 min)	Role of Music (150 min)
TPLF Lies & Atrocities (120 min)	80 Years of US Hostilities (120 min)	Media (90 minutes)		Role of Eritrean Sports (150 min)
Nicole Saulsberry on Wol-Wol (60 min)	Fighting Fistula (Ambereen, Melba, Mary) (60 min)	Mahaffy Family (60 min)	Deborah on Nenne Sanguineti-Poggi (40 min)	Eric Garcetti (20 min)
Public Dipl.-Set-01 (40 min)	Public Dipl.-Set-02 (40 min)	Public Dipl.-Set-03 (40 min)	Public Dipl.-Set-04 (40 min)	Public Dipl.-Set-05 (20)
250 min	265 min	280 min	290 min	340 min

## Awel Bunn Lecture Series and Informational Sessions

The First Awel Bunn Session was a PowerPoint Presentation by Mr. Abraham Zerai, Ph.D. Fellow at the University of Turin. His presentation was on “the role of archeology on public diplomacy.” Awel Bunn in Tigrinya (one of the working languages of Eritrea means the first round of traditional coffee ceremony).

NCEA Public Diplomacy Group holds regular lectures and information sessions. Mr. Yosief Fesseha had the flag protocol information session. It was a very informative and educational session.

NPDTF  
presents

Awel bunn Lecture Series # 1

**The Role of Archeology in Public Diplomacy**

**Abraham Zerai, Ph.D. candidate**

**Date: August, 21, 2021**

**Time: 9:00PM (EST)/6:00PM (PST)**

JOIN US  
ON ZOOM

Q&A WITH

# GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2021

5:30 PM PST

The Eritrean & Ethiopian American community join hands to **VOTE NO** on the recall.

## WHY GAVIN NEWSOM?



AFFORDABLE HOUSING



AFFORDABLE EDUCATION



HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL SERVICES

ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED SHORTLY





ሕዳሽ መልሰን ምስ

# GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2021

5:30 PM PST

ማሕበረሰብ ሕገ-መንግሥትን ለማስፈጸም ስሜርም አብ'ዚ ካብ ስልጣን ንምውራድ **VOTE NO** ዝብል ጸዋዒት፡ ስለምንታይ ኣማሓዳሪ ጋሺን ኒውሶም?

## WHY GAVIN NEWSOM?



ትሑት ዋጋ መንበሪ ኣባይቲ



ትምህርቲ ብምጠኑን ዋጋ



ክንክን ጥዕናን ንኩሉ

ዕለት- September 9th. 2021

ሰዓት- 5:30 ድ.ቀ.

ብናይ ካሊፎርኒያ ስዓታት

