

HAMA TUMA'S MUCH HAILED FIRST BOOK REPUBLISHED
SECOND EDITION OF "THE CASE OF THE SOCIALIST WITCHDOCTOR
AND OTHER STORIES" PUBLISHED

Hama Tuma's book was first published by Heinemann (London), African Writers Series , back in 1993 and it immediately received rare and positive reviews. Famous Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiongo wrote the preface for first edition and stated: "Hama Tuma brilliantly captures the contradictions that make up the real Ethiopia of the twentieth century". Robert P. Smith of Rutgers University also wrote a long review from which the one below is excerpted:

"Hama Tuma's tales admirably illustrate the spirit that prevails widely under oppressive regimes in Africa today. Dreadful though they may be in content, these excellently written stories combine the satire and imagination of a Montesquieu and the inventiveness, humor, and oral tradition of a Bernard Dadie, a Birago Diop, and others".

Hama Tuma's stories dealt with dark period of the Mengistu regime, the Red Terror that shed so much blood and tested the core and soul of Ethiopians. Hama chose satire to deal with grim reality and as many readers and reviewers have pointed out he succeeded to capture the reality "brilliantly". Hama Tuma has gone on to write more stories proving his talent at satire and irony but this his first book remains to be the best of them all. Here is what an Israeli reviewer wrote when the book was translated into Hebrew and published in Israel in 2009:

"Allow me to highly recommend an Ethiopian book that I have been reading very slowly for the past two weeks, very slowly so it won't end. I didn't translate it (Dori Parnes' translation is exquisite) so my recommendation is pretty objective. I asked the quality-addicted publisher, Saray Gutman, to send me the press release and the cover so you'll know what I'm talking about and so you won't confuse this book with other Ethiopian books.

Rarely does a reader bump into a book he doesn't want to finish reading so much

that he is angry with the writer who didn't "bother" writing another 100 pages. For me "The Case of the Socialist Witchdoctor" is one of those priceless pieces of work. I normally read a lot but I don't remember ever being sorry ending a book of such high standard. I might be a little bit exaggerating but subjectively this is how I feel. Add to this the fact that the writer is Ethiopian and anonymous but still – this is a masterpiece.

The book handles a terrifying period. Stalin had many students who were even "better" than him, improving the system up to a total madness. The reality in the book is insane, shocking and we can only grip it through humor, wittiness and logic giving the impression of a constant absurdity.

So this is the book and I have no intension of lending it to you so go out and buy yourself a copy.

Avital Inbar

For long out of print, Hama Tuma's book has now been reprinted and is available for the public.

To order your copy e mail to Menberu.lemma2@gmail.com

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