

## THE MASTER AND THE DUMMY

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There is a Yiddish saying that states one lie is a lie. two are lies but three is politics. The recent exuberant declaration by Obama praising the dictatorial regime in Ethiopia smacked of pure and unadulterated imperial /ist/ politics. In the above photo taken at the White House the puppet master and the ladies smile while the dummy looks, expectedly, uncomfortable, constipated, droopy-bent and totally ill at ease. The lies were even too much for the powerless vessel of lies.

For those who had hoped Obama would mean a new departure for America and its world politics/policies, he has heaped on them one disappointment after another. The man hailed as a peace maker has proved to be a "more than a Bush" war monger. Guantanamo is still wide open, America still acts as a cruel imperialist power all over the world, Gaza continues to burn and every tin pot dictator from Qatar-Riyadh to Addis Abeba and Equatorial Guinea calls Obama a steadfast friend. No wonder then that Obama did not blink an eye, with that darling of tyrants called Susan Rice at his side, when

he praised a regime that is committing massacres in the Ogaden and Gambella, has ordered the ethnic cleansing of Amharas, sold off the country's fertile land (at least the size of Belgium) to China, India and the Arab countries, is the predator of the free press, has jammed most web sites and radios, has made brutal torture routine and keeps at least 45,000 political prisoners in labor camps, secret prisons and underground hellholes. The repressive regime sent soldiers into Somalia not to keep the peace or the national interest of Ethiopia (to which it is still alien) but to serve Obama's needs as he struggles to find some redeeming points for a failed policy in the Horn of Africa. For Obama, puppet and peace keeper have become synonymous. Killers are invited to the White House and praised and feted. The dummy called Haile Mariam thus got his 15 notorious minutes of infamy in the White House. As to the much trumpeted economic growth of Ethiopia (we remember such praises being showered on Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and other such places), it only confirms how much official statistics is bent to rhyme with lie and fantasy. Thomas Payne once said government, like dress, is a sign of lost innocence. This is what Obama brings to mind much to the delight of tyrants ready to serve America and get protection a la Mafia. And so the Ostrich politics, the refusal to see and admit the grim reality of impoverished Ethiopia, with a very high rate of unemployment, an inflation that has reduced ordinary people to hunger and humiliation (paying 1.50 BIRR for a handful, gursha, of hotel leftover food), with many millions of dollars lost to corruption in high places, with some 8 million people needing food aid from the UN. Obama lied and lied more than three times to exhibit very bad politics.

Or we could take Browning's suggestion and stop saying Obama lied ("a rough phrase") but say he fell from the truth. Obama has fallen so many times/though slightly less times than his Rice/ that he is very bruised. But then again, to use the famous Bard's phrase, democracy is like a chair that fits all buttocks. As before, democracy for them and democracy for us are very much apart and even different, if not contradictory. We are the people of the dark continent, as the right winger French man Sarkozy said still knocking at the gate of civilization, still needing guardianship, undeveloped and better fast relieved from our national wealth by all means necessary. Nationalists like Menelik and Shaka, Lumumba and Nkrumah are anomalies the soonest sent away or demonized the better. That is why Obama, Britain, Susan Rice and the whole cabal praised the late tyrant Meles to the skies and poked at the wound of 90 million people who had to endure or

perish under his very rotten rule. Autocracy and democracy rhyme for the West when it concerns other people and decades will pass before the West really understands why its world disorder spawns a myriad of brutal extremist groups.

All said, the wailing against the powers that be is of no significance as stupidity is boundless and greed eternal. The fate of Ethiopia, Africa and all other peoples rests in their own hands. No missionary or politician should be allowed to swindle us a second and tenth time around giving us the Bible or the Koran while he takes away our land. Idiocy is no excuse and losing one's country out of foolishness or cowardice is inexcusable. And those who relentlessly pursue their national interest can be blamed for their lack of morality but not for having no purpose. As we say, we believe in God but we should still lock the barn gate. Or as is said so often, the sheep can pray for vegetarianism to prevail but the fox and wolf are forever carnivorous. Imperialism is not benign, Blair and Bush were not saints and are not followed by Saints, alas. This time around the master appears as dumb as the dummy. Who is cheating who? The regime in Addis Abeba as a peacekeeper, democratic, economically sound calls for the suspension of all reality and common sense. We are pressed hard to believe that the American embassy in Addis Abeba is filled by the human version of the three proverbial monkeys. No see, no hear no talk. No conscience to speak of, no decency.

The true statistics are grim indeed and expose Obama for what he is or is not for that matter. The United Nations Development Program has released its 2013 Human Development Index.

Ethiopia is still at lowest level of the index in the HD Index, unveiled by the United Nations Development Program, UNDP. Given that it is the Ethiopian people who know what is the reality in their own country more than 95% have no confidence in the regime, consider the electoral process a farce, have no expectation of fair justice and the rule of law. In fact, the World Justice Project (2014) ranked Ethiopia lowest on the global and regional rule of law index. Capital per worker in Ethiopia is the 4th lowest in the world and the country has one of the lowest per capita in the world. An optimistic surveys still insists that more than 54% of the people are malnourished, 62% have the permanent symptoms or consequences of starvation and close to 60% of the people in Addis Abeba

live in fetid and horrible slums. Agriculture, which accounts for 43% of the GDP and 85% of the employment is in shambles due to the State ownership of land, the fleecing of the peasantry by the agro-industrial firms owned by the ruling Tigrean front, the forced resettlement of millions as they are pushed out of their fertile land that have been now given to foreign land grabbers. The health situation is bleaker and not represented by modern and half empty hospitals in Tigray. The country has at least 48% AIDS orphans-- these and other poor children are sold off to America and other countries at a cheap price. Young girls are also sold off unto domestic slavery in the racist Arab counties and many have been raped and murdered. A crude so called Anti Terror Law is used to stifle dissent, close and ban newspapers, arrest and imprison journalists. The rights of women, children and all political dissidents are buried deeper than a Swiss vault. There is much more but no need to belabor a known truth. If wealth there be or any economic gain it concerns the clique in power and its comprador surrogates. This is the reality that the people know and have known for the last two decades of misery. A perfunctory, toothless and mild annual rebuke via the State Department has little to do with real concern for human rights.

And so, alas , Mr. Obama royally fell off from the truth. Voltaire said prejudice is the reason of fools but then again it is never too late to give up our prejudices. Ethiopians say kissing the sinner is not always a sign of wisdom. Mr. Obama, something up there in your white abode is stinking and needs a cleanup operation.