

## The Systematic Emasculation of Africa's Leadership-Part 1

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Time and again we have been told that Africa's leaders were corrupt megalomaniacs that have contributed to the continent's backwardness, conflict and strife. We tend to believe narratives that assault Africa's leadership especially when they tell us that Africa's leaders, who fought for their nation's liberation were somehow not qualified to lead it when independence came. We believe so called "intellectuals and professionals" who believe they are better poised to govern and lead Africa's budding institutions. Yet we mourn great leaders such as Congo's Patrice Lumumba (Congo), Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah , Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser, Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella and Ahmed Sekou Touré of Guinea, who fought to liberate their beloved nations from the yokes of colonialism, only to be eliminated shortly after with help from their own nationals, traitors who sold them out.

Sekou Touré proclaimed, "We prefer dignity in poverty to affluence in slavery". They wanted to instill pride and confidence in the ability to shape their own destinies, to rely on their own resources, human and material, not to depend on handouts and stipends. They wanted to liberate their lands, but also their minds. They understood Africa's worth, its vast resources and its potentials. Time and again we have seen great leaders brought to their knees. Sadly, Africa today finds itself in deep poverty, without dignity and with some leaders turned into slaves with affluence...emasculated.

The author traveled to New York in early October 2012 to listen to what was being said by the various leaders who had convened on Turtle Bay for the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. What struck me was the lack of respect shown by the host nation and others to the guests that had flown thousands of miles to present their Statements to the world body. At times, it seemed as if they were talking to themselves, as the Assembly Hall was virtually empty. It seemed the UN envoys showed up only to listen to those "like minded" leaders who shared their world view. While some leaders and their representatives were presenting, the others chose to spend their time in NY visiting high end shops and enjoying fine dining at the expense of their people. I sat in person to listen to some of the addresses, but followed almost all through the UN webcast.

On 1 October 2012, UN News Center<sup>i</sup> reported the following:

**"...Eritrea's Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, said it is clear that the UN has not succeeded in its paramount purpose of saving humanity from the scourges of war and poverty, and now the threat of global climate change, in the 67 years since its**

creation...“What is particularly significant is the fact that in most of these wars, it is some of the big powers, who have been the main architects and actors in these wars – the same powers who by virtue of their position in the United Nations Security Council should have shouldered the biggest responsibility for the maintenance of peace and stability,” he said...“The United Nations system, as has been repeatedly pointed out, is indeed outdated. The General Assembly has been emasculated. The Security Council is dominated by one powerful permanent member and increasingly becoming paralyzed,” he added...”

Member states have been calling for reform of the United Nations and the UN Security Council for quite a long time, but because the status quo is preferred by those who wield the most power, reform has been slow in coming. Many have paid lip service to the idea of reforming the outdated Organization and much has been said about its inability to meet its international obligations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Unfortunately, no concrete steps have been taken as yet. The UN’s credibility and integrity has been eroded and its reputation further undermined when the P-3 have opted to go against decisions taken by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, and finding ways to evade them. The UN General Assembly is therefore rendered useless-emasculated by the veto wielding countries on the Security Council.

Can an entire nation be emasculated? History shows us that it is possible to emasculate individuals as well as entire populations.

So how does one go about emasculating an entire population?

Stanley Milgram carried out experiments in the 1960s to discover how the Nazis had managed to get ordinary people to take part in the mass murder of the Holocaust. The experiment was created to explain some of the concentration camp-horrors of the World War 2, where Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Slavs and other enemies of the state were slaughtered by Nazis. The experiment showed that compliance to authority was the norm and not the exception.

In *“Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View”* Stanley Milgram writes:

- **“...Obedience, because of its very ubiquitousness, is easily overlooked as a subject of inquiry in social psychology. But without an appreciation of its role in shaping human action, a wide range of significant behavior cannot be understood. For an act carried out under command is, psychologically, of a profoundly different character than action which is spontaneous...”**

- **“...The person who, with inner conviction, loathes stealing, killing, and assault may find himself performing these acts with relative ease when commanded by authority. Behavior that is unthinkable in an individual who is acting on his own may be executed without hesitation when carried out under orders...”**
- **“...It has been reliably established that from 1933 to 1945 millions of innocent people were systematically slaughtered on command. Gas chambers were built, death camps were guarded, daily quotas of corpses were produced with the same efficiency as the manufacture of appliances. These inhumane policies may have been originated in the mind of a single person, but they could only have been carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of people obeyed orders...”**

The other factor that enables a legitimate authority to evoke destructive obedience, according to Milgram, is the shift of participants into a different experiential state –the “agentic state” that enables them to relinquish responsibility to the authority and therefore to follow his or her orders without regard to their morality.

In 1998-2000, at the height of the Eritrea Ethiopia border conflict, Meles Zenawi’s minority TPLF regime in Ethiopia decided that it was going to deport Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin because Zenawi decided that he did not like “the color of their eyes”. Young and old, men women and children were taken from their homes and thrown onto buses that dumped them at the mine infested borders. Handicapped persons, the sick and the elderly, nuns, priests and others were forcibly removed from cities across Ethiopia. Breastfeeding infants were snatched from their mothers and left abandoned. Ethiopian responding to orders from the minority regime committed untold crimes against Eritreans living in Ethiopia. Their hard earned belongings were confiscated by Tigrayan cadres loyal to the minority regime. Were Ethiopians put in an “agentic state” by the regime? Was it hate or fear that prompted the ill-treatment of Eritreans? Was it hate or fear that prompted the regime’s forces to destroy the cemeteries of Eritrea’s beloved martyrs? 12 years later, many questions remain unanswered...

As the line between hate and fear intercross in modern Ethiopia, the world witnessed another spectacle in Ethiopia. This time it was the death of Meles Zenawi. While the secrecy surrounding his death remains; it was the orchestrated mourning that garnered the most attention. Those close to the TPLF regime say that Ethiopians were ordered to mourn Meles Zenawi, a leader responsible for the many internal and external conflicts raging in today’s Ethiopia. They were told to mourn for a leader that had massacred

their children. Was it an attempt to deflect attention away from the domestic upheavals that seemed to be imploding or were Ethiopians genuinely mourning their leader? It is hard to tell as the regime has lied throughout its reign and has lost the trust of the people.

Who was Meles Zenawi and what did he do to warrant such a send off? Much has been said and written about the Tigrayan leader to date. Jean Shaoul sums up Meles Zenawi's rule quite accurately in the 4 September 2012 article:

**“...Meles engineered one-party rule in Ethiopia, over which he dominated, favouring some ethnic groups and regions at the expense of others, clamping down on dissent, forcing oppositionists into exile, and riding roughshod over human rights. Ethiopia is considered one of Africa's most repressive governments...The 2005 elections were subject to widespread rigging and saw the opposition winning just 23 seats, sparking mass protests. Meles's regime responded by launching the biggest crackdown seen in Africa since South Africa's 1986 state of emergency, killing 200 protesters and beating up and jailing some 50,000 oppositionists, a number of whom were tried for treason...He staged-managed the 2010 elections so effectively that his EPRDF coalition won 99.6 percent of the vote, leading to further protests. He arrested more than 100 oppositionists and charged more than 10 journalists under a 2009 anti-terror law. He appointed around himself a small corrupt clique, took all the important decisions, and refused to allow a successor to emerge...”**

When the news about the death of Meles Zenawi made the headlines in July 2012, the propaganda machinery in the Ethiopian capital went into full swing. The Information Minister told the people that the Prime Minister was on vacation of sorts, and that he would be back at work in September 2012. Others came out to spin similar stories in what turned out to be a blatant lie, a bid to buy time. When it became impossible to hide the truth, his death was finally announced. The same individuals that had no qualms lying to the people of Ethiopia were back on Ethiopian television telling the people he was in fact dead. Lying outright and without shame has been the norm with the current TPLF leadership in Ethiopia. It is the way they conduct their domestic affairs and it is also the way they conduct their international affairs.

Reminiscent of the public mourning held when South Korean leader Kim Jong-il died, Ethiopians were forced to participate in staged mourning events throughout the country, complete with posters and scarves. It should be recalled that similar staged events were orchestrated when Stalin, Zhou Enlai, and Pol Pot died and in each case, it is safe to say that the people participated out of fear. Not only did Meles Zenawi's

cadres orchestrate a two week long “mourning” throughout the country, they put together an elaborate funeral programme whose remnants are still visible around the capital, Addis Ababa. There were posters (probably done by mass printing) distributed to all neighborhoods. They told the foreign press that it was a spontaneous reaction of the people...That the people went out and made these posters themselves....

What was awful to watch was the sea of Ethiopians waving a white handkerchief as if on cue. The regime wants us to believe that the people of Ethiopia all went out and bought the handkerchiefs themselves...in a spontaneous act of grief! A white handkerchief as far as I know is a sign of surrender. In some religious cults, waving of the white handkerchief is a plea to God to extend His mercy. In Spanish football, white handkerchiefs are waved as a sign of disgust. Elsewhere in the world, waving a white handkerchief is a sign that someone was surrendering or giving up. So what were the Ethiopian people telling us by waving those handkerchiefs?

For some odd reason, other than a few officials in the government, ordinary Ethiopians did not speak at the funeral. That was reserved for external mourners, like Susan E. Rice, the US Ambassador to the United Nations and other invited guests. Only leadership that harbored deep seethed hatred and contempt for its own people, a leadership that feared its population would orchestrate such a shameful spectacle and attempt to pass it off as a spontaneous response by the people.

This excerpt from one of the US Embassy cables illustrates the regime’s contempt. It said:

**"...Hailemariam Desalegn, chairman of the Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM), has argued to Post that due to poor education and illiteracy the Ethiopian public is too underdeveloped to make a well reasoned, informed decision, and so Revolutionary Democracy is the political bridge by which the "enlightened leaders" can lead the people to democracy..."**

Judging from the spectacle in Ethiopia over the summer, it is obvious that the frightened minority regime in Ethiopia, like Adolf Hitler and the Nazi’s, has mastered the art of fear to garner obedience from the otherwise proud people of Ethiopia. An emasculated regime whose members suffer from debilitating inferiority complex and crab mentality used the only tools it has at its disposal- fear and lies- to garner obedience.

Let us move on...

Are all leaders of nations great and small, rich and poor, the same? Do western leaders view African leaders as equals? The record shows that they are neither viewed as equals, nor treated as such. Judging from the info found in the Wikileaks American Embassy cables, American and European leaders are placed on a different platform than African or Asian counterparts. States have been calling for equal treatment at the United Nations and at other multilateral forums, but to no avail. The rich countries are content in maintaining the status quo and don't seem to be regarding that as being a problem and sometimes, even the cause of the many international conflicts.

For this sitting, the author will endeavor to present the fundamental causes of Africa's economic retardation and never ending religious and ethnic conflicts, and the emasculation of the continent and its population. For brevity's sake, the author will address issues in the Horn of Africa and the role of the leaders in the region. With the exception of the few, for the most part, Horn leaders have betrayed the trust of their people, and by providing critical national security information to US and other western governments have in fact grossly undermined the independence and sovereignty of their nations and governments.

No continent has witnessed the emasculation and humiliation of its leaders more than Africa. Who is to blame for the systematic emasculation of Africa's leadership? The underlining causes remain varied and there is enough blame to go around.

How many African Ambassadors, or their political officers, in the United States get the opportunity to walk into the White House and chat with the sitting US President on demand? When was the last time that the Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali Ambassadors in Washington had an audience with President Barack Obama?

How many African Ambassadors in Europe get to walk into European State Houses to chat with European Presidents and Prime Ministers on demand?

How often, if they do at all, do Americans and European officials brief African Ambassadors about meetings held by their chief national security and intelligence officers? When was the last time that the Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali Ambassadors in Washington were briefed by the FBI, CIA, Pentagon and the White House on issues relating to US national security, the same briefing given to a sitting US President?

How often, if they do at all, do US officials from the White House, Congress and the Pentagon provide African Ambassadors with information and minutes of their official

meetings? When was the last time that the Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali Ambassadors in Washington were provided with documents related to confidential official US government activities?

How often, if they do at all, do European officials provide regular briefings to African Ambassadors about meetings taking place at the European Commission, European Parliament and in their own State houses?

When was the last time that an African Ambassador or the Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan and Somali Ambassadors in Washington called to the White House to discuss the Presidents/Prime Ministers of Canada, Mexico, Columbia, Brazil, Venezuela etc. etc.?

When was the last time that an African Ambassador was summoned to the State Houses in Europe, so that European leaders could share their personal attitudes towards other European leaders or to back stab one of their own?

Would American or European officials (State, military, intelligence etc. etc.) discuss the overthrow or assassination attempts of their leaders (Prime Ministers and Presidents) with African Ambassadors serving in their capitals?

While some African leaders contributed to Africa's economic malaise by engaging in corrupt behaviors and robbing the nation of its resources. There are also those that seek to advance western interests in Africa instead of strengthening Africa's sovereignty and independence, believing it would somehow elevate their stature in international politics.

According to the recently released American Embassy cables, from providing critical national security information to providing reports and minutes from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and meetings held by heads of states at the African Union, the leaders of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have divulged critical information their own citizens are deprived from having. They have wittingly or unwittingly, compromised the credibility, integrity and independence of the regional and continental organizations and reduced them to becoming foreign policy tools of the external powers.

The Wikileaks cables are replete with evidence of African Presidents and state officials, head of regional and continental wide organizations, academics and intellectuals, who have succumbed to western ideology and are found shamelessly sharing sensitive and

critical information with western Ambassadors and low level Embassy staff serving in African capitals.

More on the emasculation of Africa's leadership in Part Two...

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43176&Cr=general+debate&Cr1=#.UJUDQm-unSg> accessed 22 October 2012