

THE MINISTER OF PEACE

A few years back I wrote about the Ethiopian penchant to be the first in all things diverse. The first human being, the first barefoot runner to win the Marathon in Rome, the first county to have a homeless prime minister (when the wife of the previous dead one refused to vacate the premises), the first country to be chosen by God, and so on and so on. The country has now become the first one to have a minister of peace who presides over the very anti peace security and intelligence services and on the touchy immigration department. The minister is a she and a long time regime official and cadre.

The whims of African dictators have often captured the attention of the world at large--Paul Biya of Cameroon who recently declared himself the seventh time winner of the general election would not, of course, accept his feat as a comedy of sorts. Why squander money when the end result of the rigged election is known beforehand? The president of Zimbabwe, who is continuing "Mugabeism" without the old man, recently announced to all the male citizens that they should better marry two three wives to decrease adultery. Official permission for polygamy? Museveni, the longtime Ugandan president, says leaders with experience (of course like him) should legitimately continue in power till they die. I have made the foibles and crazy declarations of our dictators source and content of at least five African Absurdities books. I do not remember now but one African country had a ministry of happiness. Does the Minister smile all the time? Were sad faces forbidden? What was happiness especially in Africa where sorrow has reigned and surviving every day had for long been a miracle? Anyway, the Minister of Peace in Ethiopia is a woman and she is to control as they say the security services. Everyone knows it is as fiction as a new state of affairs in the country. Window dressing. A popular struggle that would have ended up by ending the repressive pro West ethnic chauvinist regime has been thwarted by a sort of a disruptor, to talk of change and keep the hated system going. The popular demand for a broad based transitional government has been rejected and the new PM has declared arrogantly he will renew and continue with what was for the last 28 years. The Minister of Peace

nonsense is an intrinsic part of this theatrics. The Ministry of Plenty in a country where famine stalks the land and the Ministry of Truth where the devil of lies reigns supreme. Nonsense . Suffering people have to laugh sometimes until the Minister of Control and Grimness comes calling.

Actually, what does the Minister of Peace do? Install peace? Maintain peace? Control the hate and war mongers? The same rulers who appointed the minister of peace are the ones responsible for the misery and sadness of the people. In Ethiopia, the ethnic cleansers and hate mongers, the regime, are the appointers of the minister of peace. The joke is there right away. But I still wonder what will be the minister's job in reality. The Minister of Silliness has an easier job as most of the African dictators are very silly and ridiculous while being thugs and cruel . I sort of feel sorry for the woman who is a victim of a farce by a regime pretending to respect the rights of women by appointing them ministers and nominal president while in reality the basic rights of women and the girl-child remain violated and denied. Rwanda does the same charade with earnest. Being a minister of peace under a prime minister and ruling party of war mongers is not going to be an easy task. This being the case I venture to advise the minister to handle her task as follows (and I demand no fee).

First, stay sphinx like and declare outright that all the talk of war, ethnic cleansing, murder and carnage is enemy propaganda and false.

Follow this with the assertion that peace prevails in Ethiopia and thanks to the regime Ethiopians have peace in abundance and maybe itching for the wars that they have been used to during the past regimes.

Add to this that women in Ethiopia are peaceful and the fact that have now become ministers and even a president shows that the patriarchal country is actually very feminist and on the right path.

Stay ambiguous and decree that peace is nebulous and peace in Ethiopia is a complicated affair.

Give several interviews in the state controlled media on the war situation in th Congo, the plight of Iraqis, the carnage in Libya, the war in Afghanistan and why Idlib and Yemen need to be protected. Beat around the bushes on fire and ignore the reality in place,

Talk of love and reconciliation, sound like an Deepak Chopra or a guru with an Ethiopian bent.

Declare all those who oppose the violation of human and basic rights are negativists and conflict provocateurs and have them neutralized in the name of peace.

Link peace to the degradation of the environment and launch a nationwide slogan : Plant Trees, Assure Peace which will leave many as confused as ever.

If the Minister of peace follows my advice I can assure her she will not have any success but can sustain the impression of having done something without actually doing nothing. Peace in Ethiopia needs more than one powerless minister can ever do. It requires the end of the system, the fall of the regime that made her a minister in the first pace. In other words, the country does need peace but not a minister for or of peace. The joke is stale.

