

Appendix 4. The Role of David Mercer in the early 1990's

The Scotsman, James Bruce, was a free mason, who traveled to Ethiopia perhaps desirous of taking away the Ark of the Covenant from Ethiopia. Instead, he took away other artifacts including the original copy of the Kebra Negast, but left us with interesting stories and insights into the years of a murderous Ethiopian from Adwa, Ras Mikael Seuhl, who was a viceroy in Gonder, and who was also responsible for the downfall of the Gonderine Dynasty, which resulted in the impoverishment of Ethiopian emperors and the advent of a period identified by some as the Era of Princes (Zemene Mesafint). During the Era of Princes, Lord Ansely along with his helper, Henry Salt, traveled from India and landed in Massawa. In 1805 and 1810, Mr. Salt visited Ras Wolde Selassie at Antalo, the seat of the prince who governed Hamasen and coastal territories. Mr. Salt was a liar not only because he visited England to inform the foreign office that he had messages from the Emperor of Ethiopia, though he never went to Gonder to visit the emperor, but also because he fabricated requests made of Britain by an Ethiopian emperor. He later became British Ambassador to Cairo. Since the lies of Salt, Britain was set on a track, which to this day works against the just interests of the people of Ethiopia.

At the end of the 20th century, we find contributions of yet another British subject, David Mercer, to tyrants of Ethiopia. Unlike his predecessors, Mercer informs us that his service to the TPLF leaders was established by accident.

Students of Ethiopian history will view Mercer's report as a significant contribution to understanding the TPLF tyrants. David Stuart Mercer was born in 1940, near Liverpool, England and retired in 2003. He received his PhD from Leeds University two weeks after his retirement in 2003. His first degree in Physics and Electrical Engineering was from Imperial College and was received in 1962. He also received the BA in Social Sciences in 1985 from the Open University. After receiving his first degree, he participated in revolutionary causes and in the sixties he informs us that he was among those who helped expel South Africa from the Commonwealth. Then he became a CEO to a successful company before he joined IBM. Subsequently, he became a lecturer at the Open University (OU), from where he interacted with the TPLF leaders, not only by fashioning an MBA program for TPLF officialdom, but also by serving as an advisor to Mr. Zenawi, the TPLF tyrant. URL1

David Mercer's career is quite interesting in that he has charted a strange but quite fascinating path for physics graduates to pursue. David Mercer wrongly wrote that the Italians incorporated Eritrea to Ethiopia perhaps as his way of grasping why the Eritrawi Ethiopians would seek liberation from Ethiopia. If we don't view his rendition of Ethiopian history empathically, David Mercer would be a liar. However, if we viewed it empathically, by considering a person who does not know the history of Ethiopia and would revert to logical construction of issues in order to grasp them, then David Mercer's renditions could be viewed as an "honest mistake". Regardless of the errors in his rendition of Ethiopian history, his report of what happened at a dinner is quite fantastic. Presumably, the TPLF brass was alerted that David Mercer was somebody

high in the British ways of doing things. Accordingly, Seeye, the defense minister, invited David Mercer to a dinner shortly after his arrival in Addis. The following is part of what Mercer reported happened at that dinner.

“At the time Ethiopia included Eritrea; but with Eritrea wanting to go its own way - that is seceding. Seeye made it clear that the Ethiopian government supported this, since Eritrea had been their partners in the civil war. The problem was that, in recent years, no country had ever seceded from another in Africa. He was therefore negotiating, in effect, British government support for this. The ambassador was being asked for Eritrea to be recognised almost before it seceded. There was a lot of banter about this, with James Glaze ducking and weaving as ambassadors are supposed to do in such a situation. ...

As a dinner ended, my contact in the government -- Dr Fassil -- took me aside and told me that I would be meeting the Minister of Defence again face-to-face in the morning. He also discreetly said "Could you please tell the ambassador that we are perfectly serious about the secession of Eritrea and suggest that he clears this with his government." URL1

At the introduction of his life's work, David Mercer gave a summary of his interaction with Ethiopia, which I quote below.

“Above all, though, I managed two especially important projects which were quite different to anything I had previously undertaken, and very different to the work of other academics. The first of these, which came about

almost accidentally, was helping the new government of Ethiopia move that nation – with a population of 60 million - from Marxism to social democracy. This started as an educational project, teaching – on behalf of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) – the three man junta (President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence) who, following their military success in the civil war, ran the country. I, and my team of senior OU academics, taught them and their colleagues the management skills needed for their new roles in peace-time government. For me it grew into an even more important role when, almost as a double agent, I became the main link between the three man junta and the western governments. In a space of two years this saw me setting up their top level new diplomatic structures, linking the government to the outside world, negotiating a \$1 billion loan from the World Bank, which the IMF considered to be the most successful ever, and successfully negotiating a resolution of the renewed civil war, which had seen more than 100,00 soldiers deployed in the field.

To say it was an exciting time would be to grossly underestimate the stresses of working, as some would see, as a double agent. I reported to the SIS (Secret Intelligence Services) in the UK, but I am still not certain whether this was to the FCO's own SIS or MI6; since my handlers in Ethiopia were the FCO but those in the UK were MI6! On the other side of the double agent equation, my main contact was the Ethiopian Minister of Defence, the outstanding – but largely unknown - general who had brilliantly led the rebel army to it's the greatest military successes in the 1980s.

Although I was the teacher, I learnt as much from the experience as my students. Moreover, these lessons were not just about Ethiopia, or even about the dilemmas facing third world nations, but just as much about the cultural blind spots to be found in our own western ‘democracies’. Bringing a new nation across from Marxism to social democracy clearly exposed the anomalies inherent in the market economies which we take for granted. It also highlighted how narrow was the western, US, vision of what democracy should be about.

In the process I made some very good friends, amongst the senior members of government, though, with several thousand miles between us, I have once more not been able to maintain these friendships! Such is the price I, and my peers, have paid for our roving careers!”

By his own admission, David Mercer was a revolutionary young man in the 60’s. That revolutionary zeal probably had prepared him to connect with the TPLF line of viewing issues. Moreover, the TPLF or the Foreign Office of Great Britain, or more likely both working in tandem must have handled David Mercer so thoroughly that he did not see nor was he interested in the interests of the Ethiopian people, as he was single-mindedly pro-TPLF leaders. Astonishingly, he described the murder squad, the TPLF army, as though it were an army of democrats. Those who know how votes are taken in the TPLF parliament can easily appreciate the votes that the TPLF army takes when it storms its enemies. At any rate, I quote David Mercer’s website to show how the TPLF army is described by him. I have also included other quotes on issues including David Mercer’s recounting of the OLF and its army.

"They were an unusual army, though. Discipline was self-imposed. The troops didn't even have uniforms, and foot drill was unheard of. More amazing still, for those many who think that obeying orders without question is a life and death necessity in an army, the cadres of troops chose what to do themselves. If they ever needed to storm a position, knowing that many would die, they took a vote on the decision; and then, without fail, stormed the position. They ended up, without it being imposed, as the best army in Africa, and one of the best in the world."

===== Regarding secessionist Eritrea--

"Some 30 years before my coming out to Ethiopia, the Eritreans, who had been incorporated into Ethiopia by the Italians, had demanded their independence; and, when this wasn't granted, they had started a guerrilla war against the centre -- which was still ruled by Haile Selassie."

=====Regarding the OLF-----

--In theory at least, there was also another faction opposing the Derg. This was the OLF: the Orrumo Liberation Front. However, they chose not to fight the war themselves but to withdraw to America -- where they spent 20 years lobbying American governments, and living in some comfort if not in luxury."

"As I have explained elsewhere, the Orrumo Liberation Front (OLF) had not participated in the Ethiopian civil war. However, it still confidently expected to take over the post-

war government; since they thought they represented the largest tribe, in a tribal nation.”

“I was called by James Glaze into the embassy. His brief was that, having been in contact with the other ambassadors, they recognised that the OLF had no grounds for fighting inside government and certainly not for taking their troops out to fight military battles.”

“Thus the major decision that the western ambassadors, as a group, put to me was that they simply wouldn't tell their governments what was going on; but would hope that the Ethiopian government was able to suppress the rebels before anyone noticed.”

“The gist of my instructions was that the ambassadors would allow the governments to round up the OLF and end the new war.”

“I explained the position to Seeye exactly as it had been told to me, in effect setting down rules of engagement for the new Civil War.”

“Over the next two to three weeks those of my students who were in the army disappeared, to fight the war against the OLF.”

“Seeye came to see me. .. and his words were memorable: "We didn't use helicopter gunships. We didn't even use heavy weapons or armoured vehicles. All we did was go out into the jungle with our Kalashnikovs. They [the OLF] had been in the jungle for 17 days. We had been there for 17 years. Guess who won!"

“There were something like 100,000 troops fighting in the jungle, yet nobody in the west has heard about it..”

“Remembering that a large proportion of OLF fighters were recruited from the Derg forces, these deserted in their thousands - to collect their pension.”

“..even though more than 100,000 troops were involved, only a few hundred of them had been killed.”

David Mercer’s report provides more evidence to what many had been saying all along about the role taken by the British government in denying Ethiopians get their votes of May 15 2005 respected. Such inferences may be gleaned from reactions to British officials given below.

A) Reaction to Lord Triesman's utterances

Lord Triesman of the British Foreign Office visited Addis Ababa and talked with his favorite Ethiopic lad, Zeanwi, after which he said, "Ethiopia's international reputation has not been helped by recent events. I believe it is possible to find a way forward to redress this and give Ethiopians hope for a better future," he said, according to BBC News of December 2005.

"Dinqem teqorquari", after Britain supported the dismantling of Ethiopia, firstly by facilitating the gift of Ethiopia's seaports to the northern Tigre (Hamase) rebel group (EPLF), and secondly by financing a brutal dictatorial Tigre rebel group of the Shire Plateau (TPLF) to divide landlocked Ethiopia into language-based homelands and to oversee the economic, political and educational

deprivation of Ethiopia, Lord Triesman appears to shed crocodile tears when he refers to the dwindling reputation of Ethiopia. Lord Triesman ought to be told that Ethiopia had survived despite stresses placed on it by Britain since 1800's. One is particularly reminded of what General Gordon, a former British employee of the former Khedive of Cairo planned, namely that the ports of Ethiopia should be given to Italy since Egypt, which became a British colony, had bogus claims over Ethiopia. We are also reminded by the bedeviling lies perpetrated by British Rear Admiral Hewitt who signed the 1884 Treaty at Adwa with Yohannes IV, in contravention of which Britain invited Italy to occupy Massawa. In those times as at the present, Ethiopia had not done any wrong to Britain, though Ethiopia remains a recipient of British sponsored onslaught on its nationhood and the well being of its people. Lord Triesman ought to be told that Ethiopia will have a better future not because his lordship so indicates of such possibilities, but despite his efforts at stifling it. Ethiopia shall survive as it had in the past despite British animosities to the possibility of the existence of a free and vibrant Ethiopia. The TPLF era shall be removed and Ethiopians will remember that era as the period when "hodam" individuals sold out the interest of Ethiopia.

Lord Triesman continued: "We remain completely committed to provide aid to some of the poorest people in Ethiopia."

"Dinqem erdata. Britain threatens to continue its support of the budget of a dictator, their lad Zenawi. All Ethiopians know is that Kinijit, the main Ethiopian opposition party, won the overwhelming vote in May 2005 elections and

Kinjiit and Hebrat are the duly elected representative of Ethiopia. Would Britain give a penny to Kinijit? Certainly not for that would demonstrate that Britain is respecting the vote of Ethiopians.

For more pronouncements by his lordship David Triesman point to URL <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4539364.stm>

B. Legitimacy to tyranny ensues from negotiations with a tyrant

What Ethiopians seek from the civilized world is an unconditional rejection of tyranny, a respect for the votes of Ethiopians, the majority of whom opposed the TPLF/EPRDF government. Ethiopians do not seek conditions of providing legitimacy to tyrant Zenawi. Tremendous hope was placed on the proposition that the democratic traditions of the civilized world east of the Atlantic would force it to forge solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Ethiopia. We still keep hope alive.

Legitimacy to tyranny ensues from negotiations with a tyrant, particularly when the negotiations are made between the tyrant and those whom he had placed in jail. The legitimacy is heightened when foreign governments are involved in making the negotiations.

Recently, **Prime Minister Blair gave a boost to the stature of tyrant Zenawi by sitting with him in the February 2006 conference of "progressive leaders" in South Africa.** According to Peter Biles BBC southern Africa Correspondent, Prime Minister Blair said. "The government won the election, there was then a reaction to

it, there was then, perhaps, if I can say this without being too undiplomatic, an over reaction to that, which often happens." [URL2] Evidently, Mr. Blair considered the murder of over 80 and the imprisonment of thousands of Ethiopians as a mere case of "over reaction". Of course, some assure us that Mr. Blair's body language clearly was unfriendly to Mr. Zenawi. The important issue, however, is that the body of Mr. Zenawi was at the conference of the "progressives", and the utterances of Mr. Blair at a press conference were pro-Zenawi and against the interest of the people of Ethiopia who suffer under the tyranny of Zenawi. Mr. Blair's disregard of the interests of the oppressed people of Ethiopia is matched by his unwarranted and unsupported assertion that Mr. Zenawi had won the elections, when the EU-EOM has not so declared. A number of seats, 299 seats to be exact, have not been agreed upon by the opposition as having been settled in a transparent and just way. Remarkably, and in the interest of furthering a democratic and nonviolent struggle, the Kinijit leaders had offered the now famous "Eight Points principles" (Appendix 10) as a way of working through parliamentary democracy, which tyrant Zenawi did not accept. A desire to live by democratic principles as provided in the eight point principles proposed by Kinijit is unfortunately dismissed by Mr. Blair as a "reaction".

We are now treated by an EU representative who visited Ethiopia, and who is working on "a negotiated settlement" between the tyrant and his imprisoned opponents. Before sharing the negotiation story by Mr. Louis Michel, it is instructive to remind us of the role of nonviolent movements extracted from a book by Gene Sharp.

Click Gene Sharp to read this short and quite easy to read book, entitled "From Dictatorship to Democracy", 2002.

Below are some quotations from the book.

p.5. Dictators are not in the business of allowing elections that could remove them from their thrones.

p. 6. Usually, no foreign saviors are coming, and if a foreign state does intervene, it probably should not be trusted. With respect to this issue one of four points made includes:

Foreign states also may be willing to sell out an oppressed people instead of keeping pledges to assist their liberation at the cost of another objective.

P.11. When the issues at stake are fundamental,..., issues of human freedom, or the whole future development of the society, negotiations do not provide a way of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. On some basic issues there should be no compromise.

p. 13. Resistance, not negotiations, is essential for change where fundamental issues are at stake.

Further, democratic negotiators, or foreign negotiation specialists accepted to assist in negotiations, may in a single stroke provide the dictators with the domestic and international legitimacy that they have been previously denied because of their seizure of the state, human rights violations, and brutalities. "

Reference to a story regarding Mr. Louis Michel's visit to Ethiopia is given below..

"ADDIS ABABA - EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel said a negotiated settlement to the crisis was crucial in efforts to let democracy take root in this Horn of Africa nation of an estimated 77 million people. The European Union pressed Ethiopia's ruling and opposition parties Friday to negotiate an end to the political crisis triggered by disputed results of last year's elections and a subsequent crackdown on government's critics. Political and civil unrest have shaken the country since the May general elections." [URL3] <http://www.ethiomeia.com/>

References

URL1 . BBC News, 18 December, 2005:
(<http://futureobservatory.dyndns.org/9149.htm>).

URL2 [UK PM targets Ethiopia at summit, Sunday, 12 February 2006.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4707232.stm>]

URL3. <http://www.ethiomeia.com/>

Gene Sharp (2002.) From Dictatorship to Democracy.

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