

The shameful act of OPDO. By Yilma Bekele



I came across a clip of a VOA interview from Ethiopia. It is about the unveiling of a new statue in Oromia Kilil (Bantustan), Arsi Zone, Hitosa Wereda named *Anole Statue and Museum*. From the video that came with the report the ugly contraption seems to be sitting in the middle of acacia forest and depicts a cut off human hand with a cut off what we are told to be depiction of a female breast resting on the palm stretched to the sky. I am assuming the Museum is there to explain the reason for the erection of such a strong and ugly visual in such a serene place.

The picture you see above is captured off the video and it shows the statue under construction. The Video makes it look to be in the middle of nowhere with no buildings or road nearby. I have no idea if the location has any significance to the story being told. The report does not tell us where the museum is located in proximity to the statue. Ato Eskinder Frew the VOA reporter promised to give us an in-depth interview soon.

Ato Eskinder talked to a few people to give us differing perspectives on this monument. I found the exchange very enlightening. Oromia Kilil (Bantustan) Culture and Tourism Bureau Head Ato Mohamed Jilo was interviewed to shed light on the meaning of this twenty million Bir project. This is what he said.

'this is not to exact revenge the act was not done by a certain nationality the government of Oromia Kilil or the people of Oromia do not view it like that , the fight was with the system and it was that sacrifice paid fighting against the system that enabled us to have the democracy we have today. The revolution of Ginbot 1983 got rid of the 'neftegna' system. Some people claim this statue is built to exact revenge on the Amhara of the time but we say 'Neftegna' Minilik was born an Amhara but we are not condemning all Amhara to be Neftegna. Rather than exact revenge it (the statue) is to make sure such act does not take place again, it is to teach future generations.'

and when he was informed by the reporter that All Ethiopia party does not have a positive view on such a statue here is what he said.

'we expect such opposition from them it is not only the statue they oppose but they are against Oromo self rule and use of our own language further more they claim our Federal system is based on ethnicity and they are against it so we are not surprised by their opposition to the statue anyway we still claim the atrocity (cutting women's breast) is done by individuals not by a certain Nationality there were Oromos with Minilik such as Gobenä Dache that savaged his people allied with Minilik it is also possible other nationalities were involved in this.....thus the individual that committed this could emerge from a nation like Minilik did but he also brutalized his own peoplehe did not lift his own people from poverty all of the people of Oromia are aware of that today his people (Amhara)are as poverty stricken as the Oromos .'

What do you think? Has any other country faced such a problem? Can children of the same mother depict each other in such terms and continue to live together? Why would anybody do such harm to so many millions in the name of what and to what end?

The report states the permission to erect such a statue was approved by the Oromia (Bantustan) Kilil. Knowing how the current system works it is doubtful that the TPLF did not give tacit approval if not early inception of the idea itself. It is the stated mission of TPLF to create a wedge between the various people of Ethiopia. This incident is a TPLF victory. It is a hate message aimed at the Amhara and all of Ethiopia's children. It is a sad day to be Amhara or Oromo. It is definitely a crazy and disturbed person that would come up with such diabolic idea. It is totally gullible and clueless individuals that would give life to such ugly thought.

With all due respect Ato Mohamed Jilo is parroting a rehearsed response void of reason, emotion and psychological impact on society as a whole. My question to him is was this act and its ramifications discussed before it was approved? Did someone ask the purpose of it all and demanded for a verifiable proof such things did happen as part of a policy? Did the OPDO thought out historians to get perspective, psychologists to see its impact both on the Oromo youth and their Amhara cousins and seek advice from elders of both groups to make sure there would be no lingering animosity?

I doubt all that was done. Ato Mohamed dismissed Ato Abebaw Mehari's of All Ethiopia's concern as irrelevant. That is a curious and callous response to the grave accusations of mass atrocity as vividly displayed by the Anole statue. No matter how much my friend Ato Mohamed tries to dance around the issue the finger is pointing at the same old Amhara as the perpetrator. His attempt to separate Minilik from the Amhara is definitely out of this world logic.

The issue here is more than history. It is about today. How could a party in charge resort to fanning the flames of hate and intolerance and solve the daily problems faced by our people? We are in the middle of a mass migration of our youth, there is talk of impending food shortage, the inflation is double digits, do the esteemed leaders of OPDO believe that putting up such an offensive statue that would injure many of their citizens a priority? How does one justify spending twenty million dollars to weave a fairy tale just to promote hate?

Oromo's conquered Amhara, Amhara's conquered Tigray and Oromo, today the Tigray's are in the process of digesting conquered Amhara, Oromo and the rest of Ethiopia we always seem to forget about. Should every Kilil go out on a statue building binge with Amharas recounting the Oromos Conquer of Gondar, with Tigrays reliving Amhara domination, Christians lamenting the expansion of Muslims and burning of Churches and Monasteries and so on. Where does this lead us to?

Isn't forming brotherly love part of the requirements of living together in harmony? How could we live and form a lasting union if we accuse each other of ugly behavior from the past and not even based on verifiable fact nor true? How does this depiction affect the relationship between our people? How does viewing such ugly and offensive statue affect our children?

It is very sad to see people such as Ato Mohamed Jilo being used by those with ulterior motive to weaken the bond between our people. We do not see the TPLF warlords building a monument depicting their people as weak victims but heroic fighters that stood up to oppressors. They have built monuments that reach the sky showing them to be bigger than life. No Ethiopian objects to that. A positive depiction of one's people is always appreciated as long as it is not done at the expense of one's own family.

The practice of building a monument is prevalent in all human history. Every Nation's capital is full of statues and memorials showing heroism and gallantry of past leaders and average people. The US has Lincoln Statue, MLK Memorial and library, the French built Arc de Triomphe, the Russians have Red Square as a focal point of their glorious past among many others I can mention. Anole Statue and Museum stands all by itself erected not to celebrate past achievements of our Oromo forefathers but present them in a negative and victimhood state which is far from the truth.

So my simple question to Ato Mohamed Jilo and the OPDO mini warlords is what exactly are you trying to accomplish when you spend twenty million Bir to build such a statue that shows the Oromo as victims? How does it help the people of Oromo that are starving as we speak and the children of Oromia that lack paper, pencil or a decent school? Do you think that money could have been better spent to train teachers, build a clinic or bring clean water to the villages instead of an offensive and demeaning statue in the middle of nowhere?

Today thousands of our Oromo people are running from the hell created by TPLF as an architect and OPDO, ANDM, SEPDM and other opportunists as running dogs. There are thousands of Oromos in TPLF prisons, thousands are walking to all parts of Africa, thousands of our young girls are in servitude in the Middle East and the puppet OPDO true to its nature choose to build a monument to create hate between children of the same mother. Does that sound to be the responsible and grown up thing to do? Does that add a spoonful of nutrition to our starving and destitute people?

My dear OPDO the claim that your statue is a strange and bizarre sight is an understatement. To say that it is ugly and rude is not far from the truth. I do not know

what it would look like when finished but the picture we see today is a crude idiot inspired and not to scale rendition of a hand and whatever is being held by it. It must have been created by a committee of men without the presence of a woman since a female with two nipples on one breast is not the norm and because no artist worth his salt would claim ownership of this work that cries for imagination and creativity if nothing else.

All Ethiopians should demand the statue be dismantled without further discussion. We believe it does not serve any useful purpose other than create mistrust, hate and poison the relationship between our peaceful people. We believe it is not possible to build a harmonious society based on hate and negativity. Our people have fought each other, loved each other and always managed to come together when it matters. We want to build on our positive side while working on our negative to make life better for our children. We reject all those that choose cultivating hate and negativity for fame and fortune. The Ethiopian people are tired of mad and unstable leaders and opportunist followers that cannot see beyond their nose. We only accept leaders that would emphasize our many good qualities and help us harvest the bounty that come out of common toil. Live free. Die free.

<http://www.ethiograph.com/video/watch.php?vid=505211777>