

The Rise and Fall of the “Baksheesh State” in Ethiopia

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My long time readers by now know that I mint my own words and phrases whenever I find it necessary to convey my ideas and arguments with greater clarity, precision and creativity. In this commentary I introduce the concept of the “baksheesh state” (beggar state) to examine the political economy of the ruling Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) regime in



Ethiopia.

In various parts of the Middle East and South Asia, there is a tradition of “baksheesh” which has various manifestations. One may practice “baksheesh” by “alms giving” or charity to the poor as part of one’s religious duty. “Tipping for services rendered” is another manifestation of that custom as is making payment to those in authority “for granting special favors.” “Baksheesh” also refers to a culture of political corruption and moral bankruptcy where government officials demand “gifts” and “presents” at the highest levels to aggrandize enormous wealth while officials at the lowest levels supplement their meagre incomes with it.

I introduce the concept of the “baksheesh state” to analyze regimes and states that sustain themselves primarily through *international alms (aid + loans) and engage in*

aid/loan racketeering (use of legitimate organizations for illegal purposes) through a variety of corrupt practices. [Just as I have previously argued that the highest stage of African dictatorship is “thugtatorship”](#), I argue here that the “baksheesh state” (beggar state) is a predictable mutation of the garden variety African “kleptocracy” where political power is a means for public officials and elite members of the ruling class to accumulate personal wealth by effectively privatizing and siphoning the public treasury and resources at the expense of the broader population.

My notion of the African baksheesh state hearkens back to the admonitions of the well-known Nigerian nationalist, author and statesman Chief Obafemi Awolowo who urged constant vigilance against the rise and entrenchment of “beggar states” in post-independence Africa. In 1967, at the 4th Summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, Chief Awo sternly warned:

Today, Africa is a Continent of **COMPETING BEGGAR NATIONS**. We vie with one another for favours from our former colonial masters; and we deliberately fall over one another to invite neocolonialists to come to our different territories to preside over our economic fortunes...

... We may continue and indeed we will be right to continue to use the power and influence which sovereignty confers, as well as the tactics and manoeuvres which international diplomacy legitimatises, to extract more and more alms from our benefactors. But the inherent evil remains—and it remains with us and with no one else: unless a beggar shakes off and irrevocably turns his back on, his begging habit, he will forever remain a beggar. For, the more he begs the more he develops the beggar characteristics of lack of initiative, courage, drive and self-reliance.”

Democracy has been pithily defined as a “government of the people, by the people and for the people.” In contrast, a “baksheeshocracy” is a government of aid donors and loaners, for aid donors and loaners and by aid donors and loaners. Alternatively, the baksheesh state could be understood as a government of panhandlers, for panhandlers and by panhandlers.

There is little question or debate that under the TPLF baksheesh state in Ethiopia has handily won the race to the bottom to become the #1 African beggar state. Indeed, the TPLF regime is the prototype and archetype of the baksheesh state in Africa today. It is well-established that Ethiopia has been and remains Africa’s largest recipient of foreign aid. [According to the Development Assistance Group ETHIOPIA](#), Official Development Assistance given to Ethiopia for 2008 was \$3.819 billion, \$3,525 billion in 2010 and \$3,563 billion in 2011. In 2011, [“Britain chose Ethiopia to be its biggest recipient of development aid during the next four years.”](#) The U.S. increased its aid to the TPLF regime from nearly \$1.8 billion in 2005 to nearly \$3.5 billion in 2008.

International aid donors and loaners subsidize and transfer massive amounts of funds in various forms (humanitarian, development, military, bilateral and multilateral aid, NGO aid, etc.) to baksheesh states such as Ethiopia to advance their own strategic and geopolitical agendas. They use their “aid” to manipulate and control the small clique of malignant kleptocrats who cling to power by force to enrich themselves by skimming off a substantial portion of the international aid and loans they receive in the name of their people. One of the notorious ways in which donors and loaners manipulate baksheesh states is by vastly increasing the amount of aid they give to states who enlist in their proxy service. For instance, after the late Meles Zenawi invaded

Somalia in 2006, [the U.S. increased its aid to his regime from nearly \\$1.8 billion in 2005 to nearly \\$3.5 billion in 2008.](#)

The TPLF baksheesh state is hopelessly addicted to aid as a dope fiend is addicted to hallucinogenic drugs. That regime follows the dictum, “Ask not how YOU can handle your country to make it self-sufficient, ask how you can panhandle for your country so that it can never become self-sufficient.” The leaders of the ruling TPLF regard aid as “free money” that flows like the River Nile without end and without conditions. They are completely oblivious of *Chief Awo’s admonition that beggars that beg remain beggars forever*. For the TPLF leaders, international aid and loans are manna from the Western gods that will rain upon them just as predictably as the passing of the seasons. There may be less “aid-rain” one year and more another; but the Western gods never, never fail to send the “aid-rains” to the TPLF baksheesh state. Although it is proverbially said that “God helps those who help themselves”, the Western aid gods help only those at the top of the TPLF aid-food-chain who help themselves to the unending bounty of the free aid money they provide them annually.

The effect of unconditional and unending aid on the TPLF baksheesh state over the past two decades has been devastating. The TPLF bakshseesh state has been assured in words and actions that it does not have to maintain good governance or even pretend to go through the motions of good governance as a condition for aid and loans. The TPLF leaders know aid money will flow into their pockets regardless of what they do or do not. It is an indisputable fact that after the TPLF regime jailed nearly all of the opposition leaders and journalists, human rights advocates and civil society leaders following the 2005 election, the [U.S. rewarded it by increasing](#)

[its aid from nearly \\$1.8 billion in 2005 to nearly \\$3.5 billion in 2008.](#)

It is also an indisputable fact that the TPLF baksheesh state in Ethiopia receives free aid money from the Western donors and loaners with no strings attached; and in rare cases where conditions are set, they are never enforced. As a result, the TPLF masterminds and ringleaders often use international aid and loans to cling to power by using aid and loan money to maintain their large patronage system. By cleverly transmuted aid and loan money in their budget, they provide tens of thousands of jobs to their political supporters and increase the size of their security, police and military services. In August 2011, the [Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the BBC reported](#) the “Ethiopian government is using millions of pounds of international aid to punish their political opponents.” The Bureau presented compelling evidence of how “aid is being used as a weapon of oppression propping up the government of Meles Zenawi.” The gargantuan political machine they created to buy and steal votes delivered a stunning 99.6 percent victory in the 2010 “election”.

The TPLF baksheesh state is dis-incentivized by the international donors and loaners from striving to become self-sufficient. In March 2011, I wrote a commentary entitled, [“The Moral Hazard of U.S. Policy in Africa”](#) arguing that a regime that is heavily dependent on the safety net of foreign aid, massive infusion of multilateral loans and a perpetual supply of humanitarian assistance *will behave differently if it were left to its own devices to deal with the consequences* of a mismanaged economy, debilitating corruption and proliferating poverty. For over two decades, the TPLF baksheesh regime has gone out into the international community with bowls begging for food to feed millions of Ethiopians without being held accountable by the donors and

loaners. As a result, the regime has been completely indifferent to the plight of the people. In a candid moment during the 2008 famine in Southern Ethiopia, the late Meles Zenawi tried to absolve himself of responsibility while revealing his depraved indifference for the welfare of the starving people of Southern Ethiopia. Defending himself against accusations of indifference and ineptitude, Meles said, “That was a failure on our part. We were late in recognising we had an emergency on our hands. We did not know that a crisis was brewing in these specific areas until emaciated children began to appear.” Given the inescapable fact that food crises (emergencies) are so pervasive, recurrent and cyclical in Ethiopia, it is mind-boggling to hear a “leader” of a country be so uninformed and clueless to a point where he had to wait for evidence of skeletal children before he is convinced that there is a famine “emergency”.

The unfortunate fact is that even in 2014, the response of the TPLF baksheesh regime would be no different. “We were late in recognising we had an emergency on our hands...” Why is it that the regime has been unable to deal decisively with the question of famine, hunger and malnutrition year after year, decade after decade? The answer lies in the fact that the leaders of the TPLF baksheesh state are “Western aid/loan welfare kings and queens” who find it far more profitable to sit on their behinds and gorge themselves with millions of dollars skimmed from international aid and loans than putting their shoulders to the wheel of economic development and their noses to the grindstone of good governance. They are completely indifferent to alternatives to aid and loans as the long-term solution to poverty. Thus, international aid aids not only in the entrenchment of bad governance in Ethiopia but also poverty itself.

It has been rumored for some time that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and some of the Western donors have been softly urging the TPLF baksheesh regime to untether itself from the tits of the foreign aid/loan cash cow. Last week, the regime announced with some fanfare that it will be seeking access the international bond markets. It is somewhat encouraging to hear that the TPLF regime expects to get off its duff after sucking on the foreign aid lollipop for nearly a quarter of a century and seek alternatives to panhandling. [The TPLF “Finance Ministry” announced](#), “We are aiming for late December to early January at the latest as the time *for our debut* into the international capital markets. Bonds are very much part of the plan to improve infrastructure.”

It is amazing that the TPLF regime finally, after 23 years, had its epiphany and discovered capital markets. It is curious that the TPLF regime was completely unaware of such a financing mechanism when it launched its illegal “bond” sales to Diaspora Ethiopians in the United States for nickels and dimes to build the fairy-taled 5,250-megawatt Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile River. Could the Diaspora bond “sales” possibly be itsy-bitsy baksheesh in their pockets? *Just so they know that we know they have not pulled the wool over our eyes, we note that as the TPLF regime is stage-managing its current public relations campaign for outreach to international capital markets, it had allowed massive capital flight and illicit financial flows from Ethiopia for nearly a decade. [In 2011, Global Financial Integrity reported](#) that “Ethiopia lost \$11.7 billion to outflows of ill-gotten gains between 2000 and 2009.” Imagine what \$12 billion dollars could have done to propel Ethiopia’s economic development!!!*

The TPLF baksheesh state in Ethiopia is so dependent on donors and loaners that its budget (anticipated revenues and expenditures for a given year) depends overwhelmingly on *budget support* from the loaners and donors. The US, UK, and the World Bank (not including other European or industrialized countries) have provided 50 to 60 percent of the *national budget* of the TPLF baksheesh state for years, according to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development. In her book, “Dead Aid”, Dambissa Moyo argues that the primary source of revenue (budget) for the TPLF regime is foreign aid constituting [“a whopping 97 percent of the government’s budget.”](#)

Budget support has been the preferred method of delivering multi-donor “development assistance” to many developing countries and particularly to Ethiopia as a poverty reduction strategy. “Budget support” is supposed to be a kinder and gentler version of the “Washington Consensus”, that abominable and villainous “neoliberal” economic policy straightjacket devised by the the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and U.S. Treasury Department in 1989 and imposed on crisis-ridden developing economies to presumably stabilize and put them on the path to trade, investment and expanded domestic entrepreneurship. (In an article included in a book edited by the old anti-neo-liberal warhorse Joe Stiglitz, Meles proclaimed, “The neo-liberal paradigm is a dead end incapable of bringing about the African renaissance, and that a fundamental shift in paradigm is required to effect a revival.”)

On the grave-site of the “Washington Consensus” grew the tree of budget support where baksheesh states could seek shelter from the exacting demands of donors and loaners and untether themselves from the attached strings of the Consensus. With budget support, the donors and loaners

would no longer impose aid/loan conditions or demand policy alignments from recipient countries. Rather, they would select and align their conditions with the recipient country's strategy on development and poverty reduction. Simply stated, budget support is a clever strategy to conceal the rampant corruption that takes place in baksheesh states and shield corrupt leaders in recipient countries from public accountability and transparency.

In September 2009, Meles “called on international development partners to support Ethiopia’s growth and transformation over the coming five years through releasing budget aid.” His harebrained and much vaunted [“Growth and Transformation Plan”](#), based largely on “development aid” through budget support, is expected to propel Ethiopia into becoming a “middle income country by 2015”. Meles quixotically claimed that by undertaking massive infrastructure construction and large-scale agricultural production, Ethiopia will achieve middle-income status. In its [“Country Development Cooperation Strategy, 2011-2015, USAID chimed in](#) declaring, “Over the next five years, Ethiopia can be transformed to a stable, growing economy, with solid social services and a resilient population.” [We are now two months away from 2015 and a year away from 2016 and Ethiopia remains the second poorest country in the world!!!](#)

The “developmental state” v. the “baksheesh state”

[On September 25, 2014, President Obama said](#), “there is no better example of progress in Africa than what has been happening in Ethiopia — one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.” The President’s statement is not only unfounded in any demonstrable fact but also embarrassing

because he was merely parroting a canard cleverly fabricated and perpetrated by the late Meles Zenawi.

For the past decade, Meles Zenawi and his disciples have been bragging that their “developmental state” has produced stratospheric economic growth in Ethiopia in the first decade of the 21st Century. In March 2009, [Meles crowed that he expected the Ethiopian economy to grow by 12.8 percent. He assured his Parliament in 2010, “We will be seeing an economic growth rate of 10.1 percent this year, while inflation will fall to 3.9 percent.”](#) Such hyperbolic claims were roundly discounted by various international institutions. According to a [2010 report of the Center for Global Development](#), average growth rates per capita for the period 1996–2008 was 4.1 percent. The International Monetary Fund also stated in 2009 that given the global economic crises, Ethiopia could expect only about 6% economic growth. [In November 2007, the Economist magazine reported](#), “The government claims that the economy has been growing at an impressive 10% a year since 2003-04, but the real figure is probably more like 5-6%, which is little more than the average for sub-Saharan Africa.” [The Economist magazine in March 2012](#) concluded Meles’ claims of “double-digit growth rates predicted by the government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi look fanciful.”

There is no question that Meles cooked the growth statistics as I have demonstrated beyond any doubt in my commentary, [“The Voodoo Economics of Meles Zenawi”](#). In 2011, [Meles admitted that “some” of his economic statistics were questionable when he said](#), “The precision of the (economic) data is disputed, and we have an ongoing conversation ourselves with partners, including the government itself, about some of that data. But the headline issue, which nobody disputes, is that there has been from a low base tremendous development progress in Ethiopia over the last eight to ten

years or so.” Benjamin Disraeli correctly observed that there are “Lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

Meles’ self-styled “developmental state” is actually a thinly-veiled bakshseesh state garbed in neo-socialist ideological rant against “neoliberalism”. In his [unfinished “Master’s theses”](#) at Erasmus University, Meles condemned the “neo-liberal state” as a “predatory” “night watchman state”, and defined it as “a state whose intervention in the economy is very limited”. He argued the neo-liberal state is structurally incapable of “overcome[ing] the vicious circles and poverty traps.”

In contrast to the “predatory night watchman neo-liberal state”, Meles’ argued that his “developmental state“ conceives of development as “a political process first and economic and social process later.” Meles’ “developmental state” plans, initiates, implements, monitors and totally controls the development process. It is the only institution with the capacity to “eliminate rent-seeking behavior” [which economists variously define as a system in which “individuals or groups lobby government for taxing, spending and regulatory policies that confer financial benefits or other special advantages upon them at the expense of the taxpayers or of consumers or of other groups or individuals with which the beneficiaries may be in economic competition.”] The private sector is at best a spectator and a passive lackey (not even partner) to the developmental state which has a singularly commanding role in the economy. According to Meles, “without a developmental state, most if not all of these [developing] countries will be stuck in the poverty trap and the substantial business and middle class will not be created.” Meles’ “developmental state” is the silver bullet that could solve all of Ethiopia’s and Africa’s economic, social and political problems.

In my commentary [“The Fakeonomics of Meles Zenawi”](#), I demonstrated that Meles’ “growth and transformation plan” (the undergirding structural foundation of the developmental state) is nothing more than a make-a-wish list of stuff. It purports to be based on a ‘long-term vision’ of making Ethiopia ‘a country where democratic rule, good-governance and social justice reigns.’ It aims to ‘build an economy which has a modern and productive agricultural sector with enhanced technology and an industrial sector’ and ‘increase per capita income of citizens so that it reaches at the level of those in middle-income countries.’ It boasts of ‘pillar strategies’ to ‘sustain faster and equitable economic growth’, ‘maintain agriculture as a major source of economic growth,’ ‘create favorable conditions for the industry to play key role in the economy,’ ‘expand infrastructure and social development,’ ‘build capacity and deepen good governance’ and ‘promote women and youth empowerment and equitable benefit.’

However, stripped of its collection of hollow economic slogans, clichés, buzzwords and catchphrases, Meles’ growth and transformation plan is plain sham-o-nomics. *If the “growth and transformation plan” is a sham so is the developmental state!* In 2009 at a high level meeting of Western donor policy makers in Berlin, a German diplomat suggested that Ethiopia’s economic woes could be traced to “Meles’ poor understanding of economics”. (It is a pity the German diplomat was unaware that Meles almost got a Master’s degree in economics from Erasmus University and that he [“studied for a degree in Business Administration at the Open University in 1991 \(graduating first in his class\).”](#))

Meles went to extraordinary lengths to justify the perpetual (dictatorial) rule of the “developmental state” because there is “the need for continuity of policy. Developmental policy is unlikely to transform a poor country into a developed one

within the time frame of the typical election cycle. There has to be continuity of policy if there is to be sustained and accelerated economic growth. In a democratic polity uncertainty about the continuity of policy is unavoidable. More damagingly for development, politicians will be unable to think beyond the next election etc. It is argued therefore that the developmental state will have to be undemocratic in order to stay in power long enough to carry out successful development.”

The private sector must totally submit to the “developmental state” because it is that state that has the capacity to maintain a “stable, democratic and at the same time developmental coalition... in a developing country.” The developmental state “must have the ability and will to reward and punish the private sector actors depending on whether their activities are developmental or rent seeking.” In his conclusion, *Meles issued the following mind-boggling but supremely self-serving pronouncement:*

Where the circumstances for a developmental state do not exist the chances for a stable democracy to emerge are indeed very remote. Where they exist while there is no guarantee for democracy, there is a reasonable chance for a developmental and democratic state to emerge. *In the end, therefore, the chances of a stable democracy in a poor country are related intimately to the emergence of a developmental state and accelerated development associated with it.*

Simply stated, Ethiopia can only achieve economic growth, development, democracy, good governance, human rights, etc., *IF and ONLY IF* it is led by a permanently entrenched political party committed to the ideology of developmental statism under the leadership of one man. *It is a stunning*

theory of political economy coming from an arrogant autodidact!

Meles fancied himself as a prodigious economist and a polymath. Steeped in his youth in the bush in the now discredited political economy of Marxism, Meles (and his disciples) once in power, tried to redeem and rhetorically reinvent himself as the “chief architect” of “revolutionary democracy” and the “developmental state” in Ethiopia. Incredibly, neither Meles nor his witless acolytes took the opportunity to articulate their theory and practice of revolutionary democracy or the developmental state. Instead, they have chosen to mount blathering rhetorical attacks on “neoliberalism” while making a beeline to the gilded gates of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the embassies of Western governments with stretched out hands and cupped palms for alms. “Baksheesh, pretty please!!!”

The BIG LIE about the developmental state in Ethiopia

History’s greatest propagandist said, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.” When that big lie is repeated by the biggest leader in the world, it has the potential to become a big truth. But “A lie however big does not become truth, wrong does not become right and evil does not become good, just because it is repeated by the high and mighty or even accepted by a majority.”

[When President Obama met with a delegation of the ruling regime in Ethiopia on September 25, 2014 and made his statements, he was pathetically misinformed and inexcusably ignorant.](#) He said,

... I think there's no better example than what has been happening in Ethiopia — one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. We have seen enormous progress in a country that once had great difficulty feeding itself. It's now not only leading the pack in terms of agricultural production in the region, but will soon be an exporter potentially not just of agriculture, but also power because of the development that's been taking place there.

It is embarrassing for the President of the United States to be so misinformed to the point of publicly misrepresenting a simply verifiable fact. Just three weeks before the President made his statement, [USAID's August 15, 2014 report which completely contradicted him](#):

Despite a fast-growing economy, Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. *It experiences high levels of both chronic and acute food insecurity, particularly among rural populations and smallholder farmers.*

Approximately 44% percent of children under 5 years of age in Ethiopia are severely chronically malnourished, or stunted. This lack of nutrients results in irreversible cognitive and physical impairments. **The long-term effects of chronic malnutrition are estimated to cost the Government of Ethiopia approximately 16.5 percent of its GDP every year according to the UN World Food Program (WFP).**

If Ethiopia's economy has been growing by double-digits annually in excess of 10 percent as the TPLF regime claims, but loses "approximately 16.5 percent of its GDP every year", is it economically developing? This reminds me of Alice's conversation with the Queen in Lewis Carroll's, "Through the Looking Glass". "There's no use trying, one can't believe impossible things," said Alice in exasperation. The Queen

corrected her. “I daresay you haven’t had much practice. When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.” So we must also believe in at least six impossible things about the TPLF baksheesh regime before breakfast.

For several years now, Meles and his TPLF disciples have been advertising their “Productive Safety Net Programme” (driven by foreign aid in the form of budget support) as the mechanism to end the “cycle of dependence on food aid” by bridging “production deficits and protecting household and community assets”. In October 2011, Meles told his party faithful: “We have devised a plan which will enable us to produce surplus and be able to feed ourselves by 2015 without the need for food aid.” His “plan to produce surplus” was to be achieved by “leasing” out millions of hectares of the country’s prime agricultural land to so-called international investors (land grabbers) whose only aim is to raise crops for export. According to the World Food Programme report (WFP) (the branch of the United Nations and the world’s largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security), in 2014, 2.7 million Ethiopians and WFP plans to assist nearly 6.5 million vulnerable people with food and special nutritional assistance, including school children, farmers, people living with HIV/AIDS, mothers and infants, refugees and many others. The humanitarian requirement for 2012 identified 3.76 million people in need of emergency food aid; in 2011, the number was 4.5 million; 5 million in 2010 and 2009 and 6 million in 2008.34 million Ethiopians—40 percent of the population—are considered chronically hungry.

U.S. food assistance in Ethiopia is administered Ethiopia exclusively through three foreign NGOs (Food for the Hungry

(FH), Save the Children (SC) Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and one domestic NGO, Relief Society of Tigray (REST). REST describes itself as the “humanitarian wing of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)”. [As I have demonstrated previously](#), after the passage of the so-called “Proclamation on Charities and Society”, “the number of civil society organizations in Ethiopia was reduced from about 4600 to about 1400 in a period of three months in early 2010. The only domestic civil society institutions allowed to operate in the country are those that are wholly owned subsidiaries of the TPLF or others who have established partnership with individuals and organizations affiliated with the TPLF. *The TPLF administers foreign aid through its subsidiary TPLF REST. Simply stated, the TPLF regime begs for development aid and launders it to enrich its leaders and members of the ruling class through its own “NGO”.* Hence, the baksheesh state.

The fall of the baksheesh state in Ethiopia: Can rich beggars eliminate poverty and achieve economic development by begging?

I have previously written that the late Meles Zenawi was Africa’s beggar-in-chief. I did not make the statement out of malice or disrespect to the man but *strictly based on fact*. [In April 2012, Meles told the China Daily](#), “The fact of the matter is that it was the Africans who asked the Chinese to build this conference hall for Africa. It is not the Chinese who offered to build it. We asked them to build it and they agreed and they have delivered, and we have no reason to criticize this.” The Chinese squeezed out \$200 million in hard cold cash to build and deliver the African Union Hall.

Simply stated, Africans themselves could have built their own iconic signature building by chipping into an “Africa Union

Building Fund”, but why pay out of your own pocket when you can beg or pick someone else’s? To add insult to injury, the tiled silver dome which is the centerpiece of the African Union Hall shockingly resembles a giant overturned beggar’s bowl. That was why I wrote my angry commentary “[African Beggars Hall](#)”. The bottom line is that the developmental state of Meles and his disciples is based precisely on the same logic: Why bust your behind trying to develop the economy on your own when you can *panhandle your way into economic development and growth?*

In her book, “Dead Aid”, Dambisa Moyo debunked the fable that the billions of dollars in aid sent and loans provided by Western and other industrialized countries to Africa have helped to reduce poverty and increase growth. She demonstrates that despite billions of dollars in aid and loans, the incidence and severity of poverty in Africa has increased while economic growth has declined. African countries (regimes) have become addicted to aid which has distorted local economies and served as a petri dish for the propagation of corruption. Moyo categorically states no country has ever developed by sucking on foreign aid. She argues, “aid has never created jobs in the African continent.” What aid has done is make lazy and shiftless African governments and regimes even more lazy and shiftless. Moyo argues Africans do not need aid and handouts; they need trade, foreign investments, capital markets, remittances, micro-finance and savings to spur economic growth and reduce poverty. She points to South Africa, Botswana, China, Brazil and India as successful examples of development without massive and unending foreign aid. For Moyo, Africans need jobs and become entrepreneurs and she places her hopes on Africa’s burgeoning youth population.

Moyo is not opposed to all aid. She has no objections to humanitarian aid given to remediate natural and other disasters. She thinks aid provided by NGO's is at best "band aid" on serious structural problems. Her objection is to the billions of dollars transferred from Western governments and multilateral institutions and wasted by African governments and regimes. She is correct in insisting that Western aid and loans fuel corruption, encourage African governments to abdicate their responsibilities to provide, education, health care and care for the welfare of their citizens and allow someone from the outside to come in and do their jobs. It is an undeniable fact that Africans must be able to develop and grow without foreign aid or aid-related assistance.

For debunking the fable of foreign aid driven African development, Moyo was crucified by the international poverty pimps whose very high paying jobs depend on peddling aid as a vehicle for African development. Billionaire Bill Gates characterized Moyo's book as "promoting evil." Moyo responded, "To say that my book 'promotes evil' or to allude to my corrupt value system is both inappropriate and disrespectful." Moyo needs to be mindful that no amount of evidence can convince a bleeding-heart liberal with a Messiah complex who has made up his mind that aid is the solution to poverty that aid is not a solution to poverty.

In 2004, USAID issued its CDACS entitled "[Breaking the Cycle of Food Crises: Famine Prevention in Ethiopia.](#)" That report stated,

Ethiopia, its neighbors and its development partners have collectively failed to break the downward spiral of hunger, poverty and recurring food crises, which is a critical first step in improving the health and economic conditions of present and future generations of Ethiopians.... [S]uccessfully

addressing this challenge will require Ethiopian leadership, commitment and the will to change. Evidence on Ethiopia's performance is compelling and clear. The country has performed badly over the years, even relative to most other African countries, and to East Africa specifically... The poor performance of the economy is not due to drought, but results from the weak economic policies of the country over a sustained period—characterized by low rates of investment in economic growth and agriculture by both government and the commercial private sector, low levels of capacity, and low rates of agricultural and nonagricultural growth. In turn poor economic performance has led to worsening social standards, and created an increasingly fragile state...

In 2014, the TPLF baksheesh state and its development partners have failed to break the downward spiral of hunger, poverty and recurring food crises. That is an undeniable fact!!!

A beggar state for a poor people?

Joseph de Maistre, the French philosopher and diplomat said, “Every nation gets the government it deserves.” Does that mean poor Ethiopians deserve a “beggar government”?

I have often pondered the meaning of de Maistre's dictum. Logically, in a country where there are democratic elections, it is incumbent upon the voters to be careful who they vote for; and if they vote for incompetent and corrupt officials, they must accept the consequences of their poor choices until such time that they can throw the scoundrels out of office. *What if a people do not have a government but a regime that has imposed itself upon them for decades and clings to power by sheer force and by stealing elections? Do they deserve the regime that is imposed upon them?*

In May 2015, Ethiopians will get a regime they don't deserve and once again fail they will completely fail in their efforts to get a government they deserve. They will have an opportunity to choose between Tweedle Dee TPLF and Tweedle Dum TPLF. In the end, they are guaranteed to get a Tweedle TPLF baksheesh regime with a victory margin of at least 99.6 percent.

In July 2012, I wrote a commentary entitled, "[Ethiopia in BondAid?](#)" I argued that bondage is the state of being bound by or subjected to some external power or control. When people are held in permanent involuntary servitude, they are in "bondage slavery". When they bound by debt, they are in "debt bondage". When they are bound by aid, they are in bond-aid.

Before Africa became "independent" in the 1960s, Africans were held under the yoke of "colonial bondage". "International aid" addiction has transformed Africa's colonial bondage into neo-colonial bondaid. Could it be reasonably argued that Ethiopians are sinking deeper and deeper into a quicksand of "bondaid" in the second decade of 21st Century?

Perhaps Shakespeare has an inspirational thought for Ethiopia's poor:

The world is not thy friend nor the world's law:
The world affords no law to make thee rich;
Then be not poor, but break it...

“Unless a beggar shakes off and irrevocably turns his back on his begging habit, he will forever remain a beggar. The more he begs the more he develops the beggar characteristics of lack of initiative, courage, drive and self-reliance.” Chief Obafemi Awolowo

(To be continued...)

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