TRANSLATION ARTICLE OF PANORAMA - 30 AGOSTO 2018 :

“ ERITREI DOUBLE FACE ” *from Lamina -Italy*

**ERITREANS, “ DOUBLE FACE “**

Some strangers, taking care of their compatriot’s reception, also coordinate their travels in large boats *by Fausto Biloslavo*

“The entries through the sea are closed. We have to find the way, the strategy to help the immigrants, to allow them to come in and to make their rights count”.

This is Abraham Tesfai exhortation in a Facebook live recording on 11 August from Bologna . Living in Italy since 8 years, openly against Asmara’s regime, the eritrean activist mixes politics and reception to the bitter end, using the humanitarian theme in a cunning way. He used to do this when he was working as a cultural mediator at Bologna’s police headquarters until September 2017, paid for it by the Interior Ministry.

Tesfai is just the tip of the iceberg of a “ network ” of eritrean activists, such as don Mussie Zerai, Tareke Berhane and Alganesh Fisseha, all close to Laura Boldrini’s left-wing, who would like to tear down the borders, open the doors to everybody and depose Asmara’s regime. Since the first half of August, Tesfai’s Facebook page is full of calls for mobilization in order to free Diciotti’s ship hostages, most of which are Eritreans ( ??? ) This political activist online inveighs against the italian government, guilty “ to offend black people, Muslims, immigrants and to be willing to throw out African people ”.

**Bologna’s police headquarters confirm that Tesfai**, with the common name of Abrahaley, had worked as a cultural mediator for one year at the immigration office in via Bovi Campeggi. Officially his work would have finished “because the Eritrean’s applications decreased”. The suspect is that it was embarassing for the Interior Ministry to pay a cultural mediator who, after the tumultuous evacuations of Africans in Rome, lead the protest manifestations, labelling the italian police as “cruel”. On August 20th, 2017, he shared an explicit post against the evacuations: “Once more, the Italian State shows its cruel face against weakest people … to make happy the idiot racists. Always according to the willing of Minniti, Di Maio, Salvini and of all the shameful jackals, who use Italians’ ignorance”.

During this year, on August 11th, he launched one of his Facebook live recordings in Tigrigna [local area language] connecting with the immigrants in Libia, who want to came to Italy. “The entries through the sea are closed – he starts – but both we and some italian volunteers are working” (to open the landings again). To whom, in Germany, asks him for news about their relatives or friends in Libia, he explains that “ they are of the Abduselam trader ” or “ policemen ask for a lot of money ” to let them go. And when the person in Germany wants to understand what he can do or who he can pay, Tesfai invites him to write to him “in a private way, so that I put you in contact with those who gave me the information”. The humanitarian help is mixed with political mobilization for the Ginevra’s manifestation on August 31th, in front of ONU’s office, “ announced by the eritrean opposition (….) to obtain that the dictator Isaias Afewerki and his generals would be declared responsible for crimes against humanity and persecuted by the International Criminal Court”. Obviously, “participants must come to the manifestation with slogans against what’s happening in Libia and with the photos of their relatives and of those who are still halted on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea”.

On August 24th, Tesfai posted the face of another member of the eritrean network, Tareke Berhane, who holds a placard in his hands, with an invocation in Tigrigna “ to all eritreans living in Europe and to activists ” against “ the italian government, (that) abducted 150 people ” on the Coast Guard’s ship at Catania’s dock. Berhane, who’s become an italian citizen, is the President of “3 october Committee” to remember the 2013 shipwreck around Lampedusa, in which 368 immigrants died. Active in the petitions on Changeorg# with the hashtag “apriamoiporti (let’sopentheports)”, after Salvini’s political restrictions. Berhane, such as Tesfai, are followers of the eritrean priest Mussie Zerai, who has the nickname of “immigrant’s Moses”. Trapani’s public prosecutor’s office investigated him for favoring clandestine immigration, but he states he had only activeted the emergencies to save immigrants from dying in the sea. **Leak news notice that investigations on the ONG, both in Trapani and in Catania, will soon be closed.** But *Panorama* discovered that don Mussie has already had problems with the italian justice, as he was young and had just arrived in Italy. Before becoming a priest, in 1994 he went to jail and “ was condemned for taking part in detection of 2,2 kilos of Hashish for pushing ”. This drug matter has never been reminded in Zerai’s biography, since he could play the redemption card as he became a priest.

And on August 19th don Mussie polemized hard on Diciotti’s case: “ The Rule of Law taken hostage, saved people are now prisoners on the ship, doesn’t any magistrate do or say anything ? ”. And he accused the Interior Ministry of “ a pirate politics and bullying on the refugees’ skin ”. He will probably have exulted, as he got to know that Salvini has been investigated for kidnapping!

**THEY HAVE ASYLUM IN ITALY, BUT IN EUROPE OTHER COUNTRIES DENY IT**

In Italy, Eritreans have right for asylum and last year 19.526 of them have landed here, even if 30% were really Etiopian nationality). In February, Switzerland sent a parliamentary delegation to Eritrea and started to limit the chances of obtaining asylum. England and Denmark are already refusing most of the applications. A few months ago, Israel wanted to expel Eritreans, considered as economic immigrants. The Eritrean Community that living in Italy, who sustain Asmara’s government, says that their compatriots that came by boats, “ who are attracted by a network of cunning people that pretending to be humanitarians and good Samaritans “, shouldn’t be given international protection. Asmara’s government has to take some steps into the respect of freedoms and human rights, but the agreement signs on July between the eritrean President Isaias Afewerki and the new etiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, which should end the long lasting conflict between the two countries, will create a good hopes.

(F.B.)

August 30th, *Panorama*