

The Abolishment Of The Federation

Written by Winta Woldeyesus

The ongoing demonstrations by students and workers in the country in one hand, the establishment of opposition movements like Haraka and ELF in the other hand fueled the Ethiopian government's anxiety. And to create hindrances for the armed struggle of the Eritrean people, the government of Ethiopia abolished all the agreements of the Federation and instigated colonization of Eritrea.

The first measures taken by the government in violation of article 390 A (V) of the United Nations were:

- On December 24, 1958, the national flag of Eritrea were removed.
- On May 17, 1960 the title "Government of Eritrea" was changed to "Administration of Eritrea" and the seal of the government was also changed which angered many of the members of the national assembly.
- On September, 1960, all the schools in the country came under the governance of the government of Ethiopia and the medium of education was changed from Arabic and Tigrinya to Amharic.

Opposition Against the Actions of the Government of Ethiopia

While the Ethiopian government violated the agreements of the Federation, the people of Eritrea were doing their best in opposing the actions of the government of Ethiopia. When the flag and seal of the Eritrean government were removed, many members of the national assembly, even those who supported unity with Ethiopia opposed the measures taken. But their opposition was crushed by people like High Priest Dimetros, an ardent supporter of the government of Ethiopia. When the decision to change the seal of the government of Eritrea was adopted, members of the assembly opposed for a month. Putting the schools of the country under the governance of the Ethiopian government angered many of the students which led to a stronger opposition and demonstrations in the country and many of the students were imprisoned and tortured. To view some of oppositions in the country:

- In the year 1962, there was an attempt to assassinate Priest Dimetros but unfortunately it failed and the perpetrator was captured by guards and wounded.
- In the same year in the month of July, Abay Abebe, Asfha Weldemicheal and some other officials were delivering a speech in the town of Agordat when members of the ELF exploded a bomb in the gathering, many of the officials like Mohammed Omer Hasseno, Head of the Law and Justice Department of the country died in the incident.

The Invasion By Ethiopia

After the ELF bomb attack in Agordat, Ethiopia's intent to invade Eritrea became clear. Even from the beginning it was apparent that the Federation was a cover –up, the main objective of the Ethiopian government was to colonize Eritrea.

The Abolishment Of The Federation

Written by Winta Woldeyesus

At the beginning of its strategy to invade Eritrea, the government of Ethiopia began pressuring members of the national assembly to abolish the Federation, despite the fact that majority of the members of the assembly were supporters of the Ethiopian government, they refused to accept the offer of the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopian government even went to the extent of bribing them but they firmly refused.

On November 5, 1962, Asfha Weldemicheal, head of the national assembly, was called to Addis Ababa, and on November 7, Aklilu Habteweld, an official of the government of Ethiopia came from Addis, and stayed for few days to discuss with Asfha and Abye. After the discussion, Abeye Abebe, High Priest Dimetros and Tedla Oqbit went to Addis Ababa and on November 13, the three returned and discharged all members of the Eritrean Police Force. Later the Eritrean Police Force was replaced with the Ethiopian Army.

While this was happening in the country, members of the national assembly were in deep discussions for four days and the pressure from the Ethiopian government for them to abolish the Federation was high. They were even threatened.

On the 13th of November, 1962, Ethiopian Air force began flying over the major cities of Eritrea and terrorizing people. In the evening of the same day the army that arrived from Addis Ababa began shooting civilians who attempted any kind of opposition; the army hassled and threatened the residents of the country.

On the next day, every member of the national assembly gathered at 10:40 PM. Asfha Weldemicheal and Tedla Oqbit came to the meeting in which the former delivered a speech in Amharic language, even though the majority of the members of the Assembly didn't understand the language. The whole point of the speech was that the Federation was forced on the Eritrean people and that it will separate Eritrea from its mother land Ethiopia. On that speech he made it clear that federation was officially abolished and that Eritrea was part of Ethiopia and the members should accept the decision. He didn't even ask for the approval on the members.

As always no one asked the people of Eritrea's for their opinion in abolishing the Federation, but even if the assembly had agreed to abolish it; it would have been in violation of the agreements and Charters of the United Nations.

After few moments Asfha appreciated the assembly for accepting the decision and left the meeting. The individuals elected by the people to administrate the people left the meeting with out any remark.

Though the people of Eritrea knew that the Federation was a cover –up nothing angered the public more than the abolishment of the Federation without their consent. And this happened one year after Hamed Edris Awate fired the first shot of the armed struggle.

The Abolishment Of The Federation

Written by Winta Woldeyesus
