

The Eruption of Civil War(Part I)

Written by Winta Woldeyesus

After the Adobha Congress, "**Qeyada Al-Ama**" continued to assassinate and imprison all opposition elements in violation to the agreements of the congress due to the policies it inherited from the ELF leadership. Despite the efforts of "Qeyada Al-Ama" to destroy opposition forces many had separated from the movement and started other new liberation movements.

As a result, the leadership in ELF killed anyone who opposed it or anyone who tried to reform the leadership. This was proven in the case of "Haraka", a movement established in 1965, and was destroyed by ELF leaders. The atrocities of the ELF leadership victimized not only those who opposed them but also those people that were from different ethnic groups. Any fighter opposing the policies of the leadership or comments on the rights of the public and the fighters faced one punishment, assassination. After "Qeyada Al-Ama" seized power, the assassination and atrocities of the leadership continued.

"Qeyada Al-Ama" had also tried numerous times to destroy the other liberation movements. To mention some, when the People's Liberation Forces were moving from Southern Dankalia to the north, it sent troops to destroy the movement and in October 1970, destroyed one group of the movement. Later the movements began to effectively defend themselves from the attacks of "Qeyada Al-Ama", which started the civil war.

With time, many fighters joined the newly established liberation forces, the movements also gained the support of the public, creating fear among the leaders of "Qeyada Al-Ama" in addition to the separation of Obel from "Qeyada Al-Ama". It even tried to gain the support of various Arab countries but only Iraq supported them. In an attempt to regain the fighters it lost and secure control again, "Qeyada Al-Ama" called for a military congress among all forces. The People's Liberation Forces and the Liberation Party rejected their invitation but leaders of Obel accepted the invitation and a congress, "Me'asker Awate", was held from 26/2 to 13/3, 1972. In this meeting, "Qeyada Al-Ama" passed a resolution for another national congress: and invited all the liberation forces to participate, aiming to regain control and power over the forces. It also elected a new "Coordinating Committee". Unfortunately for "Qeyada Al-Ama", majority of the members of the newly established liberation forces did not accept the invitation but it held the congress anyway. "The first National Congress" as it was called was held from 14/10 to 12/11, 1971 in a place called Arr. In this meeting, Edris Mohammed Adem was elected as the chairperson, and Hiruy Tedla Bairu as the vice-chairperson of the "National Congress" where a committee with 13 members called "Sewrawi Committee", and a committee of 18 members called "Executive Committee" were also elected without any specific task.

The main agenda of the congress was to destroy the separated liberation forces that had become a threat to the leadership of ELF. The congress ratified the following resolutions:-

1. The Eritrean struggle for liberation can't accommodate more than one movement and one leadership
2. The congress also called members of the People's Liberation Forces and their supporters to accept the resolutions of the "National Congress" and join the ELF within a certain time limit:

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and members that didn't abide to the resolution would face the consequences of their actions.

In addition to the above-mentioned ploys, the leadership and the congress also tried to maneuver the force in Ala, by sympathizing with them while condemning the leaders of Obel.

To be Continued