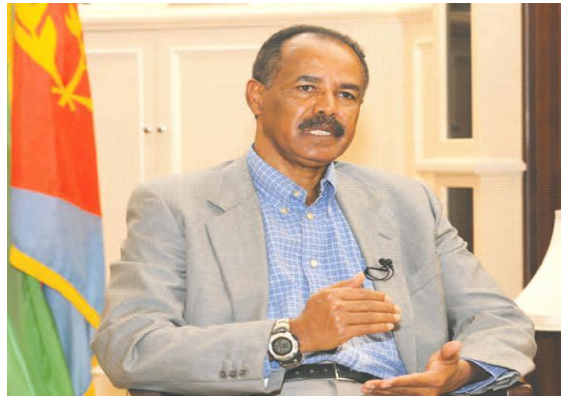


President Isaias Afwerki:

Sawa is the continuation of our revolutionary experience



President Isaias Afwerki explained the genesis of the idea of Sawa in an interview with Eritrean Center for Strategic Studies Website (ecss online) in May 2011, as follows:

“When we came up with the idea of Sawa, it was only as a continuation of our revolutionary experience and not as a new innovation. The armed struggle served as a melting pot. Eritreans from all parts of the country joined it regardless of their differences (class, age etc.) and together experienced many difficulties, some of which were bitter. For instance, the fighters were able to overcome the regional conflicts and together liberate their country. Eritrea’s liberation struggle is different from African or other countries that claim to have liberated themselves from colonialism. As I have already pointed out, in Eritrea the struggle was a political melting pot. Of course, there might have been some variations, but in general, all Eritreans have participated. This experience must have been developed by the time the country’s independence was won in 1991.

The question that we faced then was: should the process stall or it should continue as a cultural, social and political process for nation building? It was from there that the idea of creating Sawa originated.”



He further added, “As an idea, Sawa did not emerge because we anticipated wars or other hostilities. On the contrary, it came as a continuation of the political process on the basis of which Eritrea was built throughout the armed struggle. In Sawa, Eritrean Youth from different parts of the country and all walks of life come together. One would come from Assab, another one from Karora, a third from Tessenei, and other from Asmara, Senafi, Adi-Kula...etc., and all would gather in one place and know each other. These youth were not from the generation of the armed struggle and had not carried weapons before, and they did not have prior political, cultural and social experiences and lived in a climate different from the one that existed during the period of armed struggle. Therefore, the process would be continuous and the continuation in any political process would require interaction with the past. Without this interaction and continuity, we would not expect to build a nation.

The President concluded by saying “ Consequently, Sawa, as I said, is not a new invention and of course, others and I have passed through the experience of the

revolution, we knew each other in the struggle, worked in unity, and scarified our lives for the liberation of this country. In the process, we came to realize that we had become a single body of a nation. This experience must continue. In this sense, Sawa represents and personalize the continuation of the nation building process that commenced during the liberation struggle. Whoever denies this fact has the right to say whatever he/she wants. However, on our part, Sawa is the reincarnation and continuation of nation building and is by no means a strange phenomenon in our history.”