

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

POLITICAL VIOLENCE DURING THE DÄRG REGIME: RED TERROR
IN DÄBRÄ MARQOS TOWN, 1977-1978

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE DURING THE DÄRG REGIME: RED TERROR IN DÄBRÄ

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By

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Key to Transliteration System

Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES)

I have used the following transliteration system adopted by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies

I. The seven orders of the Ethiopic alphabet are represented as follows:

Values	Symbols	Examples
1 st order (ge'ez)	ä	በ Bă
2 nd order (kaa'eb)	u	ቡ Bu
3 rd order (saales)	i	ቢ Bi
4 th order (raabe'e)	a	ባ Ba
5 th order (haams)	é	ቤ Bé
6 th order (saades)	e	ብ Be
7 th order (saab'e)	o	ቦ Bo

II. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

Symbols	Examples
ሸ Ṣ	ሸብር Ṣeber
ሸ Ḷ	ሸመቻ Ṣämäčä
ሸ Ṽ	ሸገሻ Ṭägāñä
ሸ Ž	ሸገር Găž

III. Glottalized sounds are represented as follows:

Symbols	Examples
ቀ Q	ቀጃሌ Qäbälé
ጠ Ṭ	ጠቃላ Ṭäqalay
ጫ Ç	ጫርጽ Çärçar
ፀ Ş	ፀሐይ Şähay

V. Germinations should be indicated by doubling consonants:

Examples:	ተሰማ Tässäma
	አንጃ Anjja

IV. General Examples

ዘመቻ

Zāmāča

ቀበሌ

Qäbälè

ጣቢያ

Ṭabiya

አናቸንፋለን

Enačānfalān

ሻለቃ

Šalāqa

የኡ ሁታ ኮሚቴ

Yä u uta komité

For commonly used forms like Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie and Emperor this system has not been used.

Glossary of Amharic Terms

<i>Abiyotawi Ityopia</i>	Revolutionary Ethiopia
<i>Abiyotawi Mädräk</i>	Revolutionary Forum
<i>Abiyotawit quami komitè yähezb dähenenät guday</i>	The Revolutionary Permanent Committee
<i>Abiyotawi Säädä</i>	Revolutionary Flame
<i>Abiyot Ṭebäqa</i>	Revolutionary Guard
<i>Addis Zämän Gazéta</i>	Amharic Daily Newspaper
<i>Ad'hari</i>	Reactionary
<i>Aläm Bäqañ</i>	Life in Prisonment
<i>Anjja</i>	Defector
<i>Asässa</i>	Searching
<i>Asässa Zämäčä</i>	Searching Campaign
<i>Aseräläqa</i>	Corporal (Commander of ten)
<i>Asramestäña Šäläqa</i>	The 15 th Battalion
<i>Awrajja</i>	Sub-province before 1991, sub-governorate general before 1974
<i>Banda:</i>	The name given to traitors, those fought alongside the Italian Fascist Army during its occupation of Ethiopia.
<i>Buden</i>	Team
<i>Bét Läbét Asässa</i>	House to House Search
<i>Dämses</i>	Liquidate
<i>Därg</i>	It is used in reference to the military government that ruled Ethiopia between 12 September 1974 and 28 May 1991.
<i>Democracia</i>	EPRP's clandestine newspaper
<i>Dimotfär</i>	DM-4 Weapon
<i>Däräq Esreña</i>	Non-Political Prisoners
<i>Enačänefalän</i>	EPRP's version of the word victory or 'we will win'
<i>Enašänefalän</i>	MEISON's version of the word victory or 'we will win'
<i>Edegät Bäheberät Yäwäqt Ena Yäsera Zämäčä</i>	Development Through Cooperation, Enlightenment and Work Campaign
<i>Értib Ésereña</i>	Political Prisoner
<i>Hamsa aläqa</i>	Sergeant

<i>Hebrätäsäbawinät</i>	A form of Ethiopian Socialism
<i>Ider</i>	Traditional self-help association
<i>Käfetäña</i>	'Higher' Urban Dweller Association, the administrative structure above Kebeles
<i>Komitè</i>	Committee
<i>Labadär</i>	EPRP's version for the word proletarian
<i>Mänter</i>	Clearing
<i>Mätoaläqa</i>	Lieutenant
<i>Melus</i>	The Returnees
<i>Muheran Banda</i>	Intellectual Collaborators
<i>Näç Šeber</i>	White Terror
<i>Näša Èrmeja</i>	Free license to kill
<i>Negus</i>	King
<i>Qäbälè</i>	Urban Dweller Association; lowest administrative structure in the <i>Därg</i> period
<i>Qäy Šeber</i>	Red Terror
<i>Qäy Šeber Yefafam</i>	Let the Red Terror intensify
<i>Qel</i>	Calabash
<i>Rasen Agalet Zämäča</i>	Self-Denunciation Campaign
<i>Sädäd</i>	The organ or publication of <i>Abiyotawi Sädäd</i>
<i>Šaläqa</i>	Major
<i>Šambäl</i>	Captain
<i>Šärä Hezb</i>	Enemy of the people
<i>Teṭeqe Masefetat</i>	Disarmament
<i>Wäfê Lala</i>	It is a form of torture involving the caning of the soles of the feet by a baseball bat-type of hard wood or coiled wire.
<i>Wäräda</i>	District
<i>Wäzadär</i>	MEISON's version for the word proletarian
<i>Yäläweṭ Häwareyat</i>	The Apostles of Change
<i>Yäma 'ekälawi Mermära Kefel</i>	Central Investigation Unit
<i>Yämagalät Zämäča</i>	Mass-Exposure Campaign

<i>Yäweyeyet Kebäb</i>	Discussion Group
<i>Yäsäfiw Hezeb Demş</i>	MEISON's clandestine newspaper
<i>Yäṭäräba Buden</i>	Intimidating Group
<i>Yä Û Ûta Komité</i>	The Committee of Yelling
<i>Zämäčä</i>	Campaign
<i>Zämačoč</i>	Campaigners
<i>Zämäčä Ṭabiya</i>	Campaign Station
<i>Zufano</i>	a material made from mud which has a round shape and hole at the center and it surves for defecting

Acronyms

Amharic Words

<i>Iç'at</i>	Ethiopian Oppressed Peoples' Revolutionary Struggle
<i>Malèrid</i>	Marxist Leninist Revolutionary Organisation
MEISON	All Ethiopia Socialist Movement
<i>Wäzlige</i>	The Labour League

English Words

AETU	All Ethiopia Trade Union
CELU	Confederation Ethiopian Labour Union,
CIU	Central Investigation Unit
DIO	<i>Därg</i> Investigation Office
DMGSS	Däbrä Marqos General Secondary School
DMUAC	Däbrä Marqos University Archives Center
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EPRA	Ethiopian Peoples's Revolutionary Army
EPRP	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRYL	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Youth League
ESM	Ethiopian Student Movement
ETA	Ethiopian Teachers' Association
NALA	National Archive and Library Agency
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NROC	National Revolutionary Operations Command
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
POMOA	Provisional Office of Mass Organizational Affairs
PPG	Provisional Popular Government
QA	<i>Qäbälè</i> Association
RCCC	Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee
RTMMM	Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Monument (RTMMM)
WPE	Workers Party of Ethiopia

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Preface

This thesis is a historical study of political violence of the Red Terror from 1977 to 1978 in Däbrä Marqos. In the course of writing this thesis the researcher has used oral sources, archival materials and different secondary sources. Concerning oral sources, interviews were conducted with contemporary witnesses; from different walks of life. However, it was difficult to find informants who were active participants during the period and some informants were not ready to give detail information by attaching it as political issue. While some others tended to exaggerate other deeds. Hence, so as to ensure the validity of oral sources that I obtained, triangulated with archival sources as well as with published memoirs and analyses of the period has been made.

Archival materials obtained from both local and national archival centers or offices have also yielded a lot of information. The sources were obtained from Däbrä Marqos University Archival Center (DMUAC), Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Monument (RTMMM), Amhara National Regional State Higher Court and Federal Court and National Archives and Library Agency (NALA). However, I was not able to find documents as much as I wanted.

The central theme of the study is that eventhough Red Terror is perceived as uniform every where in the country, there were local varieties and distinctive features. The thesis revolves around the idea that Red Terror was not as gruesome as some other areas of Ethiopia. One veritable manifestation is the absence in Däbrä Marqos of displaying victims' bodies in selected centers of the town to terrorize the people. This was the case in Addis Ababa and some other major towns.

The discussion of the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter discusses political violence of the period in the light of new revolutionary ideologies imported from abroad. The second chapter briefly discusses the Revolution and antecedents of the Red Terror. As a background part of the thesis, this chapter depends on oral sources and published and unpublished written materials. In this chapter an attempt has been made to show how political parties established their structure in Däbrä Marqos Town. Besides, the developments of political violence and of revolutionary terror are also treated. The third chapter discusses the violence during the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos Town (1977-1978). The last chapter deals with the structural organization of the Red Terror in the town.

Even though this thesis focuses on the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos, it also tries to assess the manner and extent of the ‘White Terror’.

This is only a preliminary attempt. Accordingly, much remains to be done in the future on the history of Red Terror in Ethiopia in general and Däbrä Marqos Town in particular.

Abstract

Reconstructing the history of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos Town (1977-1978) is the focus of this thesis. This study covers the period from February 1977 to August 1978, during which the people of the town, like the other urban population of Gojjam, experienced the violence of the Red Terror.

The thesis deals, among other things, with the introduction of civilian political parties into Däbrä Marqos, their political squabble and its transition to political violence. On the other hand, tremendous efforts have been made to assess the feature of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. Revolutionary turmoil, clashing interpretations among the political parties and the Därg Regime, on how to realize socialism led to violence. The majority of those murders took place during the 1977-1978 'Red Terror', which was a campaign of urban counter-insurgency waged by the Därg in Däbrä Marqos during which excessive violence was used to terrify the population and eliminate dissent.

*Moreover, the thesis treats the structural organization of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. The torture and killing in Däbrä Marqos from 1977 to 1978 were organized and executed by institutions set up by the Därg. Institutions central to this were the abeyot tebäqa, the Qäbälè Associations, the police force, the Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee, and the Därg Interrogation Division. In fact the role of local actors was not that much strong. Thus, unlike the other urban parts of the country, *näša èrmeja* was not implemented by local qäbälè officials. Therefore, Red Terror's violence, especially killings, in Däbrä Marqos was taken by forces of the central security apparatus.*

In sum, it is one of the gloomiest episodes in the history of Däbrä Marqos Town, from 1977 to 1978. Therefore, this study attempts to fill some gaps by showing the actual event in the study of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos.

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Defining Political Violence

The meaning of political violence varies according to social and partial groups, geographical area and historical period. The general definition of political violence is violence against humanity in order to achieve political goal. Donatella also argues political violence as a “politically loaded” ferocity like the French (1970s), Russian (1910s and 1920s) and Ethiopian (1970s) Terror.¹

Political violence is a process based on extraordinary and unacceptable acts of violence, mostly use of physical force in order to damage a political adversary. It is committed in order to achieve a certain psychological and political effect on identifiable groups of people i.e. people considered as opponent or “anti-revolutionary”.²

Machiavelli and Bodin considered political violence as “an instrument for the repression, even extermination, of political enemies, without specifically calling or defining it as terror”.³ This form of political violence was experienced in Ethiopia from September 1976, the beginning of EPRP’s urban killings, to the declaration of Red Terror by Mengistu Haile Mariam on February 3, 1977. The period was not officially declared as ‘terror’ but it was a period of violence.

Cohan ascertains that “political violence may be deployed as a last resort, that is, only after all channels of nonviolent protest have been exhausted”.⁴ However, in the revolutionary period of Ethiopia, the culture of tolerance and accommodation between/among the political rivals had

¹ Donatella D. Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), P.7.

² Ibid, pp.7-8.

³ Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 99.

⁴ John Alan Cohan, “Necessity, Political Violence and Terrorism,” *Stetson Law Review*, 35(2006), p.913.

progressively deteriorated. Since political disagreement was interpreted on the basis of the Marxian political philosophy, the manner of competition was forceful. Accordingly, the the *Därg* regime and its civilian allies on the one side and the civilian political parties on the other side deployed revolutionary terror as a means to gain dominance over their adversaries. To this end, the justification for their violent action was that, they were defending their cause and innocent members from the unlawful aggression of others.⁵

Periodically, when we think of political violence globally, the twentieth century was possibly more violent than any other periods in recorded history. Just think of the world wars, anti-colonial resistance movements in Africa and indeed, of revolutions and counter-revolutions.⁶ From among these violent episodes of the world, this thesis focuses on the revolutionary violence; typically on the revolutionary violence in Ethiopia.

This form of violence [the revolutionary violence] happens under revolutionary governments. From histories of revolutions, which occurred in France, then Russia and other countries, we learn that revolution causes incalculable bloodshed, and inflicts lasting psychological and spiritual damage on peoples of the given countries.⁷

In the pre-revolutionary period of Ethiopia, the source of political violence was from the leaders and its process was one dimensional. However, in the revolutionary period, specifically during the period of the Ethiopian Red Terror, civilian political groups were also the sources as well as

⁵ In September 1976 EPRP declared urban assassination and they said that the justification for the change of policy was to protect party members and the masses from the Fascist (*Därg*) rule. With the same venom the Military Government declared war of annihilation and justified its action by deriding EPRP as enemy of the people and the sovereignty of the nation at large.

⁶ Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies*, pp. 71-72.

⁷ Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*, (London: New Heaven: 2009), p. 41.

participants of the political violence that occurred in the country. Among the civilian political groups, EPRP and MEISON were the main actors.

The violent political drama from 1976 to 1978 redefined Ethiopia's political tradition and political violence in the light of new revolutionary ideologies, imported from abroad (mainly Russia).⁸ Therefore, those who expressed difference or held opposing views were branded as reactionaries and physically as well as non-physically harmed by the ruling government. The violence of symbolic or non-physical nature included acts of humiliation and coercion to induce individuals to make self-denunciation as well as public confessions. Needless to say, in the Ethiopian Red Terror campaign, the violent act was not only the targeted individuals or groups but also the civilian are victimized.

The political violence of Ethiopian Red Terror was not without any precedents. Due to lack of democratic norms and skills in Ethiopia, the country's history is filled with numerous pages and chapters of repressions and massacres perpetrated by those in power and/or the people in need of change and/or resistance. Although, as Niebrug asserts that, states with a higher historical incidence of violence have subsequently enjoyed "periods of relative tranquility", Ethiopians could not achieve it.⁹

By taking earlier violence as a precedent, *Därg* perpetuated political violence in the guise of revolution but with some fundamental differences. Therefore, the acts of violence of earliest type were committed by the *Därg* government, specifically from 1976 to 1978.

⁸ Bahru Zewde, "The History of Red Terror: Context and Consequences," in Tronvoll, Schaefer, and Aneme. Eds. *The Ethiopian Red Terror Trials: Transitional Justice Challenge*, (James Currey, 2009), pp. 17-23.

⁹ H.L.Niebrug, *Political Violence: The Behavioral Process*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 13-15.

1.2 Glimpses of Political Violence in Ethiopia

Political violence has been a dominant theme throughout Ethiopian history.¹⁰ But it was practiced in different manners. Thus, the “perception of its legitimacy”, the nature and proportion has varied in time, scope and gravity.¹¹ Therefore, Ethiopia’s history is replete with violence of various nature, proportion and justification. For our purpose, the position and attitude of the emperors towards violence in the period of “Modern Ethiopia” prior to the Ethiopian Revolution is important.

Under this period, I try to show the bird’s eyes view of political violence during the reign of Tewodros II, Yohannes IV, Menelik II and Haile Selassie I. The political violence during these period was varied depend on its manner, proportion and justifications of the adherents of the act. Means of violence under this period were mostly succession to the throne, territorial expansion and incorporation, and to dominate and sustained their political power. Therefore, since the “end justifies the means”, normative and legal restrictions were often ignored or eroded and political violence was unleashed.

Hence, whenever a group, class or religion, was grasped to pose a threat to the vision of the emperor, uncontrolled violence was used against it (“the opponent”). The vision or desire may be the cause for the violence. For instance, Emperor Tewodros’s vision for “unification and modernization” and also the same vision by Emperor Menelik were later brought an opposition from the regional lords and others, which in turn triggered violence.¹²

¹⁰ Jon Abbink, “Transformations of Violence in Twentieth-Century Ethiopia: Cultural Roots, Political Conjunctures,” *Focaal*, no.25 (1995), p. 59.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1874*, (Addis Ababa: AAU Press, 2007), pp. 73-75.

Others means of violence under this period were mostly succession to the throne, to maintain or to dominate political power. Therefore, since the “end justifies the means”, normative and legal restrictions were often ignored or eroded and political violence was unleashed.

As their rule met resistance, Ethiopian emperors resorted to physical annihilation of the recalcitrant. In other words, violence served as an instrument to dominate and sustain their political power.

For instant, Emperor Tewodros II as unifier of the Ethiopian state was regarded by generations of Ethiopian rulers and citizens as a national icon. However, as Crummey maintains ‘he was one of the most violent of all monarchs’.¹³ Because, as his rule met strong resistance, he resorted forceful action against the unruly. Thus, from 1857 to 1861, it was his inability to suppress the rebellions of Gojjam, Wollo and the north which grew up in their shadow, which drove him to increasingly violent and drastic measures. Gojjam under the rule of Tädla Gualu, especially after his unsuccessful attempts to capture Amädè Basir of Wollo in 1857, was devastated by the emperor’s army.¹⁴ This, however, could justifiable by his desire for reform and his compassion for a lot of the common people.

Emperor Yohannes IV resorted to physical annihilation of the recalcitrant. The records indicate that his march to subjugate and baptize the Wollo people was characterized by devastation and massacre.¹⁵ In addition, his 1888 campaign to Gojjam, “in a pretext to punish *Negus Täklä*

¹³ Donald Crummey, “The Violence of Tewodros,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 9:2 (July 1971), p. 107.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 116.

¹⁵ Bahru Zewde, *A History of...*, pp. 48-49.

Häyemanot for his defeat by the Mahdist force was also devastating to the civilian peasants of Gojjam”.¹⁶

Emperor Menelik II took territorial expansion and incorporation in making of Ethiopia; he met strong resistances from the regional lords of the southern states. Hence, to curb the strong resistances, the emperor resorted to physical annihilation of the recalcitrant (the regional lords). But, the civilian peasants were also highly affected by the campaign.¹⁷

The case of political supremacy was also a factor for the means of political violence. In this case, following the appointment of *Ras Imeru*, in 1932, as a governor of Gojjam, the members of the Gojjam ruling class were in an opposition against the central government thereby to restore their traditional rule on the one side, and the central government to enforce its administrative adjustment on the other side. Consequently, in 1935/36 as result of the opposition from the seat, Däbrä Marqos Town, the resistance from the central government was destructive on the civilians.¹⁸

Political violence in Ethiopia was not only committed by the Ethiopians on the Ethiopians, but it was also committed by the Italian invaders from 1936 to 1941. Because of the legitimacy of the Italians was never accepted by the Ethiopian population they introduced terror and violence. Specifically, the 1937 violence after an assassination attempt on the ‘viceroy’ Graziani was purposful mass murder targeting a particular group (modern educated Ethiopians).¹⁹

¹⁶ Abdussamad H. Ahmad, “Emperor Yohannis' Campaign in Gojjam August 1888 to February 1889,” *North East African Studies*, 13:1(1991), pp. 2-4.

¹⁷

¹⁸ Nega Ayele, “Centralization versus Regionalism in Ethiopia: The Case of Gojjam 1932-1969,” BA Senior Essay, Department of Political Science and Government, HSIU, June 1970, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p. 167.

Emperor Haile Selassie I after the Restoration meted out to official violence to the people at large. Rebellions in Gojjam, Balè, Tigray, the Somali, the Afar, etc. were brutally crushed.²⁰ Even peaceful demonstrators were also hit, gunned or killed.²¹

The difference between how the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the Red Terror violence is simply a matter of style, organizational scale, extent and justification. Like the previous regimes, the Derg committed murders or mass killings against its opponents. But, what makes the Red Terror violence unique was that, “the scale of violence and the aspect of impunity”.²²

In terms of its structural organization or instruments of violence, most importantly it was carried out most importantly by both the local people (those who allied with the regime) and the top officials of the regime against the so-called “anti-revolutionaries”.²³ In other words it was “bottom-up and top-bottom” political violence.

The continuity of political violence and brutality was quite obvious. Emperor Tewodros II cast victims from cliffs, hanged them to die or hacked off their limbs and sent them home to terrify the population.²⁴ Emperor Yohannis IV and Haile Selassie I also practiced violent acts in a different manner. The *Därg* on its part displayed mutilated corpses on the street to achieve the same goal.

However, unlike the former regimes, killings during the Red Terror were ideologically motivated. As a result, they used violence without any compromise because they believed that,

²⁰ See more, Gebru Tareke, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest, Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 89-192.

²¹ Ibid; Babile Tola, *To kill a Generation*, (Washington, DC: Free Ethiopia Press, 1989), p. 6.

²² Jon Abbink, “Transformations of Violence...,” p. 59.

²³ Ibid, p. 66.

²⁴ Donald Crummey, “The Violence...,” PP.114-116.

“compromise in the struggle was not seen as the distinguishing mark of a true revolutionary”.²⁵

However, since all of the adversaries were Marxist and their interest was to create a socialist Ethiopia, the violence was the result of conflicts of ‘negotiable’ principles and ambitions.²⁶

Therefore, I strongly argues that the conflict was avoidable.

Furthermore, there was also a difference in the terminology or vocabulary they used. The Ethiopian Red Terror brought new vocabulary to the political violence. In the discourse used by the military regime Stalinist concepts were applied. Thus, the word ‘reactionary’ (in Amharic, *Ad’hari*) and ‘enemies of the people’ (in Amharic *Şärä Hezb*) were introduced to the political arena as a means of repression and killings.

Therefore, this thesis examines the political violence during the Derg regime specifically the episode of the Red Terror campaign, in Däbrä Marqos Town. From 1880, Däbrä Marqos had served as the seat of Gojjam Province.²⁷ It was also the capital of Gojjam Administrative Region during the *Därg* period. It was also one of the seven *awrajas* of the province and administrative center of Däbrä Marqos *awraja*. Besides, it was the administrative center of Gozamen *Wäräda*, one of the seven *Wärädas* of Däbrä Marqos *awraja*. Most of the central government’s ministerial branches and other offices were established in this town.²⁸

²⁵ Pietro Toggia, “The Revolutionary Endgame of Political Power: the Genealogy of ‘Red Terror’ in Ethiopia,” *African Identities*, 10:3(2012), p.268.

²⁶ Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*, (London: New Heaven, 2009), p. 41.

²⁷ Ibid, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest...*, p. 161.

²⁸ Abel Kassahun, “Dabra Marqos: Foundation, Growth and Development up to 1941,” BA Senior Essay, Department of History, AAU, June 1984, p. 4.

CHAPTER TWO

THE 1974 REVOLUTION AND ANTECEDENTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN RED TERROR

The early 1974 popular uprising exploded on the Ethiopian political scene. The urban upsurge which involved students, teachers, unemployed youth, civil servants, taxi drivers and soldiers reached its climax in February 1974. The deteriorating conditions and the uprising against the ageing monarch, hence, the armed forces overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie's rule in 1974.¹

It was few radicals among the Ethiopian students at home who laid the foundations of revolution in Ethiopia. Albeit, the radical intellectual did play a prominent part in giving the struggle its depth and momentum, none of them were strongly organized enough to imprint themselves on the situation.² Hence, due to the absence of well-organized civilian political groups, the 'Bloodless Revolution' was snatched by the men in uniform from the genuine Ethiopian revolutionaries.

Therefore, on September 12, 1974 the Provisional Military Administration Council (PMAC) (known in Amharic as *Därg*) was formed by junior officers of the Ethiopian army.³ Since then, oppositions against the government began to erupt from different sectors of the society. This opposition to the *Därg* government was quickly transformed into strong rivalries. By its form this struggle was two dimensional. On the one side, it was between the military and the civilian political group(s) and on the other side; it was among the civilian political factions. More

¹ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern ...*, p. 163.

² Babile Tola, *To kill...*, p.23.

³ *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No. 1, 1974, 34th Year, 12 September 1974, p.1.

specifically, the conflict within the civilian political groups was complicated. Consequently, those rivalries were transcending into bloody confrontations.

Therefore, in this chapter the major incidences; national as well as regional that could be taken as contributory factor for the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos are discussed.

2.1 Political Rivalry between the Military and the Civilian Leftist Parties

When the *Därg* grabbed power in 1974, it promised that the new leaders could not repeat the excesses of the old order and it would hand over authority to a civilian government as soon as possible.⁴ However, on September 12, 1974, the PMAC assumed full state power.⁵

Henceforth, the junior military officers who formed the *Därg* took the call for revolution as an opportunity for the military to seize power and its own vision of change.⁶ Therefore, in spite of its promise, the military junta curtailed basic democratic rights which the revolution stood for and it dropped the promise to handover authority to civilians.⁷ Spontaneously, *Därg* (the well-organized and disciplined, but non-Marxist group) strengthened its hold on power day by day and considered itself to be the sole protectorate of the revolution.

Consequently, opposition to the setting up of the PMAC came from different parts such as, the students, the university teachers' group known as Forum, the labour organization (Confederation Ethiopian Labour Union, CELU) and the clandestine leftist organizations (*Democracia* and

⁴ Edmond J. Keller, "State, Party, and Revolution in Ethiopia," *African Studies Review*, 28:1 (March, 1985), p.3.

⁵ Edward Kissi, *Revolution and Genocide in Ethiopia and Cambodia*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2006), p.38; Bahru, *A History of Modern...*, p.236

⁶ Ibid, p.xx

⁷ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p.236; John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*, (The Red Sea Press, 1986), pp.114-116; Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Aristocracy*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p.71, 80.

Yäsäfiw Hezeb Demše).⁸ Clear and official opposition came first from CELU. On its annual congress, which was held from September 15 to 17, 1974, the congress passed a resolutions calling for the respect of democratic rights and the formation of Provisional Popular Government (PPG).⁹ The *Därg* rather than answering their demands, arrested leaders of mass organizations who protested the curtailing of democratic rights and demanded the people's government.

Moreover, even within the military rank, the lower *Därg* units of the Engineers Corps, the Air Force, and the Army Aviation also opposed *Därg*'s control of state power. These groups showed their support for the call of the civilian government.¹⁰

The most important opposition, especially in the long run, came from two budding underground political organizations, namely the *Democracia* group which subsequently crystalized into the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the *Yäsäfiw Hezb Demš* group which was the slogan of All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (acronym in Amharic, MEISON).¹¹ Both of them were by-products of the international Ethiopian Students Movement (ESM), established several years before 1974 among veterans of the student movement abroad.¹² They surfaced in the capital, Addis Ababa soon after the February upheaval. The leadership of EPRP returned to Ethiopia in July 1974 and launched its weekly paper (*Democracia*) in the same month.¹³

Then, they expanded into the countryside following the Development Through Cooperation, Enlightenment and Work Campaign or in Amharic *edegät bäheberät yäwäqt ena yäsera*

⁸ In the early years, the terms *Democracia* and *Yäsäfiw Hezeb Demše* were popularly used to refer to both the papers and the organizations which produced them; later, however, the producers became known as EPRP and MEISON, respectively.

⁹ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p. 263.

¹⁰ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.80; Marina and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution*, (New York: Africana, 1987), p.59; Wudu Tafete, "Mäison: From Opposition to Critical Support, 1974-1977," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 44(December, 2011), p. 53.

¹¹ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p. 263; Andargachew, *Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.75.

¹² Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.75; Bahru, *A History of Modern...*, P. 263.

¹³ Ibid, p. 75.

zämäčä.¹⁴ The Campaigners were sent to different parts of the country. Like the other parts of the country, campaigners were also sent to Gojjam Province. For each *wäräda* between 20 and 25 campaigners were assigned.¹⁵ Therefore, since most of the members were students, the party politics was also expanded to the countryside. So that, started from the *Zämäčä* (Literally meaning Campaign), the organizational activities of the two parties were formed in different parts of the province.

Hence, EPRP introduced into Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos Town in particular by the *Zämač* (Literal meaning Campaigner); they were teachers and students. Every *zämäčä tabiya* (Literal meaning Campaign Station) in the province had its own underground leadership as well as a democratically elected body accountable to the collective assembly of the *Zämäčä* members. These were linked to the *wäräda* as well as provincial underground leadership bodies.¹⁶ Accordingly, in Däbrä Marqos town the EPRP established its local political network.¹⁷ Then, the Zonal as well as Sub-Zonal Committees were secretly set up its own structure until the *wärädas*.

EPRP formed a strong party's structure in the Province of Gojjam and Däbrä Marqos was its center. Hence, the party had strong organizational activities in the town. Members of the Zonal Committee of Däbrä Marqos were Alämayähu Tämasgän, Mälaku Wäldätänsay, Çanyaläw Kasè, Zäyenu Endris, Abäbä Ayalèw, and Samuèl Tadäsä.¹⁸ Among those, Samuel Tadäsä, Abäbä

¹⁴ The Development Through Cooperation, Enlightenment and Work Campaign is known in Amharic, *Edegüt Bäheberät Yäwäqt Ena Yäsera Zämäčä* members and supporters of the oppositions argued that the aim of *Zämäčä* was to remove the students who were against the military regime from the urban center. This campaign was declared by the government on 25 November 1974 and it officially launched on December 1974. Eventually, close to 60,000 students and teachers were involved. Both EPRP's and MEISON's members participated in the program. *Nägarit Gazeta*, Proclamation No. 11, 1974, 34th Year, No. 10, 25 November, 1974, p.40.

¹⁵ Informant: Qomçä Ambaw; Genzeb Atalay, "Red Terror in Gojjam; 1976-1978," MA Thesis, Department of History, BDU, June 2012, p. 28.

¹⁶ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Tämasgän Alämayähu.

¹⁷ Genzeb Atalay, "Red Terror..." p. 32.

¹⁸ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše Yämäqaber Afafe*, (Addis Ababa: Far East Printing Press, 2004), pp. 74-83; Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

Ayalèw, Zäyenu Endris were teachers in DMGSS.¹⁹ Çanyaläw Kasè was a civil servant who works in Däbrä Marqos Health Center. Alämayähu Tämäsġän was the head of the committee and sent from the capital, Addis Ababa, to organize the party in the Province of Gojjam.²⁰

In addition, there were also Sub-Zonal Committee members, among those Mulugèta Bezunäh, Alameräw B., Gezačäw Terunäh and Eştifanos Gäbrämäsġäl were very figurative.²¹ The youth wing of the EPRP, “EPRYL which made itself public on March 8, 1977”,²² was also set up and was led by Ewunätu Abäbä, who was a student of grade 9 at DMGSS.²³ According to my informants, the EPRYL had more than two hundred members in Däbrä Marqos Town.²⁴

Parallel with EPRP, MEISON members were also participants of the *Zämäčä* program. But, according to my informants, MEISON was not persuasive enough to introduce itself into the area.²⁵ But, it introduced into the area following the structural setting up of the POMOA, since May 1975 i.e. after its official declaration.

As I stated before, the most important demands of EPRP and MEISON were people’s democratic rights and the formation of a PPG.²⁶ Therefore, due to those demands, the time following the overthrow of the imperial regime was a period of political debate between the civilian political groups and the *Därg* government.²⁷

¹⁹ Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Tämäsġän Alämayähu.

²⁰ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše...*, pp. 74-83.

²¹ Gezačäw Terunähe, *Näfes Aden Ruča bä Abaye Šäläqo*, (Addis Ababa: Afro Printing Press, 1996 E.C.), p. 95.

²² Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation, Part II: Ethiopia: Transformation and Conflict, The History of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), p. 284.

²³ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše...*, p. 76.

²⁴ Informants: Alämayähu Bälaye and Tämäsġän Alämayähu.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 75.

²⁷ Following the military control of power MEISON and EPRP were showing their demand through their pamphlets. For instance, “*Dèmoçraciyawi ripublik woyes yäwätadär mängest?*”, *Yäsäfiw Hezeb Demše*-MEISON’s organ, No.4, 5 *Pagumè* 1966 E.C.; “*läwut lähezb bähezb*”, *Democracia*- EPRP’s organ, No.3, 25 *Hämlè* 1966 E.C.

In fact, the demand for PPG was raised at the time of early 1974 popular uprising, primarily because Haile Selassie's government was crumbling and there was no obvious organized group to replace it.²⁸ But, it also continued even after the PMAC controlled the state power.

Paradoxically, *Därg* soon established itself as a 'permanent and irrevocable self-perpetuating groups' rejecting all calls for civilians rule.²⁹ Then it took charge of the revolutionary process and considered itself as a guardian of the Ethiopian Revolution. Hence, the regime had faced staunch opposition from the civilian political groups.³⁰

Accordingly, the most significant and consistent opposition at a time came from the EPRP which tried to undermine the regime by disseminating clandestine leaflets. Furthermore, it had successfully organized labor unions and youth associations to rally behind it.³¹ Besides, when the *Därg* frustrated the labor strike, MEISON, like EPRP continued to denounce the *Därg*'s repressive measures as anti-people and anti-democratic.³² They were not only denounced it, but also called for other military units to stage their struggle against the government of elite officers.³³

Although unwilling to concede power to the civilians, the PMAC took some radical measures in response to the popular mood and in the hope of appeasing its leftist critics.³⁴ Therefore, from its onset it attempted to catch the attentions and the support of the Ethiopian left by declaring its socialist intentions in its program with the motto "*Ityopia Teqdām Yalämenem Dām*" (Ethiopia

²⁸ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 147.

²⁹ Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1981), p.87.

³⁰ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.123.

³¹ Edmond J. Keller, "State, Party and Revolution in Ethiopia," *African Studies Review*, 28:1(March 1985), pp. 1-17.

³² Wudu Tafete, "Mäison...", p. 54.

³³ Ibid, pp.53-54; Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.77.

³⁴ Gebru Tareke, "The Red Terror in Ethiopia: A Historical Aberration," *Journal of Developing Societies*, 24:2(2008), p.190; Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 86.

First without Bloodshed).³⁵ However, the leftist political groups accused the PMAC as it had no defined ideology that could serve the broad masses equally.³⁶

Accordingly, on 20 December 1974, the *Därg* declared that its ‘political philosophy’ was “*Hebrätäsäbawinät*” (a form of Ethiopian Socialism). The *Därg* policy statement explained that the philosophy was derived from an interpretation of “*Ityopia Teqedām*” (Ethiopia First) and from Ethiopian culture and religions.³⁷ But this was also criticized by those groups for failing to distinguish classes and for deviating from “the only scientific Socialism”.³⁸

The *Därg*’s earlier policy statements were vague enough to allow any interpretation. As a result of the leftists’ pressure, *Därg* translated ‘Ethiopian Socialism’, in the course of 1975, in practice by adopting nationalization measures.³⁹ Subsequently, *Därg* pursued a series of nationalization measures. Most importantly, *Därg*’s radical measure on nationalization of rural and urban lands brought new structural organizations; Urban Dwellers and Peasant Associations were the major ones.⁴⁰ Those associations became the most important forums in which the struggle for power by various factional contenders was fought out in subsequent years.⁴¹

In the course of their rivalry against the *Därg*, the two leftist political parties were parting from their mutual opposition against the regime. This was when MEISON’s external wing came back home eventually persuaded by the *Därg*’s radical initiatives of the land reform. As a result, in

³⁵ Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People’s Republic*, (Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 213.

³⁶ Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution?* trans. A. Berrett (London: Zed Press, 1981), p. 156.

³⁷ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, pp. 86-87.

³⁸ “*Yäityopia Sošiyalizem Wäyenes Sayensawi sošiyilizm*”, *Yä Säfiw Hezb Demše*, No.19, *Ter* 1, 1967 E.C; *Men Ayenät Sošiyalizm, Democracia*, No.20, *Tahasas* 16, 1967 E.C.

³⁹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, p. 87.

⁴⁰ *Nägarit Gazèṭa*, Proclamation No.47, 1975, 34th year, No. 41, July 26, 1975, p. 209.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp. 115-116.

December 1975, MEISON transformed itself from an opposition to a full-fledged supporter of the *Därg* under the guise of ‘critical support’.⁴²

The MEISON’s political influence was thus closely tied to the connections that its leadership developed with the radical wing of the *Därg*. It had as a secret motive to eventually capture power by removing Mängestu and the *Därg*.⁴³ Henceforth, as a critical juncture MEISON opted to support Mängestu’s wing of *Därg*, against the universal demand for democracy and freedom. And it immediately dropped the slogan for a PPG. This marked the bold boarder between the two civilian political groups which resulted for fierce competition in the subsequent years.

For the EPRP, the military regime’s radical reforms and its collaboration with MEISON represented a significant challenge. With its anti-*Därg* polemics significantly weakened, this forced the party to insist on democratic rights and on the persistence of military rule as the issue the regime had not, and was not likely to resolve.⁴⁴ Henceforth, the establishment of a PPG that would setup a republic where democracy and freedom would thrive became the main agenda of the EPRP’s opposition.⁴⁵

In the meantime, *Därg* developed a strategy to bring opposition leftist political groups towards its side. Hence, it invited the opposition leftist political groups to form a joint front.⁴⁶ Thus, other organizations with similar strategies and tactics as that of MEISON mushroomed around the *Därg* such as the Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle (acronym in Amharic, *Içe’at*), the Marxist Leninist Revolutionary Organization (acronym in Amharic, *Malèrid*), the Proletarian

⁴² Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror Campaign in Addis Ababa, 1976-1978,” PHD in History, University of Oxford, 2014, pp. 81-82; Wudu Tafete, “Mäison...,” p.16.

⁴³ Gebru Tareke, “The Red Terror...,” p.192.

⁴⁴ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation, Part II...*, p. 30; Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 82.

⁴⁵ Wudu Tafete, “Mäison...,” pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, pp. 176-178.

League (acronym in Amharic, *Wäzlig*) and the Revolutionary Flame (acronym in Amharic, *Abiyotawi Sädäd*).⁴⁷

However, EPRP rejected the calls believing that to work with the military junta was to give legitimacy to a regime that hijacked power and held it undemocratically.⁴⁸ Hence, it made the party as the only opponent from the center (urban area). Therefore, EPRP diametrically moved in the direction against those the amalgamated parties, whom it labeled as “*bandas*”.⁴⁹ Literally ‘*banda*’ means ‘collaborators’ and it called the ruling government “Fascist”.

In December 1975, the government together with those political groups established the Provisional Office of Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA).⁵⁰ MEISON carried out political and ideological tasks of the regime from 1975 until the culmination of the Red Terror. To this end it recruited members and branches were established in many parts of the country. As part of the country, the structure of POMOA was set up in Gojjam at Däbrä Marqos, the capital of the province. Therefore, political parties those were around the *Därg* got the chance to assign their party members in some positions of this organization.

However, according to my informants, unlike the other parts of the country, the staff members were most importantly recruited from members of the organizations other than *Mäison*.⁵¹ Among those, Häbtè Ayalèw from *Wäzlig*, Adisu Abäbä from *Malèrid* and Fäkadu Tägäñ from *Abiyotawi Sädäd* were well-known members of the POMOA staff in Däbrä Marqos town. They

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 130-134; Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia...*, p.199.

⁴⁸ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, pp. 176-178.

⁴⁹ The name given to traitors, those fought alongside the Italian fascist army during its occupation of Ethiopia.

⁵⁰ Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, pp.128-129. The *Därg* announced that its ultimate intention was to form a mass vanguard party to incorporate all Ethiopians. It was supportive to move the *Därg* forward with ideological support from member parties. Then the government officially established the POMOA on 12 May 1976. *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No. 91, 1976, 35th year, No.33, 12 May 1976, p. 215.

⁵¹ At the capital, MEISON cadres occupied a number of ministerial posts and participated in the development of different economic and social policies of the regime.

also played a great role during the political rivalries and the subsequent bloody confrontations of the EPRP and *Därg* in the town.⁵²

Šaläqa Mäle’aku Bäqälä, who was “the Vice Leader of Gojjam Province since 22 February 1976”,⁵³ was assigned as leader of the POMOA in Däbrä Marqos. The organization carried out political and ideological tasks of the regime from its establishment until the culmination of the Red Terror in the town. The rivalry significantly was between the POMOA and the EPRP. Therefore, the POMOA worked to defame the EPRP members within the community. For instance, though both the ruling government [*Därg*] as well as the EPRP’s socialist ideology was in contradiction of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, they worked with elders to educate the community as they [EPRP members] were anti-Christianity and of Ethiopian unity. However, they couldn’t stop their activities in the town rather they made their activity to be more secret.⁵⁴

The POMOA also served as an instrument for the radical group of *Därg* (*Šaläqa* Mängestu’s group) to equip them for confrontation with the future political rivalries; internal as well as external. One of its contributions was the school of politics, called *Yäkatit 66*. So, at *Yäkatit 66* Political School, cadres of the military regime were able to acquire new political indoctrination. The staffs in Däbrä Marqos were also sent to the school for political education.⁵⁵ Their cadres developed “new political discourses legitimizing its political use of violence”.⁵⁶

Then, in April 1976, POMOA launched a program known as the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) that envisioned “a socialist people’s democratic republic led by the proletariat

⁵² Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

⁵³ *Nägarit Gazetä*, General Notice No. 8, 35th Year, 1976, No.33, 12 May 1976, p.10.

⁵⁴ Informant: Qomçä Ambaw.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 83.

in alliance with the peasants and the backing of the petty bourgeoisie”.⁵⁷ The program gave priority to the establishment of Leninist Party rather than the formation of a non-provisional government. It represented massive ideological shift, from ‘Ethiopian Socialism’ to scientific socialism. However, EPRP rejected the program and argued that the NDR was begging not to answer the decisive questions concerning the status of the *Därg* and the shift to people’s democracy.⁵⁸ Henceforth, their conflict began to follow the socialist discourse.

The *Därg* and its political allies began to use ideological terminologies against their opponent, EPRP. Thus, they labeled the EPRP and all those who had fought against the feudal regime and who refused to accept the authoritarian military rule as “enemies to the people” (in Amharic *Ṣārā Hezb*). Consequently, the *Därg*, influenced by the intellectual leftist groups from POMOA, was then given the insistence that “counter-revolutionaries” must be eliminated. EPRP on its part was ready to wage urban guerrilla warfare, in order to bring down the *Därg*.⁵⁹ Therefore, the repression of *Därg* shifted the rivalry into political violence.

It is argued that the establishment of POMOA in 1975 and the declaration of NDR after a year raised issues which led to a strong confrontation between the strong leftist political groups, i.e. MEISON supported with the ruling regime on the one side and EPRP on the other side. Later, it carried the conflict further into the realm of violence.

2.2 Political Commotion and Rivalry between the EPRP and MEISON

Of all leftist political organizations which emerged following the February Revolution, EPRP and MEISON had the greatest effect on the ideological development and influence on the *Därg*

⁵⁷ Provisional Office of Mass Organizational Affairs, Agitation, Propoganda and Education Committee, *Basic Document of the Ethiopian Revolution*, (Addis Ababa: Berhanina Selam Printing Press, May 1977), P.11.

⁵⁸ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation Part II...*, pp. 61-62; Jacob, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 85.

⁵⁹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, pp. 130-131.

and guiding the Ethiopian Revolution. They were also engrossed in an intense political debate between themselves.

In fact, both of them shared the same ideology. But, by reflecting pre-existing divisions in the student movement in abroad, they entered the revolutionary period in a divided spirit.⁶⁰ Among their differences, the kind of democracy envisioned and their attitude to the military regime were the major ones.⁶¹ EPRP pressed for an unlimited people's democracy guided by people's government whereas, MEISON favored controlled democracy, guided by a vanguard party.⁶² Therefore, it declared that, it stood for "an armed, politically conscious and organized struggle" and to work with *Därg*.⁶³

The two parties also had disparate programs towards the military government. The EPRP's view tended towards favoring the immediate disengagement of the military from a leadership role in the revolution. On the contrary, MEISON acknowledged the interim role of the army in a government and supported not a mass but a vanguard party.⁶⁴ Accordingly, EPRP demanded unconditional formation of a PPG whereas; MEISON had decided to work with the *Därg*.⁶⁵ The decision was ensued following the arrival of its leading activists, among them Häyelé Fida, Nägädä Gobäzé and Andargaçäw Asäged.⁶⁶ The emphasis then shifted to the question of political power.⁶⁷ Henceforth, both EPRP and MEISON were engaged in relentless struggle for power. Significantly, a strategic shift of MEISON on the side of the *Därg*, amplified its differences with

⁶⁰ Edmond J. Keller, "The Ethiopian Revolution; How Socialist in it?," *Journal of African Studies*, 1:2(1984), p.55.

⁶¹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian...*, p. 89.

⁶² Edmond J. Keller, "State, Party...", p. 4.

⁶³ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, p.74.

⁶⁴ Edmond J. Keller, "The Ethiopian Revolution...", p. 61.

⁶⁵ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation Part II...*, p. 74.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 71.

⁶⁷ Wudu Tafete, "Mäison...", pp. 50-51.

EPRP. As Kiflu concurs “the alliance of MEISON with the *Därg* was one of the events that EPRP dreaded most”.⁶⁸

Though the differences between them had been simmering under the surface for a long time, EPRP and MEISON did not make them public until the end of 1975. As of then, they engaged in rigorous debates through semi-clandestine political pamphlets and government owned newspaper. The debate first took place in the pages of their clandestine newspapers *Democracia* and *Yäsäfiw Hezb Demşe* that belonged to EPRP and MEISON, respectively.⁶⁹

In addition to their pamphlets, they were also in a war of pen on a column in the Amharic-language official daily newspaper (*Addis Zämän*) called ‘*Abeyotawi Mädräk*’ (Revolutionary Forum).⁷⁰ The newspaper devoted for several months in early 1976 to the purpose of airing their differences publicly.⁷¹ On this newspaper, each of them called themselves as a true revolutionary and its counterpart as counter-revolutionary. As a result of this polemics, the Revolutionary Forum made them more irreconcilable.⁷²

Moreover, the various *zämäča ṭabiyawoč* (Campaign Stations) were used as political battlegrounds between the members of the two parties. Their discussions were mainly focused on socialism and the situation of the country; Ethiopia. As it was already stated, campaigners were sent to Gojjam Province from the capital of the country. Beside the work of the *zämäča*, the campaigners were enthusiastically engaged in their political activities for their respective party.⁷³

⁶⁸ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation Part I*, p. 72

⁶⁹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.143.

⁷⁰ *Abiyotawi Mädräk* was one of the first projects which POMOA embarked as an instrument for political and ideological education.

⁷¹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.143.

⁷² Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p.246.

⁷³ Worku Gebeyehu, *Empire and Revolution in Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa: Far East Trading Plc, 2018), p.

Hence, it facilitated the activities of the EPRP to get popular support in the area. It also contributed for the rivalry between EPRP and the POMOA in Däbrä Marqos town.

Therefore, bitter ideological conflicts erupted between the two most powerful civilian groups.⁷⁴ MEISON supported the *Därg* while the EPRP tried to undermine it and both of them needed a political power. However, EPRP critically opposed MEISON's stand as an opportunistic and labeling them as "*Muheran Banda*", in English, Intellectual Collaborators.

Intense political struggle took place between the two groups and as their relationship continued deteriorating, they began to label each other as enemy. Accordingly, each of them called the other political organization as 'counter-revolutionary'. Thus, EPRP began labeling MEISON as *Banda*. The MEISON was not short of labels, either. It called the EPRP 'anarchist', 'fascist', 'terrorist', etc., throwing back at the EPRP much of what the EPRP said of it.

In the last days of 1975, POMOA was formed by the union of five political parties that emerged following the February Revolution. Kiflu maintains that "because of POMOA/MEISON's involvement [in the *Därg* government], the main differences that separated radicals themselves became the concern of the state power and apparatus."⁷⁵ This organization had many opportunities for the MEISON's cadres to use its structure, to challenge EPRP's political activity.

MEISON cadres were assigned to the function of coordinating the political activities of several organizations; including Urban and Rural Associations, Trade Unions and others.⁷⁶ Therefore, by using its leading position in those organizations MEISON crystalized itself to challenge its

⁷⁴ Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia ...*, p.199.

⁷⁵ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II*, p. 69.

⁷⁶ John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution...*, p. 157.

counterparts.⁷⁷ Significantly, the POMOA and its control by MEISON's cadres brought profound effect on the development of political violence, which later came to be known as the Ethiopian Red Terror. But, in Däbrä Marqos, the influence of *Wäzlig* and *Abeyotawi Säädäd* on the POMOA was gigantic.⁷⁸

Gradually, the political rivalry between the two leftist political groups developed into preparation for an imminent fratricidal political conflict. The turning point was the adoption of NDR program in April 1976 and immediate rejection of EPRP. Since then, political groups began to examine how political space was claimed, challenged and defined.⁷⁹ This competition was mostly seen in the "*Abeyotawi Mädäräk*" (Revolutionary Forum) and the "*Yäweyeyet Kebäb*" (Discussion Club).

The 'Revolutionary Forum' provided an opportunity for the opposition groups and individuals to write articles in government controlled newspapers. By using those means of communication (*Addis Zämän*), they did a lot "to shape the thinking of the general population" on what should be the nature of the new Ethiopia.⁸⁰ There were also intense debates in 'Discussion Clubs'.⁸¹ The "clubs" were formed by the POMOA in the various government institutions, *qäbälès*, factories and others. Accordingly, in Däbrä Marqos, there were clubs in each of the eleven *qäbälés* and Däbrä Marqos General Secondary School (DMGSS). Its prime objective was to involve people in the political struggle of the regime. But it became a political battleground of the political rivals in a competition for political space. The competition was mainly between members of the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše...*, pp.4-7.

⁷⁹ Jacob Wiebel, "Revolutionary Terror...", pp. 85-86.

⁸⁰ Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia...*, p.197

⁸¹ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, pp. 58-59

POMOA other than MEISON and the EPRP.⁸² As a result of the insistence of the students, those were supporters of the EPRP, two discussion clubs; namely History and Amharic Clubs were secretly formed in DMGSS.⁸³ Therefore, within those clubs, EPRP competes for political space and was able to get support from the students.

Another competition was to control institutional structures within the *qäbälè*, which was established following “nationalizations of private residential properties in August 1975”.⁸⁴ The *Därg* had established new *Qäbälè* Associations (QA) to administer the towns and those new local assets. Therefore, until August 1976, *qäbälès* were turned into center of political competition for control of the newly emerging public space and institutional structures, which were formed under it.⁸⁵

Under this phase of struggle, infiltration also appeared as a form of rivalry. It was practiced to obtain information about the activities of the infiltrated groups and the regime.⁸⁶ Mostly it was practiced by EPRP members. After the end of the national Campaign Program, in July 1976, the EPRP cadres who returned from the campaign began to infiltrate mass organizations and professional associations. Hence, the urban associations, peasant associations, and even military units became their targets of infiltration.⁸⁷ Accordingly, EPRP in Däbrä Marqos became more influential and enable to infiltrate provincial branch of the Ethiopian Teachers’ Association, the students, peasants and the POMOA in Däbrä Marqos. For instance, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät was one of the prominent members of EPRP in Däbrä Marqos. He was the Secretary of the Ethiopian

⁸² Gezačäw Terunähe, *Näfes Aden...*, p. 96; Informants: Mäbet Gezačäw and Alämayähu Bälaye.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 96-97.

⁸⁴ *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No. 47, 1975, 34th Year, No. 41, July 26, 1975, p. 209.

⁸⁵ Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 87.

⁸⁶ Infiltration was served to acquire information about the overall activities of the organization. Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, p. 75.

⁸⁷ John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution...*, pp. 154-155; Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 141.

Teachers' Association (ETA) in Gojjam province. Therefore, though he has worked with the government, he tried to his best for his party.⁸⁸

MEISON on its side claimed to be a Marxist-Leninist political organization and as such sought to integrate itself with the progressive social groups. The creation of mass organizations particularly the Urban Dwellers' Association and Peasant Associations at the end of 1975, gave MEISON an important opportunity. Thereafter, its members dominated the Urban Dwellers' Association leadership. This enabled the party to struggle against the EPRP's infiltration of the association.⁸⁹ However, it was not competitive with the EPRP in Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular.

Even though the EPRP and MEISON conducted intense political struggles amongst themselves, initially the average citizens were unable to understand their difference. Specially, the non-partisan intellectuals regarded the difference between the two groups as semantic.⁹⁰ Through time, members began to develop an identity makeup between the two major political adversaries. Hence, members began to develop their vocabulary to reflect the EPRP and MEISON's usage of political terms and thereby to broadcast their new identity.⁹¹

The very word for 'proletarian' became a site political struggle between EPRP and the MEISON. The EPRP used a word based on the word for 'sweat'- *Lab-* to produce *Labadär* (ላብ አደር/ላባደር), whilst MEISON used *Wäzadär* (ወዝ አደር/ወዛደር), a word derived from *Wäz* meaning 'moist skin', but with a connotation of beauty and comfort.⁹² The other word 'victory' was a word which served as a slogan of the respective parties. But, used in different way, EPRP

⁸⁸ Informants: Tämäsgän Alämayähu, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Alämayäh Bälaye.

⁸⁹ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 141.

⁹⁰ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation Part II...*, p.75.

⁹¹ Jacob Wiebel, "Revolutionary Terror..." p. 91.

⁹² Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p.138.

used *Enačänefalän* (እናቸንፋለን), whilst MEISON used *Enasänefalän* (እናሽንፋለን), the words have the same meaning ‘we will win’.⁹³

Starting from its formation, POMOA played a leading role in repressing dissent and opposition activities in different places. Even though, POMOA worked to repress EPRP’s oppositions, in its political activities, it was excelled by the political organizations, which were collaborating with the *Därg*. As a result, political developments took a different and unhealthy turn when *Därg* and its supporters came to realize that they were excelled by the EPRP’s organizational capacity. EPRP demonstrated this massive show of force in May Day celebration of 1976 at national level.⁹⁴

The civilian political parties’ (especially, EPRP and MEISON) inability to solve and handle contradiction, the stage was set for a violent confrontation. Therefore, the absence of tolerance and accommodation between the civilian political parties and the ideological debate almost “inexorably drifted into a campaign of mutual extermination”.⁹⁵

Therefore, those political parties (MEISON backed with the regime and the EPRP on the other side) began to prepare themselves for the imminent confrontation. A violent escalation of these conflicts was expected by both sides. The 1976 May Day demonstrations confirmed such expectations.⁹⁶ Therefore, these political parties began to prepare themselves for the imminent confrontation. Thus violent escalation of these conflicts was expected by all sides.

Therefore, the period from April 1976 to September 1976 was a period of preparation for the looming conflict between the MEISON- *Därg* and the EPRP. Thus, during this period, EPRP

⁹³ Informants: Mäbet Gezačäw and Qomečä Ambaw.

⁹⁴ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern ...*, p. 247.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 244.

⁹⁶ Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 92.

was concentrated on organizational and propaganda work and continued its coercive criticism of the military rules.⁹⁷ Along with its critics, the party prepared itself for a forceful confrontation. For this reason, the urban military wing which was formed as early as 1974 was engaged in training and conducting studies of the “future targets”.⁹⁸ Therefore, the EPRP prepared itself by establishing “urban defense squads” at the center in July 1976.⁹⁹ Then the structure spread to other parts of the country where there were relatively stable organizational structure of the party. Among them the Province of Gojjam was the one. According to my informant, the entire Däbrä Marqos structure numbered 15 squad members.¹⁰⁰ Among these, Tämäsgän Alämayähu, Yäsegat Hebestè and Adisu Bälay were infamous.¹⁰¹ The qäbälè officials as well as Police Officers who were “the architects of the repression” became the urban squad’s target.¹⁰² Killings of the squad will be discussed in the next chapter.

Consequently, it changed the way of struggle against the regime and its supporter to violence, by labeling it as “Fascist-Banda”. Therefore, EPRP backed ‘revolutionary violence’ against the *Därg* and its supporters by launching a campaign of urban terrorism in September 1976. Therefore, their inability to solve and handle contradiction made them victims of the harsh policies of the *Därg* in the subsequent years.

2.3 The Transition from Political Squabble to Violence

The development of violence from the political rivalry in the post-revolutionary period was emanated from both the *Därg* and the civilian political groups. That rivalry between the civilian

⁹⁷ John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution...*, p. 155.

⁹⁸ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II ...*, p. 149.

⁹⁹ *Democracia*, Vol. 3, No 11.

¹⁰⁰ Informant: Tämäsgän Alämayähu. Tämäsgän was a member of the urban defense squad in Däbrä Marqos.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

political groups was a triggering factor for the emergence of political violence in the country. On the going process, violence was understood as a “necessary and legitimate instrument” to become victor and a vanguard of the revolution by the actors on all sides; from the *Därg* and the civilian lefts.¹⁰³

In fact, violence had been also practiced earlier by the ruling junta. Following the PMAC’s assumption of full state power in September 1974, the battle lines were drawn between the *Därg* and its military and civilian political opponents who struggled for the formation of the PPG. The ruling military government used forceful method earlier to halt the peaceful opposition. By and large, the *Därg* was tolerant of the civilian political groups but not the military activists. Of course, it was a systematic way of elimination of the opponents of the *Därg*. Therefore, its first action was “to quell military resistance” early; *Därg* took violent acts within its rank.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, its first act of violence was, on 7 October 1974, when the regime secretly executed some radical members of the Engineering, the Army Aviation and the Body Guard military units. We may call it as an initial violence of the *Därg*. Soon after, the secrete execution in October was followed up in November by the publicly announced execution.¹⁰⁵ We may call it as an initial violence of the *Därg*.

Soon after, the secret execution in October was followed in November by the publicly announced execution of Lt. General Aman Mikael Andom. This was due to divergent political visions and internal power struggle within *Därg*’s rank. The first issue which reflected differences within the *Därg* was on how to handle the Eritrean problem. The difference was between those who advocated a political or peaceful solution and a military one. The advocates

¹⁰³ Jacob Wiebel, “Let the Red Terror....” pp. 9-11.

¹⁰⁴ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁵ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, p.231.

of peaceful settlement were headed by Aman Andom and those favoring a military one.¹⁰⁶ The militarists were headed by the First Vice Chairman, Major Mängestu Haile Mariam. Consequently, the disagreements precipitated the death of Aman Andom, in his home, on November 24, 1974. In the aftermath, the *Därg* wildly executed of sixty former government officials, at *Aläm Bäqañe* Prison.¹⁰⁷ This bloody event led to the abandonment of the *Därg*'s slogan of "Ethiopia First, Without Bloodshed" (*Itiyopia Teqdām Yalämenem Däm*).

Following the assassination the *Därg* announced the following on its media, *Addis Zämān*:

“..... በጨቋኞች ላይ ዛሬም ሆነ ወደፊት የምንወስደው እርምጃ በንፁህን ሰዎች ላይ እንደተወሰደ ወይም የንፁህን ሰዎች ደም እንደፈሰሰ የማንቆጥረው መሆኑን እናረጋግጣለን።”¹⁰⁸

Literally meaning,

(We announce that the measure on the oppressors that we take now and in the future, would not be considered as measure on the civilians or the blood spill of the civilians.)

Hereafter, the rhetoric of a bloodless revolution soon appeared as a tentative memory. After this event blood began to shed in different parts of the country.

Thus, people of Gojjam were also victims of the *Därg*'s revolutionary violence prior to the Red Terror period. By justifying the violence as an action against “anti-revolutionaries”, the regime responded to protests in Gojjam harmfully.¹⁰⁹ For instance, in August 1975 the military government under the vanguard of Major Endalä Täsäma had slaughtered more than 200 men mercilessly. And this event called as the “*Bičäna* Massacre”.¹¹⁰ This massacre prefigured the urban violence in Gojjam Province in general and its seat, Däbrä Marqos in particular.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid; Gebru Tareke, *Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 40

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.rtmmm.org/redterror.html>, Accessed on 24 May 2018. See more Appendix I.

¹⁰⁸ *Därg Asfälagi Yäpoltika Wusanè Wäsädä*, Addis Zämān, 31th Year, No. 564, *Hedar* 15, 1967 EC.

¹⁰⁹ Babile Tola, *To Kill...*, p. 34.

¹¹⁰ Regarding the actual cause of the massacre, the archival materials are silent. Temesgen Gebeyehu, “Peasant Resistance against the Ethiopian Revolution: The Case of Gojjam 1975-1978,” MA Thesis, Department of

Furthermore, in late 1975 over a thousand men were appointed and sent to different provinces, including Gojjam. Those military appointees in a pretext to dislodge the imperial bureaucracy took harsh measure on the civilians of the province. This violence was not restricted to the small *wäräda* towns, but it extended to the capital of the province, Däbrä Marqos. Subsequently, members of the old aristocracy, retired officials and the wealthy nobles were arrested in large numbers and some of them were later executed.¹¹¹

Apart from its killing against the “opponents of the regime”, *Därg* was also occupied with internal disagreements and killed its own officials by accused them as anti-revolutionary.¹¹²

Even though the military regime had resorted to violence, in a national and local level, a few months after it took power, both the scope and the magnitude of the repression increased only after September 1976. Because, since then, the *Därg* and its civilian allies and also the EPRP entered into violence which was ideologically justified and legitimized by those parties in the struggle as a reason for successful revolutionary transformation to socialism.

The civilian political groups were needed to be a vanguard party. Therefore, their political conflict ultimately escalated into violence, with increasing fighting between the two groups. In April 1976, following EPRP’s rejection of the regime’s program of the NDR, which represented last co-opt opposition as much as a road for revolutionary Ethiopia’s development, violent confrontation appeared inevitable.¹¹³

History, AAU, June 2005, pp. 30-31; Major Endale Tassama was a permanent member of *Därg* and later a Central Committee member of Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE). Babile Tola, *To Kill...*, p. 34.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.14.

¹¹² For instance, on June 13, 1976 *Därg* announced the execution of 12 *Därg* members in Addis Ababa including Major Sisaye Häbté (*Därg* member and head of foreign relations committees), Brigadier General Gétaçaw Nadäw (Administrator of Eritrea) and Major Kiros Alämayähu *Därg* member. Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, pp. 82-83.

¹¹³ David and Marina Ottaway, *Ethiopia...*, p. 113.

Since then every difference between the civilian political groups was began to be viewed based on the Marxist line of interpretation. As Pietro argues,

The prevalent discourse among the Ethiopian left drew on a Leninist truism: the fundamental question of politics is the question of state power. What was then widely adopted was the definition of class enemies and allies, along with the strategy of uncompromising class struggle, the decisive nature of political victory, exclusive party leadership, as well as condoning violence as an ideologically concocted historic necessity.¹¹⁴

After the second anniversary of the Emperor's overthrow, on 12 September 1976, government newspapers began to publish articles denouncing EPRP.¹¹⁵ The EPRP took this campaign as its pushing factor to launch its own strategy of "offensive defensive", starting the urban assassination. Henceforth, the EPRP began to assassinate leading members of the *Därg* and its client institutions, notably the Urban Dwellers' Association (*qäbälés*). In this case, state-sponsored violence proceeded than the violence committed by opposition groups.¹¹⁶

However, Andargačäw and Feqrä Selassie maintain that "the EPRP began their violence and terror before September 1976 by the underground group known as *Yäṭääräba Buden* (Intimidating Group)".¹¹⁷

EPRP's first attempt on September 23, 1976 was on Mängestu's life but he survived with a minor wound. According to Halliday and Molyneux, EPRP's attempt on Mängestu's life was a significant turning point for the subsequent political violence in the urban parts of Ethiopia.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Pietro Toggia, "The Revolutionary Endgame of Political Power: the Genealogy of 'Red Terror' in Ethiopia," *African Identities*, 10:3(2012), p. 268.

¹¹⁵ *The Ethiopian Herald*, The PMAC condemn EPRP, Vol 34, No. 228, September 17, 1976.

¹¹⁶ Bahru Zewde, "The History of Red Terror...", p. 25.

¹¹⁷ Andargačäw trace the period early from March 1976, when EPRP formed the underground group, *Yäṭääräba Buden*. Andargačäw Asäged, *bäačər yätäqäčä räjem guzo: mä'ison bä ityopia hizboč tariq wusṭ*, (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1992 E.C.), p. 428; Feqrä Selassie also argues "the underground group, *Yätäräba Buden* began the acts of terrorism before September 1976. Feqrä Selassie Wägdäräs, *Eñana Abeyotu*, (Los Angeles, CA: TSEHAI Publishers, 2006 E.C), pp. 157-158.

¹¹⁸ Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 120; another scholars justify the incidence in different way, for instance Lefort and Ottaways are maintain their doubt on it, as 'it carried out by a military faction opposed to him'. Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretic...*, p.185 and Ottaways, *Ethiopia...*, p. 107.

In conflict, when there is a violent act “the groups or individuals also employ justification for it, whether tailored for themselves or defender”.¹¹⁹ Accordingly, the urban violence, which erupted in September 1976, was justified by the adversaries, EPRP on the one side and the *Därg* and its civilian allies on the other, in different ways. Still now each of them justifies its act of violence as legitimate and to protect themselves and the innocents. For instance, the military junta attempted its violent acts were considered as a legitimate act for the national unity and to end the country’s revolution. The EPRP on its side justified its urban campaign as a legitimate act to return the revolution snatched by the soldiers and its *mehuran bandas* and in need of people’s freedom and rights. However, there were also conflicts within the EPRP members.

Internally, EPRP’s policy of assassination resulted for a split within its leadership and made its violence two dimensional; against the party’s opponents and between its factions. This assassination policy was opposed by two of the leaders of the organization, Berhanä Mäsqäl Rāda and Gētačāw Maru. They argued that ‘it was ultimately self-destructive’. Hence, those leaders and their followers led by Berhanä Mäsqäl Rāda were labeled as “*Anjjas* (the Defectors)”, by the “Clique (the Mainstream)”, which favored urban terrorism.¹²⁰

Then, factionalism and infighting within EPRP began, with some members opposed to assassination tactics and others joining the military regime.¹²¹ Even from the “*Anjja*”, members also defected to *Därg* to save their life from the killing campaign of the “Clique” faction.¹²² In general, EPRP’s factional split after September 1976 had contributed more to the violence that occurred in the subsequent years.

¹¹⁹ G. O’Boyle, “Theories of Justification and Political Violence: Examples from Four Groups, Terrorism and Political Violence,” 14:2(2002), <https://doi.org/10.1080/714005612>, p.23.

¹²⁰ Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern...*, pp. 26-27.

¹²¹ Ibid, pp.26-27.

¹²² Haile Mariam Wāldu, *Helḑätä anjja wā kelik zā ihapa: manāw ihapan yafārāsāw*, (Addis Ababa: Afro Printing Press, 2006), pp. 157-158; Andargačāw, *Bä ačer...*, p. 425.

As MEISON was EPRP's primary target, its several leading members were killed. The first victim was a leading MEISON and government cadre, Feqrè Märed, assassinated by EPRP, on 1 October 1976.¹²³ But, according to Andargačäw, five days before the assassination of Feqrè, members of the Youth Wing of the party, Gäbrä Egzabhèr Täsfayä, Abubäkär Abdul Mäjed and Kenfä Asfaw were killed by the EPRP.¹²⁴ Following the execution of Feqrè Märed, a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Gètenät Zäwdè, was murdered. In addition, senior government officials and members of the secret service were killed in the next two months.¹²⁵ The public assassinations continued until 1977.

EPRP assassins eliminated many prominent MEISON intellectuals. Saying this, I would not equate the EPRP's assassination with that of the *Därg*, *qäbälès*, and MEISON cadres the Red Terror carried out by the *Därg* and its allies. There was a huge difference in the scale of murder carried out by the two antagonists, the EPRP and the *Därg*. Because, state sponsored political violence exceeded that of EPRP's urban assassinations. And as a "retaliatory" measure, MEISON also organized its own execution squads in the *qäbälès* against the EPRP.¹²⁶ Therefore, following the sporadic bloody encounters, assassinations, and counter-assassinations began to occur in the streets and back alleys of Addis Ababa between MEISON and EPRP.¹²⁷ Then, as the assassination was winding down in Addis Ababa, it was heating up in earnest in the rural towns all over Ethiopia.¹²⁸ Thus, by September 1976, revolutionary violence became a defining feature of everyday life in Ethiopia's major cities.

¹²³ Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.162.

¹²⁴ Andargačäw Asäged, *Bä açer...*, p. 422.

¹²⁵ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 367.

¹²⁶ Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity...*, p. 55.

¹²⁷ Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia...*, p.199.

¹²⁸ Babile Tola, *To Kill...*, p.148.

There were also killings in Gojjam particularly in Däbrä Marqos town. In fact, the military operation and urban terror in Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular was not as such strong like that of the capital, Addis Ababa. Based on the archival sources, military operation and urban violence in Däbrä Marqos began in March 1977 and continued until August 1978.¹²⁹

According to my informants, in the early period, the EPRP members committed violence against state supporters and those who disagreed with their political agenda as defined by their leaders.¹³⁰ Therefore, they began the assassination in Däbrä Marqos in the early months of 1977. Accordingly, on 13 March 1977, Feqrè Guančä and Čanè Wärqenäh, who were *Därg* officials in Bahir Dar town,¹³¹ were killed while attending a conference in Däbrä Marqos by one of the EPRP members.¹³²

To sum up, the level of violence at the national in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular, increased significantly following Mängestu's rise to the head of the government on February 3, 1977. Since then even justification for the legitimacy of the violence also shifted into a Revolutionary Terror.

2.4 The Move from Political Violence to Revolutionary Terror

Due to the politics of intolerance, from September 1976, a dual political violence began in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, and gradually spread like a wildfire to the provincial seats and rural towns. The proponents of the various parties were engulfed in political killings of one

¹²⁹ Däbrä Marqos University Archives Center (DMUAC): Folder No. 79, File No. ፬.፯-18, Ref. No. 9671/100/50, 8 *Mägabit* 1969 E.C. See Appendix II.

¹³⁰ Informant: Mäbet Gezačäw.

¹³¹ DMUAC: Folder No. 79, Ref. No. 9671/100/50.

¹³² Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

another. At the same time, they were pre-occupied in making “terror as a form of instrumental violence”.¹³³

Terror is one of the most powerful forces known to mankind, particularly when used as a political tool. In history, it was obviously linked to revolutionary groups who conducted it during civil strives against real or perceived enemies. For instance, in the French (1790s) and Russian Revolutions (1910s and 1920s), terror was an “essential property of revolution and inherent to its dynamics”.¹³⁴ In both cases, it had been used to control unstable populace and guide the revolution in a new direction. Consequently, during these two preceded revolutions, terror which was dubbed as ‘Reign of Terror’ and ‘Red Terror’, respectively, was notorious for its violence and atrocious deeds against its enemies.¹³⁵

During the Ethiopian Revolution, the actors (the *Därg* junta and its civilian allies on the one side and the EPRP on the other) resorted to rival ideologies to legitimize and justify actions and policies. Political squabble and rivalry between contending parties resulted to political violence. Gradually, these adversaries had changed the violence into a revolutionary terror. Therefore, *Därg* and its proponents resorted to a revolutionary terror to make a political supremacy against their adversaries, the so called ‘counter revolutionaries’. Hence, they believed and partook in a revolutionary terrorism.

Accordingly, each of the political organizations had been calling itself as a “revolutionary” and castigated the counterparts as “counter-revolutionaries”. Following EPRP’s adoption of the policy of urban assassination (terror), on 10 September 1976, the POMOA argued that “the

¹³³ Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.99.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p.93.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

difference between EPRP and the Ethiopian progressives was not a case of two lines among progressives but between reactionaries and progressives (between EPRP, EDU and imperialism, on the one hand and Ethiopian Progressives, on the other)".¹³⁶ On the contrary, the EPRP also blamed the *Därg* and its allies as reactionary forces.

When Fekeré Märed was assassinated, on 1 October 1976, the regime responded by declaring its infamous 'exchange rate' "የአንድ ታጋይ ሞት በሺህ አፍርኪስቶች ይመነዘራል!" (Literally meaning for every revolutionary killed one thousand anarchists [anti-people elements] shall be liquidated).¹³⁷ Henceforth, *Därg* not only labeled the EPRP as reactionary but also reacted by indiscriminate arrests and executions of the latter members and sympathizers.

In the closing months of 1976, on the EPRP's side assassination campaign became a dominant feature of life in Addis Ababa.¹³⁸ As its systematic assassination campaign escalated, leaders of MEISON, *Wäzlig* and *Maléréd*, further drifted towards allying themselves with the *Därg*. Thus, they called for large-scale arming of the urban *qäbälés* by the *Därg*, to 'defend the revolution'.¹³⁹ MEISON in particular, pressed more the ruling *Därg* more strongly for "arming the masses".¹⁴⁰ And it demanded an urgent measure to retaliate against the terror of EPRP.¹⁴¹

Following the second round elections of Addis Ababa Urban Dwellers' Associations'; in November 1976,¹⁴² POMOA's organ, *Abeyotawit Ityopia* (Revolutionary Ethiopia), encouraged

¹³⁶ *Abeyotawit Ityopia*, I, 10, *Mäsekäräm* 1969 E.C.

¹³⁷ Bahru Zewde, "The History of Red Terror...", p. 26.

¹³⁸ Jacob Wiebel, "Revolutionary Terror...", p. 106.

¹³⁹ Their call for the arming of the masses against the reactionaries began in September. *Abeyotawit Ityopia*, I, 10, *Mäsekäräm* 1969 E.C.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, I, 12, *Teqemt* 15, 1969 E.C.

¹⁴¹ Wudu Tafete, "Mäison...", p.67.

¹⁴² Yä Addis Ababa *Qäbälé liqämänabert merça zarè yekahèdal*, *Addis Zämän Gazéta*, 33th Year, No.1159, 28 *Teqemt* 28 1969 E.C.

the associations to create their own revolutionary committees as well as defense squads.¹⁴³ It further insisted to take ‘revolutionary actions’ against the ‘anti-revolutionary’ groups.¹⁴⁴

However, because of the new power reshuffling of *Därg* officials in December 1976, Mängestu’s and Atenafu’s political roles were dominated by Brig. General Täfäri Bānti (the reformist faction).¹⁴⁵ From the very beginning, the radical and reformist factions of the *Därg* had been accusing each other of betraying the revolution. The reformist faction of the *Därg* did not support to take the “revolutionary measure” on the “anti-revolutionary” groups. This attempt of constraint soon came to zilch on 3 February 1977, when Mängestu’s collusion took a “revolutionary action” on seven *Därg* members.¹⁴⁶ The central policy issue in the conflict seems to have been Täfäri Bānti’s desire, indicated in a speech on January 30, “to reach some reconciliation with the rival civilian groups”.¹⁴⁷

The radicals charged them of being in contact with the conservative EDU, favoring negotiations with the EPRP and delaying the arming of the masses.¹⁴⁸ This event triggered paranoia across the

¹⁴³ *Abeyotawit Ityopia*, I, 13, *Teqemt* 30, 1969 E.C.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, I, 14, 15 *Hedar*, 1969 E.C.

¹⁴⁵ Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution ...*, p. 213.

¹⁴⁶ *Säfiw yä ityopia hezeb hoye abeyoteh kā tākälakayenāt wādä ateqināt tāšägagerolehāl*: PMAC, *Addis Zāmān Gazéta*, 33th Year, No. 1268, *Ṭer* 27, 1969 E.C. The victims were General Täfäri Bānti, Captain Alāmayāhu Häylé, Captain Mogās Wäldä-Mika’el, Lt Col. Heruye Haile Selassie, Captain Tafärä Dānāqā, and Corporal Häyelé Bälāye.

¹⁴⁷ *Tāramajna dimocraciawī häyeloče läzihe Fātāna bāheberāt mäsälāfe alābačāw*: the speech of the chairman of the PMAC, *Addis Zāmān*, 33th Year, No. 1264, *Ṭer* 22, 1969 E.C.; The Speech of the Chairman of the PMAC, *Ethiopian Herald*, Vol. 34, No. 329, 1 Tuesday, February 1977.

¹⁴⁸ *Säfiw yä ityopia hezeb hoye abeyoteh kā tākälakayenāt wādä ateqināt tāšägagerolehāl*: PMAC, *Addis Zāmān Gazéta*, 33th year, No. 1268, *Ṭer* 27, 1969 E.C. In addition, as Kiflu argues, “because of his speech pointedly omitted all attacks against ‘anarchist’ were interpreted as a call to the EPRP”. Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, p. 166.

urban parts of the country. At the same time, it marked the emergence of one man, Mängestu, unchallenged leader of the PMAC.¹⁴⁹

On 4 February 1977, he officially declared the ‘Red Terror’ in a response to the ‘White Terror’ proponents.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the full weight of state power was brought to bear against the rivals outside of the *Därg* to be born, especially by the EPRP. Therefore, the violence since then was officially generating its own language and semantic space, called as *qäy šeber* (Red Terror) and *näç šeber* (White Terror). Henceforth, the theoretical basis of the Red-White terror had been engulfed the urban parts of Ethiopia.

The term ‘Red Terror’ is usually associated with Marxist Leninist organizations which conducted extra killings against their enemies, i.e. ‘white’ counter-revolutionaries. It had its origin in Russia. The political competitors during the Ethiopia revolution of 1974 were highly influenced by the Russian Revolution. So, they sought to imitate the political killings that characterized the Bolsheviks terror. And the PMAC elaborated the reasons why they used the Bolsheviks as a model in its newspaper, “*Sädäd*”.¹⁵¹ The paper stated the cases during the Russian revolution and elaborated its relevant in the case of Ethiopia as follows;

Both countries were besieged by enemies at a time when the Revolution of the oppressed masses erupted; Russia’s encirclement was attempted at strengthening internal counter revolutionaries and in doing so to reinstate the exploitative old regime and the same was true in the case of Ethiopia; Russia’s encirclement was supported by internal counter revolutionaries like Kolchak, Denkin, etc. while Ethiopia’s encirclement was supported by the EPRP, EDU, etc.; and neighboring reactionary powers were participated in order to abort Russia’s Revolution at its infancy and similar event was happening in Ethiopia.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ And also Dawit argues, “...from then Mengistu became priest of the terror against the regime’s opponents”. See Dawit Woldegiorgis, “The power of Decision Making in Post-Revolutionary Ethiopia”, in Martina Ottaway, ed, *The Political Economy of Ethiopia*, (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990), p. 55.

¹⁵⁰ *Addis Zämän*, No. 1268, *Ter* 27, 1969 E.C.

¹⁵¹ *Sädäd* was the organ of *Abeyotawi Sädäd* political organization.

¹⁵² *Sädäd*, I, 9, *Hämelé* 13, 1969 E.C.

Accordingly, the military junta rationalized its version of terror by quoting the Russian Revolution where similar measures had been taken.¹⁵³ Thus, *Därg* by labelled its terror ‘Red’ and the opponents, especially EPRP, ‘White’ calling them as Kolchak, Denkin and etc. and resorted to the urban violence.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Dawit Woldegiorgis, *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia*, (Trento: Red Sea Press, 1989), pp. 90-91.

¹⁵⁴ But, as Gebru argues, “the bloody conflicts that transformed into the Red Terror were never between ‘revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries’, as the regime claimed, or between ‘fascist and democrats’, as the rebels maintained”. Rather, it was between two political organizations which shared the same ideology (Marxist-Leninism) and strategic goals, but used different tactics. Therefore, the deadly conflict in Ethiopia was not between conservative and radical forces as Russia; hence, political violence was “avoidable”. Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*, (London: New Heaven: 2009), pp. 1, 7. But, due to lack of the tradition of political tolerance the rival political groups were dragged into bloody conflict. This can be attributed to the absence of a serious democratic tradition in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER THREE

RED TERROR IN DÄBRÄ MARQOS

3.1 Background to the Red Terror

Red Terror was a campaign of intimidation, arrests, violence and executions. It unfolded as the regime struggled to liquidate the so-called enemies of the revolution; mainly its political opponent i.e. EPRP and its sympathizers.¹ This wave of state-sanctioned political violence was overseen by the *Därg* and its civilian allies, and carried out mainly by its agents (the *qäbälè* militia, the police, the *abeyot tebäqa* and the others).

The 'Red Terror' was declared, through the government media, as a necessary tool to counter the “*näç šeber*” ('White Terror') of the 'counter-revolutionary' political opposition (EPRP).² *Därg* ordered state security forces and government trained civilian death squads to eliminate EPRP leaders and members. On the other side, EPRP was also preoccupied with urban assassinations since September 1976.

Even though the ‘Red Terror’ was primarily an institutionalized violence contrived by the *Därg* regime, it was also a complex and intertwined process in which opposition forces had actively engaged in and contributed for.³ Therefore, this urban warfare broke out between the *Därg*, supported by its intellectual allies on one side and its opponent EPRP on the other.

¹ Edmond J. Keller, “State, Party...,” p.23; Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian...*, p.200.

² For instance *Addis Zämän Gazéta* stated about the objective of Red Terror on 20 *Tahas* 1970 E.C as follows: “የቀይ ሽብር ዓላማ ነጭ አሽባሪዎችን በመደምሰስ ለአብዮቱ ዋስትና ለመስጠትና ጭቁኖች የዕለት ተዕለት ተግባራቸውን በሰላም አንዲከናወኑ ለማድረግ ነው፡፡” (Literally meaning: The aim of the Red Terror is to liquidate the white terrorists so as to give guarantee to the revolution and enable the oppressed to practice their daily activities peacefully.)

³ Pietro Toggia, “Revolutionary Endgame...,” p. 256.

The detentions and killings were intensive and well publicized in the center, but the campaign was also conducted throughout the urban parts of the country.⁴ Hence, violence occurred in Däbrä Marqos as part of power consolidation and political repression via the ‘Red Terror’.

Historians have long speculated about the origins and indeed the starting point of the Ethiopian Red Terror. But, the origin as well as the starting point of this episode has remained controversial. There are contradictory arguments about who fired the first shot that precipitated the Red Terror in Ethiopia. In this respect, many MEISON members and *Därg* officials ascertain that, “the urban violence was launched, in September 1976, by the EPRP leadership with their policy of urban terrorism” and they “blame the party [EPRP] for this bloody episode”.⁵

EPRP members on the other hand incriminate *Därg* and its allies for the beginning of the urban terror.⁶ For instance, Kiflu, a leading member of EPRP and the architect of the urban guerrilla struggle, maintains that “EPRP only reacted to the preparations being made by the *Därg* and its POMOA allies in late August 1976 for a war of annihilation against the party”.⁷ Another member of the EPRP, Babile, also concurs that the campaign was officially launched on 11 September 1976, when EPRP was accused in the media of various acts of counter-revolution and economic sabotage.⁸ Therefore, both of them blamed the *Därg* for the beginning of the Red Terror in the country.

In addition to the participants of the ‘Red’ and ‘White’ terror, scholars have also put forward their own arguments as to who started the terror in Ethiopia. For instance, Wiebel ascertain that

⁴ Alex De Wall, *Evil days: Thirty Years of Famine in Ethiopia*, An African Watch Report, (USA: New York, 1991), p. 108.

⁵ Andargačäw Asäged, *Bäačər...*, pp. 421-423.

⁶ Informants: Tämäsegän Alämayähu, Qumlačäw Adamu and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

⁷ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, pp. 137-139.

⁸ Babile Tola, *To Kill ...*, p. 28.

“EPRP’s popularity on the views of the *Därg*” was a pushing factor for the beginning of the urban terror.⁹ Then he concludes that “the decision by the *Därg* to pursue a violent repression of the EPRP was triggered by the party’s growing popularity and intrepidity, not by its assassination campaign”.¹⁰ On the contrary, Gebru and Halliday and Molyneux maintain that “the policy of urban assassination of the EPRP constituted as an initiator for the Ethiopian Red Terror”.¹¹

According to my informants, who were members of EPRP, “MEISON and *Wäzlig*, who had worked in cahoots with the *Därg* in those days as having been instrumental in convincing Mängestu to reject the peace initiative suggested by General Täfäri Bānti which tried to bring all progressive forces around the negotiating table”.¹² Therefore, they argue, “both the ruling *Därg* as well as its civilian allies are to be blamed for the start and atrocities of the episode”.¹³

I argue that, most importantly, the uncompromised political difference between the two leftist political groups (the EPRP and MEISON) as well as *Därg*’s culture of using arms for any opposition paved the way for the bloody episode, which came to be known as ‘Red Terror’. And it was the direct outcome of their uncompromising demand for power. Therefore, even though *Därg* declared the Red Terror in February 1977, it was not the only responsible party. Rather, its civilian allies and EPRP were also responsible to the start of this gloomiest episode.

Apart from its origin, it is still also unclear how to precisely mark the period of the Red Terror in Ethiopia. Different scholars as well as institutions have suggested different periods. For instance,

⁹ Jacob Wiebel, “Revolutionary Terror...,” p. 95.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 46; Halliday and Molyneux argue that, ‘it was the EPRP’s terrorist policies that encouraged the new phase of PMAC repression’ which was declared in September 1976. See, Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian ...*, pp. 120 and 122. This argument is also resounded by Keller another academician. See more, Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia...*, p.199.

¹² Informants: Tāmāsegān Alāmayāhu and Ašāber Wāldāsānbāt.

¹³ Ibid.

Halliday and Molyneux and MEISON members framed the duration for the official Red Terror campaign between November 1977 and May 1978.¹⁴ Halliday and Molyneux argue that, “the earlier repression did not become as a central part of the *Därg* policy”.¹⁵ On his part, Bahru framed it from September 1976, following the beginning of the urban assassination by the EPRP up to May 1978.¹⁶

MEISON members tend to focus on the atrocities committed by the military regime after their defection from the revolutionary bunch. MEISON defected in the summer of 1977 and they gave priority to the atrocities committed after November 1977 or ‘the third phase of the terror’.¹⁷ However, its counterpart (EPRP) argues that, “such time is intended to exonerate the party of the atrocities of the ‘Red Terror’”.¹⁸

The Red Terror Martyrs’ Memorial Monument (RTMMM) in its online information reports “the events of the Red Terror took place between 1977 and 1978”.¹⁹ The successor regime to the *Därg*, the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), instituted a Special Prosecutor’s Office to prosecute human rights abuses during the Red Terror, trace it to the time since *Därg* came to power in 1974 until its downfall in 1991.²⁰

¹⁴ Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian ...*, pp. 122-123; Andargačäw, *Bäačər...*, pp. 424-425.

¹⁵ According to the authors, the ‘repression, that is the use of arrest, torture, and execution of civilian opponents was begun with the clashes of May Day 1975, but it did not become a central part of the PMAC [*Därg*] policy until the end of 1976’. See, Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian ...*, pp.122- 123.

¹⁶ Bahru Zewde, “The History of ...,” p. 25.

¹⁷ Andargačäw Asäged, *Bäačər...*, pp. 424-425.

¹⁸ Kiflu Taddese, *The Generation II*, p. 131.

¹⁹ <http://www.rtmmm.org/redterror.html>, Accessed on 24 May 2018.

²⁰ *Dām Yazälä Dossé: Bägizé’awi Wotadärawi Astädadär Därg Wäyem Yämängest Abalat Bä Neşuhän Zégoče Laye Yätäfäşämä Wänejäl Zägäba*, (Yäleyu Aqabi Heg şefät bét, (Addis Ababa: Far East Publishing, 7er 2002 E.C.), p.123. It argues that “ቀይ ሽብር ያለፍርድ መግደል ገድሎ ለቅሶና እራሳ መከልከል ከሆነ፤ የተጀመረው የአዩ ኃይለስላሴ ሚኒስትሮችና ጄኔራሎች ያለፍርድ ተገድለው አዲስ አበባ ወህኒ ቤት ውስጥ ከተቀበሩበት ጊዜ አንስቶ በመሆኑ...፡፡” (Literally meaning: If Red Terror is dubbed as killing without trial and prohibition of mourning and collection of corpse, then it was kicked off since Haile Selassie Ministers and Generals were executed without trial in Addis Ababa prison ...). However, according to its [document, *Dām Yazälä Dossé*] definition,

To sum up, the origin and starting point of the Ethiopian Red Terror is an ongoing controversy among the participants as well as historians. But obviously, most historians place the start of the violence in September 1976 and the Red/ -White Terror from February 1977. And also the term Red is for the *Därg* and White for the EPRP. The Red Terror *per se* in Ethiopia in general and in Däbrä Marqos in particular began in February 1977.

In fact, there was terror and repression, especially in Addis Ababa since September 1976, but the terror was not dubbed 'Red' and 'White' officially. Following the declaration of the 'Red Terror', the city of Addis Ababa was in a grip of terror and violence. Gradually, terror had been transcending from the capital to the rural towns of Ethiopia. According to the available sources, Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos covers the period from February 1977 to August 1978.²¹

3.2. Phases of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos

For the case of this study and its simplicity, it is important to divide the campaign of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos into two phases. Even though most academic works divided the Red Terror episode into three phases, the event in Däbrä Marqos began and declined later than the period at a national level and the two do not match well. Accordingly, the first phase of terror in the town stretched 3 February 1977 up to October 1977 and the second from November 1977 to August 1978.

It is clear that the period (from February 1977 to August 1978) was marked by the highest scale of political violence in the town. Therefore, the following topics cover this period.

Ethiopian Red Terror was so pervasive as to include any form of state violence carried out by the military government against civilians from 1974 to 1991. For that reason, it failed to distinguish the Red Terror from the other contemporary conflicts which were before and after the episode.

²¹ Informants: Qomçä Ambaw, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

3.2.1. The Mild of the Terror

This is the first phase of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. It covers from February 3 to 3 November, 1977. In the beginning of this phase, the regime began to arm the urban collaborators, conducted search campaigns and denunciation sessions. Those practices became prominent features of the town from February to May 1977.²² Beside those activities from June to 3 November 1977, there were killings on an individual level.

The Red Terror declaration, on 3 February 1977, was a turning point for the beginning of political violence as a form of Red and White Terror in the province of Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos Town in particular. The coup done by Mängestu's collusion was a turning point for the intensification of violence and terror in Ethiopia and it was the starting point in Däbrä Marqos town. From that event on, as elucidated on *Addis Zämän Gazéta*; *Därg* claimed “አብዮትህ ከተከላከይነት ወደ አጥቂነት ተሸጋግሮልሃል” (literally meaning your revolution had transferred from a ‘defensive to an offensive’ stance), Mängestu turned his full attention to ‘the terrorist acts of the EPRP’.²³ Hence, in Däbrä Marqos violence against the EPRP began significantly following Mängestu's rise to the head of the government and his don on February 3, 1977.

The threshold was when Mängestu killed his more moderate competitors within the military regime. Therefore, this time was the period when the Red Terror was begun in the town. On the next day of the execution of his more moderate competitors within the military regime, the supporters of the regime demonstrated in Addis Ababa. In a speech addressed to the crowd Mängestu stated on the stage the following:

²² Çanyaläläw Kasè, *kädämäläše yämäqaber afafe*, (Addis Ababa: Far East Printing Press, 2008), pp. 1-20; Gezaçäw Terunähe, *Näfes Aden...*, pp. 89-120.

²³ *Säfiw yä ityopia hezeb hoye abeyoteh kä täkälakayenät wädä ateqinät täšägagerolehāl*: PMAC, *Addis Zämän Gazéta*, 33th Year, No. 1268, *Ter* 27, 1969 E.C.

“There is one thing about which we would like to remind the Ethiopian people over and over again. Like the broad mass of the people, I and my PMAC colleagues and Ethiopian men in uniform are committed to a clarion call: revolutionary mother land or death! We will fight unto death to safeguard the nation’s wellbeing and the revolution. ...To this end, we will arm the allies and comrades of the broad masses without giving respect to reactionaries and avenge the blood of our comrades double and triple fold. The motto and clarion call of “arms and democracy to the broad masses” will be implemented. If we advance and march forward with such unity which is stronger than steel, we will be able to dismantle from its very roots the conspiracy which we foiled.”²⁴

Right after the declaration of the official Red Terror, there were state sponsored and organized demonstrations in the province of Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular.²⁵ They were meant to support Mängestu’s “revolutionary” action on the “anti-revolutionaries”; the EPRP, EDU and the others.

Fearing the spread of a competing narration that could preempt the consolidation of the revolution, *Därg* moved to neutralize the opposition by arming peasants, workers and students who supported the regime. Based on their “demand to be armed”, from March 1977, the military government began arming its supporters nationwide in *qäbälés*, government institutions and factories. Thus, the then higher officials in the province of Gojjam began recruiting supporters of the *Därg*. Of course, since December 1976, the *qäbälés* of Däbrä Marqos had their own militia and they were now reinforced by this national program.²⁶

The selection and recruitment in the country in general and the province in particular was mainly conducted in each *qäbälé* and factory. There was no factory in Däbrä Marqos, thus, it was

²⁴ *Ethiopian Herald*, Mengistu’s Speech, Vol. 34, No. 333, 5 Saturday 1977.

²⁵ *Yäqälbaše häyeloče deferät ena neqäte yäsäfiwn hezeb te’egest asčärsual*: Däbrä Marqos, *Addis Zämän Gazèta*, 34th year, No.1268, *Ṭer* 27, 1969 E.C; *Seläyätäwäsädäw ermeja yäsäfiw hezbe demše qätelual*: Däbrä Marqos, *Addis Zämän Gazèta*, *yäkatit* 4, 1969 E.C.

²⁶ DMUAC: Folder No. 193, File No. 00/Ḳ-76, Ref. No. 310/140/05, 21 *Tahesas* 1969 E.C; Informant: Qomçä Ambaw.

conducted from each of the *qābälé* and Däbrä Marqos General Secondary School (DMGSS).²⁷ Students were recruited and armed for “propaganda”²⁸ and “information”²⁹ purposes. Therefore, parts of the town were armed so as to combat the EPRP.

In those years peaceful demonstration against the government was banned and such act was considered as anti-revolutionary. Thus, during the May Day rally, which was arranged and led by the the government, on 29 April 1977, EPRP members conducted a demonstration. Consequently, many demonstrators, mainly students, were jailed.³⁰ In fact, it was not bloody like that of the capital, Addis Ababa.³¹ According to my informant, after the strike which was held at *Negus Täklä Häyemanot Square*, about fifty-five students of the DMGSS, those considered as members and sympathizers of the EPRP were jailed in Däbrä Marqos Police Station.³²

Then, a committee to decide on the fate of the detained was formed by the provincial *Därg* administration. The committee included *Šaläqa Mäkuriya Hayelè*; a permanent member of *Därg* in Gojjam, Atenafu Tariku; a provincial administrator, *Šaläqa Mäle’aku Bäqälä*; the head of the POMOA in the town, Adisu Abäbä; from *Malérid*, Habté Ayaléw; from *Wäzlige* and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät; a Secretary of ETA in Gojjam.³³

Accordingly, their list was presented to the committee which was led by, *Šaläqa* Atenafu Tariku, the then leader of Gojjam Province. At this time, the stand of the POMOA officials; specifically,

²⁷ There were eleven *qābälés* with in the town. Peasant Assassinations were also armed at different periods. For instance, on 27 May 1977, Peasant Associations were armed about 260 DM4 weapons with 50 bullets by the provincial police officer, Germa Haile Selassie. DMUAC: Folder No.79, File no. 00/2-76; Ref. No. 548/15/69, Date *Genbot* 19, 1969 E.C. See more Appendix III.

²⁸ Informants: Alämayähu Bälaye and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

²⁹ Genzeb Atalay, “Red Terror...,” p. 67.

³⁰ Informants: Tämäsgän Alämayähu, Alämayähu Bälaye and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

³¹ “On 29 April 1977, mass killings took place in Addis and at least 1,000 were killed”. Bahru Zewde, “The History of...,” p. 27.

³² Informants: Tämäsgän Alämayähu, Alämayähu Bälaye and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

³³ Ibid.

the *Wäzlige* and *Malérid* representatives, were to take a “revolutionary measure” on them. But their interest did not get the support of the then moderate provincial administrator and permanent member of *Därg* in Gojjam, Atenafu Tariku and *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Hayelè respectively.³⁴ Therefore, after four days of imprisonment, the students were released without any harm and trial. However, this action did not stop their antigovernment activities in the town.³⁵

3.2.1.1. Self-denunciation and Mass-exposure

Rasen agalete zämäča (literally meaning Self-denunciation) and *yämagaläṭe zämäča* (Mass-exposure) sessions were another juncture of this phase. Self-denunciation was confessing one’s own anti-revolutionary activities. Mass-exposure was a system of denouncing the other. These sessions were mainly organized and led by the POMOA cadres since 25 February 1977. Among them, Fäkadu Tägäñe (from *Abeyotawi Sädäd*), Adisu Abäbä (from *Malérid*) and Habté Ayaléw (from *Wäzlig*) were the major actors.³⁶

Mandatory gatherings were often conducted in different places mostly in government institutions and public gathers such as market places. There, participants were encouraged to either confess their own counter-revolutionary activities or to denounce others. The first Self-denunciation and Mass-confession in Däbrä Marqos was organized on 25 February 1977.³⁷

Accordingly, the first step was Self-denunciation, which was conducted in *qäbälé* and schools. On 25 and 27 February 1977, denunciations were held on Saturday market and in the DMGSS

³⁴ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Qomeça Ambaw.

³⁵ Informants: Ibid and Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

³⁶ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše ...*, pp. 4-6. According to my informants, during the sessions Habté Ayaléw was participated as a representative of *Därg*, but he was an underground *Wäzlige* member. Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

³⁷ Ibid.

compound, respectively.³⁸ According to my informants, these programs were arranged to give a chance for EPRP members to perform Self-denunciation and the gathering to denounce others.³⁹

Kiflu states the steps of self-denunciation as follows:

In the “self-denunciation” session, POMOA members would demand that “anarchists” voluntarily come to the podium. If not response was forthcoming, names of alleged “anarchists” would be read out and the public was encouraged to provide more names. That process was prepared until the names of all of those that were suspected of “anarchist” connections were provided and POMOA representatives felt that they had the situation under control.⁴⁰

The cadres cautioned the people during such meetings that anyone who did not denounce himself/herself, if he/she was subsequently exposed by others or if his/her name was found in the list, the consequence would be *näša èrmeja*. The cadres pretended as if they had the list of members and sympathizers of the EPRP. They warned that those who had read *Democracia* even once would be subjected to *näša èrmeja* unless they confessed.⁴¹ In fact, no one was subjected to *näša ermeja* during the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. As a result of the caution as well as the support of the EPRP ‘defectors’ to the POMOA, about One Hundred Fifty students and teachers in Däbrä Marqos denounced themselves.⁴²

Active members of the EPRP were mostly “exposed” to the public denunciations when they presented their criticisms during the discussion clubs conducted in the school.⁴³ Accordingly, in the session which was held on 25 February 1977, in DMGSS compound, the Sub-Zonal leader, Èstifanos Gäbrämäsqäl, who was the student of DMGSS and active participant in the discussion clubs, was denounced by others on the podium.⁴⁴ In addition, the Zonal leaders of the party,

³⁸ Informants: Hayelu Mängestè, Ejegu Gäbrè, Gezačäw Ayalèw, Qomečä Ambaw and Qumlačäw Adamu and Čanyaläläw Kasè, *kädämäläše ...*, p. 11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, p. 192.

⁴¹ Genzeb Atalay, “Red Terror...,” p. 68.

⁴² Informant: GA.

⁴³ Gezačäw Terunähe, *Näfes Aden Ruča ...*, pp. 96-97.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.108.

Mulugéta Bezunäh and Abäbä Ayaléw denounced themselves on the same podium.⁴⁵ In such sessions, the role of EPRP members those caught by the *Därg* in the first half of February 1977, was imminent. For instance, Wändménäh Çané, who was the student of DMGSS and the leader of EPRP's Zonal propaganda unit, was the one who denounced his 'comrades' [EPRP members].⁴⁶

There were some EPRP members who defected from EPRP to and join the *Därg* government. These individuals were coined in Amharic as "*melus*" (literally means the returnees). The *melus* individuals facilitated the works of the POMOA by supporting the officers and giving tips what they knew to unravel the structure of the EPRP. For instance, according to my informants, Dämesäw Wälé⁴⁷, Bäyänä Wändafra⁴⁸ and Laqačäw Abatènäh⁴⁹ were among the founding members of the party but they defected and joined the POMOA in the first month of 1977. Since then, they joined the office of POMOA and had been giving information that they knew about the party and its structure. Consequently, EPRP members were denounced and jailed. To avenge the detention of their 'comrades', EPRP's urban squad killed one of the defectors, Dämesäw Wälé in August 1977.⁵⁰

Anti-EPRP demonstration was also parts of denunciations programs of the POMOA in Däbrä Marqos. The demonstration was intended to terrorize its members and sympathizers. It was deliberately held on market day; on Saturday, February 25, 1977, to show for the neighboring people and thereby to expand their propaganda for the rest of the community around Däbrä

⁴⁵ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *kädämäläse...*, pp. 11-13.

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 6-7.

⁴⁷ Informants: Tämäsgän Alämayähu and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

⁴⁸ Informants: Ibid, Qumlačäw Adamu, Lengär Kassa and Fätläworq Çanè.

⁴⁹ Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

⁵⁰ Informant: Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

Marqos.⁵¹ Some of the EPRP member demonstrators say the following slogans while they demonstrate on the road of the town.

እናጋልጣለን እናጋልጣለን፤ ያፈረስነውን እንገነባለን!
ራሳችሁን ያላጋለጣችሁ እንደ እኛ አጋልጡ!
ከህዝብ ድርጅት ጎን እንሰለፋለን!⁵²

Literally meaning:

(We will denounce, we will denounce; we will build what we have damaged it!
Those who haven't denounced yet, you denounce just like us!
We are on the side of people's organization [the POMOA]!)

Here, in the Self-denunciation and Mass-exposure sessions, there was violence, which was more symbolic in its form. Violence of a more symbolic, non-physical nature included acts of humiliation and coercion to induce individuals to make public confessions were applied. In the Mass-exposure, the people of the town used the opportunity to denounce personal enemies. As a result, enmity, mistrust and fear became the rule. In this sense, the regime's terror campaign was successful: it generated widespread fear, mutual suspicion, and the collapse of trust among the people of the town. In doing so, it cut short any challenge to the regime's and deterred people from engaging in actions to support the EPRP's political activities.⁵³

In general, according to my informants, in both the Self-denunciation and Mass-exposure session's "more than three hundreds EPRP members in Däbrä Marqos" were identified and detained.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše* ..., p. 11; Informants: Qomeçä Ambaw and Qumlaçäw Adamu;

⁵² Ibid, pp. 11-12.

⁵³ Informants: Qomeçä Ambaw, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Qumlaçäw Adamu.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

3.2.1.2. Searching Campaigns

Next to the “national program of arming the supporters of *Därg*”, on 23 March 1977, *mānter zāmāča* (literally means the campaign of clearing) or *bét läbét asässa ena teṭeqe masefetat* (literally mean the House to House Search and Disarmament) effort originated and commenced by the POMOA office of Addis Ababa.⁵⁵ The same actions were taking place in Däbrä Marqos town. In May 1977, the then provincial police commander Germa Haile Selassie was arming members of *qäbälé* Associations.⁵⁶ Hence, based on his letter written to the provincial administrator, two hundred sixty *dimotfärs* (DM-4) with fifty fitting bullets were arming.⁵⁷

On 31 May 1977, the first [for the town] *asässa zāmāča* (literally means the searching campaign) was launched in Däbrä Marqos.⁵⁸ The main purpose of this campaign was for hidden opposition activists, weapons and propaganda materials.⁵⁹ In fact, prior to this campaign, in “November 1976”⁶⁰ and “August 1976”⁶¹, *Därg* conducted Searching Campaign to collect arms in and around the town. And this was also similar with the former by its plan to disarming of its opponents, but not a part of it.

The search teams include the *Abeyot Tebäqa* squads and the militia. The campaign had had one team for each of the eleven *qäbälés* of the town. It was strictly implemented by *mānter zāmāča* (literally means the thin out campaign).⁶² Under this implementation the neighboring *qäbälés* of

⁵⁵ *Abeyotwit Ityopia*, VIII, 2, *Mägabit* 14, 1969 E.C.

⁵⁶ DMUAC: Folder No. 36, File No. *መ/ገ*-18, Ref. No 578/18/69, Date 19 *genbot* 1969 E.C.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ DMUAC: Folder No.310, File No. *መ/ገ*-77, Ref. No. 863/174/510, 27 *Genbot* 1969 E.C. a letter from a *qäbälé* leader to Däbrä Marqos Town Police Station.

⁵⁹ Informant: Qomeçä Ambaw

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ NALA: Folder No. 98, File No. *አ.ወ*-4/71/1, Ref. No. *፲መ*10/16/269, 27 *Nähäse* 1968 E.C.

⁶² The committee was uniquely established by the administrators of Gojjam province.

Gozamen *awrajja* were immediate participants of the campaign in their respective areas. But, due attention was given to the seat of the province, Däbrä Marqos.⁶³

The searching campaign was conducted from May 31 to June 3, 1977.⁶⁴ *Därg* and its supporters jailed people whom they suspected to be ‘counter-revolutionaries’ and confiscated arms.⁶⁵ By this campaign, the teams were “able to confiscate illegally held arms”⁶⁶ but failed to demolish EPRP’s organizational structure.

Although policies of "applying revolutionary measures" were directed principally against the EPRP during the Red Terror, political killings as well as ‘confiscating arms’ were not confined to alleged EPRP members. For instance, one informant recalls the experience of an illiterate neighbor, who had found *Democracia* pamphlet on the street and taken them home to be used as toilet paper. During a search a pamphlet was found, and he was arrested on suspicion of illegally duplicating subversive literature. Therefore, many residents of the town were detained and tortured without even having been politically active. In addition, weapons of suspected EDU members were also confiscated and the individuals were imprisoned.⁶⁷

After the completion of the Searching Campaign, *Qäbälé* Association members prepared a show on 6 June 1977, at *Negus Täklä Häyemanot Square*.⁶⁸ On this show, different weapons and EPRP’s political materials i.e. propaganda papers and printing machines, were displayed to the

⁶³ Informants: Qomeçä Ambaw.

⁶⁴ DMUAC: Folder No.310, File No. 80/8-77, Ref. No. 863/174/510, 27 *Genbot* 1969 E.C.

⁶⁵ For instance, *Šaläqa* Wärgenäh Endalä, Ejegu Kassa, Marqos Täfäri, Çané Räta, Käbädä Bogalä and Gäbrä Mäsqał Atešam were imprisoned by the *assaša buden* (literally meaning the searching team). Ibid. Among these, Gäbrä Mäsqał Atešam was a father of Eštifanos, who was a Sub-zonal leader.

⁶⁶ DMUAC, Folder No. 79, File No. 410, Ref. No. 1094/410, 29 *Genbot* 1969 E.C.

⁶⁷ Amhara National Regional State High Court Archive: Folder No. 439, File No. 1554, Reference Number, 2/1222/1399/2, *Miazya* 20, 1969.

⁶⁸ DMUAC: Folder No. 79, File No. 410, Ref. No. 1094/410, 29 *Genbot* 1969 E.C.

public.⁶⁹ The show was intended to discourage and frustrate people of the town from supporting EPRP's political activities.⁷⁰

However, when the Searching Campaign was held, the EPRP members did not allow the actions without any response. They were engaged in different 'defensive activities' which were "developed by the party in August 1976 and spread to the Zonal structure in the first months of 1977".⁷¹ One of its 'defensive activities' was performed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Youth League (EPRYL).⁷² Some members of the League organized groups known as *yä ù ùta komité* (literally meaning the Committee of Yelling).

In fact this was practiced by mostly mothers of the EPRP members within the vicinity. The Committee was organized and became functional during the *bét lä hét asässa* (House to House Searching) to protect members of the party from the *asässa buden* (searching teams). While the *asässa buden* raided homes, mothers yowled and youngsters threw stones on the roof of the houses around the area. This was meant to mobilize/alarm the people against the *asässa* as well as imprisonment and killings of the youth by the *Därg*.⁷³ Accordingly, this committee had played a role to save the EPRP members and youngsters from being caught by the team of the *asässa* in the town, at least for some time.⁷⁴

Even though the government suppresses EPRP's activity in the town, its members in turn had been devised to combat the crisis by arranging urban killings.⁷⁵ Thus, parallel to the killings and *asässa* of the *Därg*, the EPRP members were also preoccupied with their own urban killings. As

⁶⁹ Ibid, Folder No. 89, File No. 210, Ref. No. 10922/24/64, Date, *Genbot* 28, 1969 E.C.

⁷⁰ Informants: Qomçä Ambaw and Alämayähu Bälaye.

⁷¹ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II*, p. 285.

⁷² The Youth League nationally made itself public on March 8, 1977. Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II*, p. 284; Hiwot Tefera, *Tower in the Sky*, (Addis Ababa: AAU Press, 2012), p. 227.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Informant: Yänèäläm Qumlaçäw.

⁷⁵ Informant: Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

a result, some *qäbälé* officials as well as civilians were attacked by EPRP's urban squads.⁷⁶ For instance, on 29 May 1977, the urban squad tried to kill police officers. The bomb attack was in front of Däbrä Marqos Police Station. As a result, *Mäto aläqa* Häyelu Asgädom, *Mäto aläqa* Berhäné Laqäw and Adamu Häyilu were wounded.⁷⁷ According to the available sources, it was arranged and done by the EPRP urban squad member, Adisu Bälaye.⁷⁸ Again, on 12 October 1977, the urban squad also tried to kill Seleši Häyelu, who was a crime investigator in the town's police station.⁷⁹ This attack was led and organized by Yäsegat Hebestè. According to my informant, Yäsegat Hebestè was the urban squad member.⁸⁰

EPRP members in Däbrä Marqos were rife with factional conflicts. EPRP's internal conflict had been transcending even up to prisons. So as to avenge those of the EPRP members considered as a cause for the weakness of the EPRP were denounced by their own members. One of the Zonal leaders, Alämayähu Tämäsgän, prepared his own black list then he exposed their names for government authorities.⁸¹ This is one of the features of the culture of political vengeance as epitomized by EPRP.

In general by the self-denunciations and mass-confession sessions, more than three hundreds EPRP members and sympathizers were identified. Even though, the then *Därg* officials had promised to release all EPRP members, if they denounce themselves, they took all into a detention camp, Asramestäña Šäläqa Military Camp. Here, anyone who dares to spread the slightest rumor against the regime was arrested immediately and brought to this camp.⁸²

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ DMUAC: Folder No. 79, File No. 410, Ref. No. 1080/Δ/410, 25 *Genbot* 1969 E.C.

⁷⁸ Ibid; Informant: Tämäsegän Alämayähu.

⁷⁹ NALA: Folder No. 98, File No. *h.θ*-4/71/1. Ref. No. 228/Δ/410, 3 *Teqemt* 1970 E.C. See Appendix IV.

⁸⁰ Informant: Tämäsgän Alämayähu

⁸¹ Çanyaläläw, *kädämäläše* ..., p. 41.

⁸² Genzeb, "Red Terror...", P. 67.

According to the detainee's information, in this camp the prisoners had a relative freedom of movement. Most prisoners were allowed to take daily walks within the camp.⁸³

Even in this concentration camp, the POMOA arranged a denunciation process. The session was led and attended by "EPRP members and sympathizers" who were detained in the camp. Even though, these sessions were led by the EPRP members, it was infiltrated by the POMOA cadres. It was chaired by one of the EPRP's Zonal Committee members, Çanyalāw Kasé. The main purpose was to disclose EPRP's weapons, printing machines and printed propaganda materials.⁸⁴

Even outside of the prison, the condition was difficult. In a public speech on 13 April 1977, Mängistu called upon the people to fight against the "enemies of the revolution".⁸⁵ He smashed bottles filled with something resembling blood in a mass political rally at Revolution Square to signify the blood he vowed to spill of his "enemies" and impending destruction of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism.⁸⁶ Following this, on 13 April 1977, the provincial administrator and police commander, Šalāqa Aṭenafu Tariku and Šalāqa Engeda Telahun sent a message to the president of Ethiopia through telegram.⁸⁷

The strategies of *Därg* following the coup in February 1977, i.e. arming of the urban population, searching campaign as well as denunciation put considerable social and psychological pressure on the EPRP in Däbrä Marqos.⁸⁸ But even after a series of denunciations from March to May

⁸³ Informants: Qumlačāw Adamu and GA.

⁸⁴ Informants: Ibid.

⁸⁵ *Säfiw Hezb Abyotawit Ityiopian Lämätäbāq Tāzāgajetual: Adhariwoče Yäçeḡun Hezbočen Tegel yämigätubät menem hayel yälaČäwum*; Mängestu's speech as stated by *Addis Zämān*, 34th Year, No. 1296, *Miyazia* 6, 1969 E.C.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Däbrä Marqos, *Addis Zämān*, 34th Year, No. 1296, *Miyazia* 6, 1969 E.C.

⁸⁸ Informants:

1977, EPRP members were occupied with distributing party's leaflets and painting the walls of the town with different "revolutionary" messages.⁸⁹

According to the archival sources, the *Därg* Investigation Office formed a steering committee which was chaired by Colonel Täka Tulu. This committee had a mandate to inspect the movements of the "anti-revolutionaries" in the province of Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular. The committee started its official investigation on 3 August 1977. The committee identified individuals who said to have been an "anti-revolutionary". Accordingly, students accused of distributing the EPRP's leaflets, the EPRP members and workers from the POMOA office in Däbrä Marqos were jailed.⁹⁰

Even though, the command was given by Colonel Täka Tulu, Colonel Mākuriya Hayelè did not take into practice. Then, members of the EPRP, who participated incidentally and read party's papers or who were disliked by the cadres of POMOA were detained.

3.2.1.3. Police Camp

However, as many members were arrested, the *Därg* learned how EPRP secret roots function. That made it easier to kill and arrest its members one by one.

Like other parts of the country, political prisoners in Däbrä Marqos were also held in police station. Therefore, after the denunciation those who were suspected of underground activities were detained in *Asramestāña Šalāqa* (the 15th Battalion) Military Camp. Then, those who were identified as 'anti-revolutionary' were moved to Police Camp.

⁸⁹ For instance in the night of April 27, 1977 EPRP leaflets were distributed on the main roads of the town. DMUAC: Folder No. 27, File No, መ.አ-59, Ref. No. 9491/11/68, 20 *Miyaziya* 1969 E.C; Folder No. 618, File No. መ/ደ-19, Ref. No. 11348/100/50, Date 22 *Miyaziya* 1969 E.C. See more Appendix V.

⁹⁰ *Dām Yazälä Dosè*, p. 339.

In the Police Camp they were interrogated thoroughly. During the interrogation process, torture was the main instrument to force the suspected prisoners to give information about the EPRP and their role in it. Thus, they used different types of torturing so that detainees reveal names of their comrades whom they were working with. According to the victims, here, confession did not necessarily stop the tortures.⁹¹ To force them to give as much information as possible, brutal beatings, immersing in water, *wăfê lala*, removing nails and other forms of torture were applied on to them.

Wăfê lala is an Amharic word created by student militants who underwent such torture during the Imperial regime of Emperor Haile Selassie.⁹² It is the most painful form of torture involving the caning of the soles of the feet by a baseball bat-type of hard wood or coiled wire. This was the most common form of torture during the Red Terror in Dăbră Marqos. According to my informants, the beating could continue for an extended period. Thus, sometimes the torturers took a rest and continued it for a long period of time.⁹³

The victims sang the following poem about this form of torture.

ወፌ ኢላላ ወፌ ኢላላ፣
ደሜ ፈሰሰ ስጋዬ ተላ፣
በቀዩ እሳት በቀዩ ዱላ፣
ወፌ ኢላላ ወፌ ኢላላ፡፡⁹⁴

Literally meaning:

wăfê ilala, wăfê ilala
My blood is shed, my body is rotting
By the red fire and the red stick
wăfê ilala, wăfê ilala

⁹¹ Informants: Ašäber Wăldäsănbăt, Qumlačăw Adamu and GA.

⁹² Melakou Tegegn, “Mengistu’s ‘Red Terror’,” *African Identities*, 10:3, (2012), p. 254.

⁹³ Informants: Ašäber Wăldăsănbăt, Qumlačăw Adamu and GA.

⁹⁴ Informant: Ašäber Wăldăsănbăt.

The torturers here were mainly members of the security police, *qäbälé* officials, the POMOA cadres and officers of the Central Intelligence Unit. From those the well-known interrogators were Fäkadu Tägägn, Bayè Bäläṭä and Andargačäwu K.⁹⁵ According to my informant, a POMOA cadre and member of *Sädäd*, “Fäkadu Tägägn gained a fearsome reputation among detainees with his cruelty”.⁹⁶ As a result of his crudeness prisoners as well as people of the town called him in Amharic, *Negus* (literally meaning king).

In fact, the prison authorities and the POMOA cadres were not the only actors in the torturing of prisoners in a Police Camp. Some members of the EPRP also actively participated. Such scenario followed the factions which were formed within EPRP since September 1976 as Clique and *Anjja* (literally meaning splinter).⁹⁷

Many *anjja* members, chased by party squads, were forced to surrender to the authorities, hoping for mercy. However, unlike Kiflu’s argument, the *anjja* members were not the only collaborators but also the Clique.⁹⁸ From November 1977, some Clique members in Däbrä Marqos, so as to save their lives, also started collaborating with the *Därg* cadres. Then after collaborators gave information about their party they were also imprisoned by the government.⁹⁹ In prison, they met with their comrades. Hence, political prisoners who were imprisoned by the POMOA established a strong relation with the prison authorities. So as to avenge their suffering, prisoners were

⁹⁵ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *kädämäläše ...*, p. 54.

⁹⁶ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Alämayèähu Tämäsgän.

⁹⁷ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II*, p. 180.

⁹⁸ Kiflu argues that “Derg cadres, with the support of the *anjja* in some cases would sit down with the prisoners, one at a time, with a drawing of the EPRP structure to which the member belonged in their hands, and demand that they fill in the missing information and links.” Ibid, pp.283-284] But he neglects the role and position of some Clique members those collaborated with the regime.

⁹⁹ Informants: Qumlačäw Adamu, and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

involved in torture.¹⁰⁰ Beside factional cases, individual issues were also reflected on this act of vengeance.

For instance, Alämayähu Tämäsgän, formerly EPRP's Zonal Defense Representative who was caught and imprisoned by the *Därg* at an early stage, was the one who engaged in such act. He was 'vindictive' with no ability to forgive and forget the deeds of the EPRP members, who refused to accept his commands earlier.¹⁰¹ Gëtačäw Zäru was a teacher and member of the EPRP. He was arrested during the mass denunciation and self-denunciation frenzy, which took place in a DMGSS earlier. Before his imprisonment, he did not volunteer to steal and hand over his father's colt to the then Zonal Defense Representative. Therefore, the imprisonment Gëtačäw became an opportune moment for Alämayähu to avenge what was done on him when they were out of the prison. He watched while Gëtačäw was tortured by the cadres. He even he tortured his former comrade brutally until he couldn't walk.¹⁰² Therefore, the act of vengeance between the factions of the EPRP in the prison was also part of the political violence of the period.

The agony of the prisoners was not stopped in the Police Camp. The tortures as well as killings continued ruthlessly in the next prison. Besides, their factional conflict had been surpassing into Dämäläše Prison, where many suspected EPRP members and sympathizers were jailed.

The introduction arming the supporters of the regime, the searching campaign and the Self-denunciation and Mass-exposure sessions, by the *Därg* and its civilian allies marginalized the courts and redefined notions of citizenship.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

¹⁰³ Paul H. Brietzke, *Law, Development, and the Ethiopian Revolution*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1982), pp. 186-99.

3.2.2. The Pinnacle of the Terror

This phase covers the period from 12 November 1977 to 14 August 1978. In this phase, the act of disarming, denunciation, imprisonment and torturing shifted into complexity of gruesome atrocities. Killings under this period were applied in mass. The anguish of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos was recorded under this phase.

There are a number of factors appear to have contributed to the acceleration of ‘Red Terror’ in Ethiopia in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular. The factor for the intensification of Red Terror in the town was the amalgam of national and local factors. From these, the national factor was more pertinent. As Bahru states that,

The war with Somalia gave the *Därg* and its agents what they interpreted as a mandate to liquidate all internal opposition mercilessly. The execution of the *Därg*’s vice chairman, Lt. Col Atenafu Abate, in November 1977 removed the last restraining influence against the vicious spiral of murder. Moreover the splits within both the EPRP and Maison gave the terror campaign elements with a particular zeal born of the instinct of self-preservation.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, on 12 November 1977, the *Därg* chairman and head of state, Lt. Col. Mängestu, publicly urged *qäbälê* leaders to “spread revolutionary terror” against government opponents, particularly the EPRP. So as to spread revolutionary terror against opponents, particularly the EPRP, the government nationally announced “*qäye šeber yefafam*” (literally means let the Red Terror be accelerated).¹⁰⁵

The second was a local one, but was tied-up with the national factors. Following the execution of the *Därg*’s vice chairman in November 1977, Mängestu reshuffled the high level provincial officers. Consequently, the ‘moderate’ permanent member of the *Därg* in the province of

¹⁰⁴ Bahru Zewde, “The History of...”, p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ *Qäy Šeber yefafam*, *Addis Zämän*, 34th Year, No. 1467, *Hedar* 6, 1970 E.C.

Gojjam, *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè was replaced by *Mäto aläqa* Ešäto Alämu.¹⁰⁶ Hence, “the acts of terror in Ethiopia were organized and led by officers assigned directly by Mängestu,” Ešäto worked hard to implement in practice the letter which was sent from the center.¹⁰⁷

Earlier, he “took part in the November’s Massacre of 1974”¹⁰⁸ which was mainly “carried out by Colonel Daniel Asfaw”.¹⁰⁹ He was also a member of *yäläwut häwareyat* (the Apostles of Change).¹¹⁰ He went for socialist education to Moscow and Havana, and returned in early 1977. Then he became an important propagandist of the struggle against domestic opponents in Gondar.¹¹¹ There, he was an assistant to *Šaläqa* Mälaku Täfära, a ruthless administrator infamously known as ‘the butcher’ in Gondar.¹¹²

In connection to his stay in Gondar some informants argued that, “Ešäto acquired the experience of killing as well as torturing of the ‘anti-Därg’ elements from *Šaläqa* Mälaku”.¹¹³ But, this seems to be a sweeping generalization. No doubt, many youngsters were tortured and killed there, but we could not blame the atrocities committed by Ešäto to his former relation with Mälaku. Rather, it was due to his personal cruelty as well as the political nature of the regime.

¹⁰⁶ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Qomčä Ambaw.

¹⁰⁷ Dawit Woldegiorgis, *Red Tears*..., p. 92.

¹⁰⁸ *Leyu aqabi heg bänä colonel Mängestu Haylä Maryam laye yaqäräbäw kes ena yäfädäral kefetäña ferd bêt yäsätaw wusanè*, Addis Ababa, *mäskäräm* 2000 E.C., pp. 7-9. Recently, this information supported from his personal cellphone by the investigation office of the court in Dutch. “I have done things in the past that I cannot justify at this moment,” he was recorded saying in a wire-tapped phone conversation. SBS Radio, interview with victim of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR08EHss2VU>. Accessed on 20 July 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Dawit Woldegiorgis, “The Power of ...,” p. 57.

¹¹⁰ SBS Internet Radio, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR08EHss2VU>, Accessed on 20 July, 2018.

¹¹¹ Informant: Qomčä Ambaw.

¹¹² Mälaku Täfära was a Permanent Member of *Därg* and the administrator of Gondar Province. Red Terror under his rule was very cruel and gruesome atrocities were registered in Gondar. As a result of his cruelty the people of Gondar expressed their agony and fear in the following Amharic poem:

እባክህ መላኩ የእግዚር ታናሽ ወንድም፤

የዛሬን ማርልኝ ከእንግዲህ አልወልድም፡፡

Literally meaning that,

(Please Mälaku, the younger brother of God

Spare my son for today I will never birth from now.)

¹¹³ Informants: Qomčä Ambaw and Alämayähu Bälaye.

Therefore, Mälaku's experience and Ešätu's relation with him could not be the rationale behind for the cruel actions of the latter people of Däbrä Marqos.

At the height of Red Terror, he was assigned as permanent member of *Därg* in Gojjam Province. From November 1977, he became 'Chairman of the Coordinating Council of the Revolutionary Campaign' in Gojam. According to the available archival sources, *Mäto aläqa* Ešätu was one of the main organizers of the Red Terror in Gojjam Province in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular. In addition to the *Mänter* campaigns, he also organized *Dämses* (Liquidate) Committee with its own respective committee, which worked in Gojjam Province, especially in Däbrä Marqos Town.¹¹⁴ The *Dämses* Committee was led by Lieutenant Abäbä Dästa.¹¹⁵

Since Ešätu was *Därg*'s highest representative in Gojjam, he used to summon the chief of the special commanders of the *awerajjas* within the province to order them on 'revolutionary killings'.¹¹⁶

3.2.2.1. The Agony in Dämäläše Prison

The Central Prison was located at the foot of the hill where Ešätu's office (formerly the palace of *Negus* Täklä Hayemanot) was. After the revolutionary struggle was suppressed by the Red Terror, many peoples were arrested from Däbrä Marqos town and its surroundings to be gathered

¹¹⁴ *Yäleyu Aqabi Heg şifät bét, Däm Yazälä Dossé: Bägizé'awi Wotadärawi Astädadär Därg Wäyem Yämängest Abalat Bä Neşuhän Zégoče Laye Yätäfäşämä Wänejäl Zägäba*, (A.A: Far East Publishing, Ter 2002 E.C.), p.340.

¹¹⁵ DMUAC: Folder No. 79, Ref. No. *ጸ/ከ*/120/2/70, *Mägabit* 11, 1970 E.C.

¹¹⁶ *Däm Yazälä Dossé*, pp. 338-339.

in the Police Camp. Then, after the interrogation, more than five hundreds of them were taken to Central Prison, also known as Dāmālaś Prison.¹¹⁷

According to the available sources, the transfer of political prisoners from Police Camp to the Central Prison began from December 1977.¹¹⁸ There were more than One Thousand Four Hundred prisoners at the time. There were two types of prisoners known in Amharic as *däräq esreña* (literally meaning dry prisoners) and *értib ésereña* (literally meaning wet prisoners). *Däräq esreñas* were nonpolitical whereas *értib ésereñas* were political prisoners. From the total prisoners more than Nine Hundred prisoners were *értib ésereñas*. These type of prisoners were treated differently.¹¹⁹ This topic focuses on the so called *értib ésereñas*.

In fact, during the period of Ethiopian Red Terror (1976-1978) conditions in all prisons of Ethiopia were harsh. However, according to the victims, the authorities of the Central Prison of Däbrä Marqos seemed to be very innovative indeed, to make the lives of the prisoners miserable until they face their ultimate death.¹²⁰ These made it very harsh and gruesome. Şähäye Jämbäru in her book has clearly elaborated the conditions of prisoners in this prison as follows,

የማርቆስ ቀይ ሽብር እንደ ሌሎች አካባቢዎች ቀይ ሽብሮች ጅል አይደለም። ከየቤቱ ጎትቶ ግንባራቸውን በጥይት ፈልጦ፣ 'ቀይ ሽብር ይፋፋምብኝ!' የሚል። ይህማ ዳቦን ትንሽ ገምጦ ንደመወርወር ነው። ባለፈ ነው ምግብን የሚያበላሽ! ጨዋ ቤት ምግብ ክቡር ነው። በጥንቃቄ አስቀምጦ፣ ሲርብ ቀስ እያሉ አላምጦ ምንም ሳያስተርፉ መዋጥ። ቤት አይበላሽም፣ አካባቢ አይቆሽሽም።¹²¹

Literally meaning,

¹¹⁷ This prison also known as the Higher Prison and it got its name during Emperor Haile Selassie's regime. The equivalent word of Dāmālaše in English is 'the Avenger'. It deserves the nomenclature Dāmālaše (literally meaning avenger).

¹¹⁸ Informants: Qomčä Ambaw and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät. For instance, see Appendix VI.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Şähäye Jämbäru, *Dämelaše*, (Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing Enterprise, 1993 E.C), p.2.

(The Red Terror of Marqos [Däbrä Marqos] is not silly like that of the other areas [of Ethiopia]. It does not merely drag people out of their home, riddle their head with bullets and say ‘Let Red Terror carried out on me’. This is simply taking a small bite and throws bread. It is a rascal that wastes food. In the house righteous food is respected. It is preserved carefully and when served it is chewed gently and swallowed entirely without leftovers. The house is not dirtied, the area is not soiled.)

Central Prison (Dāmālaṣ) was the most brutal spot. In this prison the interrogation was mainly done by those who came from the Central Investigation Unit (in Amharic, *yāma’ekālawi mermāra kefel*).¹²² This group was led by *Māto alāqa* Eṣātu Andargé, and included Tāfārawārq Ayaléw, Bayé Bālātā and Gétačāw Mamo as members.¹²³

Torture was the rule rather than the exception in Dāmālaṣe. Conditions were calamitously inhuman. In room number five, six, seven and eight were labeled as dark rooms. In those rooms, political prisoners were locked up in close confinement and underwent constant torture.¹²⁴

Prisoners faced different forms of ‘revolutionary measures.’ Awugečāw Awāqā affirms that, he was harmed by guards and special interrogators, who reported directly to *Māto alāqa* Eṣātu. He also describe that there was kicking and whipping with a wire, electric shock and spoon.¹²⁵

Prisoners were hit on their faces, private parts and walk bare foot. The frequent torture has left Aṣāber’s left ear to ringing constantly and lose his sight partially.¹²⁶ Another individual named GA for anonymity was also one of the victims. GA was suspended in the air, with his hands and

¹²² *Dām Yazälä Dosè*, pp. 340, 345 and interview with the victims on the Voice of America (VoA) radio Amharic program; <https://amharic.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-red-terror-eshetu-alemu-the-hague-court-and-the-3-witnesses-with-alula-kebede-11-03-17/4101041.html>, November 5, 2017.

¹²³ Informant: Aṣāber Wäldäsānbät.

¹²⁴ Informants: Ibid, Awugečāw Awāqā and G.A.

¹²⁵ Informant: Awugečāw Awāqā.

¹²⁶ Informant: Aṣāber Wäldäsānbät.

feet tied together and bottles filled with water hung from his genitalia. As a result, one of his testicles percolated.¹²⁷

The other heartbreaking case is the story of someone who had been tortured severely but he refused to confess. His younger brother who had no notion of or involvement in politics was summoned and was tortured in front of him. Still, the elder brother remained adamant. The younger brother, knowing nothing about politics could not provide any information. The torturers then brought the mothers of the two brothers. After the mother has seen what the torturers had done to her sons, she had suffered insanity ever since.¹²⁸

Due to the agony of the tortures, most victims wished death. To show that mutilation is worse than death the victims sang the following poem in the prison.

መጥት ምን አለበት ማንም ይጥተዋል፤
በእሳት መጠበሉን ግን፤ ማን ይቋቋመዋል፡፡¹²⁹

Literally meaning,

(Nothing is new with death it is everybody's fate
Who can stand, however, being roasted with fire.)

They also had the following poem to show the pain of whipping by the interrogators,

ሞጣ ቀራጊያ እንግዲህ ተወክህ፤
ብሳል አልሰማኸኝ ብጮህ ከጉያህ፤
የቀይ ሽብር ጅራፍ ሲልጠኝ አይተህ፡፡¹³⁰

Literally meaning,

(I abandoned you, Mota Qäraniyo
Since you ignored my Offerings and the loud cry in your armpit
As the whips of the Red Terror peeled my skin.)

¹²⁷ Informant: G.A.

¹²⁸ Informant: Tämäsgän Alämayähu.

¹²⁹ Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

In this prison the excess of the prison authorities infringes the norms and accepted principles. Since July 1, 1978, after and in between the interrogation and tortures, prisoners' free movement was restricted in this prison.¹³¹ Because, on this date prisoners from room number eight was break the prison. For this reason, from date on prisoners were ordered to be fettered in a special prepared shackle. According to the eyewitnesses account, prisoners were line in two rows and two inmates were selected to be fettered in a specially prepared shackle.¹³² Thus, one of the prisoners leg was fettered with a leg of another inmate; for instance, the left with the right one and vice versa. The fettered prisoner called his inmate in Amharic, *Quraña* (literal meaning the paired).¹³³

According to my informants, prisoners who were fettered were walking together, sleeping together and when they go to the toilets they had to do it together.¹³⁴ As a matter of fact, it was only in the morning and the evening they were allowed to a bathroom visit.¹³⁵ If they needed a toilet before the scheduled time, they were urinating and defecating within a cell. Materials in which they used for urinating and defecating were called *qel* (literally meaning calabash) and *zufano* (a material which has round shape and hole at the center, made from mud), respectively.¹³⁶

The agony of the prisoners had not stopped with a torture in the dark rooms; rather it continued until the final decisions. The victims were consequently dehumanized and this was a necessary precondition in order for mass execution to occur. At the height of the Red Terror in Däbrä

¹³¹ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše* ..., pp.112-113.

¹³² Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät, and G.A. The metal had a 'U' shape. It had two holes at the top. After the two metals were put round the two legs, the cleats to connect the round metal would be inserted in the two holes. The cleats had a head like a bolt. When the cleats were inserted, the metal would have a shape of a shackle. Ibid. pp. 112-113. Şähäye Jämbäru, *Dämelaše*, p. 2.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

Marqos, mass execution was reported in and out of Dāmālaše Prison. Wherever, the execution took place the final action to bury the victims were held in the prison.¹³⁷

According to my informants, mostly political prisoners saved their lives if and only if they got one of the following chances. First, if the prisoner had relatives who worked with the ruling government. Second, those who had a rich family who were able to pay money to the POMOA officials as bribe. For instance, a prisoner like Ašäber Wäldäsänbät, who had strong family with money survived but he arrested, imprisoned and tortured in the prison.¹³⁸ The third was if he/she got a chance to be punished by serving a prison term only. The last, which was rare case, was if he/she succeeded to escape from the prison. For example, on July 1, 1978 Alameräw Gädäfaw and Mamuyäät Kābādä¹³⁹ were succeeded to escape from the prison.¹⁴⁰ The rest either died during the torture or were executed later on.¹⁴¹ For instance, Mälaku Wäldätänsaye died while he was tortured by the interrogators.¹⁴²

The agony of the prisoners did not stop here. They proceeded to the final actions, which were mass executions within and out of the prison.

3.2.2.2. Mass Executions

In this phase of the terror, besides the tortures, secret and announced executions were registered in the town. Thus, in the months of February, June and August 1978, executions were registered in different parts of the town. The targets of mass execution were perpetually groups of people

¹³⁷ Informants: Tāmāsgān Alāmayāhu, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät, and G.A.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Šefāraw Kābādä, “Yāmamuyä Tezetawoče,” in *Tāraročen Yanqātaqāṭā Tewuled*, Vol.5, (Mega Printing Press, 1993), p. 220.

¹⁴⁰ Čanyalāw Kasè, *Kādāmālaše yāmākaber...*, p. 113.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät; VoA Radio Amharic program, interview with the victims of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos; <https://amharic.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-red-terror-eshetu-alemu-the-hague-court-and-the-3-witnesses-with-alula-kebede-11-03-17/4101041.html>, November 5, 2017. Mälaku was a teacher at DMGSS. He was a founding member of EPRP in Däbrä Marqos. In addition, he was a member of the Zonal Committee.

who were defined as ‘enemies of the revolution’, mostly EPRP members but also EDU members. The rhetoric of annihilation regarding their political affiliations was often, therefore, a prerequisite for the mass execution to be carried out. However, civilians were also victimized.¹⁴³

Therefore, the first mass execution of this phase took place on 5 February 1978. After he took a “revolutionary action”, *Mäto aläqa* Ešātu Alämu reported to *Šambäl* Feqrä Selassie Wägdäräs, through telegram. His letter reads as follows:

ፀረ-ሕዝቦችን ለመመንጠር በኦፕሬሽን ላይ ነኝ። ... በዛሬው ዕለት በሰዓት ሰዓት ሁለት የፖሊስ አባሎች አንድ ሻምበል ሌላው የአስር አለቃ ላይ እርምጃ ተወስዷል። ሁለቱም ተገድለዋል። ሴሚናሩና ምንጠራው አሁንም እንደቀጠለ ነው።¹⁴⁴

Literally meaning,

(I am in an operation. ... Today at seven o’clock we have taken an action on two police members, *Šambäl* and *Aser aläqa*. Both were killed. The seminar and operation are still going on.)

As he clearly indicated on his letter, *Mäto aläqa* Ešātu had been continued his operation throughout the province. Hence, in June 1978, some youngsters were taken from the prison and executed in the outskirt of the town, particularly at a place known as Gotära. Finally, they buried in the prison compound. According to my informants all of the victims were members of the EPRP.¹⁴⁵

Again, on 5 August 1978, sixteenth EPRP members, most of them were on leadership position, were executed in the prison compound.¹⁴⁶ They included Alämayähu Tämäsgän, Wändménäh Çané, Estifanos Gäbrämäseqäl, Däsalän Asnaqä, Alämayähu Meteku, Särgu Muhè, Täfära

¹⁴³ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Alämayähu Bälaye and *Däm Yazälä Dosè*, p. 340.

¹⁴⁴ በፌ.ዲ.ሪ.ው ወንጀል መዝገብ ቁጥር 1/87 (401/85) ውስጥ የል.ዐ. ሕግ ማስረጃ 147.4.5: *Däm yazälä Dosè*, p.340.

¹⁴⁵ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

¹⁴⁶ *Däm yazälä Dosè*, p.344.

Mängestè, Tämäsgän Täfära, Täfära Sisay, Mähamäd Husèn, Mulugèta Asfaw, Gètnät Däsyebäläw, A’emero Bälay, Ewunätu Abäbä, Samuel Säbsebè and Tadäsä Ayalèw.¹⁴⁷

3.2.2.3. A Satanic Act in a Holy place

Lastly, on 20 August 1978, the last and the most horrific mass execution registered in Däbrä Marqos town. This massacre is special from the other registered mass killing in the town. What makes this special is that, the mass killing and buried were held in the church compound.

It was on 14 August 1978 the mass killing commanded by *Mäto aläqa* Ešätu. The letter read as follows:

ስማቸው ከዚህ ጋር ተያይዞ በተላከልዎት ዝርዝር የተገለፀው ሰማንያ ፀረ-አብዮተኞች ፀረ-አብዮት ድርጊታቸው በጣም ከፍተኛ በመሆኑ አብዮታዊ እርምጃ እንዲወሰድባቸው ሆኖ አፈፃፀሙ እንዲገለፅ ያደርጉ ዘንድ አስታውቃለሁ።¹⁴⁸

Literally meaning,

(This is to inform you that, the anti-revolution activities of eighty anti-revolutionaries whose list is attached with this letter are so serious that you should take revolutionary measure and make a report.)

Therefore, based on *Mäto aläqa* Ešätu’s order, on 20 August 1978, seventy five prisoners were taken out of their cells at night.¹⁴⁹ They took them by tying their hands at the back and putting a rope round their necks. When they reached “in front of St. Mikael Church”, they forced them to kneel down.¹⁵⁰ Then, Special Force troops knocked down the prisoners and killed them by strangulation. Finally, the so-called *däräq ésrāñas* (nonpolitical prisoners), those came from the nearby prison compound; Dämäläše, had to carry the dead bodies into a specially prepared mass

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. pp. 344-345.

¹⁴⁸ *Däm yazälä Dosè*, p.341.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.346 and Informant: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät.

¹⁵⁰ The place found on the foot hill of the palace, office of Lieutenant Ešätu Alämu. It between the prison and the office of him

grave, in a place between the church and the prison.¹⁵¹ According to the eyewitness to the killing, “Siyamrāñ Dārāsä, who was a teacher and EPRP member, was buried alive”.¹⁵²

After this horrific act, based on his letter sent to the prison authorities, a report was sent back to *Mäto aläqa* Ešäto. The implementation was uncovered by the archival materials in which the administrator of the prisons in Gojjam Province, *Šäläqa* Wändemeyä Häyelè ascertained the mass killing by his letter. The letter reads as follows:

በ8/12/70 በቁጥር 448/4/11 በተባራልን ትዕዛዝ መሰረት 71 ፀረ-አብዮተኞች እርምጃ ሲወሰድባቸው፤ ሶስቱ ቀደም ሲል ከወህኒ ቤት ሲያመልጡ የተገደሉ፤ አንድ በዚህ ቀን የጠፋ፤ አምስቱ ግን በመተከል አወራጃ ወህኒ ቤት የሚገኙ መሆኑን እየገለፅን ዝርዝሩን በዚህ ደብዳቤ አማካኝነት መላካችንን እናሳስባለን።¹⁵³

Literally meaning,

(Based on the order that was written on the date 8/12/1978, number 448/4/11, seventy one anti-revolutionaries were killed. In addition, three were killed before this command came while they were trying to escape from the prison, one prisoner disappeared on the same day, but the remaining five are found in Mätäkäl prison. Therefore, inform you that we have sent the details of the lists attached to this letter.)

But it seems to not to inform the action done on to the prisoners, rather to mislead the people. Because, the eyewitness maintains that, “even though he wrote a letter to the prison authority to take a ‘revolutionary action and to report it, Ešäto Alämu overseeing a person was being buried alive and kicked to death”.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, Lieutenant Ešäto gave the order for 'revolutionary measures' to be taken against victims.

This event is remembered as a horrific event ever since in the town. No parent could take the corp of an offspring; no one was allowed to shed tears. Rather they commanded their parents to

¹⁵¹ Informant: M.G.

¹⁵² Ibid. He was also the chairman of the Ethiopian Teachers’ Association (ETA) office of Gojjam.

¹⁵³ Federal High Court Archive: Folder No. 1/87, File No. ደ.147.5, Ref. No. አስ/4/10472/70. See also Appendix VII.

¹⁵⁴ Informant: M.G.

prepare food for the soldiers. According to my informants, this was deliberately made with an objective of terrorizing the people.¹⁵⁵ This mass execution in a church compound was the most destructive, both in human and cultural aspects. After this terrifying action, mass killings in the province in general and the town in particular had become almost to an end.

¹⁵⁵ Informant: Alämayähu Bälaye.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE RED TERROR IN DÄBRÄ MARQOS TOWN

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Red Terror was a campaign of tortures and killings that was unleashed mainly in the urban parts of the country in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular. It was carried out by “the *Därg* and targeted members of EPRP and its sympathizers”. To combat its opponents *Därg* did not resort to legal organs but used extra-judicial organs which it set up with the sole purpose of punishing and squashing the ‘anti-revolutionaries’. *Därg* employed instruments of terror to liquidate the EPRP in the urban parts of the country in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular.

The organization was hierarchically structured from the top to the bottom. While the main structure and its target were minted at the political center, it was implemented by both local and central actors. According to Abbink, “the local and central actors converged in shaping these organizational structures and in generating the resultant violence”.¹ Therefore, violence during the Ethiopian Red Terror was the amalgam of the local administrations and the central state.

The infamous mass killers, as well as torturers, came from a wide range of institutions ranging from the *Därg* itself to the *qäbälès* (Urban Dwellers Associations) of Däbrä Marqos town. The tortures and killings in Däbrä Marqos from 1977 to 1978 were organized and executed by those institutions. Institutions central to this were the *abeyot tebäqa*, the *Qäbälè* Associations, the police force, the Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee, and the *Därg* Interrogation

¹ John Abbink, “The Impact of Violence: the Ethiopian “Red Terror” as a Social Phenomenon,” In Peter J. Bräunlein and Andrea Lauser (eds.), *Krieg und Frieden: Ethnologische Perspektiven*, (Kea Edition: Bremen, 1995), p.138.

Division. Thus, this chapter focuses on the role of those institutions during the Red Terror (1977-1978) in Däbrä Marqos Town.

4.1 The Role of the *Qäbälè*

Qäbälès were formed following the proclamation of urban housing in July 1975.² According to the proclamation, these institutions were formed “to hear and decide disputes between urban dwellers over lands and houses, to protect public property as well as the rules and welfare of the urban population.”³ Like the other urban parts of the country, eleven *Qäbälè* Associations (QA) or Urban Dweller’s Associations were formed in Däbrä Marqos Town.

However, it was not long before these associations turned into “the site of urban terror”.⁴ Thus, since the first months of 1976 control of the *qäbälè* became “the vital battleground in the struggle for power in the cities” of the country.⁵ It was alternatively operated by the EPRP against supporters of the government and by ruling state officials against their opponents. Each side sought to mobilize the mass against the other.⁶

In October 1976, the regime came up with a new proclamation which focused on the roles of QA.⁷ They were reformed to stem the demand for local self-administration, a popular slogan of the radical opposition. Therefore, it greatly increased the power of the *qäbälè*, giving them direct control over the administration of their neighborhoods.⁸ Since then, these institutions were the base units of the structural organizations of the regime. Then, according to Proclamation No.

² *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No.47, 1975, 34th year, No. 41, July 26, 1975, p. 209.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 209-210.

⁴ Babile, *To Kill...*, P.77; Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian ...*, p. 112.

⁵ Christopher Clapham, *Transformation...*, p. 51.

⁶ Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian...*, p. 112.

⁷ *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No.104, 1976, 36th Year, No.5, October 6, 1976, p.75.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.76.

104/1976, “*qäbälès* were grouped into *käfetäña* (Higher Association)”.⁹ Thus, the power of *käfetäñas* was to supervise activities of the *qäbälès* grouped/assigned under their administration.

Since December 1976, the regime took the upper hand in controlling the *qäbälès* of Däbrä Marqos Town with the appointment of one of the *Därg*’s leading figures, Täse’eya Mogäs as Chief of Urban Housing and Development office of the town. Candidates for the *qäbälès* were nominated by him and Mäle’aku Bäqälä, a chairman of the POMOA branch of the town. Accordingly, these two officials arranged a seminar to the candidates and representatives of each *qäbälè*, which was held on 8 and 10 February 1977.¹⁰ Then, on 10 February 1977, the seminar was concluded by electing the *qäbälè* leaders and by forming a committee to facilitate activities of the QAs. Gètahun Şägayè, who was a member of *Abeyotawi Säädä*d, was elected as leader of the Committee of QAs in the town.¹¹ In the same scenario, the QAs were organized into two *käfetäñas*. The *käfetäñas* were organized in *käfetäña* 1 and *käfetäña* 2 and they became responsible to oversee the activities of five and six *qäbälès*, respectively. Finally, on 13 February 1977, the committee prepared a seminar to the whole *qäbälès* of the town.¹²

⁹ Ibid, pp.76-77.

¹⁰ *Lä Däbrä Marqos qäbälèwoče yäneqat temehert täsäjä*, Addis Zämän, 33th year, No. 1235, *Yäkatit* 5, 1969 E.C.

¹¹ Informants: Qomeçä Amebaw and Aşäber Wäldäsänbät.

¹² *Lä Däbrä Marqos ...*, Addis Zämän, *yäkatit* 5, 1969 E.C.

Table.1 *Names of the qäbälè leaders in Däbrä Marqos (From March 1977 to August 1978)*

<i>Qäbälè</i>	Name of Qäbälè Leaders	<i>Käfetäña</i>	Name of Käfetäña Leaders
01	<i>Šambäl</i> Lemäneh	<i>Käfetäña 1</i>	Fäkadu Tägañ
02	Gètnät Yäšanäwu		
03	Damtäwu Wubešät		
04	Ṭènawu Häyelè		
06	Täkästä Mogäs		
07	Tayä Alamnäh		
05	Negatu Tameru	<i>Käfetäña 2</i>	Germačaw Säbsebè
08	Abäbä Käbädä		
09	Asmarä Alamnäh		
10	Marqos Därebè		
11	Walä Bäyänä		

Source: Informants: Qomečä Amebaw, Yänèaläm Qumlačaw, Ašäber Wäldäsänbät, Hayelu Mängestè, Gezačaw Ayalèw and Tämäsgän Alämayähu; DMUAC: Folder No. 320, File No. *መ/ደ*-11, Ref. No. 7667/16/03/05, 2 *Miyazia* 1970 E.C.

Since March 1977, regular purges were undertaken to cleanse the *qäbälès* of EPRP elements in Däbrä Marqos town. By the time the anti-EPRP war got declared, the eleven *qäbälès* in the town were under the control of the POMOA. Unlike the other parts of the country, MEISON did not acquire a monopoly in the appointment of the cadre as well as in the formation of the QAs rather, *Abeyotawi Säädä*, *Wäzlige* and *Malèrèd*.¹³

According to Fesäha, each *qäbälè* and *käfetäña* of urban centers in the country was equipped with detention centers run by the *qäbälè* association and *käfetäña* officials.¹⁴ However, this was

¹³ Informants: Ibid.

¹⁴ Fesäha Dästa, *Abeyotu ena Tezetayé*, (Los Angeles, CA: TSEHAI Publishers, 2006 E.C), pp. 241-243.

not the case in Däbrä Marqos Town.¹⁵ Thus, local violence was not high like that of the capital city of the country, Addis Ababa.

According to my informants, the *qäbälè* cadres such as, Marqos Därebè, Abäbä Käbädä, Tayä Alamnäḥ, Šambäl Lemäneh, Asmarä and Täkästä Mogäs in the town created much fear by their all-embracing surveillance of the population. Because they had the authority to denounce and imprison individuals they were considered as ‘anti-revolutionaries’.¹⁶

Qäbälès benefited from the state authority but were not closely controlled.¹⁷ As a result, involvements of the *qäbälè* cadres affected both how the victims were selected and also who was selected. This could be expressed in two ways; on the one hand, “the cadres sought to eliminate influential people who could turn a village against the regime”.¹⁸ On the other hand, “many cadres used their power to settle personal feuds”.¹⁹ For example, according to my informant, a man, from *qäbälè* 08, was captured and imprisoned in the way described above.²⁰ He was suspected of harboring anti-revolutionary outlooks and happened to be involved in a bitter personal dispute with a committee member for having reneged his promise to marry the former’s sister.²¹

In addition, the *qäbälè* cadres were keen on arresting women and young girls who resisted their demand for sexual relations. The following story elucidates this point. “Asmarä Alamnäḥ, who was the leader of *qäbälè* 09, asked someone for sexual relation, but she ignored his request”.²²

¹⁵ Informants: Qomeçä, Yänèälām, Ašäber and Tämäsgän.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jacob Wiebel, “‘Let the Red Terror intensify’: Political violence, governance and society in urban Ethiopia, 1976-78,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 48:1 (2015), pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ Informants: Ašäber, Tämäsgän and Gezačäw Ayalèw.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Informant: Ašäber.

²¹ Ibid, Hayelu Mängestè and Gezačäw Ayalèw.

²² Ibid.

For this reason, he accused her as an ‘anti-revolutionary’ and imprisoned her. Furthermore, the occurrence of sexual assault in the *qäbälè* detentions was one form of violence during the Ethiopian Red Terror.²³ However, this form of violence had occurred in the Police Camp and Dämäläše Prison. For instance, Šambäl Lemāneh was a *qäbälè* cadre; he raped a woman in the Police Camp. This information reached *Mäto aläqa* Ešātu Alämu and he sent Šambäl Lemāneh to Dämäläš Prison.²⁴

To sum up, victims of the terror were not only regime opponents, but also personal foes. Therefore, these acts of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos were characterized by “privatization of the instruments of coercion”.²⁵

4.2 Activities of the *Abeyot Tebäqa*

Within weeks of Māngestu’s ascendancy to the position of Chairman, a range of new structures and practices of revolutionary violence were introduced or developed. From those, in Amharic *yä abeyot tebäqa komitè* (Revolutionary Defense Committee), an institution probably copied from the “French”²⁶ and/or “Cuban”²⁷ revolutionary experiences, was the one. Even though, the preparation for the formation of *yä abeyot tebäqa* began “in October 1976”²⁸, the first call for its establishment was sounded in December 1976 and “finally became practical in January 1977”.²⁹

²³ Jacob Wiebel, “Let the Red Terror...,” p. 15.

²⁴ Čanyalāw Kasè, *Kädämäläš yāmāqaber...*, p. 45.

²⁵ Jacob Wiebel, “Let the Red Terror...,” p. 12.

²⁶ Fesäha Dästa, *Abeyotu ena...*, p. 232. Namely, Comité De Salut Public (the Committee of Public Safety) was the agency for the execution terror during the French Revolution.

²⁷ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation: Part II.*, p. 111.

²⁸ *Nägarit Gazèṭa*, Proclamation No. 104/76, p.76.

²⁹ Bahru Zewde, “The History of Red Terror...,” p. 27; Christopher Clapham, *Transformation...*, p. 55.

Therefore, the POMOA arranged a seminar for the *qäbälès* and the seminar decided that the *abeyot tebäqa* group had to be armed and the anti-EPRP struggles had to be intensified.³⁰ Accordingly, the regime began to arm urban supporters through the *qäbälè*, commanding them “to demolish forces opposed to the revolution” and to “meet with Red Terror, the White Terror anarchists.”³¹

The regime organized it at a national, regional and local level. Its members were recruited from the *qäbälès* and factory workers. In Däbrä Marqos, on 8 and 10 February 1977, a seminar for the QAs was arranged by offices of the POMOA and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing.³² By this seminar, on 8 February 1977 the *abeyot tebäqa* was officially formed in the town.³³ Then, on 10 February 1977, the seminar was concluded by forming a committee to facilitate activities of the *qäbälè* associations. On this meeting even the whole members of the QAs demanded weapons to be armed by the regime.³⁴

Based on their “question of arming”, on 27 May 1977, two hundred sixty members of QAs were armed.³⁵ Thus, each *qäbälè* came to possess militias of about 23 armed men. These squads were armed with *Dimotfär* or DM-4 and came to be called *abyot tebäqa*. They were instructed to search and jail or, for that matter, kill anyone whom they suspected of anti-revolutionary tendencies. Hence, they were placed under the direct control of POMOA branch, its chairperson was nominated by the officials of the POMOA.

³⁰ Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation II...*, p.167.

³¹ *Yäfelemyaw qän dāräsä: Çequn yäkätäma näwariwoÇe ena woz adäroÇe mätaṬäqe jämäru*, Addis Zämän, 33th year, No. 1253, Date Yäkatit 27, 1969 E.C.

³² *lä Däbrä Marqos qäbälèwoÇe yäneqat temehert täsäṭä*, Addis Zämän, 33th year, No. 1235, Yäkatit 5, 1969 E.C.

³³ *Bä Däbrä Marqos yäabeyot tebäqa komitè tequaquamä*, Addis Zämän, 33th year, No.1237, Yäkatit, 8, 1969 E.C.

³⁴ Ibid. 33th year, No. 1235, Yäkatit 5, 1969 E.C.

³⁵ DMUAC: Folder No. 193, File No. ፬፱፻-76, Ref. No. 310/140/05, Tahesas 21, 1969 E.C.

Structurally, the *qäbälè* and the *abeyot tebäqa* committees of the town were supposed to be different institutions. However, in due course time and in practice, the *abeyot tebäqa* chairpersons became the commanding figures of both.³⁶

According to the proclamation, their organizational mandate was “to stifle the urban opposition at the local level, using revolutionary methods of instant justice in contrast to the supposedly inefficient workings of police and courts”.³⁷ Thus, as Andargachew maintains, “the revolutionary guards were established ostensibly to discharge duties of ordinary police forces at the local level”.³⁸ Therefore, the *abeyot tebäqa* squads were effectively used by the *Därg* to eliminate its political opponents through the Red Terror operation. Thus, throughout 1977, public displays of violence on an unprecedented scale occurred at the *qäbälè* level in towns and cities, often carried out by the *abeyot tebäqa*.

Accordingly, following the arming program, in late May 1977, the *asäsa* mainly implemented by the *abeyot tebäqa* was then rolled out across Däbrä Marqos town. During this period the government had given the *abeyot tebäqa* a license to carry out ‘revolutionary measures’.³⁹ However, in Däbrä Marqos the *abeyot tebäqa* did not involve in indiscriminate violence such as killings on the street and public display of dead bodies. In fact, they were involved in the *asäsa* campaign which marked by mass detentions and violence other than killings.

³⁶ Informant: Qomçä Ambaw.

³⁷ *Nägarit Gazèta*,, Proclamation No. 104/76, p.81.

³⁸ Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution...*, p. 208. The politics under the *Därg* regime strategically substituted the police members by local militia known as *abeyot tebäqa*. Therefore, it is argued that under this regime politics played a great role to weaken the role of the police force.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Again on 14 January 1978, one hundred five members of the *abeyot tebäqa* were armed by *Mäto aläqa* Ešäto Alämu and *Šaläqa* Mäle’aku Bäqälä.⁴⁰ Following this arming program, in the last week of January 1978, the third *asäsa* campaign was conducted in Däbrä Marqos. Like that of the formers, here also the *abeyot tebäqa* has participated.

Though the *abeyot tebäqa* is considered the deadliest institution against the opposition, this was not the case to the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. Of course, on a pretext of “safeguarding the revolution”, members of the committee were involved in violent acts such as arresting and torturing suspected individuals, but not killings. They were also some corrupt officials who embezzled by selling arms and ammunitions in the black market.⁴¹ But, the *qäbälè* squad did not involve in killings, so the deadliest institutional discourse did not appear in Däbrä Marqos Town. By saying this, I am not undermining the role they played in supporting the other institutions that were engaged in killings. Therefore, the *abeyot tebäqa* had its own role in the Red Terror campaign in Däbrä Marqos but it was not on the scale of the deadliest institution that terrorized the other urban areas of Ethiopia.

4.3. The Role of the POMOA

Starting from the denunciation up to torturing of the suspects, the POMOA cadres played a dominant role. Compared to QAs and the *abeyot tebäqa*, the role of POMOA for the Red Terror violence in Däbrä Marqos (1977-1978) was immense. This institution at the provincial level was chaired by *Šaläqa* Mäle’aku Bäqälä.⁴² As the town was the seat of the Provincial Administration; he also acted as a leader of the POMOA of Däbrä Marqos too.

⁴⁰ NALA: Folder No. 98, File No. **hoo**23/71, Ref. No.5573/17/51, *Ter* 4, 1970 E.C.

⁴¹ Informants: Ašäber, Qomčä, Qumlačäw and Tämäsgän.

⁴² Ibid.

The POMOA cadres were the real torture instrument during the Red Terror in the town. In the history of Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos, the figure of Fäkadu Tägäñ had become the embodiment of the brutal local despot. He was the main actor in the tortures and killings within the *qäbälès* of the town. His barbaric act did not stop in the *qäbälès* but it also continued up to Police Camp, which was the site of the most barbaric tortures. Fäkadu has worked in this compound.⁴³ This violence made him the prime example of the armed and centrally empowered POMOA cadres in the town. In fact, his violence needs to be understood from the structural organization that he was operating within the POMA; as a “representative of the *Abeyotawi Säädä*” party of the town.⁴⁴

Although Fäkadu’s acts of violence in town were immense; he was not the only actor. The other POMOA cadres, for instance, Adisu Abäbä, Habté Ayaléw, and *Aser aläqa* Tämäsgän and Adamu, who were members of *Maléred*, *Wäzlig*, and *Abeyotawi Säädä* respectively, were also involved in these furious acts.⁴⁵

Furthermore, together with the POMOA cadres, those individuals who defected from the EPRP in the first month of 1977 were also involved in the violent activities of the period. Among these, Dämesäw Wälé, Bäyänä Wändafraß, and Laqačäw Abatnäñ took the leading position.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the regime finally turned its face against such collaborators by accusing as ‘anti-revolutionaries’. Thus, in December 1977, like his comrades, Laqačäw Abatnäñ was imprisoned and finally killed on 14 August 1978.⁴⁷

⁴³ Informants: Tämäsgän, Ašäber and Qumlačäw.

⁴⁴ Ibid; Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše* ..., p. 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp.4-6.

⁴⁶ Informants: Tämäsgän, Ašäber and Qumlačäw.

⁴⁷ Çanyaläläw Kasè, *Kädämäläše*..., p. 25.

4.4. The Involvement of the Police Force

Although its function was actually “taken by the new repressive organizations that were formed by the *Därg* i.e. *Abeyot Tebäqa*” and *Dämses Komitè*, the police force was also involved in the Red Terror indirectly.⁴⁸

Surprisingly the initial drive to arm urban militias of Däbrä Marqos came from the regular police force. The following story elucidates this point. A letter written by the chief of Gojjam Province Police Lt. Gen. Germa Haile Selassie, on 20 May 1977, insisted “the *Qäbälè* Associations to be armed and to stand with the police force so as to protect the security of the town”.⁴⁹ Hence, based on his recommendation QAs were armed on May 27, 1977.⁵⁰ However, since, “the police were considered unreliable and tainted by the EPRP” their functions were actually taken by the new repressive organizations, the *abeyot tebäqa*⁵¹, and *dämses komitè*. In the urban parts of Ethiopia in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular, “the *abeyot tebäqa* squads had taken the place of the police as the most immediate level of contact between the state and its citizens.”⁵²

In addition, the duty of the office was also under the control of the POMOA. Therefore, this institution had been commanding the police forces so as to participate in the “revolutionary campaign”. During the first Search Campaign (from May 31 to June 3, 1977) the office sent a letter to the Province’s Police Office, so as “to participate in the revolutionary campaign [the searching campaign] and to implement each work [assigned by the POMOA] properly”.⁵³ It was

⁴⁸ Babile Tola, *To Kill ...*, p.76.

⁴⁹ DMUAC: Folder No.36, File No. *መ/ገ*-18; Ref. No. 1221/64/4, *Genbot* 12 1969 E.C.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Ref. No. 548/15/69, *Genbot* 19, 1969 E.C.

⁵¹ Dereje Workayehu, “A History of Police and Policing in Addis Ababa under the Derg Regime, 1974-1991,” MA Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University, 2009, p. 62.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ DMUAC: Folder No. 310, File No. *መ/ጸ*-77, Ref. No. 162/69, 17 *Mägabrit* 1969 E.C. A letter from the POMOA office of Däbrä Marqos to the provincial police office.

also strongly ordered, “to take a revolutionary measure on the ‘anti-revolutionaries’”.⁵⁴ Accordingly, the police force was gradually involved in the fierce acts of the Red Terror.

Although, they had no direct role on the Red Terror, police members, therefore, served as an instrument for the violence during the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. There were policemen who played a role and participated in guarding and even torturing suspects in the Police Camp. For instance, the Gojjam Province police investigators; *Hamsaaläqa* (Sergeant) Mäkonän Zäläqä and *Hamesa aläqa* Mängestu Yeteyäw, were involved in the torturing of prisoners in the Police Camp.⁵⁵

Besides, the prison polices also served as an instrument for the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. They played a role in guarding the prisoners, giving command to dig a mass grave and taking out the prisoners from the prison rooms and giving them to the “murderers”. In addition, they were also participating in the torturing and killings in the police camp. For instance, they participated in “the killings of those prisoners who attempted to escape from the prison on 1 July 1978”.⁵⁶ On this incidence, eight prisoners participated out of which six of them; Anemaw Basazenäw, Solomon Kābādä, Solomon Pawulos, Dämè Şähaye, Däsalāñe Gudisa, and Tadäsä Gäbäyähü, were killed whereas Mamuyä Kābādä and Alameräw escaped.⁵⁷ Again the killing of August 5, 1978, at a place called Gotära was arranged by the then Gojjam Provincial Prisons administrator, *Şaläqa Wändeyä Häyelè*.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *Däm Yazälä Dossé...*, p. 446.

⁵⁶ Şefäraw Kābādä, “Yāmamuyä Tezetawoče,”..., p. 202. The writer of this chapter in a book entitled *Tāraročen Yanqäjaqäjä Tewuled*, Şefäraw Kābādä is the then Mamuyä Kābādä, one of the participants who succeeded to escape from the prison on July 1, 1978; Çanyaläläw Kasè, *kädämäläşe...*, P. 113.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 202-203.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.199; Informants: Tämäsgän, Aşäber and Qumlačäw Adamu.

In general, though the police had a responsibility of protecting the security of the town, their role had been manipulated by the government for its political goals. Therefore, the police force had an indirect role during the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos (1977-1978).

4.5. The Central Investigation Unit

I shall try to give a clue of what I mean by the Central Investigation Unit (CIU) by briefly describing the *Därg* Investigation Office (DIO). Before its entire control of the state power, on 15 June 1974, *Därg* formed an Investigation Commission to examine high officials of the detained imperial cabinet.⁵⁹ However, from the beginning members of the *Därg* complained about its decision-making process. Therefore, “so as to make its revolutionary measure sharp and fast,” the DIO established on 12 November 1974.⁶⁰ It’s headquarter was in *Arat Kilo* Palace.⁶¹ Until the second half of 1977, its service had been restricted in the palace compound.⁶²

Since July 1977, based on the support from the East German intelligence officers, in particular, the regime’s intelligence services [*Därg* Investigation Office] expanded its work to the provinces.⁶³ Therefore, the CIU means a group of investigators that were recruited from the DIO and sent to Däbrä Marqos at different times. The *Därg* authorities gave preference to this department that was in favor of the regime. For example, since the opposition to the regime in Däbrä Marqos were identified and apprehended by *abeyot tebäqa* and handed over to the Central Investigation Unit, the *Därg* had given relatively better attention to this department. This is

⁵⁹ *Nägarit Gazèṭa*, Proclamation No. 326, 1974, June 15, 1974, p.10.

⁶⁰ *Dām Yazälä Dossé*, pp. 25-26.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.29.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁶³ Gebru Tareke, “The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 33: 3 (2000), p. 666; Jacob, “Let the Red Terror...,” p. 19.

because of the fact that this department investigated the cases thoroughly in order to present the findings to the cadres so that they will decide on the case.⁶⁴

The first group of investigators was sent to the town on 3 August 1977.⁶⁵ According to the archival sources, the *Därg* Investigation Office formed a steering committee which was chaired by Colonel Täka Tulu.⁶⁶ The committee was led by Petty Officer Elias Bäqälä and it had a mandate to inspect the movements of the “anti-revolutionaries” in the province of Gojjam in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular.⁶⁷ The committee started its official investigation on 3 August 1977. This unit conducted its “investigation/torture” in the Police Camp.⁶⁸

The next day, the committee identified individuals who were said to have been “anti-revolutionary”.⁶⁹ Accordingly, Mäkuriya Märša and Mäkuriya Yänənäh, accused of distributing the EPRP’s leaflets, were jailed on 4 August 1977 and examined by this group.⁷⁰ In addition, Negatu Gäbrè, a worker from the POMOA branch of Däbrä Marqos was also jailed.⁷¹ The report of this committee was presented for *Šaläqa* (Major) Berhanu Käbädä, the head of DIO. Then, on 10 September 1977, he presented it for the chairman of the Revolutionary Standing Committee—Public Security (*abeyotawit quami komitè-yähezb dähenenät gudaye häläfiwoče*), *Šaläqa* Täka Tulu. Based on a report he had passed the following decision:

...በጎጃም ክፍለ ሀገር የተያዙት የኢህአፓ ቅጥር ነብስ ገዳዮች፣ እጅ ከፍንጅ የተመሰከረባቸዉ ላይ በሞት በመቅጣት ሪፖርት አንዲቀርብ በክፍለ ሀገሩ ላሉት የደርግ አባሎች ይፃፍ። ...በክፍለ

⁶⁴ Informant: QomČä Ambaw.

⁶⁵ *Däm Yazälä Dosè*, p. 339.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Informant: Qomčä, Tämäsgän, Ašäber and Qumlačäw

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ The start of Ogaden War in July 1977 had been boosting the *Därg*’s new international relations to socialist bloc countries; mainly the USSR, Cuba and East Germany. Thus, in the second half of 1977, Ethiopia’s security services developed close collaborations with their socialist bloc counterparts, particularly those from the German Democratic Republic. Gebru, “The Ethiopia-Somalia War,” p. 666; Jacob, “Let the Red Terror...,” p.19.

⁷⁰ Informants: Ašäber.

⁷¹ Ibid.

ሀገሩ ውስጥ ተደብቀው ፀረ-አብዮት ስራ የሚሰሩ የኢህአፓ አባሎች አንዲታደኑ ጉዳዩ ለሚመለከታቸው ለክፍለ ሀገሩ ባለስልጣኖች ትዕዛዝ ይሰጥ።⁷²

Literally meaning,

(...write a letter to members of the Derg in Gojjam Province to administer death penalty on those EPRP members who were apprehended red-handed and report the execution...Give the order to concerned authorities in the Province to hunt EPRP members who are engaged in anti-revolutionary activities hiding in the Province.)

As I described before, violence in Däbrä Marqos from March 1977 to September 1977 was mainly under the control of the *qäbälè*, POMOA cadres, and *abeyot tebäqa*. I also said violence was not severe. However, a report of the DIO to the *Därg*'s "Public Security Committee" on 10 September 1977, illustrates the perceptible transition to greater government control over local violence.⁷³

Therefore, even after the return of the CIU to Addis Ababa, the provincial administrators had sent the EPRP suspects to the *Därg* Investigation Office for further investigation. According to my informants, "members of the EPRP, who participated incidentally and read party's papers or who were disliked by the cadres of POMOA were detained and transferred to this organization for further investigation".⁷⁴ For instance, "on 4 November 1977 ten EPRP suspects were sent to Addis Ababa".⁷⁵ These were Bärhun Dañäwe, Alänähe Wubätu, Bayuhe Yaläw, Kasa Şegè, Kasahun Mängäşa, Täsfahun Zägäyā, Andargè Ejegu, Tadälä Ṭerunähe, Ayalèw Kābādā, and Färädä Gäbäyāhu.⁷⁶ But still, there is no evidence on where they were killed and buried. The victims' families ascertain that, they were killed by the cadres but still they could not know when

⁷² በፌ.ክ.ፍ.ቤት ወንጀል መዝገብ ቁጥር 1/87 (401/85) ውስጥ የል.ዐ. ሕግ ማስረጃ ድ147.3, *Dām Yazälä Dosè*, p. 339.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Qomčä, Tämäsgän, Ašäber and Qumlačäw.

⁷⁵ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät, E. Ş and M.Y.; Personal diary of Ašäber. See Appendix VIII.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

and where they were executed and buried.⁷⁷ In such a case, the whereabouts of many Ethiopians still remain unknown.⁷⁸

So as to broaden tasks of this organization nationwide, on 16 February 1978 *Šaläqa* Berhanu Käbädä, the head of DIO, wrote a letter to the office of Military Political Affairs. The letter read as follows,

በአሁኑ ጊዜ በአገራችን በመካሄድ ላይ ባለው አብዮት በየክፍለ ሀገሩ የሚከናወነው ምርመራ ሁሉ በአብዮት አንፃር መታየትና በጥንቃቄ መጣራት ሲገባው ይህ ባለመደረጉ በአንዳንድ መርማሪዎች በኩል ጉልህ ስህተት መፈፀሙን መረዳት ችለናል።⁷⁹

Literally meaning,

(In the revolution that our country is currently undergoing the ongoing investigation in the various provinces should have been conducted relative to the revolution and cautiously filtered. This was not, however, applied and we have realized that visible mistakes are committed by some investigators.)

In the same letter the head of DIO highlighted that “the government arranged a seminar for members and established a group of investigators”.⁸⁰ He also ascertained that “an important seminar was set up and qualified investigators were assigned to examine”.⁸¹

For this reason, the Revolutionary Standing Committee Public Security organized seven interrogation groups.⁸² In each of them, there were two or three interrogators which were

⁷⁷ Informants: E.S and M.Y.

⁷⁸ This case might happen either by secret massacre or in some case left for the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Army (EPRA) or to neighbouring countries. Because, when the youngsters disappeared or in some cases left for the EPRA, or to some neighbouring countries, they could not and did not inform their families. But, the case of those ten EPRP suspects might be secret massacre.

⁷⁹ በፌ.ክ.ፍ.ቤት ወንጀል መዝገብ ቁጥር 1/87 (401/85) ውስጥ የል.ዐ.አ.ግ ማስረጃ መክ.ግ 6.2 ቁጥር ፪/ም/ክ/1/647/69 ቀን 17/10/69, *Dām yazälä Dosè*, p.32.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Each group had its own leader and also interrogators. It comprises the following group leaders, Group one was led by *Šambäl* Badma Negatu, two by *Šambäl* Abäjä Gezehañ, three by *Šambäl* Afewärq Kendè and *Šambäl* Abäbä Bäqälä, four by *Šambäl* Täkelè Tadäsä and *Mäto Aläqa* Feshaşeyon Equbägäber, five *Mäto Aläqa* Ešäto Andargè, six by *Mäto Aläqa* Berhanu Täsäma and *Šambäl* Zäläqä Wubè, and seven by *Šambäl* Kasa Wäldè. *Dām Yazälä Dosè*..., p. 36.

dispatched to different parts of the country.⁸³ Henceforth, in the pretext of ‘attacking the anti-revolutionaries’ the DIO had assigned a group of investigators to the provincial administrations of the country.

Thus, the second round official investigation in Däbrä Marqos was begun in March 1978.⁸⁴ According to my informants, this round was led by “*Mäto aläqa* Ešätu Andargè”.⁸⁵ According to the available source, he was one of the leaders of the seven CIU.⁸⁶ In his group, “*Mäto aläqa* Täfarawärq Ayalèw, Gètačäw Mamo”⁸⁷ and “Bayä Bälätä”⁸⁸ were the ‘infamous’ investigators/torturers.⁸⁹

Universally, the central investigators of the regime had “the right to ask and moved prisoners from the detention centers”.⁹⁰ To legalize this, on 20 March 1977, the chief of *Dämses* Committee sent a letter to the Chief of the Prisons. The letter read as follows, “...የአስረኞችን ጉዳይ የሚያጣራ ቡድን የተቋቋመ ስለሆነ መርማሪው ቡድን ከወህኒ አውጥቶ ለመመርመር የሚፈልጋቸውን ሰዎች እንዳይከለክል ...” (Literally meaning ...since a group of investigators has been established to examine cases of the prisoners, they should not be deterred from taking

⁸³ Ibid, p. 27.

⁸⁴ Informants: Tämäsgän, Ašäber and Qumlačäw.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ According to the report of the Special Prosecutor’s Office, “he was also an interrogator in one of the torture and detention sites of the government, known as Bermuda Triangle or Safe House”. *Däm Yazälä Dosè*, p. 36, 71.

⁸⁷ *Mäto aläqa* Täfarawärq Ayalèw and Gètačäw Mamo were members of the CIU group under the leadership of *Mäto aläqa* Ešätu Andargè. Ibid, p. 71.

⁸⁸ In addition to them, according to my informants, Bayä Bälätä was also a member of the CIU. Informants: Qumlačäw, Ašäber and Tämäsgän.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid; *Däm Yazälä Dosè*, p. 75.

out prisoners from the prison for interrogation...).⁹¹ Henceforth, the interrogators had been asking what they wanted to investigate.

The centers of the investigation were in the Police Camp and Dāmālaše Prison. Those places were highly protected by three rounds of armed forces. The first line was the Special Security Forces consisting of those who came with the investigators from the center. The second was organized by the returnee militias from Ogaden War (July 1977 to February 1978). Finally, the third round was controlled by the *qābālè* militias.⁹²

The agony of the police camp and Dāmālaše Prison, as I discussed in the previous chapter, were mainly implemented by this institution. In general, this institution had played its own role on the political violence of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos.

4.6. The Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee

At this point, it would be better to look how the Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee (RCCC) was formed. On 27 August 1977, the National Revolutionary Operations Command (NROC) was formed by the Military Government's proclamation.⁹³ The proclamation formed RCCC as part of the NROC.⁹⁴ Therefore, the formation of the NROC supplanted the activities which were formerly implemented by "the Revolution and Development Committee.

⁹¹ DMUAC: Folder No. 310, File No. ፬፬/፩-77, Ref. No. ፩/ከ/120/2/70, *Mägabit* 11, 1970 E.C. See more Appendix IX.

⁹² Çanyaläw Kasè, *Kädämlaše...*, pp. 47-49.

⁹³ *Nägarit Gazèta*, Proclamation No. 129, 1977, 36th Year, No. 30, August 27, 1977, p.287; *Dem Yazele Dosie*, p. 81.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, Chapter I, Article 5, p. 289.

The latter was established on 30 May 1977”.⁹⁵ This organization, in the Province of Gojjam, was led by *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè, who was also a member of the *Därg* Standing Committee.⁹⁶

Therefore, since August 27, 1977, the structure of the RCCC was set up throughout the country. Its aim was to root out ‘anti-revolutionary’ forces throughout the country. It was staffed by members of the *Därg*.⁹⁷ They were sent to the provinces as ‘representatives on a mission’ to enforce the orders and confirm the “revolutionary measures” on the “counter-revolutionaries”. Accordingly, it was set up in Gojjam Province by making Däbrä Marqos its epicenter.

In this committee, a senior commander of *Asera amestäña šaläqa kefel* (the 15th Battalion Unit), Ministry of Transport and Communication, Commission of Police, head of the POMOA branch and a representative of the AETU were represented. It was headed by *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè, a representative of the PMAC of the province and the vice chairman was Aṭenafu Tariku, chief-administrator of the province.

⁹⁵ Ibid, Proclamation No. 115, 1977, 36th Year, No. 18, May 30, 1977, p.176.

⁹⁶ DMUAC: Folder No. 176, File No *፬/፲*-1, Ref. No. 13893/100/1, Date 18 *Nähäsè* 1969 E.C.

⁹⁷ *Nägarit Gazetä*, Proclamation No. 129/1977, Chapter 1, Article 3, p. 288.

Table.2 *Names of the RCCC members in Däbrä Marqos from 30 May 1977 to August 1978*

Name of the representatives	Position
<i>Šaläqa</i> Mäkuriya Häyelè	Chairman of the Revolution and Development Committee (From May 30, 1977, to August 26, 1977) and Chairman of the RCCC (From 27 August 1977 to 11 November 1977)
<i>Mäto aläqa</i> Ešätu Alämu	Chairman of the RCCC (From 12 November 1977 to 25 August 1978)
<i>Šaläqa</i> Ksayè Aragè	Chairman of the RCCC (From 29 August 1978 to January 1979)
Atenafu Tariku	Chief Administrator of the Province (From 22 August 1976 to 11 November 1977) and Vice-chairman of the Revolution and Development Committee and then RCCC (From 30 May 1977 to 11 November 1977).
<i>Šaläqa</i> Engeda Ṭelahun	The Province Police Commission
<i>Šaläqa</i> Mäle'aku Bäqälä	Deputy Administrator of the Province and the leader of the POMOA in Däbrä Marqos
Yämanä Gäberä'ezgi	Chairman of the Ministry of Communication and Transport
Wubešät Wärqenäh	A representative of the AETU
Wärqenäh	Manager of the Ministry of Health
<i>Šambäl</i> Mamo	Commander of <i>Asera amestäña šaläqa kefel</i> (the 15 th Battalion Unit)
Asäfa Ešätè	A representative of the Agricultural and Cooperatives Association

Source: Informants: Qomeçä, Yänèäläm, Ašäber and Tämäsgän; DMUAC: Folder No. 193, File No. ፬፱/፪-76, there is no a Ref. No., *Hämlè* 13, 1969 E.C.

Accordingly, *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè, Ešätu Alämu and Kasayè Aragè served as chairmen of the RCCC from May 30, 1977, to January 1979. Throughout this period, Atenafu Tariku was the vice chairman of the committee.⁹⁸

Following the November 1977, reshuffle of the state power, the permanent member of the *Därg* in the province of Gojjam; *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè was replaced by *Mäto Aläqa* Ešätu Alämu.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Informants: Ibid.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the most notorious places whenever the Red Terror in the town discussed is the Police Camp and Dämälše detention centers. These were where the most atrocious torture and secret killings were conducted. The agony of Dämälše Prison from November 1977 to August 1978 had been led by the chairman of the RCCC, *Mäto aläqa* Ešātu. His rule scored the highest atrocities of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos. According to the available archival sources, he was one of the main organizers of the Red Terror in Gojjam Province in general and Däbrä Marqos town in particular.

In fact, his violence needs to be understood from the structural organization that he was operating within the *Därg* regime. Because an authorization to take any ‘revolutionary action’ was in the hands of a branch of the *Därg*’s centralized apparatus; the RCCC.

Here, suspects were accused, tried and executed with no appeal against the verdict. Because, the “revolutionary measure” by the RCCC had its own unique procedure. The procedure and how measure had been taken is uncovered from the archival materials in which *Šäläqa* Fesha Dästa wrote a letter to the Ministry of Interior on 9 October 1978. The letter read as follows,

በአንድ ሰው ላይ እርምጃ እንዲወሰድበት ከተፈለገ በመጀመሪያ ደረጃ ፍርድ ቤት መቅረብ የለበትም። ፍርድ ቤት ከቀረበ ግን ህጋዊውን አሰራር መከተል አለበት እንጂ ግማሹ ህጋዊ ግማሹ ከህግ ውጪ የሆነ አሰራር የተከተለ መሆን ፍትህን ያዛባል።
ፍርድ ቤት ሳይቀርብ በአካባቢው ባለው ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ ተመዝግኖ በአካባቢው ካለው የደርግ አባል ጋር ተመካክሮ የሚወሰን እርምጃ ቢኖር እስከአሁን ድረስ ሲፈፀምም ቆይቷል፤ ራስንም የቻለ አሰራር ነው።¹⁰⁰

Literally meaning,

(If it is necessary to take action against someone, first of all, it should not be brought to court. If the person is brought to court, the courts must follow the legal formalities. Otherwise, half legal and half illegal procedure would lead to injustice.

⁹⁹ Informants: Ašäber Wäldäsänbät and Qomčä Ambaw.

¹⁰⁰ በፌ.ዲ.ሪ.ፍ.ቤት ወንጀል መዝገብ ቁጥር 1/87 401/85 ውስጥ የል. ዐ. ሕግ ማስረጃ ህክግ 28.2 ቁጥር ወመ1/133/347/71, *Däm Yazälä Dosè*, p. 116.

It has been a common practice so far to take action on cases not brought to court by taking into account the local reality and in consultation with Derg representative. This is an autonomous procedure as well.)

Therefore, actions on the suspects in Däbrä Marqos town were not taken by the court rather by institutions formed by the *Därg*, mainly the RCCC. The committee had the power to imprison the suspects, move the prisoners and command the police stations and its intelligence units whether to take a revolutionary measure or not.¹⁰¹ During this period, only suspects of ‘nonpolitical crimes’ were taken to court. Whereas, the so-called political crimes judged by the official of the RCCC.

In fact, it was also applied by Gojjam Province Revolution and Development Committee earlier. This can be verified by the fact that, the case of seven suspects on 20 July 1977 are seen by the committee and decided based on the institutional procedure. The suspects were Gašä Hebestè, Nābeyäleül Manyahelāwal, Gètačāw Zāru, Māsfeñ Zāru, Zālālām Sebhāt, Wasè Yehāw, and Abābā Abāgaz. These suspects were imprisoned as “anti-revolution”.¹⁰² For instance, Gašä Hebestè, and Nābeyäleül Manyahelāwal were teachers of DMGSS. The former was accused of forming *Ider* (literally meaning, traditional self-help association) and the latter suspected as a member of the EPRP. The rest were high school students who had joined the EPRP’s Youth League and confessed their membership but they denied their participation in pamphlet distribution.¹⁰³ Then the committee arranged a meeting to discuss the cases of the suspects.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p.75.

¹⁰² DMUAC: Folder No. 193, File No. መ/ደ-76, there is no Ref. No., *Hämlè* 13, 1969 E.C.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Finally, a committee of nine officials sentenced the suspects to prison terms, except Abäbä Abägaz, without a judicial proceeding.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, this institutional procedure has been continued by the RCCC strictly. As a result, between November 1977 and August 1978 both the civilians as well as alleged “counter-revolutionaries” were executed by RCCC’s “revolutionary measures.” During this period, *Mäto aläqa* Ešätu was both a judge and executioner. He recommended that “immediate revolutionary action” be taken. Therefore his report/letter “take action” specifies the fate of the suspects. Therefore, he directed and executed revolutionary violence by representing the RCCC of the Province. In general, this committee was a real furious machine in the service of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos.

To sum up, even though the Red Terror was characterized by mass killings, torture as well as terror everywhere in the country, the event was relatively better in Däbrä Marqos. The reason can be seen as the low level of involvement by the QAs and the *abeyot tebäqas* into the Red Terror violence. Throughout 1977, public displays of violence on an unprecedented scale occurred at a *qäbälè* level in many towns and cities of the country, often carried out by regime collaborators within local communities.¹⁰⁵ Although the mode and extent of violence varied, the decentralized exercise of violence had been practiced in Däbrä Marqos town. However, unlike the other urban parts of the country, *näša èrmeja* was not implemented by local *qäbälè* officials. Therefore, Red Terror’s violence, especially killings, in Däbrä Marqos was taken by forces of the central security apparatus.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, Participants of this discussion were *Šaläqa* Mäkuriya Häyelè, Atenafu Tariku, *Šaläqa* Engeda Ṭelahun, *Šaläqa* Mäle’aku Bäqälä, Yämanä Gäberä’ezgi, Wärqenäh, Šambäl Mamo, Asäfa Ešätè and Wubešät Wärqenäh.

¹⁰⁵ Jacob Wiebel, “Let the Red Terror,” p.12.

Of course, as the town was the seat of the provincial administration of Gojjam the violence was more severe than other towns in the Province of Gojjam. By saying this, I am not comparing the casualties with other urban areas, such as Gondar and Addis Ababa. Relatively, the atrocity in the town was more moderate than the atrocities occurred in those urban areas.

CONCLUSION

Though the 1974 Revolution of Ethiopia has marked the end of monarchical rule in Ethiopian history, it also marked the beginning of the horrendous bloodshed. The uncompromised political difference between the two leftist political groups (the EPRP and MEISON) as well as *Därg*'s culture of using arms for any opposition paved the way for the bloody episode which is known as 'Red Terror'. And it was the direct outcome of their demand for power. Therefore, the Ethiopian Red Terror must be understood from its root in power interest rather than ideology.

The political violence of Ethiopian Red Terror in general and Däbrä Marqos Town, in particular, was not without any precedents. Due to lack of democratic norms and skills in Ethiopia, the country's history is filled with numerous pages and chapters of repressions and massacres perpetrated by those in power and/or the people in need of change and/or resistance. The violence during the *Därg* regime (from February 1977 to 1978) was that generating its own language and semantic space, called as *qäy šeber* (Red Terror) and *näç šeber* (White Terror). In this period, physical as well as symbolic or non-physical forms of violence were applied on the "reactionaries".

The period was full of killings and revenge. For example, White Terror against the *qäbälè* officials such as the killing of *qäbälè* officials on 13 March 1977 led to a desire for Reds to have revenge and imprisoned a large number of prisoners, creating dialectic of violence. However, the atrocities of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos exceeded the White. The revenge was no restricted between the two counterparts, but also between the two factions of the EPRP; *Anjja* and Clique. Thus, the act of vengeance in between the factions of the EPRP in the prison was also parts of the political violence of the period.

Like other parts of the country, political prisoners in Däbrä Marqos were also held in police stations. Therefore, after the denunciation those who were suspected of underground activities were detained in the *Asramestāña Šalāqa* (the 15th Battalion) Military Camp. Then, those who were identified as ‘anti-revolutionary’ were moved to Police Camp (Since February 1977) and then to Dāmālašē Prison (Since December 1977). During the interrogation process, torture was the main instrument to force the suspected prisoners to give information about the EPRP and their role within it. The torturers were mainly members of the security police, *qābälé* officials, the POMOA cadres and officers of the Central Interrogation Division. In addition, some members of the EPRP also actively participated.

Beside the ‘revolutionary tortures’, both secrete and officially announced executions of a great number of people were the main features of the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos (1977-1978). Following the execution of the Därg’s vice chairman in November 1977, Mängestu reshuffled the high level provincial. Consequently, the ‘moderate’ permanent member of the Därg in the province of Gojjam; *Šalāqa* Mäkuriya Häyelē was replaced by *Mätoalāqa* Ešātu Alämu. Henceforth, the acts of terror in Däbrä Marqos were organized and led by him. At the height of the Däbrä Marqos’s Red Terror, mass executions were registered between 1977 and 1978. The mass executions took place on 5 February 1978, in June 1978, on 5 August 1978 and on 20 August 1978.

Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos was carried out by “the *Därg* and targeted members of EPRP and its sympathizers”. To combat its opponents *Därg* employed instruments of terror to liquidate the EPRP in Däbrä Marqos Town. The structure was hierarchically structured from the top to the bottom. While the main structure and its target were minted at the political center, it was implemented by both local and central actors. Accordingly, the tortures and killings in Däbrä

Marqos from 1977 to 1978 were organized and executed by those institutions. Institutions central to this were the abeyot tebäqa, the *Qäbälè* Associations, the police force, the Revolutionary Campaign Coordinating Committee, and the *Därg* Interrogation Division. Therefore, violence during the Red Terror in Däbrä Marqos (1977-1978) was the amalgam of the local administrations and the central state.

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Folder No. 27, File No. መ/አ-59;
Folder No. 618, File No. መ/ደ-19;
Folder No. 320, File No. መ/ደ-11;
Folder No. 193, File No. መ/ደ-76;
Folder No. 176, File No. መ/ፒ-1;

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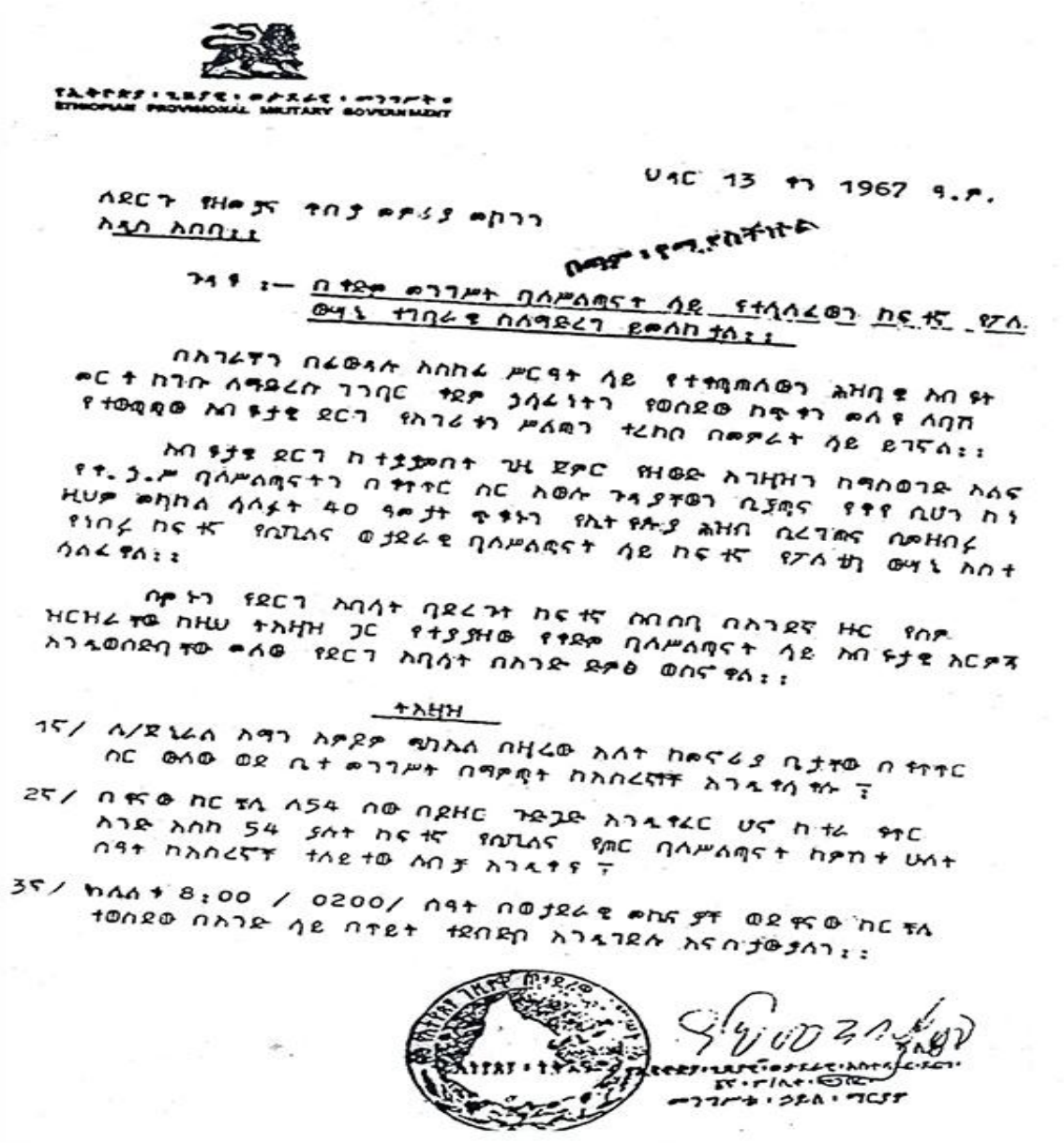
List of Informants

N o.	Name	Age	Place of Interview	Date of Interview	Remark
1	Alāmayāhu Bālaye (Ato)	70	Dājān Town	15/03/2018	He was a student in Mātākāl Town and he had been served <i>Dārg</i> as a cadre. He has a good knowledge about the event.
2	Ašāber Wāldāsānbāt (Ato)	79	Dābrā Marqos Town	12/01 /2018 and 10/06/2018	During the time he served as a Director of DMGSS and secretary of ETA branch of Gojjam Province. He was a member of EPRP and he stayed at Dāmālaš Prison for three years. He gave me important points about the regime in general and the Red Terror in particular.
3	Awugečāw Awāqā (Ato)	73	Dābrā Marqos Town	20/01/2018	He was one of the victims of the <i>Dārg</i> . He stayed stayed at Dāmālaš Prison for three years.
4	Azezačāw Čanè (Ato)	60	Dājān Town	10/06/2018	He was a student of DMGSS. He remembers how the Red Terror campaign took place.
5	Ejegu Gābrè (Ato)	72	Dābrā Marqos Town	06/06/2018	He has lived in Dābrā Marqos. He told me much important points about the Red Terror in the town.
6	E. Š. (W/ro)	58	Dābrā Marqos Town	05/02/2018	She is one of the victim's families. She lost her elder brother during the campaign of the Red Terror.
7	Fātlāwārq Čanè (W/rit)	58	Dājān Town	20/01/2018	She was a student of DMGSS.
8	G.A. (Ato)	74	Dābrā Marqos Town	05/02/2018	He was one of the victims of <i>Dārg</i> because he was suspected as a member of EPRP. He stayed at Dāmālaš Prison. He gave me important points about Dāmālaš Prison.
9	Gādef Ewunātu (Ato)	82	Bahir Dar	08/02/2018	He was a member of <i>Dārg's</i> central committee. He has ample information about the event.
10	Gezačāw Ayalèw (Ato)	80	Dābrā Marqos Town	06/06/2018	He has lived in Dābrā Marqos Town. He knows more about the qābālè cadres.

11	Häyelu Mängestè (Ato)	78	Däjän Town	10/06/2018	He got the chance to observe the condition of Däbrä Marqos Town during the Red Terror period. He knows much about the Red Terror.
12	Lengär Kassa (Ato)	68	Däbrä Marqos Town	12/01/2018	He was a student of DMGSS.
13	M.G. (Ato)	69	Däbrä Marqos Town	11/03/2018	He is one of the victims of <i>Därg</i> because he was suspected as member of EPRP. He stayed at Dämäläš Prison.
14	M.Y. (Ato)	65	Däbrä Marqos Town	06/02/2018	He is one of the victims' families. He lost his elder brother during the campaign of the Red Terror.
15	Mäbet Gezačäw (Ato)	59	Däbrä Marqos Town	14/01/ 2018	He lived in Lumamè Town and by the time he got a chance to observe the action of <i>Därg</i> in Däbrä Marqos Town.
16	Qomčä Ambaw (Ato)	78	Däbrä Marqos Town	20/01/2018	He was a member of <i>Därg</i> and served as a woreda administrator. He gave me important information about the event.
17	Qumlačäw Adamu (Ato)	55	Bahir Dar Town	08/02/2018	He was one of the EPRP members. He was imprisoned at the Police Camp for five months.
18	Tämäsğan Alämayähu (Ato)	58	Däbrä Marqos Town	12/01/2018 and 10/06/2018	He was one of the EPRP's urban squad members. He gave me important points about the role of the urban killing squads in DM.
19	Yänèäläm Qumlačäw (W/ro)	63	Däbrä Marqos Town	16/01/2018	She is one of the victims' families. She lost her brother.

APPENDICES

Appendix I



Appendix II

ቁጥር 9671/100/50
8-7-69

ሰላሳ ስቴ. ተጠቅሞት - ከዘ/ማ. የሰላሳ ስቴ. ከገ/ሀገሩ ገቢዎች ያህል/ገ/የገደብ
ገ/ሀገሩ

ገላ ፍቅረ ገንጽ ገላ ሙሉ ወርቅህ በ4/7/69 ለ5/7/69 ዓ.ም አጥቢያ
ከመሸቱ በ3. በዓት በቅጥር ነፍሰ ገዳዮች በመገደሉ ምላሽ ማርቅስ ከተማ የአሥራ ኦ
ገዱ ቀበሌ ማገበር ሊቀመናበር ተች የተቃወሙ ሰላማዊ ሰጪ ሰጪ በ9/7/69 ዓ.ም ልክ በ4. በ
ዓት ላይ በገንዘብ ተከለ ሃይማኖት አደባባይ የሚያደርጉ መሆናቸውን ገልጾ በዚህ ዕለት ተ
ፈጻሚ አገር ወዳደሩ የአቢዱል ደጋፊ የሆኑ የመገንዘብ ሸጫዎችና ሠራተኞች ተባባሪ አገደ
ሆነዋል ሙሉ ጠይቀዋል :: ስለዚህ የሰጪው ሕዝብ አካል የሆኑት ተመራጮች ባቀረቡት ጉዞ መ
ሠራት ሠራተኞች ከላይ በተገለጸው ቀን ከጥቅቱ በ3. በዓት በሥራ ላይ ተገኝተው ሥራ ምረቃ
ን ሲያከናውኑ ከቀዱ በኋላ ለአራት በዓት አረብ ጉዳይ ሲሆን ሰጪ ወደ ሕዝባዊነት ሥፍራ
ሂደው በየክፍል ቀበሌዎች በመሆን አገደያከብረው ከቀበሌ ማገበር ሊቀመናበር ተች ጥሪ በተደ
ረገው መሠረት ከተፈጸመ በኋላ መናገስ የሰጪ ሥነ ሥርዓት አብቅቶ ትርፍ የሥራ በዓት
ቢኖር ሠራተኞች ተመልሰው በመደበኛ ሥራ ላይ አገደገኙ አገገልጸዋል ::

ፊርማ
8-7-69
ሰላሳ ስቴ. ተጠቅሞት

ፊርማ
8-7-69
ሰላሳ ስቴ. ተጠቅሞት

Appendix III

-ቁጥር 5748/16/69
 190119 ተን 69 ዓ.ም

ለጽሑፍ ዘፍለ ሀገሪ አስተዳደር ለ/ቦት
 ደብረ ግር ቀበ ፒ

ምስጢር

ወንበዓው ስሜኑ ደብታ ከአረብ አጭሪ ጭፍጭ ጋር በመወሰድ ጭፍፍ ይዘ ይገባታል
 በለባባሉ በር ቁጥር 748 ለአገሪ ምዕር አጭሪ አስተዳዳሪ በቁጥር 977/4/410/
 በ3/9/69 ዓ.ም ሲሰፋ ለአጽሑፍ የደረሰውን ቅጂ ይጠቅሳል::

ወንበዓው ይተላለፍበታል በግባሉ በርና ከላ ጥበቅ ቁጥርና ጥበቃ እንዲደረግ ከበሉ
 ላጥጥ ለአጭሪ ፖሊስ ለዛዝ በቁጥር 522/15/69 በ5/9/69 ዓ.ም በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ
 ቤት ለዛዝ አስተላልፈን ነበር ፤ ሆኖም በከፍላጥን የግንኙነት የፖሊስ አባሎች በሰፊ ስሜን
 ምክንያት ከቦታው ተነስተው ኃይላጥን አጭግ አነስተኛ ከመሆኑ በላይ የሠለጠነው ሕዝባዊ
 ሠራዊት ወደ ገንጭ በሚሄዱ የጥበቃውን ሁኔታ በተጠቀሱት በርጥ ላይ በደበሰጥ ለግጥና
 ለሰብአዊ የገበሬ ግንባራ አንዲታጠቁ ሲደረግ የተሻለ ነው ሲሉ የአጭሪ ፖሊስ ለዛ
 ዝ በቁጥር 1221/64/4 በ12/9/69 ዓ.ም በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ አባባባል::

በሰዓሉ የነገሩ አባባባላት ታምኖባት ወንበዓው ይገባታል ተብሎ በግጥና በርጥ
 አባባባል የግንኙነት የገበሬ ግንባራ በግንባታ ታትቶ ጠበቅ ባለ ሁኔታ በርጥና በላጭ ሲጠበቅ
 የተሻለ ጭህፍን እናባባባል::

..ለት ይጻፍ ትቅደም..



/19/ 707 ደረሰላል
 /19/ የጥበቃውን ፖሊስ ጥናት

160000
 ለዘፍለ ሀገሪ ታም የደርግ አባል
 ደብረ ግር ቀበ ፒ

ከምክርቤት: 1142
 የጽሑፍ: ደ.ረ. አረባይ.
 ከምክርቤት: 1142
 የጽሑፍ: ደ.ረ. አረባይ.
 19-9-69

#260 ደ.ረ. አረባይ
 1750 መስላት: 3085
 ደ.ረ. አረባይ: አረባይ
 የጽሑፍ: 27.9.69

7: መገንጠል: 16
 19/9/69
 19/9/69
 19/9/69

[illegible]

Appendix V

ገጽ 11348/100/50
22-8-69

ከገጽ 50. በጽሑፍ ላይ. የጽሑፍ ቁጥር. 005063.
ዓ/109.

ገ/19-8-69 ከ20-8-69 ዓ/100. ሃገረ ሕገ-
ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ተገኝቶ. የሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.
ሀገረ. ሀገረ. 434/1035. ገጽ. በቀረጽ. 9491/
11/68 ሚኒስቴር. ደብዳቤ. 69 ዓ/100. የተሰጠው. ደ.
ርዕይ.

በመሠረቱ. ገጽ. ገጽ. ተገኝቶ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.
ገጽ. የሚገኝ ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. የሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. የሚገኝ.
ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.
ደ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ተገኝቶ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.
ሀገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.
ሀገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ. ሃገረ ሕገ-ገጽ.

ኢትዮጵያ ትቅደም

22/8/69

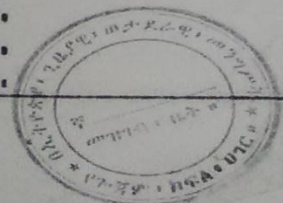
ገጽ 11348/100/50
22-8-69

Appendix VI

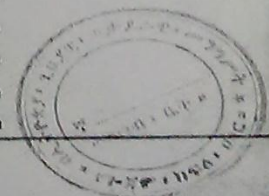
ተረ ቁ.	ስም ከነስባት	የታሠረበት ቀን	ያለበት ጠባቢ ቤት	ዎ	ር	መ	ራ
1	ተረሪ መኮንን አጌሉ	20/6/70	ከፍለ ሃገሩ				
2	ጌትነት ማዕ ቢሻጭ	15/1/70	" "				
3	አበፋ ከሰ ተሰማ	20/6/70	" "				
4	ጌት አጃጉ በየነ	20/6/70	" "				
5	ለጃዓለም ጥሩ ነህ ተገኜ	18/6/70	" "				
6	ዘፀኑ በላይ ጌታሁን	19/6/70	" "				
7	መስፍን ሉሉ ገጌሪ	18/6/70	" "				
8	የሺዋስ ተከሰተ መንገሥት	18/6/70	" "				
9	የነሰጩ ወቅያ ከሃ	4/6/70	" "				
10	ተስፋዬ ዋሲሁን አጃጉ	20/6/70	" "				
11	ጌት ደገፉ ገብረጌ	20/6/70	" "				
12	አገታሁ ነጋ አላምነህ	18/6/70	" "				
13	ዳምጼ ላቀፀ ገሠሠ	20/6/70	" "				
14	አስማረ ብርሃኔ ተሰማ	21/6/70	" "				
15	ጤናፀ አለማየሁ ፀሎ	26/7/70	" "				
16	ከሊፋ መስመድ መሃመድ	26/7/70	" "				
17	ደርጉ በላቸው ዋረ	24/7/70	" "				
18	አሃዱ ተገኜ አለበ	15/7/70	" "				
19	ዘሪሁን መኮንን ዘሪሁን	8/6/70	" "				
20	በቃሉ ተስፋሁን መንገሥት	25/4/70	" "				
21	ተስፋዬ ጌትነት ነህ ተሰማ	20/6/70	" "				
22	ፍስሃ ተገኜ አሊ	20/6/70	" "				
23	አፀነቱ የነነህ ከሃ	18/6/70	" "				
24	አሸብር ፀጋ ወ/ሳርያም	20/6/70	" "				
25	ያደገለሸት ከሃሁን መንገሥት	7/7/70	" "				
26	ደተባረክ አበበ በየነ	20/6/70	" "				
27	ኮከበ ዘገዳ አወተ	20/6/70	" "				
28	ጥበቡ አዲሱን ደግሞ ወ/ሚካኤል	20/6/70	" "				
29	ሙሉ ተመስገን የሸታ	20/6/70	" "				
30	አበፋ ገሠሠ ወርቅነህ	20/6/70	" "				
31	አበፋፀ አስረስ ብሩ	17/6/70	" "				
32	ገዛቱ አቻም የለህ ገብረ	20/6/70	" "				
33	ባጪ ጼ ሚካ	20/6/70	" "				
34	አምሳሉ ባባያፀ ተርፈ	20/6/70	" "				
35	ታደሰ ታረረ ወርቅነህ	24/2/70	" "				
36	ጌትነት ዘሩ በጋሉ	20/6/70	" "				

.../ 2

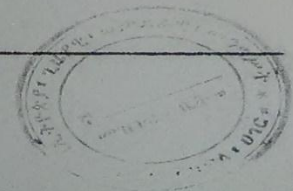
ተረ ቁ/	ስም ከነ አባቱ	ቀን	ወህኒ ቤት	የርመራ
37	ተዕገሥተ ተስፋዬ ማዘንጊያ	17/6/70	ክ/ሀገሩ	
38	በላይ በየነ ብርሐኑ	20/6/70	..	
39	መስሪ መንገሥተ ወርቅነህ	20/6/70	..	
40	አበበ ፈለቀ ተመስገን	26/6/70	..	
41	ብርሐኑ መስመዴ ያሲን	15/7/70	..	
42	አዲስ ዘለዓለም ባይለየኝ	20/6/70	..	
43	ሙሉቀን አላምነህ ባይነሳ	20/6/70	..	
44	ብርሐኑ አያሌፍ ከበደ	20/6/70	...	
45	አበበ ገጋቴ ዊዳነህ	20/6/70	..	
46	ዋላ አስቻለ ገ/መዳህን	20/6/70	..	
47	አቻም የለህ ጌታነህ ፎታ	20/6/70	..	
48	ሳቀፍ አፄነቱ ፈንታ	20/6/70	..	
49	ደጽሱ ገሠሠ ወርቅነህ	18/4/70	..	
50	ገነት መኩንን በጋለ	18/6/70	..	
51	የኋለኛት ፎታ ተክለወልዱ	20/6/70	..	
52	ጌታጥፎ ደርሶህ ምህረት	20/6/70	..	
53	ተፈሪ ከበደ አይኖለም	20/6/70	..	
54	መዓዛ ገ/መስቀል አቲሸን	20/6/70	..	
55	ሙሉወርቅ አያሌፍ መለሰ	20/6/70	..	
56	ዘለቀ አዳማሱ ወንድሙ	20/6/70	..	
57	ፎታ አምባፎ ፈንታ	20/6/70	..	
58	መሀረት ባይለየኝ ታየኝ	20/6/70	..	
59	ገጉሳ ዓለም መራ	20/6/70	..	
60	መኩንን ተሸመ በላይ	20/6/70	..	
61	ደህኔ አዳማሱ በላይ	20/6/70	..	
62	አደፍርሰ ታምሩ ገ/መዳህን	20/6/70	..	
63	ዓለሙ ጽጌ ፎታ	20/6/70	..	
64	በፍላ ደጉ አላምነህ	20/6/70	..	
65	ሳመሰንነቴ ምህረት ፍካራ	20/6/70	..	
66	ደስደበለፍ ሰፈራ ገላፎ	20/6/70	..	
67	በዘዘየሁ ከበደ ደመወፍ	15/4/70	..	
68	አበበ ተዕዛዙ ገጌሢ	20/4/70	..	
69	አባይ አባቲነህ መለከው	21/6/70	..	
70	ታደለ በየነ አደራ	20/6/70	..	
71	ታረቁኝ አረአያ ተደላ	20/6/70	..	
72	አሰፋ በጽሐ ተስፋዬ	20/6/70	..	
73	ዘነበኙ አላምነህ ዘገየ	20/6/70	..	



ተረ ቁ/	ስም ከነ አባቱ	የታሠረበት ቀን	ወህኒ ቤት	የ ር መ ሪ
74	አጋሚ የለህ ታምሩ አባ ፃ	20/6/70	ክ/ሀገሩ	
75	አማረ አጋሪ የሁ ደብታ	20/6/70	" "	
76	ገዢ ተባብሮ አገናኝ ተስፋ ፊ	20/6/70	"	
77	ታምሩ ታደሰ ጀምበሪ	20/6/70	"	
78	አማ ዓለም ጉታያ	20/6/70	"	
79	አጋሚ የለህ አስረሰ	20/6/70	"	
80	አማረ መንግሥት ገደፋፊ	20/6/70	"	
81	ባለ ጭንቁ ስሙኝ	20/6/70	"	
82	አገሩ የለህ ወ/ማሪያም ተስፋ ዩ	20/6/70	"	
83	ያህን ጭንቁ ሰይጣን	20/6/70	"	
84	ሰብታ - ገ/አገዛዝ አብረው አገሩ	20/6/70	"	
85	ገርማ ለማ አየለ	20/6/70	"	
86	ሰብታ ሁነኛው ገታሁን	6/7/70	"	
87	ፀጋዬ መንግሥት ጥምቀት	23/6/70	"	
88	ወንጌል ደረረ ለመንሀ	20/6/70	"	
89	ገነት ከበደ አያሩ	20/6/70	"	
90	አወቀ ምሳ ገላዩ	20/6/70	"	
91	አበበ ነጋ ባሣ	20/6/70	"	
92	ባንቲዬ ገን መንግሥት አምባዩ	20/6/70	"	
93	ወሰን ከበደ አለሙ	20/6/70	"	
94	ዘለዓለም መንግሥት ደለለ	20/6/70	"	
95	ዜና ሁነኛው አሸት	20/6/70	"	
96	አለሜት ገ/ማሪያም ካሳዩ	20/6/70	"	
97	ደባሉ መሰሉ አማረ	20/6/70	"	
98	መለሰ ዜና ማርቁስ	20/6/70	"	
99	ገታቸው ገሠሠ ደሱ	20/6/70	"	
100	ዘማዎ ተበጀ መላት	18/6/70	"	
101	ገዢ ተባብሮ ፊት ጭንቁ	20/6/70	"	
102	በላይ አገሩ ተመስገን	20/6/70	"	
103	ከበር ተመስገን የሸታ	20/6/70	"	
104	አገሩ ገን ጭንቁ	20/6/70	"	
105	ወንጌል ነሀ ሸት ደርሰህ	20/6/70	"	
106	ሙሉ ካሳ ገ/ማሪያም	20/6/70	"	
107	በርሐኑ ያገለግላል ተፈሪ	20/6/70	"	
108	አገሩ የለህ ጥሪ ነጋ	20/6/70	"	
109	ያንድ የለህ ታምሩ መብረት	20/6/70	"	

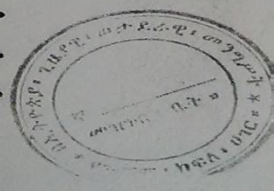


ተረ ቁ/	ስም ከነ አባት	የታሠረበት ቀን	ፀሀፊ በት	ምርመራ
110	መስፍን ገይሎ ገጌሣ	20/6/70	ክ/ሀገሩ	
111	ደደሰ ሸቱ ጸገሣ	20/6/70	..	
112	አእምሮ ዳኛቸው ዋጋፍ	20/6/70	..	
113	ሁሉዓለም አረአያ መሠረት	20/6/70	..	
114	ሠናይት በጋለ መንገሻ	20/6/70	..	
115	አበባ የሁ ለይኩን ብርሐኔ	20/6/70	..	
116	ብርሐኔ እጁን ገብዞ	20/6/70	..	
117	አረጋፍ ገብዞ የተመኘ	20/6/70	..	
118	ብዙዓለም አገኘሁ ዘገየ	20/6/70	..	
119	ብርሐኔ ገይሎ ጌዳና	20/6/70	..	
120	ዓለሜት ተገኘ ገዳሙ	20/6/70	..	
121	ሊቃቸው እምረ ረዳገኝ	20/6/70	..	
122	ጌታቸው ገብ የሁ ከዛሁን	20/6/70	..	
123	አንተነህ መቶያ ከዛ	20/6/70	..	
124	አርመናቸው ገሠሠ ጣፈጠ	17/6/70	..	
125	አናፎጋፍ አዲሳሉ ስከብ	20/6/70	..	
126	ሰውነት የጤኔ ፅባሁ	20/6/70	..	
127	ዱላነሣ ተሰላገን ዘሩ	17/6/70	..	
128	ረጌታሁን ጭገሰ ቢሆኔ	20/6/70	..	
129	አጋጋ የሁ ገ/መጠን ናደፍ	20/6/70	..	
130	ሰንታየሁ አንቶዓለም እምሩ	3/5/71	..	
131	ጌታቸው ዘፍኔ መኩንን	17/6/70	..	
132	መሠረት ረታ ተክሎ	20/6/70	..	
133	ተስፋዬ ደምሴ ደሀኔ	14/9/70	..	
134	ጠብቀው ያለፍ መራ	17/6/70	..	
135	አፋኝ ዱአዲሳሉ ጸምበር	3/6/70	..	
136	ቢዳነግሪያም ሐገህ አብረሐ	14/8/70	..	
137	ተከላኝ ሀይወት ጁኔ	14/9/70	..	
138	ፀጋዬ ደምሴ ገጣብ	21/7/70	..	
139	አሰፋ አሱማረ ዓለሙ	15/8/70	..	
140	መኰሪያ መርሻ አየሰ	26/11/69	..	
141	ከበደ አበጋዝ እምሩ	20/4/70	..	
142	ተሸመ ጣፍ አበበ	1/6/70	..	
143	በጋሼው ዋለ አንገዳ	20/6/70	..	

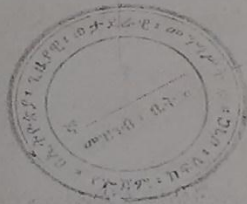


ተረ	የታሰበበት	ያለበት
ቁ.	ቀን	ወህን ወሩ
144	ደጌ ጥሩ ቶኩላ	15/5/70 ክ/ሃገሩ
145	በቤት ለቤት ለቤት	28/5/70 -
146	ፈንታሁን ደምሴ ለይናለም	3/5/70 -
147	አምሳሌ ወልደ በቀለ	12/5/70 -
148	መስመድ ወርቁ ተገኘ	5/5/70 -
149	ጭብተ በቀለ ገሠሠ	19/7/70 -
150	ሸፈረው ጭብቱ ወረቦ	18/7/70 -
151	ቆላጥው አምሳሌ ጥሩ ነህ	19/7/70 -
152	አገረው ለቤት ለቤት	9/6/70 -
153	አበባው አያሌው አታላይ	24/11/69 -
154	መኩሪያ የነበረ ነገር	24/11/69 -
155	የሸቀሰ አደው አለበት	5/8/70 -
156	ጥላሁን ጌታሁን ጋሻ	16/6/70 -
157	አከሉን ገንቱ ሥጭ	24/6/70 -
158	ተክለአጽ ይን አስናቶ ጀምሮ	13/6/70 -
159	ደበበ አጭን ሰጠሉ	4/11/70 -
160	አስፋ ደብቶ መኩንን	25/11/70 -
161	መሰሉ ገሠሠ ተገኘ	12/11/70 -
162	አለባጥው አላምረ ገሠሠ	22/11/70 -
163	ዘላለም መንገሥት አገተነህ	23/11/70 -
164	ላቶ አያሌው አዲህ	3/10/70 -
165	ተረረ በገሻው ላይ	3/10/70 -
166	አያሌው ተበጁ አስረሰባች	3/10/70 -
167	ዘጭ ወገን ለጭ	8/7/70 -

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ተረ ቁ.	ስም ከነዚህ ት	የተሠረበት ቀን	ያለበት ወህኔ ቦት	ምርመራ
168	ደጉ ገብረ አጋታ	8/7/70	ከ/ ሃገሩ	
169	ጌታቸው አብጌ ዘለቀ	28/7/70	"	
170	አጼ ጌታነህ ከበደ	20/6/70	"	
171	ላቀ ለመገህ ደስታ	20/6/70	"	
172	መሐተን ቢተፎ አቶ	20/6/70	"	
173	አያሌ ላቀፍ ጌ	3/10/70	"	



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Appendix VII

I. Name of the victims of 20 August 1978's massacre.

Nº	Name of the Victims	Job/Status
1	Berhanu Wārquenāh	Teacher
2	Delnāsa Ayälä	Teacher
3	Mulukasa Dämeläw	Teacher
4	Tägāñ Täsfayä	Ministry of Finance
5	Bäza Negusè	Teacher
6	Ahmäd Gètahun	Unemployed
7	Berhanu Wārquenāh	Teacher
8	Alāmayāhu Däsè	Teacher
9	Täsäma Häyelu	Teacher
10	Berelè Anbäsè	Student
11	Geremew Wasè	Teacher
12	Tekuyä Lejalām	Nurse
13	Asäfa Bayenäsañe	The Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement Office of Däbrä Marqos
14	Fätänä Habtè	The Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement Office of Däbrä Marqos
15	Šemäles Täsfä	Student
16	Näbeyu Mäsfen	----
17	Färädä Hunäñaw	Unemployed
18	Ṭèma Bädèsa	Merchant (Especially on Honey trade)
19	Meseker Terunāh	Teacher
20	Bezualām Dämesè	----
21	Mähamäd Hasān	----
22	Šämsu Jebril	----
23	Ejegayāhu Keflè	----
24	Leyäw Bayelè	----
25	Zäyenu Endris	Unemployed

26	Tämäsgän Asrat	Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Däbrä Marqos Branch.
27	Lägäsä Säyed	Student
28	Mähari Zärihun	Unemployed
29	AṬenafu Senešaw	Ethiopian Road Authority
30	Bälaye Lakäw	Student
31	Täklägänät Harägäwoyen	Student
32	Täšagär Mäsälu	Student
33	Häyelu Wubešät	Student
34	LaqaČaw Abatënäh	Unemployed
35	Dawit Zäwdè	Student
36	Yäwulsäw Andäñanäw	Student
37	Šetahun Mälaku	Student
38	Efrèm Araya	Student
39	Abathun Adanä	Unemployed
40	Senämängest Zäwdu	Student
41	Mälaku Yetäfu	Student
42	Mulugèta Tägäñ	Student
43	Negatu Gäbrè	POMOA of Däbrä Marqos
44	Dägaräg Alämè	Urban Housing and Development Office of Däbrä Marqos
45	Zägäyä Mäsfen	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Office of Däbrä Marqos
46	Kassa Asäfa	Post Office
47	Mazängya Däsè	Teacher
48	Siyamrän Däräsä	Teacher
49	Hayelu Kassa	Teacher
50	Kassu Mäkonnen	Bus Station Cashier
51	Dästa Tässäma	The Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement Office of Däbrä Marqos

52	Çanè Bāzabeh	Teacher
53	Nebrāt Admasu	Teacher
54	Wārāta Mogās	Unemployed
55	Kārābeh Tafārā	Student
56	Tamerat Lāgāsā	Student
57	Engedaworq Telahun	Student
58	Amsalu Bālačāw	Student
59	Tās fayè Dāsè	The Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement Office of Dābrā Marqos
60	Asāfa Hāyelu	----
61	Abābaw Tādla	----
62	Hāyelè Gālayè	Student
63	Fātānāče Zālāqā	----
64	Kendu Gābāyāhu	Student
65	Semāñāw Bišaw	Student
66	Fāthaldin Jebril	Teacher
67	Bālačāw Adāmā	Teacher (Director of DMGSS)
68	Germa Sāboqa	-----

II. Name of prisoners those were transferred to Mātākal Prison.

N_o	Names of the prisoners	Job/Status
1	Tadāsā Gābāyāhu	Student
2	Šefāraw Abunè	---
3	Alāmayāhu Arāga	Unemployed
4	Brhanu Mulāta	---
5	Tasāw Māri	---

Appendix VIII

1. 100/1000 - 1000 4000 125/2/10 1000000000
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Appendix IX

ቁጥር 4/5/12/2/70
11/7/70

ከገጽ 470 ወህደ፡ ፓሊስ፡ ደ/ሰ/ሃ፡

ዓ.ወ.፡ ማርቆስ፡

ፋይል፡ ደ-ፓ፡ ቁጥር፡ 555፡ ገጽ 97፡ ለወጣቱ ከሃሳብ፡ ሠርገው፡ ለሰው
ግጥም፡ ለተዛባተ መረከብ፡ ፓ.ሥር ለማሳከስ፡ ያረጋገጥናል፡ ከሀገራዊ ስላሳ
ፋ ከሚቀረጥ፡ ሽርገዱ፡ ማሳካት መከሰት፡ ገጽ 97፡ ተግባራዊ ውሳኔ
እስከተሰጠ፡ ድረስ፡ መሆኑ ለሚገኝበት ወህደ፡ ለፋ፡ ከፓሊስ ሰላም
ፈገግ፡ ያሳይታል፡ ያል፡—

ከሀገራዊ፡ ያሳይታል፡ ገጽ 97፡ የሚገኝበት፡ ለጽጌ፡ ያተቃታሰበ
ከሀገራዊ፡ መረከብ፡ ለጽጌ፡ ከወሳኔ፡ ከሀገራዊ፡ ከመመረብ፡
የሚረከብ፡ ለጽጌ፡ ከወሳኔ፡ ከሀገራዊ፡ ከመመረብ፡
ከሀገራዊ፡ ከወሳኔ፡ ከሀገራዊ፡ ከመመረብ፡—



ከገጽ 470 ወህደ፡ ፓሊስ፡ ደ/ሰ/ሃ፡

ገጽ 97

ከገጽ 470 ወህደ፡ ፓሊስ፡ ደ/ሰ/ሃ፡

ከገጽ 470 ወህደ፡ ፓሊስ፡ ደ/ሰ/ሃ፡

ዓ.ወ.፡ ማርቆስ፡

መ/መ/አካባቢ፡ ከሰው ግጥም፡
የሚገኝበት፡ ለጽጌ፡ ከወሳኔ፡ ከሀገራዊ፡ ከመመረብ፡—

13/7/70
7018
102/1