

Folk-Fairs And Festivals

Written by By Abbebe kifleyesus

Features of the Eritrean Festival



Festival Eritra is a yearly folk-fair whose season opens up around the first two weeks of August of every year, in the capital Asmara. It first started in 1984, during the years of the struggle for liberation, has had enormous impact on Eritrean heritage of conserving national identity. The history of the founding of festival Eritra is a cultural political counterpart of the "unity in diversity" policy of the Eritrean People Liberation Front, and its strategy of political and cultural representation. During the period of the liberation struggle, especially after the 1970s, there was no public space that could be used for festival purposes, although many Eritreans came together from near and far places in order to attend musical and dance shows in liberated areas. As a result, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front introduced the idea of "cultural troupe" in the mid 1970s as a form of entertainment for fighters and combatants and, more importantly, as a way of energizing nationalist feelings and thereby adding vigor to the struggle for independence. Musical and dance shows with all the costume wearing and hair-dressing that goes with them, theatrical scenes, camel races, and soccer games became part of the tasks of the cultural troupe.

The portrayal of cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups and the presentation of local cultural material in a larger, national festival long before and after independence promoted the political praxis of homogenization the different Eritrean societies and created a frame of reference that de-emphasized local differences. In this culture, new types of music and dance developed, and cultural traditions were re-evaluated in order to attach them to the form of national representation associated with the "unity in diversity" policy of the struggle for liberation and strong belief in an indivisible nation later depicted as "one people, one heart". Since 1984, Eritreans in the diasporas in Europe gathered annually in Bologna, Italy, in order to take part in a "national" festival consisting principally of live musical and dance shows, drama presentations, cash contributions, and sale of native cooking and cuisines, and to listen to the latest liberation struggle developments.

Folk-Fairs And Festivals

Written by By Abbebe kifleyesus



[REDACTED]