

EFLNA'S HISTORIC 9th CONGRESS

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The 9th Congress of the Association of Eritrean Students in North America (now EFLNA) was successfully concluded on August 19, 1978, after five days of vigorous discussion on international, national and organizational questions.

The 9th Congress is of crucial importance not only because it dealt with the burning questions facing the Eritrean people's national democratic revolution, but it also conducted in depth discussion to sum-up the internal struggle with EPLF leadership and crystallized the basic differences that have arisen on questions of principle and strategy. It was also of immense significance because it was convened at a time when imperialists and revisionists and their lackeys are not only spinning out one counter-revolutionary scheme after another but are in the middle of an armed intervention of unprecedented proportions to "stamp out" the flames of the Eritrean revolution.

Held under such slogans as "Death to the Soviet-Cuban revisionists", "The peoples war is to our people's interest", "Our homeland with our blood", the congress thoroughly assessed the present situation of the Eritrean revolution, on such questions of principle as Soviet revisionism, the nature of the Dergue and peaceful solution; as well as the diabolical aggression of the Soviet revisionists, their mercenaries and the fascist junta against our people's just struggle.

The historic 9th congress of our organization opened officially on August 14 in a spirit of joy and struggle and witnessed the participation of practically all its membership from all its chapters and study groups throughout the United States and Canada. Following the reading of solidarity messages from such organizations as the Association of Eritrean Workers in Kuwait as well as the National Association of Eritrean Students, the congress delved into a two-day exhaustive political education session on the theory and practice of the national democratic

revolution, its motive forces, goals and targets. The congress thoroughly refuted and discredited the illusion that the U.S.S.R. and the other revisionist countries are "strategic friends" of oppressed peoples of the world and showed that the history of revisionism has been one of treachery, deception and subversion of all genuine struggles for democracy, independence and socialism. These unmistakably ugly features of this counter-revolutionary force are better known to the struggling Eritrean masses whose sacred blood is dripping from the hands of Brezhnev's hangmen, mercenaries and fascist ilks.

The congress also reaffirmed that the task of Marxist-Leninists plays a decisive role in the revolution and the establishment of the vanguard party of the proletariat at the crucial crossroad of the revolution decides on whether it is going to be revolution or capitulation, on whether it is to continue on the road of time tested peoples war or the road of "peaceful solution" that leads to defeat and disaster.

On the third day, the congress turned into the deliberations of national and organizational matters. First on the agenda was the presentation of the EPLF's message to our congress. The message which besides reaffirming the EPLF's capitulationist line contained a statement warning us to abandon our struggle against Soviet revisionism. Our congress received the EPLF's message with anger, and in a glaring contrast to previous EPLF's messages to our past congresses, there was not even the slightest sound of applause when the message was read.

The EPLF leadership's opportunist line was further elucidated when AESNA's Central Committee presented its political report, which not only summed up the international, national as well as organizational developments of the past year, but also detailed in great length the vigorous internal ideological, political and organizational struggles of the past year and a half between our mass organization and the EPLF leadership on major and crucial questions of strategy and tactics of the Eritrean national democratic revolution.

The EPLF opportunist line was unmasked thoroughly and exposed definitely in the political report and the rigorous discussion that followed it. Assessing the present grave situation facing the Eritrean revolution, the political report also exposed the counterrevolutionary alliance of the U.S.S.R.-led revisionist

forces with the Ethiopian fascist junta as well as the counter-revolutionary maneuvers of the U.S. imperialists.

The congress then proceeded to sum-up the intensive internal ideological, political and organizational struggle between our mass organization and the EPLF leadership, the history and goals of our peoples revolution as well as the counter-revolutionary alliance of the Soviet Union and its lackeys with the Ethiopian fascist Dergue against the just, popular and revolutionary war of liberation of the Eritrean people. The 9th congress also assessed thoroughly the ideological and political danger the capitulation of the EPLF leadership to the Soviet revisionists poses to the Eritrean people's strategic questions of national salvation, independence and democracy.

Following this thorough summation of the Eritrean revolution, its many twists and turns, its enemies who come in all forms and colors, its rich experience of struggle and the gallant Eritrean masses indomitable will to fight and sacrifice, the historic 9th congress unanimously resolved to condemn and expose the capitulationist line pursued by the EPLF leadership and sever all links with it and, accordingly to change our name to Eritreans for Liberation in North America (EFLNA).

Moreover, the 9th congress also gave a telling blow to all the capitulationists within our ranks. That this was so could be seen from the post-congress activities of the careerist, and other opportunist elements in our organization that were thrown into panic and reactionary hysteria by our resolutions. Noting that revolutionaries should fight opportunism and imperialism with one and the same blow, our organization once again reaffirmed its resolve to wage a determined, resolute and persistent struggle against this capitulationist and defeatist tendency inside the organization in all spheres of our activities as part and parcel of our national struggle against right opportunism, capitulationism and defeatism in our revolution as well as in the world wide struggle against imperialism, revisionism and all reaction.

The 9th congress will be remembered as yet another significant milestone in the militant history of our mass organizations in particular and that of our people in general in the struggle not only against foreign enemies but also their local puppets. Through their revolutionary experience of the past, the Eritrean people have a deep understanding of the long and arduous road of liberation, of its many twists and turns, and the

winds of betrayal and treachery. The fierce struggle the Eritrean revolutionaries and the broad masses have been waging for the last decade against the reactionary ELF leadership and the treacherous Sabbe Clique is one case in point. The heroic Eritrean masses have a rich, glorious and revolutionary experience in exposing and combating such opportunism and treachery in whatever form it might come. The regrouping of the democratic forces in 1970 and their subsequent consolidation, represented the crowning victory of the revolutionary line over the reactionary ELF line which dominated the Eritrean struggle for over a decade since the launching of the armed struggle in 1961. And today the gallant Eritrean fighters and the broad toiling masses, better prepared to combat such treachery, will surely bury the capitulationists and other opportunists, along with U.S.-led imperialism, Zionism, Soviet-led revisionism, Ethiopian colonialism and all reaction. With this confident revolutionary conviction, the historic congress came to a triumphant end with the militants more determined and better prepared for struggle and the few cowardly opportunist elements amidst us skulking and spinning conspiracies against the very resolutions they themselves voted for.

The 9th congress was then formally concluded with an evening commemorating the 17th anniversary of the Eritrean armed struggle which was attended by over 1000 Eritreans and non-Eritreans. With the hall where the anniversary night was held vibrating with such slogans as "Our homeland with our blood", "Down with the capitulationist leaders of the EPLF and ELF", "Death to Imperialism, Revisionism and all reaction", the audience was informed of our historic congress's resolutions and the capitulation of the "leaders" of the Eritrean revolution. EFLNA also asked all friends of the Eritrean revolution to closely follow the situation in Eritrea, support our peoples' struggle for genuine independence and peoples democracy, expose the defeatist line of the "leaders" of the Eritrean revolution and condemn the fascist Dergue and its imperialist-revisionist masters.

EFLNA'S 9th congress was a triumphant congress. It was a congress characterized by vigorous class struggle and utmost seriousness. The correct line was further consolidated and the unity of our organization strengthened. The 9th congress passed important resolutions whose impact on the Eritrean revolution will be great. Following are therefore the resolutions that were unanimously passed at our 9th congress.

POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

EPLF LEADERSHIP

I. Having capitulated to the intimidation and pressures of the revisionist Soviet Union and its lackeys for its own bourgeois class interest, the EPLF leadership is covering up for the Soviet Union and other revisionist countries' aggression and expansion in our country in blatant collusion with the Ethiopian colonialists and U.S.-led imperialism, Zionism and internal reaction. The EPLF leadership presents the revisionist Soviet Union and its puppets as socialists and strategic allies of our revolution. It presents the antagonistic contradiction between them and our revolution as a contradiction within the revolutionary camp that can be resolved by negotiations. Applying this counter-revolutionary strategy into practice, the EPLF leadership has reversed the position of the enemies and friends of the Eritrean revolution, hence leading the struggle into a quagmire of reaction. (See Vanguard Vol. 3, No. 5, June, 1978).

II. Ethiopian colonialism in Eritrea, fascism in Ethiopia cannot exist without the alliance of the Ethiopian state with imperialism, Zionism, Soviet-led revisionism and internal reaction.

At present, although the fascist junta is further consolidating its ties with Soviet-led revisionism, it has not yet broken off relations with U.S.-led imperialism, Zionism and reaction. However, it can at any time in the future limit its relations, with Soviet-led revisionism only, breaking all ties with U.S.-led imperialism. Conversely, it can develop its ties with U.S.-led imperialism breaking off all relations with Soviet-led revisionism. Hence, it is only by relying either on U.S.-led imperialism, Soviet-led revisionism or both that the Ethiopian state can continue its colonial rule in Eritrea and its fascist dictatorship over the Ethiopian people.

Nevertheless, the EPLF leadership, forced by its own bourgeois class interest, has presented the revisionist Soviet Union and its puppets who are objectively standing against our revolution as socialists and strategic allies of our revolution. It has declared the fascist Ethiopian state as anti-imperialist and as having broken off all ties with imperialism, Zionism and all

reaction while it has not. (Vanguard, special issue, July 1978, Vol. 3, No. 7).

Therefore, the EPLF leadership,

a) by denying the link between Ethiopian colonialism in Eritrea with imperialism and revisionism has in fact liquidated the colonial essence of the Eritrean question (it has claimed no ties between Ethiopian colonialism and imperialism and revisionism)

b) has, in fact, condemned as counter-revolutionary the democratic struggle of the oppressed Ethiopian peoples against the fascist Dergue and its masters (it claims the junta is anti-imperialist and anti-reaction)

III. Violating flagrantly the principle which states that "our revolution sits down for negotiation with the Ethiopian rulers only when they recognize the self-determination (independence) of the Eritrean people", a pre-condition which our people, who realizing that they can attain independence only by means of force and not compromises, wrote with their blood 17 years ago and reiterated it in clear terms at the EPLF's First Congress,

The EPLF leadership

a) has called upon the Ethiopian rulers (the fascist Dergue) to sit down for negotiations without preconditions.

b) has in fact sat down with the fascist Dergue in East Germany through the "mediation" of the East German revisionists. Hence by placing Eritrea's independence as the subject of compromise it has objectively betrayed, and is working hard to liquidate the cause of independence the Eritrean people have been fighting for all along.

c) has betrayed our revolution and renounced the armed method of struggle by stating:

--the antagonistic contradiction between our revolution and Ethiopian colonialism and its sustainers modern revisionism, imperialism, Zionism and internal reaction should be resolved by peaceful means instead of through the force of arms and

--by officially declaring that "the continuation or the further intensification" of the just armed struggle for liberation our people waged for the past 17 years and are still waging unrelentlessly "is not for the interest of the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia".

a) has violated the democratic rights of all members of the EPLF by making a reactionary attempt to impose, through deception and threats, the openly counter-revolutionary strategy and resolution it is charting, without conducting any studies, consultations and dialogues among the masses of fighters and mass organizations

b) has violated the democratic rights of our organization, despite our strict observance of democratic centralism:

--because, without notifying our organization, it prevented the circulation of our publications among the masses and fighters instead of distributing them, along with its own views.

--because it ignored the views and objections that were made repeatedly by our organization and instead of responding in a democratic and scientific way attempted to impose its incorrect, unscientific and counter-revolutionary analysis on our organization through deception and threats.

Thus the congress, realizing that the EPLF leadership is treacherous and counter-revolutionary, resolved to strongly condemn it.

ELF LEADERSHIP

1. We recognize it to be an out and out reactionary that has never represented the masses.

2. We realize that it has become an open agent of the revisionist Soviet Union and is committing counter-revolutionary crimes, and betrayals over our revolution and people in alliance with the not yet exposed counter-revolutionary EPLF leadership.

Therefore, the congress, realizing that the ELF leadership is treacherous and counter-revolutionary, resolved to strongly condemn it.

"THIRD FORCE"

The congress strongly condemns the treacherous and counter-revolutionary Sabbe Clique for its backward and divisive exhortation and its activities to create a "third force" to strangle the Eritrean revolution using the fund and material collected in the name of the Eritrean people and for its ties with U.S.-led imperialism and reactionary Arab countries. The congress fully supports the opposition and condemnation voiced by the entire Eritrean people and the fighters of the EPLF and ELF against this traitor and counter-revolutionary clique and calls upon them to persist on it.

TO THE FIGHTERS OF THE EPLF

The congress hails the heroic and relentless struggle and the unprecedented victories the fighters of the EPLF are scoring against Ethiopian colonialism and its sustainers, U.S.-led imperialism, Zionism, the Soviet Union, Cuba and other revisionist countries as well as internal reaction. While encouraging them to persist on the armed struggle until our people attain their full independence, the congress calls upon them:

a) to condemn and expose the counter-revolutionary leadership of the EPLF which, for the sake of its own bourgeois class interest and acting in alliance with the counter-revolutionary leadership of the ELF, as a running dog of Soviet revisionism, is working feverishly to have the Eritrean people capitulate in front of their enemies.

b) to struggle together with the fighters of the ELF against the two treacherous leaderships (EPLF, ELF) by lining them parallel with the internal reaction and Ethiopian colonialism and its sustainers.

TO ALL MASS ORGANIZATIONS OF EPLF

The congress calls upon all the mass organizations of EPLF to condemn and expose the counter-revolutionary leadership of the EPLF and the counter-revolutionary ELF leadership, for their attempt to force the Eritrean people to capitulate in front of their enemies.

TO ALL FIGHTERS OF ELF

The congress hails the heroic and relentless struggle and the victories the fighters of the ELF are scoring against Ethiopian colonialism and its sustainers, U.S.-led imperialism, Zionism, Soviet Union, Cuba, and other revisionist countries and internal reaction. While encouraging them to persist on the armed struggle until our people attain full independence, the congress calls upon them:

a. to condemn and expose the counter-revolutionary ELF leadership which for the sake of its own class interest, and acting in alliance with the counter-revolutionary EPLF leadership, as a running dog of Soviet revisionism, is working feverishly to have the Eritrean people capitulate in front of their enemies.

b. to struggle together with the fighters of the EPLF against the two treacherous leaderships (EPLF, ELF) by lining them parallel with the internal reaction and Ethiopian colonialism and its sustainers.

TO THE ENTIRE ERITREAN MASSES

The congress calls upon the broad Eritrean masses to condemn and struggle against the counter-revolutionary leaderships of EPLF and ELF, along with the primary enemies, because they have for their own class interest capitulated to the revisionist Soviet Union and betrayed the just and anti-colonial struggle for which the Eritrean people rose in arms and have shed their blood for the last 17 years by attempting to divert the Eritrean people from the correct revolutionary path of liberation (protracted armed struggle).

TO ALL ERITREAN MARXIST-LENINISTS

The congress calls upon all Eritrean Marxist-Leninists:

a) to be in the forefront of the broad masses and fighters in exposing and condemning the treacherous leaderships of the EPLF and ELF which are working actively to put our people and revolution under the control of the Soviet revisionists and its puppets.

b) to vigorously and persistently work to fulfill their historic mission, realizing that it is only a vanguard party of the proletariat that can safeguard the gains of the revolution attained through unparalleled sacrifice and struggle of our

people and to save and guarantee the continuity of our revolution by extricating it from the quagmire of modern revisionism and enable our people to attain full independence and liberation.

ETHIOPIA

The congress strongly condemns

a) the fascist military government of Ethiopia who utilizing its ties with U.S. imperialism, European imperialist countries and Zionist Israel, and the military, economic and political support from revisionist Soviet Union, Cuba and other revisionist countries is pursuing the policy of:

--colonial and expansionist designs

--unleashing fascistic repression against the Eritrean people

--attempts to pit the Ethiopian peasant masses, through compulsion and deception, against the Eritrean masses under various labels ("voluntary army", "people's militia", "flame", "liberation army", etc.)

--we also condemn the fascist junta for -- its conspiracy of "peaceful solution" designed to cover-up its defeats, to confuse the people of Eritrea, Ethiopia and the world and to split the Eritrean revolution.

--the total denial of the democratic rights of the broad Ethiopian masses and the fascistic repression, massacres and terrorism it is perpetrating against progressive Ethiopians.

a) The congress supports the struggle of the Ethiopian masses and their progressive organizations to smash the existing fascist regime and build a people's democratic state in its place.

b) We support all the progressive and democratic movements of the oppressed nationalities in Ethiopia.

c) We condemn the counter-revolutionary activities of the feudalists and other reactionaries.

SOVIET UNION AND CUBA

The congress condemns the revisionist Soviet Union, its puppet revisionist countries, parties and organizations realizing that they are part of the camp of counter-revolution and for:

a) supplying the fascist Dergue with arms, mercenary troops, economic, political, ideological and diplomatic support to crush the just and revolutionary national liberation struggle of the Eritrean masses and liquidate the democratic struggle of the Ethiopian masses.

b) the counter-revolutionary role they are playing on the political, ideological, military and economic fields against the socialist countries, the national liberation struggles and the international communist movement.

The congress, realizing that without struggling against right opportunism, and revisionism one cannot fight colonialism and imperialism, resolves to fight modern revisionism in all fields.

INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

The congress:

a) condemns the reactionary attempts of the counter-revolutionary camp, led by the U.S. imperialists and Soviet revisionists, to crush the national liberation movements in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa.

b) supports the national liberation struggles of the Zimbabwean, Azanian and Namibian peoples.

c) supports the heroic struggle of the people of Palestine against imperialism, Zionism, revisionism and for the establishment of a democratic Palestine. It strongly condemns the Sadat treachery, which is concocted by imperialists, revisionists and their puppets, against the Palestinian revolution and the struggle of the rest of the oppressed Arab peoples.

d) supports the revolutionary struggle of the people of Oman against imperialism, its client state of Kabus and the Iranian aggression.

e) supports the national liberation struggle of the people of Western Sahara.

f) supports the national liberation struggle of the people of East Timor.

g) supports the national liberation struggles in Southeast Asia (Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, etc.).

h) supports the struggle of the Puerto Rican people for independence and liberation.

i) supports the struggle of the people of the world in general and that of Africa, Asia and Latin America in particular against colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism and revisionism.

j) supports the struggle of the revolutionary and democratic forces in the capitalist countries in general and that of the workers movement and the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed nationalities in the United States in particular.

k) expresses its gratitude to all countries and organizations that support the Eritrean revolution.

l) calls upon all socialist and progressive countries and organizations to oppose the fascist Dergue and support the just struggle of the Eritrean people.

With the spirit of revolutionary vigor, EFLNA has set out to thoroughly implement these revolutionary resolutions. As a first step, we have published a document entitled Eritrea: Revolution or Capitulation in which the basic differences we hold with the EPLF leadership are underlined.

The resolutions passed at EFLNA's 9th congress deal with the burning questions of our revolution and the concrete condition prevailing in our country. The present situation in Eritrea necessitates the clear identification of the friends and enemies of our revolution, a stiff resistance to the large scale Soviet-Ethiopian aggression by preparing the masses militarily, politically and ideologically and firmly upholding the banner of protracted people's war to achieve complete national independence. The Soviet revisionists have openly declared themselves enemies of our revolution and are in collaboration with the Ethiopian fascist junta engaged in a genocidal campaign to drown our people's struggle in blood. In light of this, our people's revolution is met with the task of identifying the Soviet-led modern revisionists as one of the primary

enemies of our revolution and put up a resolute struggle against them militarily, politically and ideologically. This is indisputably the burning question of our revolution. The masses having vividly witnessed the ugly face of Soviet revisionism with their own eyes have questioned its "socialism", and have developed a deep hatred towards it. The objective condition in our revolution, the sentiment and demand of the masses thus, demands the question of the Soviet revisionism as our enemy to be taken up for solution.

However, the supposedly leader of the Eritrean revolution -- the EPLF leadership -- has failed to appropriately answer the burning question and is instead following a capitulationist line by declaring Soviet revisionism "the strategic ally" of the Eritrean revolution. Consequently, the EPLF leadership has also made other major errors on questions of principle and strategy. Denying the fascist nature of the Dergue it has begun to regard it an anti-imperialist regime. Furthermore declaring "the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia is not in the interests" of both the peoples of the two countries, it has stated its willingness to sit for negotiations with the fascist Dergue without precondition.

Basing ourselves on these fundamental differences we hold with the EPLF leadership, we have resolved to condemn it in our 9th congress. We took this correct decision after making a thorough study of the questions that separate us with the EPLF leadership on the basis of a concrete assessment of the situation in our struggle (which through delegates we constantly made an eye witness account of) as well as summing up our experience with the EPLF and the internal struggle we waged. We have acted in accordance with the objective condition of our revolution and after exhausting all methods of internal struggle.

The questions we have raised are timely questions which our people are through bitter experience raising. In standing bold against the capitulationist line of the EPLF leadership, we are therefore marching forward shoulder to shoulder with our people.

We have called on the broad masses of our people and the heroic fighters to be on guard and not to fall prey to the trap of the traitors. Through 17 years of persistent armed struggle and enormous sacrifices our people have scored unprecedented victories bringing the just struggle closer to its complete victory. By imposing their capitulationist line on the fighters and the

people the leaders of the two fronts (EPLF and ELF) are, however, trying to snatch away from them the fruits earned through a lot of sacrifice. We have thus called on our people, with Eritrean Marxist-Leninists in the forefront, to defend the gains of the revolution, to persevere on the glorious road of armed struggle they have been persisting on and close the door for capitulation by exposing the capitulationists and forcefully directing all their guns against all the internal and external enemies.

EFLNA's 9th congress has resolved to expose and wage an uncompromising struggle against the line of capitulation which constitutes the main internal danger in the ranks of our liberation movement. Against our external enemies, Ethiopian colonialism, Soviet-led modern revisionism, U.S. imperialism, Zionism as well as their internal appendages, EFLNA will put up a tough struggle. The 9th Congress has a clear path forward -- the path of struggle through which our mass organization will be able to contribute its share to our people's revolutionary struggle.