

**REVOLUTION
IN
ERITREA**

**The Ethiopian Military Dictatorship
and
Imperialism**

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Imperialism Shifts Focus

Colonialism is inexorably bound up with the history of capitalism. Starting in the period of primary accumulation of capital and expanding during the era of pre-monopoly capitalism, it reached its peak and decline in the epoch of imperialism.

Before the First World War, imperialism enjoyed worldwide hegemony. The big imperialist powers had divided the world up among themselves. The great October Revolution of 1917 in Russia ushered in a new era of socialist and national-democratic revolutions and gave a tremendous impetus to the national liberation movement of the colonized and semi-colonized peoples. The liberation of Eastern Europe and the brilliant victories of the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions dealt serious blows to imperialism and inspired the toiling masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America to intensify their anti-colonialist struggles. Imperialism was forced to change tactics by replacing colonialism with neocolonialism that allows nominal independence. Many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America today are found under this new form of imperialist domination.

It is in the nature of imperialism for a particular region to be the centre of a fierce struggle between the world revolution and world reaction in any specific time. During the last 30 years, such a centre was Southeast Asia in general and the Vietnamese revolution in particular. Today, it is the Middle East in general and its southern flank in particular.

It is essential that revolutionary forces be aware of this, lest they be caught by surprise or, worse still, become imperialism's unwitting ally. Imperialism has already begun to operate according to a definite plan in this region. It has been decisively and totally defeated in Indochina. The brilliant victories of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have made tremendous contribution to the struggle of the oppressed peoples and nations against imperialism. The complete liberation of Cambodia and Vietnam is a great victory for all democratic and revolutionary forces throughout the world.

The world revolution should now carefully look at the struggle in the southern flank of the Middle East. The recent events in the region are not isolated, coincidental facts. They are parts of one intricate imperialist *jigsaw*. The war in Eritrea, the events in Ethiopia, the harassment of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (P.D.R.Y.), the machinations to contain the Palestinian revolution, the Iranian invasion of Dhofar, and the concerted imperialist movements in the Arabian Gulf cannot be fully understood otherwise. These events are clearly an orchestrated preliminary phase of a protracted war between progress and reaction.



Eritrea occupies a strategic location in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East:

Area: 120,000 km.2

Population: 3.5 millions

Capital: Asmara

Main Ports: Massawa and Assab

Main Languages: Tigre and Tigrinya

Other Languages: Afar, Arabic, Baria, Bazen, Beja, Bilen, Saho.

With its military defeat in Indochina, U.S. imperialism had devised the policy of "Vietnamization" — arming local traitors and puppets to carry out counter-revolutionary wars on its behalf. This policy has been shattered in its first application. The treacherous regimes in Phnom Penh and Saigon have crumbled. The Lao people have virtually taken control of their destiny. Yet, U.S. imperialism stubbornly refuses to learn from the total defeat of its policy of direct and indirect aggression. The Mayaguez provocation demonstrates its extremely bellicose and aggressive nature. In the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, U.S. imperialism continues to arm the reactionary regimes of Israel, Iran, Ethiopia, etc. to serve as its regional watchdogs against national liberation movements and social revolutions.

U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism have been conspiring to undermine the Palestinian revolution. The strivings of U.S. imperialism to settle the "Arab-Israeli" conflict is primarily directed at isolating the Palestinian people's struggle and preventing the further radicalization of the toiling Arab masses.

U.S. imperialism has also been heavily arming the Iranian puppet regime to serve as its gendarme in the Arabian Gulf region. Here, the people of Oman have been waging a war of national liberation against the regime of Sultan Qaboos. The puppet regime and its imperialist masters have failed to break the heroic determination of the Omani people, fighting under the leadership of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (P.F.L.O.). This has led the U.S. to instigate Iranian military aggression against the Omani revolution. The Shah's regime has annexed Omani islands to its empire. The Iranian invasion force of 30,000 troops in Oman's Dhofar province is also harassing and provoking the P.D.R.Y. Furthermore, the U.S. has recently acquired the Omani island of Masira as a base from which it can reinforce its imperialist domination of, and counterrevolutionary subversion in, the region.

Eritrea is located at the cross-roads of the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, which contains over two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves. It is an African country with close ties with the Arab World. With over 1,000 km. of coastline along the Red Sea, Eritrea occupies "one of the most important strategic areas in the world" at the entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. The reopening of the Suez Canal further enhances this strategic significance. Eritrea also possesses abundant marine wealth, oil, natural gas, copper, potash, gold iron ore and other minerals. This economic and strategic significance of Eritrea and its neighbors in the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf has thrust them into the centre of armed confrontation between reactionary forces led by imperialism and progressive forces led by the national liberation movements.

To secure its strategic and economic interests in Eritrea, U.S. imperialism, in collaboration with its zionist agents, has used its stooge, the Ethiopian feudal regime, to suppress the aspirations of the Eritrean people for national liberation. Israel maintains the

Eritrean islands of Fatmah and Haleb as naval bases and provides counter-insurgency training for Ethiopian army commandoes fighting the Eritrean revolution. The U.S. maintains the Kagnev Military Communications Base in the Eritrean capital of Asmara which, at an altitude of 7,600 feet near the equator, is interference-free and indispensable to the worldwide military intelligence and spying system of U.S. imperialism. In return, the U.S. has been the main prop of the Ethiopian regime and armed forces. Since 1953, Ethiopia has been receiving more than half of all U.S. military aid to Africa. The Ethiopian army, air force and navy are U.S. trained and equipped. Without this vital U.S. support Ethiopia could not have occupied and waged its war of aggression against Eritrea for the last 14 years.

However, even this massive U.S. military assistance could not stave off its defeat. In fact, the position of the Ethiopian occupation army in Eritrea has deteriorated so much that the military junta had urgently requested the U.S. for, and has been receiving, emergency air-lift of arms and ammunition. Thus, U.S. imperialism has been stepping up its military supplies to the Ethiopian occupation army waging a war of aggression and genocide against the Eritrean people.

World imperialism, headed by the U.S., has always tried to reverse the irresistible motion of history toward independence, liberation and revolution. U.S. intervention in Indochina dates back to 1945 when it supported and financed France to recolonize Vietnam. Later, in the 1960's, it committed direct aggression by deploying over half a million troops in Vietnam.

Massive U.S. support notwithstanding, Portuguese fascism and colonialism have been shattered by the struggle of the peoples of Guinea (Bissau), Mozambique and Angola for national liberation as well as the democratic struggles of the Portuguese people. The same fate awaits U.S. imperialism and its stooges in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Azania and Eritrea.

Today, despite its military defeats and reverses in Indochina and elsewhere in the world, its intervention in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa has become the main threat to peace and progress. The Eritrean revolution and the other revolutions in this strategic region should thus be viewed in the overall context of the real and growing danger of U.S. imperialist intervention and aggression.

History of Aggression and Resistance

The history of Eritrea is an integral part of the History of the Third World. The Eritrean people have been in constant struggle against cruel social oppression and foreign aggression. Due to its strategic location, Eritrea has been a victim of colonial aggression and imperialist plunder for centuries. The people of Eritrea have

vigorously and heroically fought the Ottoman Turks (1557-1865), the Egyptian expansionists (1865-1876), and the Italian (1869-1941) and British (1941-1952) colonialists respectively.

A large part of modern Eritrea, along with parts of the Tigray (the present day northernmost Ethiopian province) constituted the Axumite Kingdom. This old African civilization flourished from the 4th century B.C. to the 7th century A.D. The ruins, obelisks and other historic monuments throughout south-central Eritrea and northern Tigray are a living tribute to the hard labour and great skill of the slaves and serfs of the day. After the collapse and disintegration of the kingdom in the 8th century, Eritrea became the "melting pot" of successive waves of invaders and emigrants from what is today northern Sudan, north-central Ethiopia, eastern Egypt and the Arabian peninsula. In time, several rival ministates, or rather fiefdoms, arose and fought each other in pursuit of dominion and hegemony.* These internal conflicts provided opportune conditions for foreign aggression.

In 1557, the Ottoman Turks occupied the northern coast of Eritrea, including the important port of Massawa. At the same time, the Fung of the Sudan invaded and plundered the western lowlands, both the Fung and the Turks made several attempts to occupy the Eritrean highlands; but they were always repulsed, their expeditionary forces were often annihilated right away or, at times, ~~and~~ ~~stay~~

The opening of the Suez ~~canal~~ ~~in 1869~~ enhanced the importance of the Red Sea in international trade and communications and greatly increased the strategic significance of Eritrea. In the same year, Italian missionaries and trading companies established outposts in Assab. Egypt, under British protection, took Massawa from the Turks and became the overlord of the coastal plains and western lowlands while its incursions into the plateau met stiff resistance.

Coveted as the gateway to the interior on the one hand, and maritime access on the other, the Eritrean plateau was often the battleground of not only local resistance and foreign invasion but also contending foreign armies. From time to time, local chieftans arose, expanded their domains and plundered the people. Powerful warlords of what is today northern Ethiopia successively intrigued and even dispatched troops to dominate it. The most powerful ones managed to plunder and exact tribute from the people. But, except for a brief period (1880-1889), none succeeded in totally subduing the people and imposing effective control on the plateau.

* There were five Beja Kingdoms (Naqis, Balin, Bazan, Jarin and Q'ata) in the northern highlands, the western and coastal plains and the Gash-Setit Basin of Eritrea. The "Me're Bahr" (land of the Sea) or "Marab Melash" (Beyond the Marab) thrived on the plateau.

By then, the European scramble for the colonial partition of Africa was in full swing. Anglo-French colonial rivalry in the Horn of Africa became more intense. Eager to counter French expansion from Djibouti but preoccupied with the mounting struggle of the Sudanese people against Anglo-Egyptian domination, the British invited Italy to occupy Massawa and invade the hinterland.

From the setting of the first Italian beachhead at Assab in 1869 to the establishment of the Italian colony of Eritrea in 1889, the people waged heroic, if only uncoordinated, localized resistance. Their indomitable spirit of independence, developed and nurtured in the struggle against external aggression and plunder, rallied them to fight and resist. Besieged by expansionist incursions from the south and colonial aggression from the east, Eritrea became a graveyard of invading as well as contending foreign troops.* Yet, the gallant resistance of the Eritrean people was finally overcome by the superior weaponry of Italian colonialism which was aided and abetted by the British imperialists.

Just like the other countries in Africa, Eritrea was forged together as a nation and the process of its economic, political and cultural integration began under European colonialism. Italian colonialism set out to create a European settler colony, ruthlessly exploited Eritrean resources and manpower, made Eritrea a base for furthering its imperialist ambitions in Africa, and used the Eritrean people as cannon fodder in its colonial aggression against the peoples of Libya, Somalia and Ethiopia. These colonial objectives required a certain level of economic transformation (mainly infrastructural) that brought forth new social forces, conscious of the necessity of organized struggle for national liberation.

Thus, the Eritrean people waged stiff resistance against the brutal colonial, social and racial oppression of Italian fascism. Eritrean resistance significantly contributed to the British (allied) victory over Italian forces in 1941. However, the British reneged on their wartime pledge of supporting Eritrean independence and merely replaced the Italians as the new colonial oppressors. British colonialism not only ruthlessly plundered Eritrea's resources and looted its productive assets but also strove to divide the people and destroy the country through an insidious plan of partitioning it between Ethiopia and the Sudan. To this end, it incited and fanned religious antagonisms.

The Eritrean people vehemently opposed this and all subsequent imperialist schemes and demanded the right to self-determination. The country's economic and political integration and the

* To cite a few cases: an Egyptian invasion force of 20,000 troops was annihilated in Kenel in 1875; another 20,000 was routed at Gura in 1876; an Italian expeditionary force dispatched inland from Beilul (Denkel) was totally annihilated in 1881; an Italian garrison of 500 troops was completely wiped out at Dogali in 1887.

people's experience of a common struggle against colonial oppression had already forged a solid bond of national consciousness and unity. In the mid-1940's, the struggle for independence gained momentum, as the rise in political awareness among the masses allowed the emergence of political parties and the beginning of organized struggle.

Yet, imperialism conspired to frustrate the Eritrean people's just demands and aspirations for independence and democracy. It hatched a plot to ensure control of strategic Eritrea and provide its Ethiopian neocolony with "access to the sea". In 1950, the then U.S.-dominated United Nations passed a U.S.-sponsored resolution (390 A/V) to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia. It was thus that Eritrea was forced to enter into a pseudo-federation with the landlocked feudal Ethiopian Empire in 1952. This imperialist instigated federation was contrary to the wishes and legitimate aspirations of the Eritrean people for national independence.

Yet, even the meagre democratic provisions of the Eritrean Constitution could not coexist with the absolute tyranny of the archaic Ethiopian regime. Eritrean national autonomy was gradually subverted and finally done away with. The Eritrean people resisted the crude suppression of their democratic liberties and the cruel violation of their human rights through peaceful means, including protest demonstrations and petitions to the U.N. In 1958, Eritrean workers staged a nationwide strike in protest of the continued subversion of Eritrean autonomy and the lowering of the Eritrean national flag. Continuing for four days, the strike paralyzed the neocolonial economy. The Ethiopian regime responded by brutally murdering or wounding over 550 striking workers.

This barbaric massacre of unarmed workers signified the futility of further peaceful resistance. Eritrean patriots organized the clandestine Eritrean Liberation Movement in preparation for armed struggle. However, fascistic repression virtually disorganized the movement by killing, jailing or terrorizing its leaders into exile. Finally, in 1962, adding insult to injury, the now deposed and disgraced regime of Emperor Haile Selassie unilaterally and illegally abrogated the federal resolution and forcibly annexed Eritrea, declaring it the "14th province of the Ethiopian Empire."

The federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, and its subsequent annexation, was dictated by the overriding interests of world imperialism, headed by the U.S. It did not reflect the wishes of the Eritrean people; nor did it represent the interests of the Ethiopian masses. Likewise, the Ethiopian occupation of Eritrea is now being maintained by the imperialists and zionists whose interests it serves. They have built military bases in this strategic country and are exploiting its rich natural resources and cheap labour.

Thus, for centuries on end colonialists, and now pro-imperialist African expansionists, have invaded Eritrea, erased its boundaries

and confiscated its wealth. They have tried to falsify its history, arrest its socio-economic development, and suppress the languages and cultural life of its people. In short, colonialism has been robbing the Eritrean people of their natural resources, the fruits of their labour and soil, their democratic and national rights, and their human dignity.

Naturally, the Eritrean people have consistently risen up to redress these historical injustices. Never in their history have they accepted foreign domination and oppression low-headed. Today, the Eritrean people are fighting to liberate their country from the clutches of Ethiopian colonialism, U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism. The present war of national liberation is therefore a continuation of the historic struggle of the Eritrean people against colonial domination and for national independence.

Armed Struggle Begins

The Eritrean people started the armed struggle in 1961, under the leadership of the Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.), after all possible peaceful avenues to independence were blocked. The struggles of the colonial and neocolonial peoples for independence have amply demonstrated that, in this epoch of declining imperialism, there can be no real decolonization by peaceful means.



September 1, 1961: the first shots reverberated, heralding the armed struggle for national liberation.

To be successful, however, these struggles must be rooted in the masses and guided by a correct political and ideological line. The axiom that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" has been proved by the Eritrean experience. Even though the launching of the armed struggle represented the deepest aspirations of the Eritrean people and enjoyed their wholehearted support, its leadership — the E.L.F. — lacked a correct revolutionary line. There were many internal contradictions. The reactionary leadership followed an opportunist line both at home and abroad.

At home, the leadership committed enormous crimes of murder and plunder against the masses as well as freedom fighters. It ceaselessly fanned religious, regional and national discord. Externally, the "line" of the Front varied with the political inclination of its audience. The Eritrean struggle was painted in the colour most suited to the predilections of this or that supporting regime.

In opposition, there arose a progressive voice demanding an end to these reactionary and divisive tactics. The democratic and progressive elements strove for the adoption of a correct revolutionary line and programme. From 1965 to 1970, a protracted, and bitter struggle was waged within the E.L.F. during which the struggle for national liberation suffered a number of setbacks. These struggles culminated in the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (E.P.L.F.) in April 1970.

The E.P.L.F. set out to unify all the progressive and democratic fighters who opposed the opportunist line and rejected the reactionary leadership of the General Command of the E.L.F. It established a democratic front and correctly defined the objectives of the Eritrean revolution, clarifying its minimum and maximum programmes. It has consistently called for a democratic dialogue to resolve the internal contradictions of the revolution. According to *Vanguard* (the monthly journal of the E.P.L.F., No. 8, July 1974), the present stage of national democratic revolution aims to liberate Eritrea from foreign domination and gain national independence. The Eritrean struggle is national because it unites all patriotic classes and nationalities in Eritrea against colonialism, imperialism and zionism and fights to regain their national rights. It is democratic because it represents the basic interests and aspirations of the toiling masses and struggles to attain their social liberation. Based on the alliance of workers and peasants and guided by proletarian ideology, the national democratic revolution is laying the foundation for the upcoming socialist transformation of Eritrean society.

On the other hand, the opportunist and reactionary "Revolutionary Council" (R.C.) clique of the E.L.F., unable to distinguish between the primary and secondary contradictions of the revolution, hence their correct and incorrect methods of resolution,

launched the civil war to liquidate the E.P.L.F. which it characterized as the "counter-revolution".* The incorrect line of the R.C. clique and its sectarian politics have split the ranks of the Eritrean struggle and caused it enormous harm. Hundreds of heroic combatants have been sacrificed and a great deal of materiel perished. It fostered divisiveness, hostility and alienation among the people. It gave the Ethiopian colonial regime badly needed breathing space, enabling its occupation troops to perpetrate more crimes of bombarding the countryside, destroying villages and massacring unarmed civilians. Undermining the unity and stalling the momentum of the revolution, the civil war has tremendously benefitted the enemies of Eritrean independence.

Despite the difficulties created by the civil war, the E.P.L.F. has been able to mobilize, organize and lead the masses in the struggle for liberation. To assure the success of the national democratic revolution, the E.P.L.F. persistently strives to raise the political consciousness and the ideological level of the fighters as well as the masses. It has wiped out illiteracy from among its fighters and launched a program of intensive political education to eliminate the backward sentiments that were the inevitable remnants of the sectarian politics of the E.L.F. It is laying the groundwork for a protracted war of national liberation on the basis of national unity and self-reliance, that is, primary reliance upon the energy and resources of the toiling masses of Eritrea. The E.P.L.F. has built a politically conscious people's army that is committed to the total eradication of all forms of foreign domination and social oppression — be it class, national or sex.

"Ethiopian Socialism"?

Summing up their experiences, today, the Eritrean people are more united than ever in their just struggle to drive out the Ethiopian colonialists and their imperialist-zionist backers. Relying upon their resources and persevering in armed struggle, they have cleared the Ethiopian occupation army from the countryside and confined it to a few bases and fortified camps in the cities. The Ethiopian mercenary army in Eritrea, even though still able to continue its ceaseless attacks on civilian targets, is thoroughly isolated and demoralized. Now in its 14th year, the Eritrean struggle has become the longest armed struggle for independence in Africa. Yet, it is little known and even less understood. What confuses many people is the nature of the enemy that the Eritrean

* The so-called "national congress" of the E.L.F. (November-December 1971) resolved to liquidate the E.P.L.F. and the Eritrean Liberation Forces (Obel) unless they rejoined it within a specific period of time. On February 22, 1972, the R.C. called for armed attack against the E.P.L.F. and initiated the Eritrean civil war the following month.

people are fighting against. Unlike most national liberation movements in Africa, they are not fighting a European settler or colonial power, but a reactionary African expansionist regime that has forcibly occupied^o their country and turned it into a base of imperialism and zionism. The reactionary, backward and puppet nature of Haile Selassie's regime has always been obvious. Today, however, the Eritrean people are confronted with a more insidious enemy — a reactionary military junta waving the banner of socialism.

Whether under Haile Selassie's autocracy or the new military regime, the toiling masses of Eritrea and Ethiopia have always faced the same enemies. The democratic struggles of the Ethiopian people and the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people together brought about the downfall of the old regime. Although the uprising of the Ethiopian masses was spontaneous, totally lacking in organization and leadership, its democratic spirit was enough to scare U.S. imperialism to instigate the military seizure of power.

The military, as an arm of the state apparatus, is always a class instrument of organized violence. It is the organ of armed repression which the classes holding state power employ to suppress and subjugate the other social classes. As such, the modern Ethiopian military — created and nurtured by the landed aristocracy as well as trained and equipped by the U.S. and Israel — has always been a reactionary tool defending the interests of feudalism and imperialism against those of the toiling masses. Steeped in the chauvinist and predominantly priestly and pro-imperialist ideology of the feudal, neocolonial state, the Ethiopian military has an ignominious record of brutal cruelty against all popular and democratic movements. Witness its savage and murderous campaigns against the Woyane peasant uprising in the 1940's, the Bale and Gojam peasant rebellions in the 1960's, the student movement since 1965, etc.

It is no wonder then that the present military movement has been anti-democratic and counter-revolutionary right from its inception. Coming to power disguised as the champion of the mass movement, it was, in reality, antagonistic to the basic demands of the masses. It started as a movement of the rank and file soldiers of the Ethiopian occupation army in Eritrea in February 1974. Instead of opposing the colonial war of aggression, like their Portuguese counterparts in Angola and Mozambique, they demanded higher pay and increased benefits for being the front line fighters defending "Ethiopia's unity". This initial movement spread rapidly, becoming the spearhead of the armed forces' revolt that, through a "creeping *coup d'etat*", took hold of state power.

Who are these men in uniform who have usurped state power and decreed socialism into existence as a result of a "bloodless

revolution" in Ethiopia? What class or classes do they represent and what is their ideological basis?

Seventy percent of the officers who have graduated from the Harar Military Academy since its founding come from the landed gentry, who are fast becoming capitalist farmers. The military officers presently in power and their allies in the bureaucracy constitute the right-wing stratum of the Ethiopian petty-bourgeoisie. Many of them, like the chairman* of the "Dergue"^{**} have been trained and groomed in the U.S. It is no secret that the military intervened to rescue the prevailing feudo-capitalist system from collapse. A member of the Dergue has stated:

We had offered the Emperor to place himself at the head of our movement — he refused. We reminded him of the Shah of Iran, who made a revolution from above, as his throne and land were endangered by a revolution from below — the old man didn't listen to reason. (Colonel Tessema Aba Derash as quoted in *Der Stern*, A West German Magazine)

Thus, the intervention of the military and its subsequent seizure of state power was aimed at preserving the system for imperialism and its local compradors by preempting the mass democratic movement. This explains why the junta's repressive violence has been directed with greater vehemence against the national and democratic movements than against the landlords. Essentially, then, the same exploitative system continues to operate, but not in the old way, as new power relations have set in. The mere transfer of state power has left the old feudal state machine (the military and the bureaucracy) intact as a repository of the power of the ruling classes and revitalized as an instrument of class oppression.

Once in power, the junta proclaimed the chauvinist slogan of "Ethiopia First" to dupe the masses and schemed to crush the very social forces whose struggles toppled the old regime. To this end, it decreed a fascist penal code. It swept aside and suppressed the trade union movement, the student movement and other democratic forces in the country and became a fascist military dictatorship. The Dergue's blatant rule of terror consists of its special penal laws, sham military tribunals, assassinations as well as summary executions of the opposition, without distinguishing between reactionary landlords and progressive intellectuals and workers.

While carrying out fascist repression in Ethiopia and a genocidal war of aggression in Eritrea, the junta had declared "Ethiopian Socialism" to deceive the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses and to confuse and swindle progressive world opinion.

The character of any regime can be accurately judged not by

* General Teferi Benti was Ethiopia's military attache in the U.S. for seven years.

** The provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia

its pronouncements alone; nor even by some of its actions taken in isolation; but fundamentally by the nature of the social forces and class interests that it represents. The nature of the state as an expression of irreconcilable class contradictions as well as its functions as the fulfillment of class interests must necessarily be considered, lest one falls victim to social demagoguery that tries to camouflage its reactionary essence by a barrage of revolutionary rhetoric. After all, even Nazi Germany was "national socialist" that had put many firms under state control.

Socialism is not a system that can be decreed into existence. In the era of imperialism, socialism can be established through either a proletarian revolution in the industrial capitalist nations or a national democratic revolution in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal nations. What is clear is that both processes require the forcible overthrow of the capitalist or feudo-capitalist modes of production and their attendant superstructures. Both roads necessitate the violent destruction of the existing state apparatus — the army and the bureaucracy — and its replacement by a new one in the service of the toiling classes. In short, socialism is necessarily the inevitable outcome of a violent protracted struggle of the oppressed and exploited classes and the embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Ethiopia is a backward country par excellence. The dominant mode of production is feudal, with the vast majority of the peasantry still condemned to servitude. More than 90% of its people live on subsistence. Over 60% of the peasantry are landless tenants who can be compelled by law to yield up to 75% of their produce to the landlord. The Ethiopian peasantry has persistently been subjected to periodic famines of alarming magnitude. There have been three major famine waves since 1958, with nearly one-half million peasants already decimated in the current one alone, which started in 1973. Literacy is less than 3%. There is only one doctor for every 80,000 people. The average life expectancy is 35 years.

The urban population is less than 5% with about 0.5% of the labour force engaged in wage labour. Still, unemployment in the cities is over 70%. With the small commercial and industrial sector dominated by multinational corporations (75% of all paid up capital is foreign) the economy is subjected to continued net capital outflow. The bulk of the wage-earning and salaried people suffer from rising taxes and spiraling consumer goods prices that are not accompanied by compensatory adjustments in purchasing power. Worse still, the continuing colonial war against the Eritrean national forces has been sapping Ethiopia's meagre resources and bringing it economic and financial ruin, throwing the regime ever deeper in its dependence on imperialism.

Besides, the Oromo, Somali, Tigray, Afar, Gurage, and other nationalities are ruthlessly oppressed by a pro-imperialist Amhara

ruling class. The Ethiopian regime not only subjugates the Somali people in the Haud and Ogaden regions but also continues to entertain expansionist ambitions over Djibouti and the Somali Democratic Republic. The regime also continues its forcible colonization of Eritrea, vowing to fight the forces of national liberation "to the last drop of blood".

How then can backward, feudal, expansionist Ethiopia transform itself into a socialist Ethiopia? Experience in China, Vietnam, the P.D.R.Y. and other countries shows that the Ethiopian people would have to wage a national democratic revolution, which would lay the foundation for the socialist transformation of their society. The national democratic revolution would be victorious only as a result of a protracted revolutionary struggle against feudalism, imperialism and bureaucrat capitalism. The national democratic revolution, as well as the subsequent socialist revolution, must be guided by the proletarian ideology of scientific socialism and based on the worker-peasant alliance. A people's democratic Ethiopia would also recognize the right of the Eritrean people to national independence.

The Dergue is ideologically bankrupt. Early in September when it deposed Haile Selassie, it put forward the fascist and chauvinist slogan of "Ethiopia First" and declared its intention to form an "anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-communist" regime. Three months later in December, the junta declared that its "political philosophy" was "Ethiopian Socialism". The declaration of December 20, 1974 states:

The political philosophy should spring from the culture and the soil of Ethiopia . . . and not be imported from abroad . . . (This) philosophy which emanates from our great religions which teach the equality of man, and from our tradition of living and sharing together, as well as from our history so replete with national sacrifice is *Hibrettesebawinet* (Ethiopian Socialism). In short: "Ethiopia Tikedem (First)" means *Hibrettesebawinet* (Ethiopian Socialism); *Hibrettesebawinet* means equality; self-reliance; the dignity of labour; the supremacy of the common good; and the indivisibility of Ethiopian unity."

A glaring self-exposure of the bankruptcy of "Ethiopian Socialism" which has nothing in common with scientific socialism. An "anti-capitalist and anti-communist" regime that views socialism as "humanism based on religious principles" cannot be a socialist one. Genuine socialism is based on: science, not religion; the experience of the toiling masses throughout the world, not the feudal traditions of Ethiopia; calls for the dictatorship of the exploited over the exploiting classes, not for abstract "equality", "common good", etc.; proclaims the right of nations and colonies to self-determination, not the forcible "unity" of a country.

Annexationism! The supremacy of the "common good"! These are the hallmarks of "Ethiopian Socialism", clearly attesting to its essential fascism. Fascism invariably arises at a moment of great national crisis, as the desperate response of the ruling classes to the revolutionary upsurge of the masses threatening their continued rule. It seizes and consolidates state power in gradual stages. Proclaiming the role of the "mitigator" of the class struggle, the state is then used to suppress all the revolutionary social forces. In the name of "the whole nation", it persecutes all opposition forces, cruelly crushing the popular, revolutionary movements so as to put an end to the state of unrest gripping the masses. Yet, it has the effrontery to portray its reactionary seizure of power as "revolution" against the old ruling classes for the "salvation of the nation".

Fascism may emerge and manifest itself in a variety of forms and use different ways in different countries, depending upon the concrete historical, economic, political and social conditions as well as the correlation of world forces. It may even impose its ruthless dictatorship in the name of "revolution and socialism" so as to swindle the masses by playing on their finest sentiments and revolutionary aspirations. It tries to attract them by demagogically appealing to their most urgent needs and demands. But, its essence is always and everywhere the same. It is rabidly chauvinist, annexationist and counter-revolutionary.

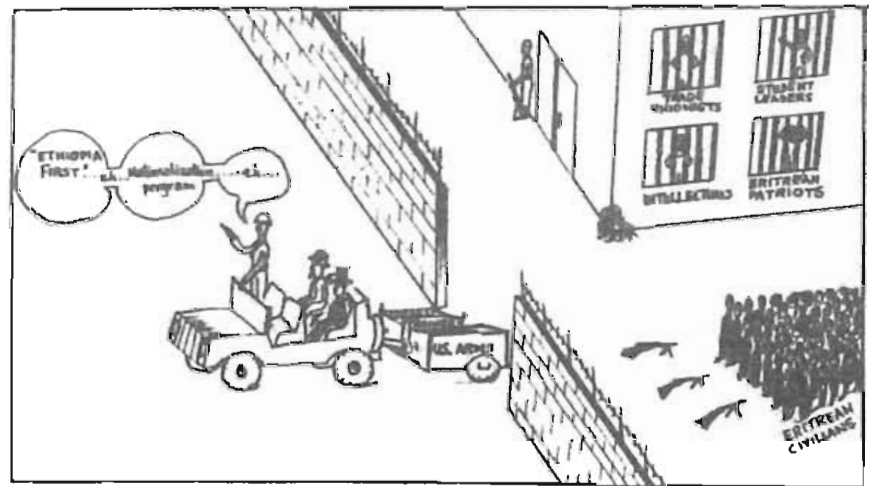
The seemingly progressive slogans and declarations of the Ethiopian military regime are thus so many words designed to deceive the broad masses of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples as well as progressive world opinion. The fact of the matter is that the military junta has succeeded, before the masses have been sufficiently revolutionized, in inflicting defeat on the popular movement and establishing a fascist dictatorship. Just like Nazism, it has the audacity to call itself "Ethiopian Socialism", though having nothing in common with socialism. "Ethiopian Socialism" is not merely petty bourgeois nationalism, it is vile chauvinism. Its true character cannot be concealed by its nauseating social and chauvinist demagogy. Indeed, such fascism, in the words of Dimitrov, constitutes "a government system of political banditry, a system of provocation and torture practiced upon the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. It is medieval barbarity and bestiality, it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations and countries. In foreign policy, fascism is chauvinism in its crudest form, fomenting the bestial hatred of other nations.

Thus, the reactionary, pro-imperialist and fascist nature of the Ethiopian regime becomes crystal clear when one looks at its practice. It has imposed its total political monopoly through the persecution and physical elimination of all opposition. The Dergue has deprived the Ethiopian masses of the basic democratic gains they had won after hard struggle. It has outlawed strikes and

protest demonstrations, suppressed the freedoms of speech, press and assembly, including the right to form political parties. It has dispersed the students, who are vocally opposed to it, to the country-side under the guise of spreading literacy among the peasantry. With the major contradictions that led to the February uprising unresolved, the Ethiopian people are still groaning under the ravages of famine, disease, unemployment and repression.

In a desperate effort to conceal its identity as the most hostile enemy of the Ethiopian people, the Dergue has announced sham reforms and unleashed a vicious campaign of anti-Eritrean propaganda. Perniciously inflaming their most backward and chauvinist prejudices, it strives to enlist the support of the oppressed masses and nationalities for its aggressive and annexationist war in Eritrea. Thus, not only is the colonial war a terrible human and economic burden to the Ethiopian toiling masses, but also one of the fundamental causes of their continued enslavement. For, as Marx said, "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations".

With orchestrated fanfare, the Dergue has decreed the nationalization of all rural land and certain firms as part of its declaration of Ethiopian Socialism. To be sure, social change (i.e., land reform) has been an urgent need and the most burning desire of



The Eritrean and Ethiopian masses are the real victims of imperialist-backed "Ethiopian Socialism"!

the masses. With over 80% of the land concentrated in the hands of the royal family, the church and the aristocracy, Ethiopian society in general and the land-hungry peasantry in particular have long been crying for radical change. The monstrous backwardness of rural Ethiopia, the alarming famine situation of the entire peasantry, has its root causes in the landlordism of the south and the fragmented peasant allotments of the north.* The devastating famine is in fact a product of not only the high concentration of land ownership but also the superimposition of the market economy on the feudal mode of production.

This situation obviously demands drastic change. The central question here is what kind of change, by whom and how. Definitely, revolutionary change in Ethiopia presupposes the liberation of the peasantry from the twin fetters of feudalism and imperialism. This means first and foremost the abolition of the landlord's holdings and all medieval forms of land ownership in the countryside and its distribution among the peasants. Yet, land nationalization and its parcelling out to individual peasants alone can neither liberate nor significantly improve the lot of the peasantry. The real liberation of the peasantry can come about only when agrarian reform is carried out with the full participation of the peasant masses as part of an overall policy of social transformation.

But, fascists also pose as the champions of land reform and nationalization. Ascending in times of great turmoil and social ferment, they seize state power and proclaim seemingly radical and progressive measures designed to mute the aroused expectations of the toiling masses, dilute their struggle and stifle their movement. After all, it was Mussolini who declared:

"In a few months, the whole of Italy will be in our power . . . and it will be entrusted to us the task of accomplishing the unique revolution that is possible in Italy: the agrarian revolution which must give the land to the tiller".

Of course, this is the kind of "people's revolution from above", "nationalization", etc., that the Dergue, the Ethiopian fascist military junta, has been talking about.

It is true that, to the extent that state appropriation of the land eliminates the landlord's monopoly, land nationalization could undermine the old feudal relations of production and stimulate the growth of capitalism in agriculture. It must be clear, however, that nationalization of industry and agriculture per se is not revolutionary, much less a measure of socialism. Nationalization can become a revolutionary step in the struggle for socialism only when state power is firmly in the hands of the toiling masses of workers and

* Contrast the famine in Tigray and Gomu Goffa, two of the hardest hit areas in the country. Tigray is a prototype of the north, where most of the peasants cultivate their own plots of land while Gomu Goffa is a prototype of the south where most of the peasants are landless tenants.

peasants. The decisive factor here is the nature of the class or classes holding state power. Is nationalization directed at smashing the monopoly power of the landlords and finance capital or facilitating the exploitation of the toilers by imperialism and its local compradors?

In a system where commodity production dominates, the mere transfer of landownership to the state in and of itself "will not do away with the poverty of the masses". The peasants need "protection not only from the landlord but from the market economy". Given that all the provisions of the land declaration are strictly implemented and, for the moment, neglecting questions like who gets what type of land, the Ethiopian peasant, with his backward implements and methods, can produce barely enough to subsist on his 10 hectares maximum allotment. Part of the little he produces, he will have to sell in the market to buy basic necessities.

The national market is controlled by the comprador bourgeoisie, and is a mere appendage of the world market with all its vagaries. Thus, the Dergue's land reform programme will operate to enrich the comprador and bureaucrat bourgeoisies, a trend that was already in the making under the feudal regime. Experience in Mexico, Brazil, Egypt, etc., shows that, even if the land reform were to materialize, it would hardly benefit the poor peasants. The real beneficiaries will be the comprador, bureaucrat and international bourgeoisies. This will be the inevitable outcome as long as Ethiopia remains an appendage of imperialism, with its nationalized sectors producing primarily for export.

Certainly, then, no "revolution from above" can effect basic changes in the age-old enslavement of the peasantry, for the principal agents of revolutionary change are the toiling masses themselves. It is true that the land declaration of March 1975 provides for, and the Dergue has dictated the formation of, peasant committees. But, these can only be puppet committees (totally unrepresentative and undemocratic) whose real function is to insure the bureaucratic control of the peasantry.

Worse still, those who have been charged with its implementation are bureaucrats and ex-military officers, many of whom are themselves landlords. There has been no case in history in which a propertied class has voluntarily and peacefully disowned itself. No class has ever relinquished its property without a fight! The same murderous officials who, only a few months ago, were massacring "rebellious" peasants for rising up to seize the land from the landlords have now miraculously become the friends and protectors of the peasantry! It is clear that no meaningful agrarian revolution is possible without democracy and the effective mobilization of the peasant masses, under the guidance of a revolutionary organization, to seize the land and to release their energy and initiative for organizing production and utilizing it for their own benefit.

The military junta has nationalized a number of foreign-owned companies and taken majority stock in others, promising to compensate the owners. At the same time, it has announced that "foreign investment will be given ample opportunities and will be assured fair and adequate returns". In effect, the junta has taken over certain minor foreign interests and expropriated the shares of some aristocrats while leaving the door wide open for foreign exploitation in such lucrative fields as mining, oil exploitation, foreign trade, tourism, etc.

State control of certain enterprises is not new in Ethiopia; it has been customary even under Haile Selassie. In fact, most of the firms that the junta claims to have nationalized were already government owned under the previous regime. Obviously, nationalization is different from socialization. It cannot be divorced from the reactionary nature of the fascist puppet state operating in the interest of capital against that of toilers. After all, the people are denied basic democratic rights and liberties, with the special penal code brutalizing their daily existence. The old labour relations code remains in force; the trade union movement is suppressed, with its leaders in jail and the right to strike banned. Under these conditions, government partnership with foreign capital merely facilitates the exploitation of workers by helping to "discipline" the labour force. Every just demand of the workers can then be branded as against the "national interest". Thus, in the epoch of decaying capitalism, bourgeois nationalization of industry and agriculture represents merely state control of the economy in the service of imperialism and its local agents — the comprador and bureaucrat bourgeoisies.

In foreign policy, the Dergue, despite certain anti-imperialist pretensions remains a stooge of U.S. imperialism. It has reassured the U.S. imperialists and the Israeli zionists of continued use of their military bases in Eritrea. In return, the Ethiopian junta continues to receive massive U.S. military aid, which has recently been stepped up through the emergency airlift of fresh supplies of arms and ammunition to "counter" the growing strength of the Eritrean liberation forces. Fifteen percent of this emergency military aid is received in napalm bombs being used daily to kill, burn and maim the Eritrean people — mainly old men, women and children. U.S. and Israeli military experts still train and advise the Ethiopian army. Consistent with imperialist propaganda against Afro-Arab solidarity, the Ethiopian junta has raised hue and cry about "Arab invasion of Black Africa".

Outdoing Haile Selassie, the Dergue has hinted its readiness to resume diplomatic relations with Israel. Recently, it has scaled the peak of treason by collaborating with zionism to enslave 25,000 Ethiopians (Falashas, or so-called Black Jews) by having them emigrate to Israel where additional manpower for cheap labour and cannon fodder is in desperate demand. The junta even boasts of

the fact that neocolonial Ethiopia participated in the imperialist aggression against the peoples of Korea and the Congo. In a speech on February 18, 1975, the so-called strongman of the junta, Major Mengistu, declared that, "Let alone in defending its own territorial integrity, Ethiopia has made itself well known throughout the world by sending its heroic children to fight in Korea and the Congo in the interests of international peace and security". What an anti-imperialist regime!

Nowhere is the reactionary, fascist essence of the Dergue and its Ethiopian socialism more clearly evident than in its actions in Eritrea. It has vowed to drown in blood the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people. The junta has escalated its war of aggression, intensified its reign of terror, and stepped up its campaign of genocide against the Eritrean people. Since February, it has imposed a total blockade of humanitarian aid to the hundreds of thousands of Eritrean war victims and a complete blackout of news on the worsening situation. In Eritrea, Ethiopian socialism has meant the extermination of whole villages (47 since February alone), the devastation of the countryside, the attempted annihilation and destruction of a people and their way of life. In support of conducting this annexationist and murderous war, the Dergue has been propagating disgusting lies and whipping up brutal, chauvinist hatred against the Eritrean and Arab peoples.

How can a socialist regime continue to forcibly occupy a country whose people have made their desire for independence absolutely clear? How can a socialist regime deliberately commit barbarous atrocities on unarmed men, women and children? All socialist and even democratic regimes recognize the right of oppressed nations and colonies to self-determination. Thus Ethiopia, which is oppressing Eritrea, is neither socialist nor democratic. Indeed, the Ethiopian military junta has nothing in common with socialism. It is a fascist dictatorship that presents itself as socialist. its excessively crude and archaic conception of the world reflects its crass ignorance. Of course, as Marx and Engels remarked about such socialism, the junta, "in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coat of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter". The Eritrean people have already seen through this sham socialism and stepped up their fight for national liberation.

The Eritrean Struggle Surges

The Dergue has vowed to mobilize "six million volunteers to punish the rebels". With over 60% of the entire Ethiopian armed

forces initially deployed, it has been pouring more troops and material to its colonial war of aggression. Yet, despite its superiority in numbers and materiel, the Ethiopian occupation army is being harassed, attacked and annihilated in its own camps and strongholds with heroic boldness and daring. With its morale sapped and its will to fight exhausted, the mercenary army has already suffered humiliating defeat. In frustration, it ceaselessly, lets itself loose upon the civilian population. It is raining bullets and bombs on the Eritrean people. Desperate and trying to mobilize the Ethiopian masses against their class brothers in Eritrea, the Dergue has been whipping up anit-Arab and anti-Eritrean chauvinist hysteria.

The Eritrean struggle for national liberation has been one of the principal causes for the downfall of the old regime. The Dergue realized that its own survival would be at stake unless it quickly moved to resolve the Eritrean independence question. Accordingly, it devised a reactionary stratagem to liquidate the Eritrean revolution. The twin pillars of the stratagem have been demagogy and violence. The Junta called for a "peaceful solution" to the question of Eritrean national liberation within the chauvinist context of "Ethiopia First". But, it is obvious that Eritrean independence and "Ethiopian unity" (i.e., Ethiopian annexation of Eritrea) are irreconcilable.



Reactionary violence breeds popular resistance — thousands join the ranks of the revolution!

In the beginning, as it strove to consolidate its hold of state power, the junta admitted the justice of the Eritrean cause, condemned the Haile Selassie regime for its abhorrent crimes against the "diligent and justice loving Eritrean people" during the last 13 years, and declared its readiness to seek a negotiated solution. However, the Dergue, like its chauvinist apologists, refused to recognize the anti-colonial essence of the Eritrean war of national liberation. It pretended, instead, to conceive the Eritrean struggle as that of a people having legitimate grievances against the corruption and maladministration of a handful of officials of the former regime.

Accordingly, it called upon the valiant Eritrean patriots to lay down their arms in favour of a peaceful solution! It set up a 38-man committee of prominent Eritreans in an effort to create a puppet body with whom to negotiate the peaceful solution. At the same time, the Dergue dispatched a high-powered "peace delegation" on a tour of African and Arab states to try to isolate the Eritrean struggle from its international friends and supporters.

Although continuing to talk of "peaceful solution" however, the Dergue was practising violence. To cite just a few instances: it decimated countless people and livestock by poisoning the water supply sources in Sahel province (May 1974); it massacred 250 unarmed civilians in Um Hajer (July 1974); it strangled 56 youth



Resolute and determined, onward to victory!

with piano wires in Asmara (December 1974); it brutalized the people and jailed thousands of patriots throughout this period.

While perpetrating these heinous crimes against the Eritrean people, the Dergue was busy reinforcing its occupation army with more troops and heavy armaments. Captured enemy documents show that the Dergue had planned to launch mopping up operations in the areas surrounding Asmara. By January 1975, two and one half of Ethiopia's four army divisions and the bulk of its air force were in Eritrea, brandishing their murderous weapons and poised for a "final onslaught" against the liberation forces and their popular base. Thus, the Dergue's talk of peaceful solution was merely a camouflage for its aggressive intentions until the arrival of a more propitious moment. Its attempts to weaken international support to the struggle and to undermine the unity of the Eritrean people were an integral part of this scheme.

Yet, the Eritrean people persisted in their resolute demand for full independence, strengthened their unity and strove to reconcile and consolidate the ranks of the revolutionary forces. The desire of the Eritrean people for independence and the strength of the liberation forces had already become so overwhelming that even the appointed committee unanimously advised the Dergue that the fighters were the only legitimate representatives of the people; and that only the withdrawal of the Ethiopian occupying forces would pave the way for peace in Eritrea.

As soon as the junta came to power, the EPLF made a correct analysis of the nature of the Dergue and an accurate prediction of its aims and policies. Right from the outset, the EPLF repeatedly warned the Eritrean people that the intensification of the war was inevitable; that all the Dergue's talk of "peaceful solution" was only so much camouflage to screen its preparations for war. Thus, the EPLF endeavored to organize and prepare the Eritrean masses to defend the revolution; to counter and defeat the imminent scorched earth campaign of the Ethiopian aggressor troops. It persistently and vigorously advocated the formation and strengthening of a united front as the only basis for waging a victorious war of national liberation.

It was to preempt and abort the Dergue's counter-revolutionary stratagem, therefore, that the Eritrean liberation forces launched their brilliant campaign on January 31, 1975.* The Ethiopian regime responded with an all-out blanket attack against the fighters and the people in Asmara and its outskirts. Since then, there has been a tremendous escalation of the war with the liberation forces enjoying the upper hand. The E.P.L.F. and R.C. forces in the front lines, who are more united than ever and have launched many joint attacks, are winning fresh victories. They have administered a well-coordinated series of brilliantly planned and heroically executed military blows against Ethiopian naval, air and army bases and installations in the urban areas. Indeed, the Eritrean liberation forces have been scoring stunning victories.

* February 4, 1975 was set as the strike date of the impending Ethiopian offensive of "kill all, burn all" in Eritrea.



Fighting with resolute determination and whatever weapons available — captured enemy arms, axes, spears, etc. — the masses are the real basis for the victory of the revolution.

The Ethiopian fascist junta is exploiting the ignorance and backwardness of the oppressed Ethiopian masses. It slanders the valiant Eritrean freedom fighters as "a handful of bandits" trying to "sell Eritrea to the Arabs". It claims Eritrea as its "14th province", just as fascist Portugal used to claim its African ex-colonies as its "overseas provinces". Colonialism has always used violence and lies as its main weapons. But, as Amílcar Cabral has observed, when the colonizer is a fascist regime, when its own people are poor and largely illiterate who neither know nor enjoy the fundamental human rights; when furthermore its economy is underdeveloped, as in the case of Ethiopia, then "violence and lies reach an unparalleled height", and its brutalization of the Eritrean people knows no limits. It is carrying out barbarous massacres and atrocious mutilations of civilians and looting their property.

Of course, this is not new to the Eritrean people. It is a culmination of the fascist terror that the Ethiopian expansionists have habitually administered on the Eritrean people in reprisal for military defeats. However, the result has consistently been the same: the stealing of the resolve of the Eritrean people to fight and of their determination to win.

The Eritrean revolution has now become the key to revolution in Ethiopia. The victory of the forces of national liberation in Eritrea will help smash fascism in Ethiopia. The Eritrean struggle

will not only liberate the Eritrean masses, but will also make a worthy contribution to the liberation of the Ethiopian peoples. After summing up their experiences, the toiling masses of Ethiopia are bound to rise up. For, as Lenin pointed out, "the bourgeoisie may succeed in overwhelming the toilers by savage terror, in checking the growing forces of revolution for brief periods of time, but that, nevertheless, this would not save it from its doom. For communists should know that the future, in any case, belongs to them". Without base in the masses and isolated from them, the Dergue is ultimately bound to crumble in the heat of their growing discontent and struggle.

For the moment, however, the Eritrean national liberation struggle is the only organized revolutionary force fighting and exposing the junta's fascism and its client nature to U.S. imperialism. It is the valiant struggle of the Eritrean people that is shaking the fascist junta to its very foundations. Indeed, the heroic Eritrean people, along with the Ethiopian toiling masses, are destined to sweep away the fascist junta into the junkyard of history in the footsteps of Haile Selassie.

It took over 30 years of struggle and sacrifice to defeat U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and Indochina. Fighting with great resoluteness and boundless heroism, the great Vietnamese people have, twice in the last three decades, decisively demonstrated the fundamental truth that a small and weak nation, when armed with scientific theory, can defeat even the biggest and most powerful imperialist nation. That in a just war of national liberation, it is neither numbers nor arms but the masses with revolutionary consciousness and perseverance that are decisive for victory. The victories of the heroic peoples of Guinea (Bissau), Mozambique and Angola over Portuguese colonialism and its imperialist backers attest to the invincibility of the masses correctly mobilized in a just cause. The establishment of the People's Republic of Mozambique is yet another shining achievement of the entire African people. These victories are, among others, a powerful material force in the arsenal of weapons of anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In the oil-rich and strategic Middle East, imperialism and its lackeys are striving to subvert revolutionary regimes and movements. So far, however, their concerted efforts to isolate and undermine the P.D.R.Y. have witnessed only the further consolidation of the revolution and the deepening of its roots among the masses. The heroic people of Palestine are scoring great victories in their just struggle for national liberation. The Omani revolution is bound to defeat the Shah's invading mercenary forces, Sultan Qaboos' puppet regime and its imperialist masters.

Yet, reactionaries never draw correct lessons from defeat. Imperialism has gone on repeating its decadent policy of aggression and intervention against democratic and revolutionary movements

everywhere. It will not stop this until its complete demise. It is not surprising therefore that U.S. imperialism is escalating its intervention in Eritrea. Recognizing this, all progressive forces should extend the Eritrean revolution full political and material support and oppose U.S. military aid to Ethiopia.

The escalation of the Eritrean war of national liberation has brought to the open the strength of the revolutionary forces while exposing the weakness of the colonial forces. It demonstrated to the world, long accustomed to the deliberate suppression of news concerning the Eritrean struggle, the determination and resoluteness of the Eritrean people to win their national liberation. Fully convinced that only total independence can pave the way out of oppression and exploitation, the Eritrean people are solidly united behind the liberation forces. Their untiring efforts have brought forth the termination of the civil war and created a new basis for the unity and further advance of the patriotic and revolutionary forces.

While the armed struggle is winning fresh victories, however, the Eritrean people are being subjected to a deliberate policy of genocide. Over 6000 have been killed and more than 300,000 rendered refugees since last February alone. The Ethiopian regime has effected a complete news blackout and the total economic blockade of Eritrea. It has confiscated a consignment of Red Cross shipments of humanitarian food and medical supplies, intended for Eritrean war victims, upon entry in Massawa and distributed it among its soldiers. It is carrying out a brutal campaign of extermination through wholesale massacres, indiscriminate bombing and mass starvation of the civilian population. In the face of this fascist onslaught however, the Eritrean revolution has received surprisingly little new international support and solidarity. Certain of its natural allies have raised alleged doubts even as to the very legitimacy of the struggle itself. The imperialists and their puppets continue to slander it as "secessionist," "Arab-instigated," or "anti-African unity."

Eritrea is a colonized country of the Third World. Its boundaries were shaped as a result of European colonial occupation. Just like "Dutch" Indonesia, "British" Kenya, "Portuguese" Guinea, "French" Algeria, etc., so also was "Italian" Eritrea formed. The common struggle against oppression by successive colonialists bound the various nationalities together and brought forth Eritrean national unity and consciousness. Today, the entire people of Eritrea are united as one in their struggle for national liberation.

Thus, the Eritrean struggle is part and parcel of the world revolution in general and the African revolution in particular, of which the national liberation movement has become the motive force. The African national liberation struggles are the vanguard of the African revolution. It is only after the complete liberation of the African peoples that their genuine unity is possible. In other words,

the liberation of the oppressed African masses is a precondition for their unity. Thus, the Eritrean people are fighting for African unity; but, as Amilcar Cabral says, unity that is in the interests of the masses, not the neocolonialist puppets.

The Eritrean struggle is not against African unity, but against the forcible annexation and occupation of a small African country by an oppressive, neocolonial African state. Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea cannot make Eritrea an integral part of Ethiopia. Therefore, whoever denies the justice of the Eritrean cause under the guise of "African Unity", or otherwise, is a witting or unwitting apologist for colonialism and imperialism.

The solid and wide support of the Arab masses for the Eritrean revolution springs from a fundamental identity of mutual interest. The colonial settler state of Israel continues its forcible occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands. Ethiopia has not only occupied Eritrea but also made it and its territorial waters a base of imperialist and Zionist subversion and intervention in Africa and the Middle East. Israeli enterprises have exclusive monopoly in the exploitation of Eritrea's fisheries, marine resources and canned meat. Thus, the Eritrean people face the same deadly imperialist and Zionist enemies as the Arab people. It is no wonder then that the Eritrean struggle enjoys the fullest support and warmest solidarity of the masses as well as the revolutionary movements and progressive regimes throughout the Arab world.

The struggle of the Eritrean people is a struggle against colonial domination and for national independence and democracy. The Eritrean liberation forces represent freedom and justice and enjoy the whole-hearted support of the Eritrean masses. On the other hand, the Ethiopian army is fighting to occupy and dominate. It represents oppression and tyranny. It is hated and resisted by the whole Eritrean people. No matter who supports it and to whatever extent, its defeat is inevitable. Guided by the correct revolutionary line of the E.P.L.F. and supported by democratic, progressive and revolutionary forces the world over, the Eritrean people are bound to win.



Growing in the ravages of war, educated in struggle, the youth are the heirs of the future, the carriers of the torch of revolution.

SUPPORT THE ERITREAN STRUGGLE

Ethiopia has escalated its scorched earth campaign and mopping up operations against the liberation forces and people of Eritrea. Since February 1975 alone, over 6000 unarmed civilians have been killed, 47 villages decimated, and more than 300,000 people made refugees. Worse still, an economic blockade of Eritrea has been in force. To hide these heinous crimes from the world public, the Ethiopian regime has effected complete news blackout and prevented the distribution of humanitarian aid to the victims of its genocidal war.

Supported, armed and replenished by imperialism and Zionism, the Ethiopian regime has now resorted to blanket bombardments, wholesale massacres and starvation as the main weapons in its war of colonial aggression.

The entire Eritrean people have risen up to this fascist challenge with boundless heroism and resolute determination. United and guided by the EPLF's correct line, they are prepared to persevere in their gallant resistance until total victory. Even though self-reliance is the primary basis of the protracted armed struggle, international support and solidarity are vital components of the national revolutionary effort.

The Eritrean struggle is in need of many types of assistance: money, medicines, medical tools, clothing, blankets, tents, food (especially children's concentrated food and powdered milk), books (medical, scientific and revolutionary), etc., in order to save tens of thousands of war victims, consolidate the liberated areas, and protect them from the vicious campaigns of the Ethiopian occupation forces.

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