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ERITREA REVOLUTION TO LIBERATE THE LAND AND THE MAN

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OCTOBER BOLSHEVIK SOCIALIST REVOLUTION - 1917

CHINESE REVOLUTION - 1949

INDOCHINESE PEOPLES TRIUMPH - 1975

In the past few months an epochal event, its significance comparable to the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, has ushered new realities into the international scene. Thirty years of unrelenting armed struggle by the Vietnamese People and five years of tenacious resistance by the Cambodian People were, almost simultaneously, crowned with total victory. Within a short span of time the world progressive and democratic sector was tremendously strengthened. Conversely, United States Imperialism's cloak of invincibility was torn wide open and its strategic weakness exposed. The whole world witnessed imperialism flee in panic when the intense heat of the guns of liberation came too close.

The far-reaching effects of these glorious victories are already evident. In the neighbouring states of South East Asia, the whole people have called on Imperialism to leave. The Thais, Burmese, the people of Philippines and Malaysia have forged forward with their revolutionary armed struggles. In South Korea, Indonesia and other fascist dictatorships, the shackled masses have risen up and demanded their democratic rights and national sovereignty. Latin American countries are challenging America's riding high on their peoples and nations exploitation. They have become more assertive in refusing to bow to American pressures as in Panama, Peru, etc. In Africa, favourable conditions had already been introduced after the fall of the fascist regime in Portugal. The coming independence of Mozambique and Angola had put great strains on the defenders of apartheid in Southern Africa. Thus, seeing the fate of their cohorts in Southeast Asia, the Vorsters and Ian Smiths are sounding even more shriller cries for 'detente' and an end to armed confrontation. The liberation fighters of Zimbabwe, Namibia and Azania have expressed their vehement opposition to any solution short of full emancipation of their humiliated downtrodden people.

Everywhere under attack, U.S. Imperialism has opted to consolidate its international interests. This has been especially true of the Middle East and the peripheries where, since being driven out of Indochina, it has been concentrating its political, military and economic weight.

The massive shipments of armaments to Saigon has changed course and are heading to Teheran (Iran). Military advisors and torture experts, just back from uncompleted contracts with the Thieu-Lon Nol regimes, are getting (new and) better paying ones from the Shah-Qabus dictatorships. The Phantoms, howitzers and other instruments of death and destruction are no more screaming in the jungles of Vietnam and Cambodia, but in the plains and mountains of Dhofar, Palestine and Eritrea. And of course, Israel, the cornerstone of Imperialist policy in the Middle East, continues its aggression and conspiracy against the Palestinian resistance. U.S. support for the Zionist state is as strong as ever.... Imperialism has fully been entrenched in the Middle East.

But lest we believe that the enemies of progress have not derived any lessons from their past disastrous adventures, we should think again. Their tactical planners certainly have seen the invincibility of a protracted peoples war. The chief of the Pentagon has recently stressed that their future wars would be based on the overwhelming of the revolutionary struggles and their immediate destruction. ^{MERCENARY} As the besieged Omani Revolution is experiencing - a vast ~~mercenary~~ army equipped with the (very) latest technological know-how, with "unlimited" backup at its disposal, has been pitted against a small people whose only motive force has been their deepest hatred for oppression and foreign occupation. Thus in their quest for Liberation the peoples of the Middle East, the horn of Africa and the Arabian Gulf are faced with an onslaught of Imperialist plunder. In its death-bed international reaction, while certainly much weaker, (has) also (become) more dangerous. It has vowed to hold to whatever portions of the world it still enjoys hegemony over... whatever the cost.

The peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America have a great deal to learn from their compatriots in Indochina. The advent of neo-colonialism in most of their independent countries, some after wars of national liberation, is in stark contrast to the independent democratic stance of Vietnam and Cambodia. The corporate plunder that still continues in these third world nations was not allowed to take root in the newly liberated Indochinese societies. The indomitable will of these heroic peoples, the development of their revolutionary leadership and their principled and unassuming positions, are rich examples from which the Eritrean and other fighting peoples are bound to draw upon in their struggles to finally finish off the imperialists and their reactionary stooges who have caused much sorrow and degradation to the oppressed peoples of the world.

HAIL AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY - 1975

(Statement by ERITREANS FOR LIBERATION IN NORTH AMERICA)

African Liberation Day, the day of world-wide solidarity with the struggle of the African people, has arrived once again.

This year's ALD takes place at a time of radical and earth-shaking changes throughout the world. The oppressed peoples have won historic victories of far reaching significance while the imperialist world is in the midst of a deep going economic crisis.

The heroic peoples of Vietnam and Cambodia have won total victory. They have defeated the most barbarous imperialist aggression after World War II, thus providing an inspiring example to the oppressed nations and peoples. In the Middle East, the just struggles of the Palestinian, Omani and other Arab peoples have scored important political and military victories over Zionism and imperialism.

To the African world, the past year has brought changes of tremendous significance. The centuries-old fascist Portuguese colonial empire has been shattered. A free and independent Guinea (Bissau) has emerged and the peoples of Mozambique and Angola will win their total independence in June and November of this year, respectively. The independence of Mozambique and Angola has created favorable external conditions for the intensification of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Compelled by the changed balance of forces, the racist regimes of Vorster and Smith have stepped up their calls for "detente" and "dialogue". ^{Ngwenye Kauruka} This has found a receptive ear among some of Africa's reactionary leaders. However, the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and Azania are not fooled by these deceptive tricks and are determined to firmly hold on to their guns and continue the armed struggle, as the main form of struggle. Neither shrill cries for "detente" nor intensification of the violent suppression of the nationalist leaders and broad masses can divert the peoples of southern Africa from their lofty goal of winning total liberation through armed struggle.

In North-eastern Africa, significant events have taken place over the past year. The national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people and the democratic struggles of the Ethiopian masses brought about the downfall of one of Africa's most notorious puppets, Emperor Haile Selassie. However, the fruits of this victory were seized by military officers who, despite their seemingly progressive slogans, have continued to oppress the people and suppress their progressive and democratic movements.

In Eritrea, the Ethiopian military junta has unleashed a barbarous bombing and torture campaign against the people. Continuing Haile Selassie's policies, the military rulers have mobilized over 60% of their troops and appropriated a large share of the country's budget for the war of aggression in Eritrea. Ethiopia's war of aggression has the full backing of U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism, which have vital economic and military interests in Eritrea. The Ethiopian Army is equipped lock, stock and barrel, with American weaponry, machine guns and bullets, tanks and planes. U.S. "advisors" and Israeli counter-insurgency experts train

the Ethiopian mercenaries who are massacring the Eritrean people.

Now in its 14th year, the Eritrean Revolution has become the longest, independence struggle in Africa. The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Forces (E.P.L.F.), armed with scientific ideology and enjoying the confidence and support of the masses, is struggling to create a genuinely independent and democratic Eritrea as a first step towards building a society with no exploitation of man by man. The Eritrean liberation fighters control nearly the entire countryside while the Ethiopian occupation army controls the cities and towns - and those only during the day.

Last February, the liberation fighters attacked the Ethiopian Army's fortified camps and bases in the heart of the capital city, Asmara, and scored brilliant victories. In the countryside, the liberation fighters provide medical care to the people, fight illiteracy and set up democratic village assemblies to enhance the participation of the masses in the war of national liberation. The Eritrean struggle is a just, popular struggle against forcible occupation and domination, imperialism and zionism.

And yet, the Eritrean Revolution is often slandered as being "secessionist," against "African unity," etc. Everyone knows that Namibia is under the occupation of another African country, South Africa, and that the Namibian people are fighting for national independence. Nobody brands the Namibian struggle as "secessionist" or against the interests of "African unity." Why then is the Eritrean struggle branded as such? Perhaps it is because South Africa has a white settler regime while Ethiopia is ruled by a black African regime. But hasn't the great African revolutionary Amilcar Cabral clearly explained that "we do not confuse exploitation or exploiter with the color of men's skin. We do not want any exploitation in our countries, not even by black people."

The Eritrean people see their struggle as an integral part of the African revolution. They are for African unity, but unity that is in the interests of the masses not the neo-colonialist ruling classes. They believe that the liberation of the oppressed African masses is a precondition for the unity of Africa. The Eritrean Revolution is a threat to puppet African regimes and their reactionary concept of unity; this partly explains why many of them do not lend it their support. Enjoying the solidarity of progressive Africans, the Eritrean people are determined to persist in armed struggle and make a contribution to the liberation of the African homeland.

Southern Africa and Eritrea are not the only storm-centers of revolution in Africa. Throughout the continent, the struggles against colonialism as well as neo-colonialism and its puppets, the armed as well as political struggles of the masses of workers, peasants and students are gaining momentum. A totally liberated Africa is bound to emerge in the not too distant future.

While we celebrate our victories and express confidence in final and total victory, we should not lose sight of the protracted, arduous and complex struggle that lies ahead. The enemies of Africa and the world have been beaten down but are not dead. The Mayaguez provocation shows that United States imperialism has not learned any lessons from its defeat in Indochina. Like a wounded animal, it is gnashing its teeth; it is brandishing its weapons and threatening the oppressed nations with war and aggression.

At home, the United States imperialists find themselves in the midst of an economic crisis, which has been exacerbated by their defeats in the third world. The United States ruling classes are shifting the burden of the economic crises on to the back of the working masses. Unemployment, inflation, racial oppression and political oppression are on the rise. This shows that the struggles in Africa and throughout the world and the struggles of the Afro-American people, the other national minorities and the workers in the United States are closely linked. Struggling in unity, the oppressed peoples throughout the world will certainly be victorious.

On this glorious African Liberation Day, Eritreans For Liberation in North America hails the heroic and significant victories of the peoples of Africa and the world. E.F.L.N.A. pays homage to all African martyrs who have shed their blood in the cause of African freedom and salutes those who are carrying forward the banner of national liberation. Once again E.F.L.N.A. reaffirms its resolute solidarity with

- the liberation movements and the toiling masses throughout Africa;
- the liberation movements and the toiling masses in Asia and Latin America;
- the people of African descent throughout the world in their struggle against racial and class oppression; and finally
- with the Afro-American people, the national minorities and the working class in the United States who history has entrusted with the glorious task of destroying once and for all the biggest fascists of all time - the American Imperialists.

Long live the African revolution!
Long live the unity of the toiling masses of Africa!
Workers and oppressed people of the world,

Unite!

ETHIOPIA'S SHAM SOCIALISM AND LAND NATIONALIZATION

The widely publicized nationalization of land in Ethiopia by the fascist military junta has raised a number of issues that need to be clarified. Some of the important questions raised in connection with the junta's "land reform" programme include: Why did the military regime nationalize land? Who is going to benefit from it? What will be the short run and long run impact of the act? etc. To understand the real issues involved, it is of critical importance to look into the underlying forces that compelled the junta to take some radical measures, the nationalization of industries, the 'land reform' act, etc.

The February 1974 upsurge in Ethiopia brought into the open the deepening economic-political and social crisis that was gripping the country. The feudal and neo-colonial plunder exploitation of the country and the 13 year old war of oppression in Eritrea were the root causes of the crisis. The broad mass of the Ethiopian people rose up in open revolt and clearly showed that they no longer could be ruled in the old way. It was also clear that the aristocratic and landlord classes which for centuries held sway was no longer capable of ruling in the old way. In the event, because of lack of a revolutionary organization to lead the masses or a powerful bourgeoisie class, the military took power.

The struggle of the poor peasants, supported by other Ethiopian democratic forces, the need to preserve the exploitative system, the need to mobilize domestic support against the Eritrean Revolution and the need to placate and swindle world public opinion are the major forces that compelled the junta to nationalize land.

From the outset the junta's aims were: to crush the nascent revolutionary movement in the country that had a broad mass basis, to consolidate the system of exploitation of the masses under a new guise, and to mobilize the country's human and physical resources for the war in Eritrea. The principal task assigned to the junta was to prevent the further radicalization of the Ethiopian masses. Thus it moved to lay aside the masses on whose struggles it had ridden to power. It suppressed their organization (student organization, trade union, etc.) and banned demonstrations, strikes, etc., prevented them from expressing their views. At the same time since the masses expectations has been aroused and they had fought hard for democratic rights and changes, the military dictators had to take some seemingly radical progressive measures. It is in this context that the Ethiopian junta's March 4th, 1975 declaration on "Nationalization of all rural land" should be looked at.

Land reform is an urgent and universally admitted need of the people. It is more so in the case of Ethiopia where about 60% of the total peasant population are tenants and where 75% of the country's arable land is jointly owned by the royal family, the church and the aristocracy. Under this archaic system the peasants suffered while the landlords and aristocrats wallow in the filth of their decadence and luxury. In March 1975, the junta expropriated the land of the aristocracy and declared all rural land to be the "collective property of the Ethiopian people", and

set a 10 hectare limit on the maximum amount of land that any family can cultivate. This declaration will weaken the aristocratic landlord ~~and~~ class and break their monopoly of economic and political power. But will this much orchestrated decree end the impoverishment of the down-trodden Ethiopian peasantry? Has it, as the military junta has claimed, abolished "the exploitation of man by man?" Or has Ethiopia suddenly become socialist as a result of this proclamation?

A distinction has to be made between state ownership and socialism. Such a distinction becomes absolutely essential, because in the era of declining world imperialism a capitalist state ownership of the means of production has become a worldwide phenomenon. It is important to note that state ownership is not synonym for socialism. Failure to make such a distinction could create confusion as regards the progressive or non-progressive nature of governments and could lead to mistaken conclusions with damaging consequences. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to realize that state ownership of the means of production does not necessarily imply change in relations of production and therefore the end of exploitation and oppression. Central to the whole question is who holds the state power. For depending on who runs the state apparatus, the nationalized means of production may serve either to liberate or exploit the masses. It is thus erroneous to assume that the road to capitalism is shut off because the state owns the majority of the means of production.

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". Lenin has pointed out that the peasants need "protection not only from the landlord but from the market economy". Provided all the provisions of the land declaration are strictly implemented and neglecting questions like who gets what type of land, the Ethiopian peasant with his backward instruments of production and lack of fertilizers, etc. (which the declaration has made no provisions for) can produce barely enough to subsist on. Part of the little he produces, he will have to sell in the market to buy basic necessities - such as salt, cooking oil, cloth etc. The market is controlled by the local bourgeoisie and is tied to the imperialist world market, with all its vicissitudes. Before the year is out, the peasant who has probably exhausted his food supply will have to buy grain for seed as well as food, at prices which are much higher than at which he sold his produce. Often times the peasant has to borrow money or grain for this latter purpose. As has been the experience in other countries, this process eventually leads to the impoverishment of the peasant, his "depeasantization" when he is forced to join the ranks of either the rural or urban proletariat or the ranks of the unemployed and the concentration of the land (be it by the state). Thus, the Junta's land reform programme will speed up the development the state (bourgeoisie) which was already in the making under the feudal regime. The real beneficiaries of the programme will be this state bourgeoisie and international capitalism. This will be the inevitable outcome as long as Ethiopia continues to depend on the imperialist world market system.

It is significant to note that the devastating famine that broke out in Ethiopia in 1973 was the result not only of the concentration of land in the hands of a few aristocrats but the superimposition of the money economy in the feudal mode of exploitation. Lionel Cliff, in his article Capitalism or Feudalism: The Famine in Ethiopia, observes "The famine sparked off by the failure of rain, is thus a product of this complex set of factors operating not on an unchanged, feudal pattern of landlord exploitation of tenant-peasants but on a transitional situation produced by the impact of the harsh, impersonal relations of the money economy." In fact, one of the areas hardest hit by the famine was Tigray Province, where most of the peasants cultivate their own piece of land. Thus the nationalization of land and its parcelling out to individual peasants does not guarantee the well being of the peasant or the end of exploitation. It just changes the way in which he is exploited.

Land reform can only be of benefit to the peasant if only it is part of an overall democratic revolution -- that is used to arouse the peasantry to fight for an end to exploitation and the building of socialism. Lenin has pointed out that "the transfer of the land to the state can and will be very useful for the peasant only when the state becomes a fully democratic republic, when all government officials are elected by the people, when the standing army is abolished and so forth." The Agrarian law promulgated by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 is also definite on this point: "For the sake of guaranteeing that all measures of land reform shall be in accord with the will and interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, the government shall take the responsibility for securing earnest democratic rights for the people, securing full rights for the peasants and their representative at all meetings freely to criticize and impeach all cadres of all binds and levels; and full rights at all appropriate meetings freely to remove and change and to elect all cadres of the government and peasants organizations. Anyone who infringes on the above democratic rights and powers of the people shall be punished by the people's court." The Ethiopian military regime is far from being representative and democratic. It does not guarantee the people's rights but has suppressed all the democratic liberties of the people -- freedom of press, speech, assembly, organization. It has suppressed the trade union movement, the student movement and other democratic forces.

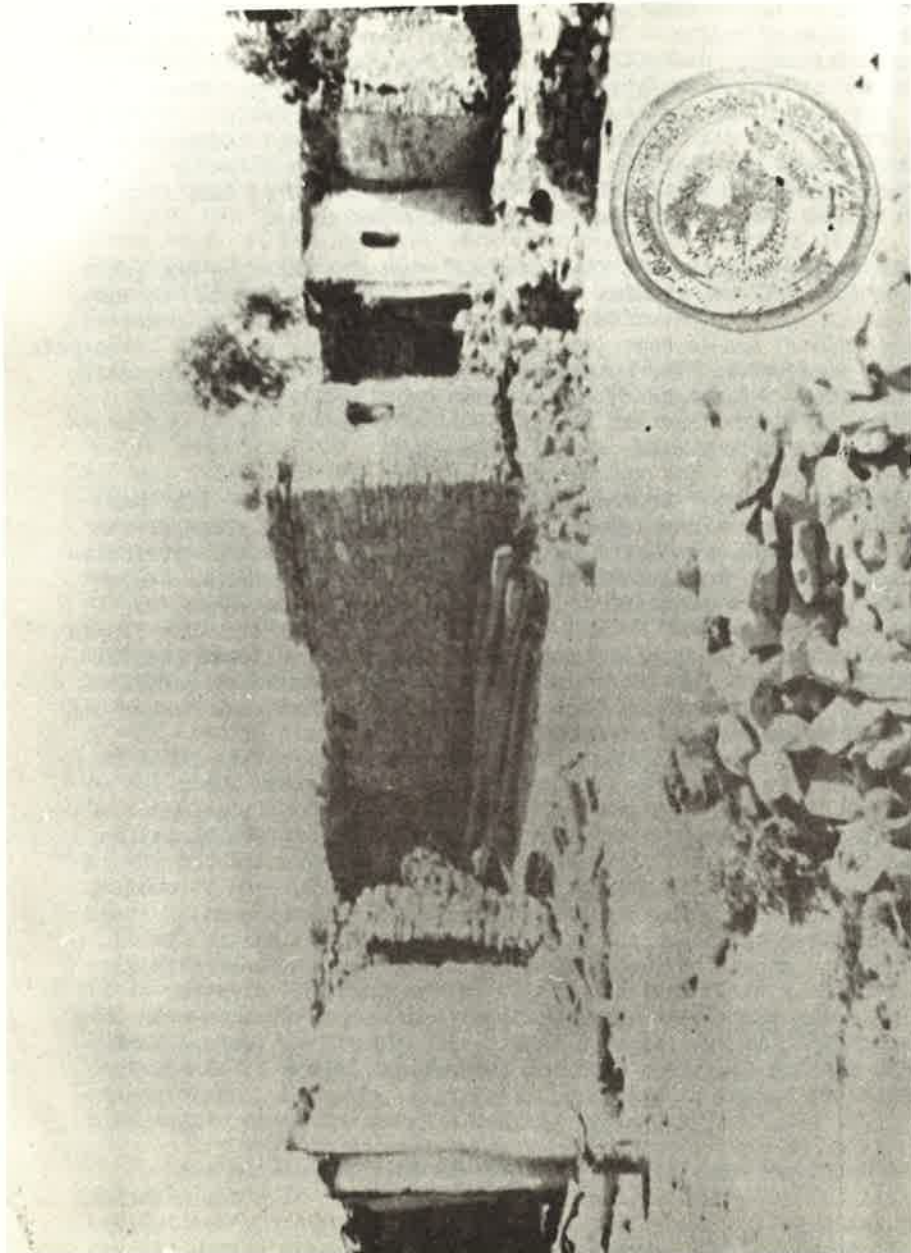
It has denied the democratic right of the oppressed nationalities to self determination and has raised the chauvinist slogan - Ethiopia Tikdem. It is waging a barbarous war of aggression in Eritrea - against a people who have made their desire for independence absolutely clear. The old standing army, the courts, the security forces and all the repressive instruments of feudal regime have not been abolished but are daily being strengthened. It would, therefore, be absurd to expect any meaningful land reform programme under a fascist regime.

Any meaningful agrarian reform can only come about and be carried out with the full participation of the masses under the leadership of a revolutionary organization. The principal agents of a genuine land reform are the masses themselves. Agrarian reform is not something that can be

implemented through decrees, proclamations and pronouncements. It cannot be effected as a result of demagogic "rural campaign". The declaration of March 4th, 1975 provides for the formation of peasant committee to implement the land reform. But this peasant committee are only a means for bureaucratically controlling the peasantry, just like the factory committees that the junta is setting up in opposition to the trade unions, are a means of destroying the independent organization of the proletariat. They are thoroughly non-representative and undemocratic. The same officers who were shooting at peasants who had risen up to seize their land from the landlords, cannot in a period of less than 6 months become the friends and saviors of the peasantry.

As mentioned above all the "radical" measures taken by the junta are designed to kill any popular initiative. In the wake of the February mass movement, for the prevailing system of exploitation to be preserved, the "land reform" had to come from above, lest the poor peasants emancipate themselves from below. The bureaucratic agrarian reform may temporarily enable the army to disorganize the mass movement and to put a brake on the class struggle that was threatening the property owners and would have shattered the oppressive social structure.

However, it won't be long before the poor peasants of Ethiopia see through the sham land reform. Already, the advanced elements are castigating the Ethiopian junta for its attempts to crush the revolutionary struggle of the masses through deceptive reforms as well as brute force. During the demonstrations that were called by the junta to "support the land reform" - the progressive elements raised such slogan as "Down with petty-bourgeoisie socialism", "For a Provisional Peoples Government, Away with the Junta" and "Freedom for progressive political prisoners". It is noteworthy that from that day on the junta banned all demonstrations whether for or against the Junta!



"Socialist" Junta's Barbarious bombing policy has left hundreds of thousands homeless.

The following article by Mamo Zeleke appeared in the French magazine, "Afrique - Asie" #79, March 24, 1975 and was translated by the African Youth Movement for Liberation and Unity.

ERITREA: WHY INDEPENDENCE

Without shooting one bullet; using trucks "Macks" of the Ethiopian army and wearing Ethiopian uniforms, Eritrean guerillas liberated thousands of their comrades locked up in prisons in Asmara and Adi Quala.

Another night, they succeeded in entering Asmara and harassing the general headquarters of the Ethiopian army by mortar shells and automatic rifles. A newly arrived unit from Addis Ababa was decimated...

They hit everywhere, from Asmara, to Keren, Massawa to Assab...

The two sides held firm their positions.

The Ethiopian regime, not only rejects any idea of independence for Eritrea, but it multiplied the organization of chauvinist demonstrations against Eritreans and Arabs, just as Haile Selassie did in 1968.

The slogans "Eritrea and Ethiopia are one and indivisible" overwhelms everyday the press and the radio.

The Derg, in difficulty everywhere in the former empire, internally divided (one of its members, Captain Michael Gebre Negus, who recently led an official delegation to Algiers and Tripoli, joined the Eritrean Front), caught in its own chauvinistic policy, looks for a military victory, up to now as problematic as the official "socialism"...

On the other hand, the guerillas made military and political gains and evaluate the favorable situation of their struggles.

They consider it not unrealistic or irresponsible to insist on the recognition of their right to self-determination, especially from a regime that continues to negate their 14 years of struggle and persists in calling them "bandits". What is certain is the fact that the guerillas are much closer to their goals today than before.

Without a doubt, the Ethiopian regime, on its part, spoke of the spectre of dismemberment to confuse the African opinion. It wants to present the Eritrean struggle as a reactionary Arab and imperialist plot against its "radical" progressive politics: mention of "balkanization of Africa", "a needless bloodbath", "a new Katanga", "a violation of the OAU charter", etc... In Addis Ababa, Africa Hall is full of those rumors.

What is it in reality? Certain historic truths must be recalled to better comprehend the aspirations of the Eritrean people.

The Eritrean war did not begin last January. Not even in September 1961 when the Eritrean Liberation Front was created. The struggle lasts for a long time; against Italian colonialism, against British occupation, and later on, against the Ethiopian empire, whether in the federal form or by pure and simple annexation.

The Eritrean case is not a simple affair of "secession" comparable to that of Biafra, of South Sudan or Katanga, for example. Ethiopia is a multi-national country, as quite a few African countries. But the situation in Eritrea is different from that of an oppressed nationality. Some persons, blinded by the Ethiopian propaganda, forget that reality and try to assimilate the Eritrean struggle with a disintegration of Africa.

And though, even if Eritrea did have in its history, multiple contacts with Ethiopia, she always existed as a separate entity. That separate existence created in Eritreans a developed national consciousness and identity. That reality was in fact recognized by Ethiopia herself when she accepted that the UN¹ decide on the future of Eritrea. After the defeat of the Italian fascists in 1941, and when the British occupied Eritrea, it was no question then, to unite the country with Ethiopia. Eritrea existed separately from the Ethiopian empire and it was decided to treat the Eritrean cause as the other Italian colonies (Libya, Somalia, etc.). The question came back to the UN, in other words, to the great powers.

Unfortunately, the Eritrean people did not have a word to say. The British thought about dismembering the country, giving one part to Ethiopia (their ally) and the other to Sudan (their colony). Americans advocated an absolute unity, because they were so much assured of the allegiance of the Ethiopian monarch.

But the objectives of Ethiopia were withheld by the Eritrean Unionist Party, grouping, at first, some "partisans of unity" and which became later on staffed with Ethiopian police. Whatever happened, in praising the unity, Ethiopia recognized the distinct identity of Eritrea.

The United Nations decided the federation of the two countries, Eritrea keeping its national identity - flag, political parties, parliament, etc. Its political culture its relatively democratic constitution, its public liberties, so many elements which distinguished it neatly from the absolutist regime of Ethiopia.

The federation last ten years, until a referendum which would decide the future of the country. All that was accepted by Ethiopia.

But the Ethiopian government, which signed in 1953 a military accord with Americans to install the Kagnev base (on the Eritrean territory) went ahead to abolish all the rights (of the Eritrean people): flag, parties, etc. It was the dismantling of the federal status and the opening of the road to pure and simple annexation.

The Ethiopian arguments as to "historical links" cannot in any way justify a forcible unity. Otherwise, many African states would have been threatened either by war, or by dismemberment. Moreover, doesn't Ethiopia invoke the "historical links" to claim Djibouti also? (Djibouti is the capital of the French colony of Somalia called Afar and Issa). Doesn't

she use this same argument to justify the annexation of Eritrea under the pretext that she needs a sea coast?

Now, they pretend that the war in Eritrea is a plot; "Arab" or "imperialist" directed against the "socialist" regime of Addis Ababa!

The argument is not valid since the struggle has been going on for fourteen years. As much as the "socialist" nature of the regime in Addis Ababa is yet to be proven.

The Eritrean guerrillas are perfectly conscious of the strategic situation of their country. So much they know the efforts of certain reactionary countries to try to swamp or to divert their struggle.

Perfectly conscious of the strategic situation of their country and the imperialist design to control the Red Sea, knowing the efforts displayed by certain reactionary regimes in the region, such as Sudan and Saudi Arabia in order to drown their movements, the Eritrean revolutionaries, those whose political maturity and clarity led to so many victories by their people, realize very well that the road leading to the exercise of their right to self-determination, freedom and dignity is full of ambushes.

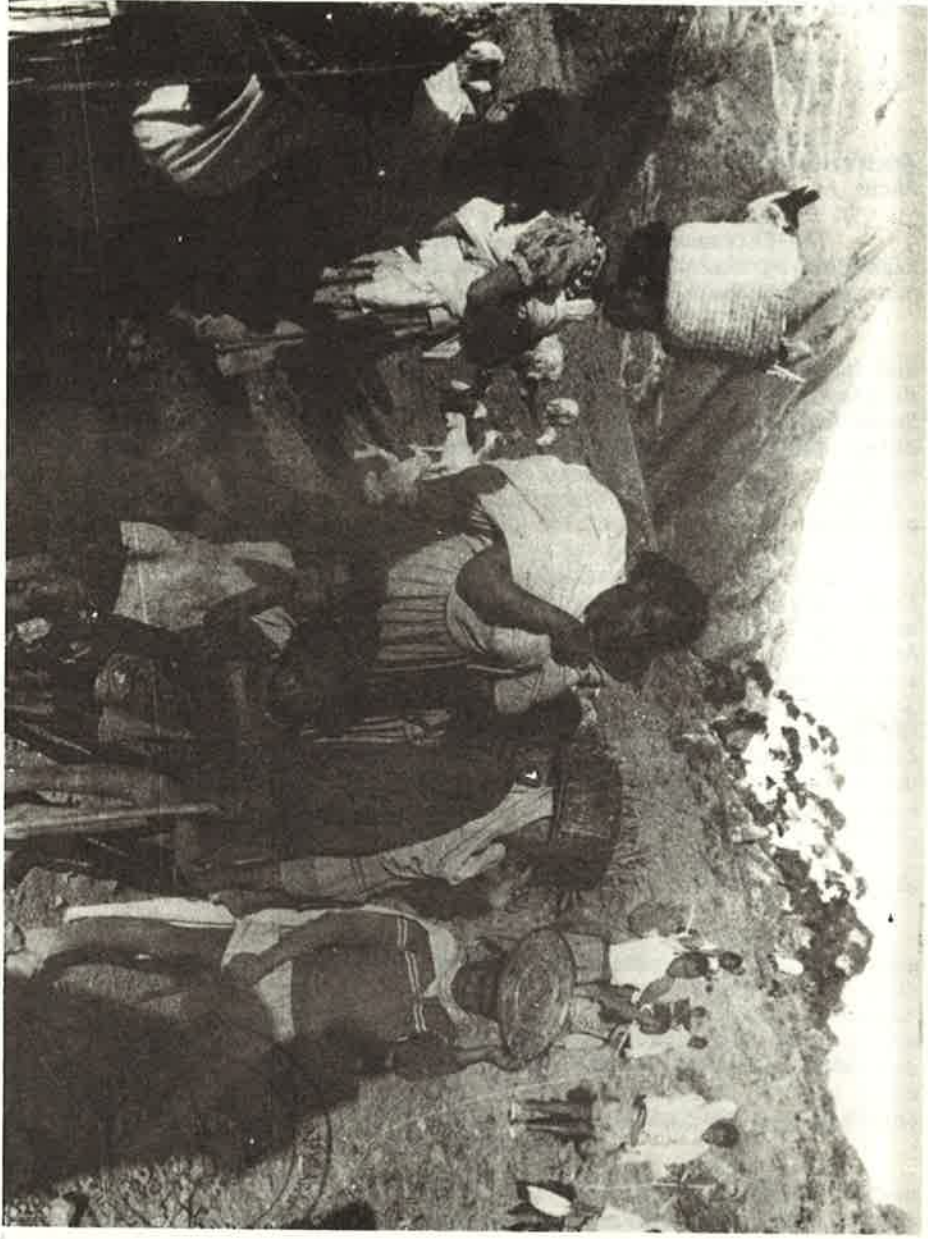
It is then the road of a real national liberation war that the Eritrean people took for fourteen years. If it could exist a period of unity with the Ethiopian people, the corrupt feudal, absolutist regime of Addis Ababa, its politics of force against the Eritreans, the brutal suppression of all their rights, the Amharization and genocide, put a final point to any tendency toward unity; be it organic or federal: "We have tasted the federal solution", say the Eritrean revolutionary leaders, "and the bitter souvenir that we conserved led us to say that we don't want it... Between genocide and slavery, there is something else; our right to self-determination, to independence..."

It will certainly be said: "But isn't the new Ethiopian regime different from that of Haile Selassie? Shouldn't it be given some chance?"

The answer is simple: one of the principal tests valid for a progressive regime resides in its attitude towards the rights of people to self-determination and independence. It is from the attitude of the new regime in Addis Ababa vis-a-vis the Eritrean people's struggle - from this movement it is a question of a people we just described - that we can determine the extent or the truth on its "democratic" character, whereas never has the repression of the Eritrean people been as ferocious as when the Derg came to power in Addis Ababa!

It is not by a bloodbath, massacres, and genocide that the new regime of Ethiopia will impose a "progressive" character of its regime on the African and world opinions, capable of finding a federal or confederal solution. Neither by declarations of intent, interviews or "reforms" - whose seriousness is to be proven - aimed at diverting the attention of the reality of the events in Eritrea.

Carrying their meager possessions, women and children on their march to the liberated area. There are 250,000 such refugees who are in desperate need of food, medicine and shelter.



Endless stream of young fighters to the revolution has doomed Ethiopia's colonial policy. Here students and other youth on their way to the front

VICTORY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The final chapter of the Vietnamese people's War of National Liberation, which began with the signing of the Paris Peace agreements in January 1973, ended April 30th, 1975 with the triumphant and historic entry of the N.L.F. fighters into Saigon itself. During this two-year-plus period Thieu, with American backing, had never contemplated on implementing the Agreements. In fact the Saigon regime was bombing the liberated areas as intensely as ever, its "pacification" program with the ensuing massacre and imprisonment of all patriots was progressing with even greater fervor. From its enclaves in the cities Thieu's army was always provoking the National Liberation Front with its land-grab operations. In direct violation of the Paris accords, which called for the release of all political prisoners, the Saigon regime set free no more than a handful of the more than 200,000 N.L.F. supporters in its jails. All these and more had shown the world that the solemn agreements signed by Saigon and Washington were not with the papers they were written on. Especially the Provisional Revolutionary Government (P.R.G.) knowing from bitter experience United States Imperialism's obdurate nature, resolutely defended its zones and punished all violations with deserving counter-attacks.

The Vietnamese war of Liberation has been in progress ever since a small brigade of 34 men under the command of Vo Nguyen Giap attacked two French border posts on December 22, 1944, completely liquidating the garrisons. Since then they had fought and defeated the Japanese fascists who took over Indochina from the French. Again the Vietnamese people had to take up arms against the French who, upon the defeat of the Axis Powers, Japan amongst them, returned to Vietnam to continue their interrupted plunder. After nine years of armed resistance and countless heroic sacrifices, the Vietnamese had once and for all destroyed the French presence. The Decisive victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 set the stage for the consolidation of People's Power in the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam. The Geneva accords that convened later in the same year assured the Vietnamese of their legitimate right to national reunification. Elections were to be held immediately and a temporary dividing line was established at the 17th parallel between the D.R.V. and the soon to be integrated Southern Vietnam. But all these hopes were short-lived. The imperialists, continuing their course of deceit and treachery, renegade on their promises. A fascist puppet regime was installed and the elections ignored (even Eisenhower admitted that 80% of the Vietnamese people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh and reunification!). Since then the people of Vietnam, especially the South, have been subjected to the most brutal of trials: massacres, concentration camps, massive bombings, 'pacification' have constituted the core of reaction's war strategy. The Phoenix 'pacification' program which eliminated 200,000 patriots, socialists and Vietnam's other finest sons and daughters as well as the bombing of populated cities: Hanoi and Haiphong in the forefront, are among history's vilest crimes. But as was fully realized on April 30th, 1975, neither unparalleled atrocities nor the presence of 550,000 United States soldiers at the height of their strength, was able to thwart the people's historic goal of driving away the foreign aggressors, reunifying their nation, and building a society wherein no small class would



Women and children have borne the brunt of the fascist assault.



Victorious E.P.L.F. troops in a newly liberated village.

parasitically live at the expense of the great majority of impoverished workers and peasants.

The Vietnamese revolution, guided by the principles of scientific socialism, did not wait until the achievement of total victory to alleviate the oppressive social and economic conditions that was the lot of the workers and peasants. Even while engaged in bitter armed struggle the Revolution always stood by its principled position that the independence resistance was intricably linked with the class struggle towards this end it always instituted radical land reforms in liberated territories, reduced the rent paid to landlords in others. The Revolution also forced the capitalists to introduce "minimum wage". Similar achievements in the cultural, educational and health services had clearly shown the vast majority of Vietnamese which side, P.R.G. or Saigon, had their real interests at heart. Workers and peasants as well as whole sections of the nations intelligensia, students, small merchants, religious peoples and others were opposed to Thieu's shameless humiliation of the Vietnamese nation, with its proud history of resistance in face of foreign intrusion, to American Imperial domain. The thousands of Americans who controlled every aspect of the Vietnamese people's existence, were seen as no different than colonialist masters. The Vietnamese considered it a bitter pill to swallow the propaganda that Western culture, history etc. was vastly superior to that of the 'gook's'. Except for the few traitors around Thieu, America had in fact miserably lost the war for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.

As inside the Vietnamese nation, so also throughout the world, the just cause of their Revolution was a rallying point of all peoples who craved for peace and justice. The internationalist spirit of the Vietnamese people and their Revolution had, through the years been able to enlist the solidarity not only of socialists and marxists but that of democratic people and certain liberal and humanitarian people as well. The mass demonstrations against United States aggression regularly held in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and even in America itself had clearly shown the wide support and sympathy for the Vietnamese. The independent and non-opportunistic line of the Front in its international relations had gained its valuable allies in the socialist world, the national liberation movements of the third world and all of the not neo-colonized nations. In fact by the end of the imperialist war in Indochina, only a handful of the most reactionary and pro-imperialist states, such as Israel, South Korea etc., still recognized the Thieu regime in Saigon.

The history of Vietnam's Resistance shows how the Revolution steadily turned the tide of war in its favour and against its imperialist enemies in both the external and internal fronts. But how was this possible? How was the Revolution able to bring together people of vastly different classes and ideology without betraying its ideals and non-negotiable goals? What organizations were responsible? And how have Vietnam's dynamic leadership, from Ho Chi Minh to Vo Nguyen Giap to other equally innovating personalities, differed from the compromising leadership of other national liberation struggles? The people who are in the midst

of popular wars, like the Eritreans, have a lot to analyze and learn from such a nation which was able to break the knees of the strongest military machine.

The Eritrean people, whose lot has become mass extermination, Imperialist and chauvinist-Amhara plotted famine, and national oppression, have much to rejoice in the total liberation of a fraternal people. Though the particularities of the oppressions in Vietnam and Eritrea have certain differences, the enemies remain the same. Both peoples have been viciously attacked by Imperialism in collusion with local and neighbouring stooges. Eritrea has experienced its share of My-Lais at Waki Duba, Om Majer etc. Both revolutions, with the whole hearted support and participation of the broad masses, have dealt crippling blows to these 'fearsome' enemies. It is true that while the Vietnamese had a working-class dominated United National Front, able to amass all the country's resisting potential, the Eritrean people are still struggling to unite the two Fronts (E.P.L.F. and R.C.) solve the nationality questions and join all the patriotic and progressive sections into a single United Front under proletarian leadership. Such leadership, tested in the fires of massive aggression has not been found lacking in heroism and guidance. Thus Ho Chi Minh's "Our mountains will always be, our rivers will always be, our people will always be, The American invaders defeated, we will rebuild our land ten times more beautiful" affirms, the leaderships readiness to accept any sacrifice in its pursuit of national liberation.

Another significant lesson of the Vietnamese Revolution is in its practice of self reliance. Knowing full well that the masses indeed were the makers of history the Revolution stood steadfast in its policy of trusting the people in defeating the enemy. With this as its guiding line, it firmly resisted all attempts to compromise its strategic goals. In fact by shifting its tactics when necessary the Revolution was able to put in disarray all the imperialist conspiracies. Thus Kissinger's fatal mistake when in January 1973 he couldn't comprehend the Vietnamese peoples victory when their fundamental demands: the expulsion of foreign troops, the legitimization of the Provisional Revolutionary Government - and the sacred unity of Vietnam, were all acceded to, with a minimal of concessions that finally proved ephemeral. The Eritrean revolution has also taken the path of self reliance. Like all revolutions it bases its primary potential in its people and nation. It also enlists the aid of progressive neighbouring states. In this regard the progressive Arab governments and people, the national liberation struggles as well as other democratic and progressive third world governments have given political, moral and even material support. The socialist nations, the natural allies of all oppressed peoples, have still to show their internationalist duty. The Eritrean Revolution self-criticising its past errors, mostly due to its former bankrupt leadership, will undoubtedly regain in time the solidarity of the truly socialist nations.

It is impossible to discuss the Vietnamese peoples recent struggles without looking at the Cambodian peoples revolution also. Two weeks before Vietnam

was liberated, the resistance in Cambodia had already smashed the 5-year traitorous regime of Lon Nol and established the Peoples Republic of Cambodia. Though Ho Chi Minh had died a year before United States imperialist invasion in Cambodia, yet his prophecy of the aggressors predicament still holds true. To a journalist's query of what he thought of the possibilities of United States troops invading North Vietnam, Ho replied "Of course we take the possibility very much into consideration. Giap is very vigilant. But it reminds me of a fox that has one foot caught in a trap. He starts leaping about trying to get out and poof - he lands a second foot in another trap. That's what will happen if the Americans are mad enough to invade the north." Certainly, the United States didn't invade North Vietnam; but it expanded its war of aggression into Cambodia and unwittingly advanced the day when one more people broke from the shackles of the imperialist system and forged forward into the era of democracy, socialism and national progress.

EDUCATION IN ERITREA

"Education is not a way of life in itself; it is only an instrument. Since anyone can use this instrument, it has a class nature."¹

The educational system in Eritrea, as it stands now is an amalgam of the old Eritrea classical (church and mosque) education with some Western (colonialist) modifications. Before the coming of Italian colonialism the educational system in Eritrea was mainly under the hands of the church and the mosque. Its purpose was the perpetuation of the feudal ideology, that is the subjugation and domination of the peasants and nomads by the feudal lords. Italian colonialism introduced embryonic forms of capitalist education, and it was originally aimed at producing a small corps of officials to administer the colonialist government.

Confidential direction to twenty-primary school headmasters (Italian) by Signor Festa, Director of Education in Eritrea reads:

"...By the end of fourth year, the Eritrean student should be able to speak our language (Italian) moderately well; he should know the four arithmetical operations within normal limits; he should be a convinced propagandist of the principles of hygiene; and of history he should know only the names of those who have made Italy great."²

The objective of this program was to domesticate the "educated" Eritreans so that they would identify with "charismatic" leaders and come to feel, compared with the masses, that they themselves are active and effective. This was a system designed to prevent change and to consolidate the existing social order.

Although the British colonisers, who took over from the Italian increased the number of primary schools from 24 to 59, schools still functioned to control social change, to produce better labor input for more material output for imperialist appropriation. The massive nationalist mobilization of the Eritrean people, in the 1940s, forced the British Imperialists to allow the Eritrean languages to flourish. Thousands of books were published in Arabic and Tigrinya - the media of instruction. However the majority of the books were not written in the interest of the masses. They did not attempt to raise the political consciousness of the people. Political parties emerged. The Eritrean people raised the banner of independence; nevertheless some elements of the petty-bourgeoisie, outputs of the colonialist schools, assumed leadership of some of the parties and dealt the nationalist movement a heavy setback. The reactionary intellectuals played into the hands of the colonialist policy of "divide and rule". The parties rivaled against each other, and the reactionary intellectuals promoted their selfish interests, before that of the masses.

During the brief period of 1952 to 1961, despite the fact that Eritrea had an autonomous government, economically through the factories and agricultural plantations, ideologically and culturally through the

educational system, Eritrea was under a tight grip of the Imperialists. (Many schools were built; however) the school curriculum and the method of teaching was imported from Britain and adding insult to injury this system had long been discarded in England when introduced into Eritrea. One of the positive byproducts of this era is the acceleration of the literacy rate of the Eritrean people.

As if Turkish, Egyptian, Italian and British colonialism were not enough, in 1962 an increasingly reactionary and oppressive feudal Ethiopia annexed Eritrea. The Ethiopian government ordered the burning of all books written in Eritrean languages, and everything retrograde found its way through Ethiopia, itself a neo-colony. The Eritrean was once again forced to learn an alien, and worse still, an undeveloped language. Imperialists found a free hand to reinforce their decadent education. High schools, bookshops, cinema houses, United States Information Service libraries were established, all geared to reverence for Western and Bourgeois values.

Children were demeaned by schooling. The status of the adult was exclusively determined by the amount of schooling (unless one is related to the ruling classes) rather than one's willingness or potential capability to perform the necessary tasks, and the urban society thus became oriented toward formalized expertise. Technology and knowledge are mystified by 'experts', in order to keep the masses from understanding class relationship in the society and separate them from technology and its control.

The colonialist education system is fraught with many drawbacks, one of which is dogmatism. The students learn textbooks and concepts without integrating it with daily practice. The school years are too long, unscientific courses too many, and the method of teaching is by injection instead of independent research and democratic discussion. The method of examination is to treat candidates as enemies and ambush them. This is designed to preserve the idea of the superiority of the teacher-scholar, the hierarchy of the bourgeois intellectual. Furthermore, the colonial educational system defends the practice of promotion by grades, a system which maintains the dependence on the teacher and subservience to the teacher, while it encourages the growth of individualism and selfishness at the expense of collaborative and collective learning.

(To make matters worse, only 'the selected few', members of the petty-bourgeois and upper classes participate in this kind of feudo-capitalist educational system).

Table 1 (*) (3) 1969*

53,439	9,859	19,361	3,399	86,058	Eritrea
Government	Mission	Private	Churches & Mosques	Total	Type of School

The vast majority of peasants and workers truly are the "wretched of the earth". Their time is coming fast! As we can see they have started their historic mission. The Eritrean armed resistance which began in September 1961 (faced tortuous growth mostly from its internal contradictions, due to the monopolization of the leadership by reactionary intellectuals - a product in no small part due to feudal and Imperialist education. Out of the contradictions in the Eritrean revolution emerged the E.P.L.F. (Eritrean People's Liberation Forces). The E.P.L.F. started mobilizing the masses effectively. The first objective was to re-educate the people. It was an education for dismantling feudal and imperialist education and myth. And it is intended to prevent the tendency that "many of the oppressed who directly or indirectly participate in revolution inter-d-conditioned by the myth of the old order - to make it the revolution their private revolution."⁵

To surmount the situation of oppression, people must recognize its causes. Under the E.P.L.F. system of education, series of ideological (verbal) discussions are maintained before the peasant starts learning the alphabet. The reason is that unless through democratic discussion "the peasant is exposed as to how he is maintaining the oppressive social order (includes Ethiopian occupation army), through his/her (the peasant) taxpaying...also unless he is taught (to some extent) on how to transform his primitive way of farming, the peasant can never learn effectively..."⁶

In principle this is similar method of teaching-learning that revolutionary educators advocate. The peasant learns faster when education is for transforming his surroundings and thereby his own self the material determining the mental. As an example, when the peasant is taught how to make more efficient and less tasking plows or if he is taught how to improve his/her weaving tools so that he/she can produce more and improve his/her standard of living and if the educators gracefully discuss the letters of the words of the new tools, the peasant learns them, and they become part of his/her reality. This is productive education where the process of liberating the peasant starts; additional political education on class contradictions would develop his/her critical thinking.

For the nomads of Eritrea, the education for liberation takes a different form. These are people who live in low lands of Eritrea which is semi desert. To change their nomadic way of life (at least the old, the women & the young), the E.P.L.F. is teaching them how to lead a settled agricultural life. When this is achieved like in some areas, the process of learning for liberation can be continued.

Historically the resistance of the Eritrean masses has been spontaneous and uncoordinated. When workers came as a result of the Italian colonization they begun organizing the previous uprisals through formulations of political parties and trade unions. Under the principles of E.P.L.F., through democratic education, the workers and peasants along with the revolutionary intellectuals, are contributing to the transformation of the whole Eritrean society. Its revolutionary trend could be observed in the collective use of whatever knowledge they have, not only

in ideology but in the utilization of every scrap of technical experience that could mobilize to raise the educational and cultural level of the society. It is

comprehensive in the sense that it is broadly based; dynamic with respect to its capacity to change.

programmatic because it is purposeful, planned, and experience-centered;

integrative because it draws together many aspects of the total educational program.

The E.P.L.F. is now engaged in the first step of the revolution; to change the colonial and semi-feudal form of society into an independent democratic society. The second is to carry the revolution forward and build socialist society.

Any given culture "is a reflection of the politics and economics of a given society, and the former in turn has a tremendous influence and effect upon the latter; economics is the base and politics the concentrated expression of economics."⁷ This includes education. So the Eritrean Revolution is destroying the colonialist economic system which was the base of colonialist educational system and is gradually building the economic basis for real education-for-liberation to serve the people.



Children must be educated to be heirs to the revolution.

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 ኣገላግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ተገይሖት! ዝብሉ ግጥም
 ተን ኣብ ምሉእ ህዝቢ ኤርትራ ኣገልግሎት። ኣብ ተገይሖት ኣገልግሎት
 ኣኣውሎ ዘይብሉ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት 30,000 ዝኣኣተ ህዝቢ ብገላግሎት
 ኣገልግሎት ምሉእ ገላግሎት ኣገልግሎት ተገይሖት ኣገልግሎት
 ኣገልግሎት ወይንቲት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ስተት ስተት
 ኣገልግሎት ፍልጻይ ፍልጻይ ህዝቢ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ፍልጻይ
 ኣገልግሎት 2ዜ ወይንቲት።
 ኣብ ተገይሖት 1974 ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት
 ኣገልግሎት፡ ወይንቲት ኣኣተ። ኣምኡ'ውን ብኣገላግሎት 1975
 ብገላግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ምሉእ ምሉእ ኣገልግሎት
 ግንባር ዝርኣኦ ተገይሖት ህዝብ ኣገልግሎትን ኣኣውሎ
 ገይቶ ኣገልግሎት ስተት ስተት 2ዜ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ተገይሖት
 ኣገልግሎት ስተት። ብገላግሎት ኣገልግሎት ምኡ'ውን ኣገልግሎት
 ኣብ ኣገላግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ዘይብሉ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት
 ወይንቲት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት። ተገይሖት ህዝብ ኣገልግሎት
 ኣገልግሎት ተገይሖት ኣኣውሎ ገይቶ፡ ተገይሖት ኣኣውሎ
 ገይቶ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ተገይሖት ህ.ኣ. ኣገልግሎት
 ተገይሖት። ኣዚ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት።
 ፍልጻይ ኣገልግሎት፡ ህዝቢ ኤርትራ ፍይ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት
 ዘይብሉ ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ግላግሎት ህ.ኣ.
 (መሰሪትን ተገይሖትን) ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት ኣገልግሎት

NEWS IN BRIEF

1. Junta's Treacherous Double Game

Reactionary Ethiopian regimes, whether Haile Selassie's feudal or the present ruling fascists, have always been notorious in their ^{known} xenophobia ~~hated~~ for the Arab peoples. Haile Selassie professed himself the real descendant of the ancient Jews and barked alleged Arab invasions to scaring the impoverished Ethiopian masses into Patriotic hysteria. Out-bidding him, the present military men have raised a hue and cry about the brotherly Arab peoples support for the Eritrean Revolution. To swindle Africa it treacherously took a populist black Africa vs. Arab Africa role that did great damage to the good relations of those peoples. Now it seems the junta had an abrupt change of heart. Taking a 180° turn, it has applied for membership in the Arab League. It seems the reported wealth of some Arab regimes was much too great a temptation the junta couldn't help but hat in hand, hope for some of the ~~look~~ MONEY.

Parallel with its efforts to join the Arab League, the fascist junta is playing another, far more sinister game, with the Zionists. This one consists of a scheme wherein 25,000 Ethiopian peasants are to leave and settle in Israel. Counfounded with a dramatic decrease in Jewish emigration, the Zionists have recognized that these Falashas are members of the Jewish faith after all. Thus they are now being called to serve their motherland. From their past deeds, it seems the Israeli rulers have ready positions for the Falashas in the kitchens and sanitation departments of Tel-Aviv, or even in the front line of the war zone, where they can be put to use in combatting the National Liberation struggle of the Palestinians which is striking ever deeper each day and taking heavier tolls on the Zionist troops.

Anyway, the military junta should know it won't hoodwink everybody. It must choose between the Arab masses and the Zionists. It shouldn't hope to eat its apple and still have it.

2. Eritrean Officers and Troops Desert Ethiopian Army

Hundreds of former Eritrean officers in the Ethiopian army, navy and air force have deserted their ranks and joined the Liberation movements. Others have arrived in Somalia, Yemen, and other neighbouring states. More than 100 Eritrean military personnel have been placed under arrest for opposing the junta's genocidal war against their country men. The Eritrean Police and commando units, which had, to a certain extent, stayed the bloody hands of the occupationist army, are being sent out of Eritrea; the Junta very doubtful of their loyalty, is steadily replacing them with troops from the traditionally hostile areas of South and Central Ethiopia.

3. "Socialist" Butchers Still Active

The fascist junta still continues its genocidal war against the unarmed Eritrean population. In March 1975 the town of Um Hajer, site of a previous massacre of 250, was ransacked. The army, smarting over a series of defeats in the area, vented its fury on the populace. Many were killed and 30,000 inhabitants fled to the Sudan, swelling the refugee ranks there who are already very poorly taken care of with many ailing of starvation and sickness.

To the east, the Ethiopian troops attacked Arkiko, a small town near Massawa in early April. 500 persons, mostly women, children and old men were the victims of these latest atrocity.

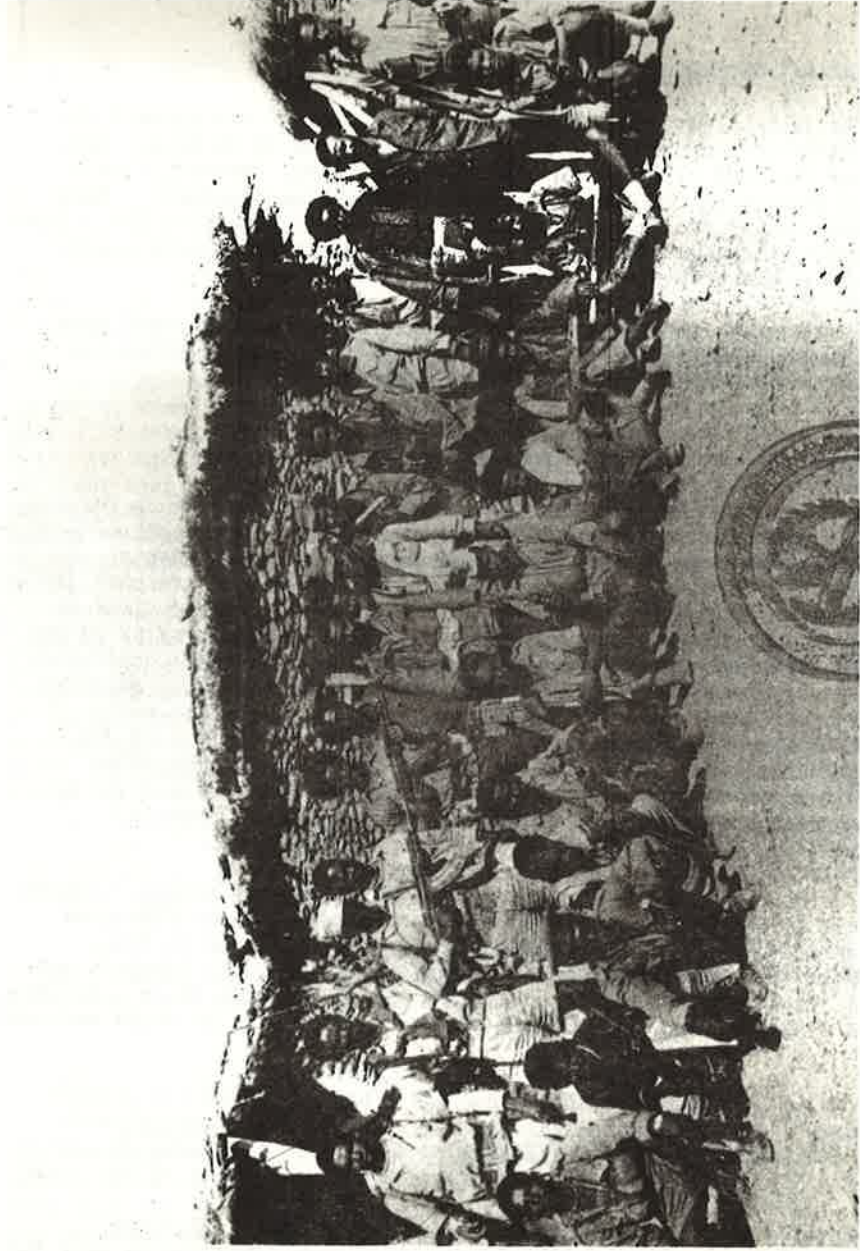
4. Military Regimes Literacy Campaign - a Flop

Last year the Ethiopian military junta started, with much fanfare, a campaign against illiteracy. Students were sent to the countryside to teach the peasants the Amharic language. Naturally, most peasants saw little value in it, since their crying problem was the catastrophic famine that had killed 100,000's of them. 29 students were killed in various parts of the country by enraged villagers. A significant portion of the students, themselves products of (past) anti-feudal struggles, called on the killers to take their destiny into their own hands. They agitated for the formation of peasant associations. The junta subsequently closed more than 30 centres and arrested many students. Some of the leaders, including Melesse Teclé, editor of the University students paper, "Struggle" were murdered. The President of the students (he also headed the literacy campaign) escaped arrest and fled to Somalia.

5. In the Middle East, Europe and here in the United States, Eriteans have taken to the streets to show their deep hatred for the Ethiopian regime that is killing and mutilating their people. 3,000 in Rome, thousands in Beirut and Cairo and hundreds in almost every European and ^{mid} Northeast capital expressed their deepest solidarity with their Liberation Fighters. Many of them also headed homewards to partake in their national duties.

In the United States, Eritreans for Liberation held a big rally on February 14. Held in front of the U.N. building, the participants accused Ethiopia for its Nazi-like war of genocide. They also denounced the United States and Israel for bolstering the war machine of the junta.

In other cities local chapters of Detroit, Boston, Madison, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Colorado, etc. held demonstrations to hail the upsurge in the national liberation war in Eritrea. Many speakers, including members and representatives of progressive organizations, expressed their support and sympathy for the fighting people of Eritrea. Others let it known that the war showed them through the smokescreen of Ethiopian Socialism to the fascist imperialist lackey the junta really is.



Members of the forefront fighters of both E.P.L.F. and R.C. - united in action,