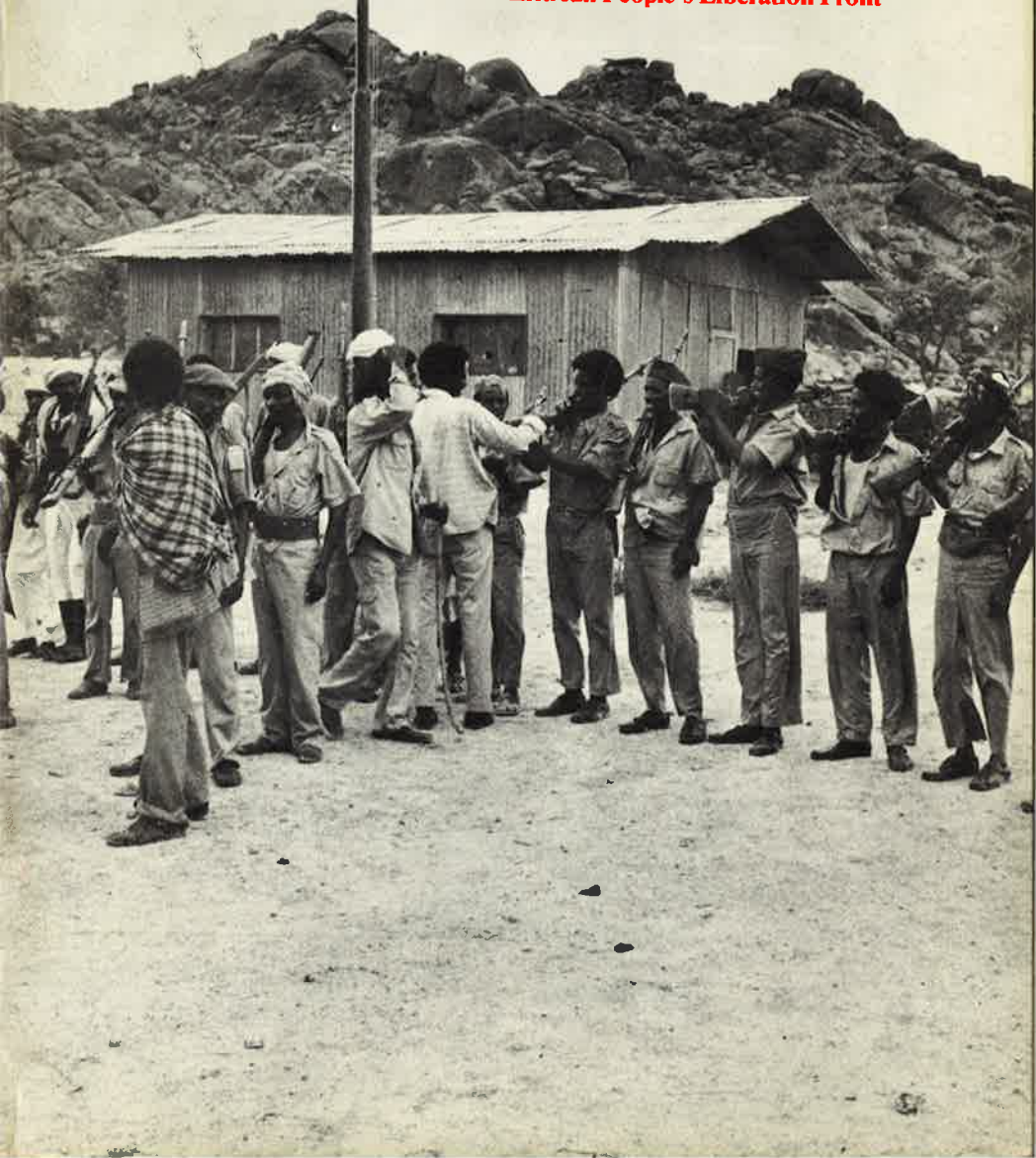




SELECTED ARTICLES FROM VANGUARD

**Official Monthly Organ of the
Eritrean People's Liberation Front**



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Cover Photo: EPLA fighters and members of the people's militia are shown after having raised the EPLF's flag at the "FORTO" in Keren right after its liberation.

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NOTE:

VANGUARD the official monthly organ of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front is published in the liberated areas of Eritrea and is reprinted and distributed by the Association of Eritrean Students in North America (AESNA). Although AESNA makes every effort to reprint **VANGUARD** every month, it was unable to reprint **VANGUARD** Vol. II Nos. 2, 3 and 4 on time. Therefore, in this issue AESNA is proud to present reprints of insightful and informative selected articles from **VANGUARD** Vol. II Nos. 2,3, and 4.

AESNA
October, 1977

CORRECTION IN VANGUARD Vol. II No. 5

Pointing out that a typographic error was made (in reprinting) in **Vanguard** Vol. II No. 5, we ask our readers to read the incomplete sentence on page 8, second paragraph (first sentence) as:

"Fourth, the EPLF adheres to the revolutionary policy of self-reliance in all fields of its struggle to win complete victory for our people's national democratic revolution."

Editorial

The Revolution advances and Victory is Certain

It is an historic and scientific truth that the wheel of history never turns back. Ignorant as it is of this truth, the fascist military junta in Ethiopia loses sight of the indisputable fact that the Eritrean revolution, as a historic movement embracing the broad masses as its main driving force, ceaselessly advances and that its victory is certain. It has been proved in the past and will also be proven in the future that the Ethiopian army of aggression, however strong and armed to the teeth it may be, cannot curb our revolution.

Having acquired rich experiences in various political and military fields in the protracted people's war which they have been waging to liberate their country, the broad Eritrean masses have an unequivocal and clear stand as far as their just cause is concerned. It is therefore in these subjective and objective conditions that the secret of the decisiveness of the force of the Eritrean masses lies. It is also these very conditions that always guarantee victory for the oppressed masses.

We assert with full confidence that the revolution is ceaseless for in our persistent fight for complete independence, social emancipation and national sovereignty, our demands and national aspirations can best and solely be served by the revolution. Our demands and aspirations can be achieved neither by yielding to the enemy nor by making concessions and accepting half solutions. In view of this fact, it is an historical inevitability for our revolution to advance along its correct path, whatever the sacrifices. Our people were aware of the immense sacrifices and hard work awaiting them when they commenced the armed struggle. Indeed, they have been bearing all its consequences; they are also ready to continue doing so in the future until complete victory.

A revolution is neither a compartmentalized nor a piecemeal process. On

the contrary, it is an integrated process continuously advancing with the continuity and interconnections of its components preserved. That this cannot be otherwise has been proved both by our long experiences in struggle and by the experiences of the struggling peoples of the world in their victorious wars against even the strongest imperialist powers.

It is from this clear standpoint and fundamental ideal that we carry on the revolution in the fullest sense of the word. Although the period of struggle before victory may be long and protracted, we have not the slightest doubt that victory, as an historical, dialectical and scientific result, is certain. All the military maneuvers of the Dergue and its predecessor, designed to subvert our movement, have been repeatedly smashed by our revolutionary forces. All the enemy's military campaigns failed miserably, not because they were set with less preparations and propaganda than the one under way, but because they were first and foremost opposed to both history and logic. Formerly, military campaigns used to be carried out in secrecy, seemingly unknown to the outside world. However, since the external form and the war tactics of the enemy have now changed, the world may be led by the fascist Dergue's threatening and boastful propaganda into thinking that the Eritrean revolution may perhaps be in danger. The world has today focused its attention on our surrounding region and is closely following the events and anxiously awaiting the outcome of the Dergue's frenzied preparations for a new aggression against Eritrea. Aware of the Dergue's plan to escalate its war of extermination in Eritrea, as well as its intense propaganda against the Eritrean revolution, many people around the world may be deeply concerned about the fate of the Eritrean people and revolution.

However, the Eritrean revolution, convinced that "actions speak louder than words," has so far not said much about the recent military preparations of the fascist Dergue. What we want to assert here with confidence is that the Dergue is digging its own grave through its mad adventure; that its continued existence as a political system will be influenced by the coming developments and that all movements of the Dergue arise out of sheer impotence and desperation.

The Role of Culture in the National Democratic Struggle

Ever since the advent of colonialism, the colonized peoples have ceaselessly fought for national independence, liberation, democracy and human dignity and won brilliant victories. Today, the national liberation movement has become the principal motive force of historical development and social progress. It is waging courageous and resolute struggles to provide a fundamental solution to the primary contradictions between colonialism, imperialism and domestic reaction on the one hand and the oppressed and colonized masses on the other. The national-democratic struggle is waged on several fronts, viz., on the political, economic and cultural fronts. Its main objective is to do away with the prevailing conditions of political oppression, economic exploitation and cultural domination and suppression and bring about social liberation, prosperity and progress.

In any society, economics is the base while politics is the concentrated expression of economics; that is, it expresses the economic relations obtaining among the various social classes. And any culture is the ideological reflection of the existing socio-economy and politics. Its form is determined primarily by the prevailing economic and political structures. In turn, culture affects and exerts a great influence on the economy and politics. The concrete material conditions of social existence are the bases of human consciousness while consciousness, in turn, plays a big and important role in the transformation of the natural and social conditions of existence.

In a colonial and feudo-capitalist society like ours, for instance, there prevails a feudo-capitalist economy and politics. Reflecting this feudo-capitalist economy and politics on the ideological plane is the dominant feudo-bourgeois culture. From their daily struggles to live and improve their livelihood, the masses, who are the victims of colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation, come to understand the causes of their oppression, poverty and suffering. In the process of their continuing struggle, they gain

experience, raise the level of their national and class consciousness, and come to identify their real friends and enemies. They grasp the need for organization and rise up against all forms of oppression and exploitation. Achieving victory after a long, hard and bitter struggle for liberation, they smash the oppressive system and establish a new and just one. Thus, in this way, economic exploitation and political oppression become the basis for cultural awakenings or consciousness. The conscious social forces then wage organized popular struggles on the economic, political and cultural fields and bring about the basic transformation of society.

Culture, in general, expresses the relations between man and nature, the relations among various social classes, the material and spiritual life of society and the identity of a people. Since it is intimately linked with the social and economic conditions, with the level of development of the productive forces and mode of production of society, it develops along with them. A given culture has dominant and suppressed, strong and weak, good and bad, positive and negative as well as progressive and reactionary elements. In more precise terms, culture has always a class character. In any class society (except under socialism), there is the progressive and democratic culture of the toiling masses struggling against the dominant reactionary culture of the oppressor and exploiting ruling classes.

Our country Eritrea is a colonial and a feudo-capitalist country. Under the yoke of successive colonial rule, its people have long remained the victims of untold oppression, exploitation and suppression. With their natural and human resources plundered by foreigners and their living conditions declining from bad to worse year by year, they lead a miserable life, suffering from distressing poverty, backwardness, ignorance and diseases. Moreover, Ethiopian colonialism and world imperialism have been striving hard to destroy the Eritrean identity by suppressing the culture and traditions of the Eritrean people and spreading their own decadent cultures and traditions in our society. They have endeavored to poison the mentality of our young men and women in the cities so that they may waste away their golden time on selfish and decadent activities instead of on the affairs of their country and the cause of their people.

Pursuing the vicious policy of divide and rule, they have, either directly or through the agency of their lackeys, never refrained from the attempt to sow religious, nationality, tribal, regional, etc., discord and sharpen the non-basic contradictions among the people in a futile effort to weaken the unity of the Eritrean people and obstruct the development of our struggle. In our country, colonialism, decadent imperialist culture and backward feudal culture are closely intertwined and have formed a triple alliance. This cultural alliance between colonialism, imperialism and domestic reaction is a reactionary alliance reflecting their common economic interests and

political views based on the oppression and exploitation of the toiling masses of Eritrea. This reactionary cultural alliance sanctions and fortifies the oppression of women, fosters hatred of labor and contempt for the toiling masses, foments tribal, nationality and provincial discord, and nurtures religious fanaticism. Backward feudal culture in particular is not only the instrument of oppression, exploitation and suppression in the service of the ruling classes but it is also a tool of colonial aggression and imperialist domination.

Culture is a very important factor in the life of a people. For this reason, the suppression, paralysis and destruction of the cultural life of a people is one of the principal instruments which colonialism and imperialism use to colonize and plunder them. During the last 25 years, Ethiopian colonialism and its imperialist overlords have inflicted enormous harm on our country and people through the unreserved use of brutal violence. They have not only committed fascist aggression to forcibly subjugate our people and plunder their natural and human resources, but there is also hardly any conspiracy they have not hatched to break our people's heroic resistance; suppress our national culture, languages and traditions, and foment national division and discord.

Colonialism endeavors to make the colonized people the source of forced labor and the victim of its exploitation. It never tries to raise their cultural level. On the contrary, it strives with all might and main to suppress the culture of the toiling masses, which it despises, and spread its own reactionary culture in its place. To destroy the identity of the colonized people, it perpetrates untold oppression, suppression and domination against them, violates their human dignity, and creates cultural alienation. Nevertheless, the colonial culture does not directly affect or influence the vast majority of the peasant masses in the countryside and the working people in the cities. Hence, the indigenous culture of the masses becomes a powerful revolutionary weapon that safeguards the identity of the colonized people, awakens and mobilizes all the patriotic forces for the anti-colonial resistance, and expands and consolidates the political and morale unity of the revolutionary forces.

Thus, the cultural struggle against colonialism must necessarily be based on the culture of the masses. The negative factors and the reactionary aspects of the culture that are an obstacle to the advance of the struggle and the progress of society should be attacked, weakened and eliminated step by step. The positive and progressive elements of the culture that support the patriotic struggle and strengthen the unity of the people must be consolidated and developed. In this way, the EPLF, as the vanguard of the Eritrean national liberation movement, has, through arduous struggles in the cultural field, already shattered the reactionary cultural alliance of colonialism, imperialism and domestic reaction against the masses and

social progress. On its ruins, it is building a new national culture based on the progressive and democratic content of the culture of our toiling masses.

Any new social development arises out of a hard and bitter struggle. And the new culture is born out of a long, hard and bitter struggle against the old one. The Eritrean people have never lived in peace with their colonial aggressors. For the last 420 years, they have been in constant resistance and struggle against foreign aggression, colonial oppression, exploitation and cultural oppression. History bears witness that even during the periods when their resistance suffered temporary defeat in the hands of foreign aggressors, they persisted in passive resistance through spontaneous uprisings, refusal to provide forced labor and pay taxes, armed revolts, etc. Today, our rapidly advancing armed liberation struggle is smashing the enemy's counter-revolutionary violence with the revolutionary force of the masses.

Since a revolution is fundamentally a social process undertaken by the masses for the masses, the EPLF, as the vanguard organization, adheres to the principle of "from the masses to the masses" in its fight. Our revolutionary patriotic struggle expresses and endeavors to implement the wishes and aspirations of our people for independence, freedom, prosperity and progress. And this is precisely why it is advancing so rapidly and dealing the enemy devastating blows on all fronts. The forces of colonialism and reaction in Eritrea, with their time drawing to a close, are today in their death throes. This great victory is the fruit of the protracted and resolute struggle of our heroic people against colonial oppression, imperialist exploitation, cultural domination and reactionary conspiracies.

The masses are always the inexhaustive source of the new revolutionary culture. Since the masses preserve their cultural identity and human dignity even under the worst circumstances of colonial oppression and injustices, they wage an unyielding cultural resistance. For this reason, they can rapidly be awakened and their large scale participation in the political and armed struggle secured within a relatively short time, thereby guaranteeing the victory of the struggle, provided that they are correctly led and guided by a revolutionary vanguard. In this way, the armed liberation struggle becomes not only the outcome of the resistant culture of the masses but also the fountain of the new revolutionary culture. This new revolutionary culture is the inexhaustible source of the courage, perseverance and unity of our people in general and the firm foundation of the resolute determination, spirit of self-sacrifice and heroism of our People's Army in particular.

Cultural resistance is a great moving force in the course of the armed struggle. When the people, who for many centuries have suffered from illiteracy, ignorance, diseases and repression, receive opportunities for education, medical care and democracy for the first time, their cultural level is rapidly raised. The conscious masses then mobilize their boundless creative energy in the service of the revolution. Thus the expansion and wide-



A great cultural evening in Dekemhare with the EPLF's Branch of Culture on the occasion of the city's liberation. The slogan at the rear reads "A NEW CULTURE FOR A NEW SOCIETY"

spread dissemination of education, literature, the arts, music and patriotic songs play a big role in the awakening of the masses and raising their level of consciousness, morale and revolutionary participation.

The objective of our national democratic revolution led by the correct revolutionary line of the EPLF is the building of a new society in a new Eritrea. We are fighting to obliterate the old colonial and oppressive society with all its old economy, politics and culture and establish in its place a new society with a new economy, politics and culture. This important task is already being put into effect in the liberated areas.

The new democratic culture that we are building on the basis of a scientific theory has a national form and a progressive content. We are expanding and spreading political education, revolutionary literature and cultural work among the masses of our people to destroy colonialism, imperialism and feudo-capitalism in the cultural field. A great effort is being made to enable the masses of our people to participate with all their energy and resources in the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal political, economic and cultural revolution being waged by raising their consciousness and cultural level. In brief, a solid foundation is being laid for the building of a society free from all forms of oppression and exploitation.

The new democratic culture being built in the course of the armed struggle is national. It opposes all colonial oppression, imperialist domination and feudal backwardness; it works for the independence and dignity of Eritrea; and it endeavors for the emancipation and progress of its people. This national culture has an internationalist content. It has no relations

whatsoever with any reactionary imperialist or feudal culture. However, it is closely linked with and develops by drawing from the progressive culture of the world's workers and toiling masses. Our progressive national culture can be enriched by drawing from any progressive foreign culture. However, this does not mean that we should blindly copy. It should be done selectively, by relating and integrating it with the concrete conditions of our society and the experience of our struggle. It is only when the culture we absorb from other countries and peoples is integrated with the particular features of our country and society and takes on a national form that it can be of service to our struggle, the development of our culture and the progress of our society.

The new democratic culture of the new Eritrea is scientific. It is based on the democratic and progressive content of the old culture of our toiling masses, draws from the developed and revolutionary cultures of the world's people, opposes and destroys all the backward, superstitious and unscientific elements of the old culture, respects the history of our people and accelerates their dialectical development. To respect our history does not, however, mean that we should be vainglorious and look backwards instead of forward. It means that we intensify and push our present struggle forward on the basis of a proper understanding of the historic experiences and victories of our people. We study our history in order to better understand our present situation and correctly map out the course of our future struggle. Our new national culture endeavors to seek after the truth and assure the unity of theory and practice.

The new national culture of the new Eritrea is democratic. Owned by and serving the interests of the toiling masses who make up over 95% of the population, it is the culture of the broad masses of the people. It has an unbending anti-feudal and anti-imperialist content. The cultural movement is extremely important for the practical revolutionary movement of the masses. That is why revolutionary culture is a powerful weapon which stirs up the broad masses of the people.

For the last sixteen years, the Eritrean people have been fighting against Ethiopian colonialism, world imperialism, zionism and domestic reaction with great determination and heroism and scoring glorious victories. They are carrying out a cultural revolution that goes side by side with, reflects and serves their political, military and economic struggles. Thus, today in Eritrea, there are two systems confronting and waging intense and bitter struggles against each other. One is old, colonial, oppressive, exploitative and counter-revolutionary while the other is new, national, just, liberating and revolutionary. It is certain that in the end the new shall triumph over the old, the national over the colonial, the progressive over the reactionary, and the revolutionary over the counter-revolutionary system.

In general, therefore, the progressive culture of our toiling masses has

crystalized and continues to develop from their long historic struggles (production and class struggles). This basically progressive and democratic culture develops and advances forward from time to time with the development of science and technology, the expansion of education, art and literature, and the attainment of social emancipation, prosperity and progress. The national culture of our masses plays a big and important role in our ongoing liberation struggle on the one hand, and is built and developed by our popular revolutionary struggle on the other.

Our cultural movement, just like our military operations, safeguards and consolidates the unity and victory of our people and assures the defeat of our enemies. The principal aim of the cultural activities being performed in the liberated areas, which our vanguard organization has given top priority, is to demolish the old feudal and decadent imperialist cultures and to build and consolidate the new democratic culture of our masses. In brief, to mobilize all the popular forces and raise their revolutionary participation is the war for national independence, democracy, freedom and progress. Its content and presentation are designed to educate and strengthen the unity of our people and to attack and smash the enemy. This cultural movement is a powerful revolutionary force that helps our heroic people, and the resolute EPLF People's Army in particular, to fight with greater unity, determination and self-sacrifice against all our enemies. Today, on the ruins of the old colonial, oppressive and reactionary political, economic and cultural systems, a new national, just and progressive political, economic and cultural system has germinated with the blood of our heroic martyrs and is branching out and flowering with the struggle of our masses and the continuing martyrdom of our finest comrades.



A cultural evening in liberated Karora.

Reportage: The Youth Are Bearers of the Revolutionary Torch

Youth—the new generation of society—are the continuators of the historic development and the harbingers of the new progress of humanity. As the inexhaustible source of the life, renewal and development of society, they play a decisive role in all fields of social struggle. Generations come and go; the old is replaced by the new, and a new generation springs up again; and so society perpetuates itself through a permanent state of renewal. The masses of the people make history through their unyielding struggle. They engage in production to secure and improve their livelihood, and endeavour to develop it further. They resist foreign aggression and fight to eliminate social oppression and exploitation. To develop the means of production, they conduct scientific tests and experiments. Thus propelled by the unyielding struggles of the masses forward, society always develops from the lower to a higher level, from the simpler to a more complex form of organization, and from worse to better conditions of life. The pace of this progress, the victory or defeat of all the social struggles, is, in the final analysis, determined by the degree of participation of the youth. For this reason, any social movement strives hard to gain the active support and participation of youth in order to achieve its objectives. History shows that if a movement fails to succeed in this effort, it simply withers away in a short while.

In the long anti-colonial resistance of our people, the youth of our country have a glorious history of courageous resistance. Adhering to this proud tradition, thousands of youth are today fighting shoulder to shoulder with their older comrades with magnificent heroism and determination and winning brilliant victories in all fields of our struggle. In any case, the objective of this article is not to explain the general role of Eritrean youth in the ongoing revolutionary struggle but to focus on the *Fitewerari*

(Vanguard), the young men and women whom our vanguard organization provides with special political and military training.

The Fitewerari was established in 1974 on the basis of the special experience of the Eritrean revolution in general and the experience of the EPLF in particular. In this section are trained the male youth ranging from 14 to 16 years in age and all the women fighters. (The boys and girls who are less than 14 years old are sent to the Revolution School (*Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 2, "Reportage"). There are two main reasons for training the young boys separate from the older ones. First, to provide them with the regular military and political training over a longer period of time, allowing for the difference in physical strength. Second, to politicize and imbue them with a new outlook with relative ease since they have been less influenced by the backward society. As regards the women, it has been found better to train them with the younger boys rather than the older ones who, like themselves, come with certain backward views and tendencies inherited from the old society. This method has shown very satisfactory and positive results both in the life of our revolutionary organization and the development of our struggle.

The Fitewerari (both boys and girls) come from the various nationalities of Eritrea. The majority are the children of peasants and nomads coming from the countryside while many of the rest are the children of urban workers and petit-bourgeoisie. Several also come from the refugees (peasants, workers and nomads) in the Sudan. There are many among the Fitewerari who, as the children of fighters and martyrs, have come to carry the struggle of their fathers forward till final victory. Besides, there are many girls who, refusing family arranged marriages, have come to fight for the liberation of the masses.

The educational and training program of the Fitewari consists of three parts, viz., literacy, political education, and military training. Since the history of successive colonialism in our country has not only subjected our people to ruthless exploitation and oppression but also reduced them to illiteracy and ignorance by denying them educational opportunities, 75% of the Fitewerari are illiterate at the time they join the revolution. In the literacy education, Tigrigna and Arabic lessons are given to all while each is taught in the language he/she understands. After four months of learning, the Fitewerari become entirely literate. To develop this new skill step by step, there are reading pamphlets and books that go along with the program of political education. Moreover, they write patriotic revolutionary songs and poems and present them in their weekly cultural programs. This plays a big role in raising their consciousness, strengthening their patriotic sentiments, and cementing their comradely solidarity. The form and content of their cultural activities, in turn, develops with the level of their consciousness.



“The Youth of Eritrea are the future heirs and defenders of the revolution and thus the EPLF arms the “fitewerari” with revolutionary theory and trains them in military and other technical skills.”

They study the *General Political Education for Fighters* which is the same kind of political education given in the regular department of training. The basic aim of political education is to arm the youth for the fight against Ethiopian colonialism, imperialism and local reaction, to cleanse and liberate them from the old views and backward sentiments, and to build a life of struggle through revolutionary theory and a new progressive outlook. The youth, who had been deprived of educational opportunities under the backward feudo-fascist Ethiopian colonialism, pursue their education with enthusiasm because it satisfies their burning aspirations to free themselves from the darkness of ignorance. Consequently, they rapidly raise their level of consciousness.

Although the military training of the Fitewerari takes a longer time, it is basically the same with that given to all EPLF recruits. They learn the tactics of conventional warfare and the use of various kinds of weapons, mostly with U.S. imperialist arms captured from the Ethiopian colonial army. Training is a process which advances on the basis of the experience gained and the general development of our organization’s military capability.

In addition to literacy education, political and military training, and running their daily affairs, they participate in production, adhering to the EPLF’s correct revolutionary principle of “integrating education with production.” They practice criticism and self-criticism to rectify mistakes,

develop work and strengthen comradesly solidarity. Upon finishing training, they are assigned to the different EPLF units and departments to carry on the struggle on all fronts. They have already won an admirable reputation for their devotion, love of work and vigilance.

This does not mean, however, that all this victory has been achieved in a single swoop without any problems. Certain difficulties were also faced on consequence of the old culture. One of these problems, for instance, pertains to the question of the equality of women. In our feudo-bourgeois society with its patriarchal family, as in all oppressive systems, women suffer from class and sex oppression and have a very low social status. The male chauvinism and female submissiveness that prevails creates certain problems, particularly in the beginning of each course. In the beginning, some men and women find it difficult not only to translate sex equality in work and relations into practice but also to accept it as a principle. Nevertheless, this problem is gradually resolved as the level of consciousness of the recruits advances through political education and the equality of women is demonstrated in practice through common participation in all work and activities. Still, there are very few women who, under the guise of equality, show erroneous tendencies that either ignore or fail to take into account the general conditions of our society or the concrete situation of our revolutionary life. But, these erroneous tendencies are also rectified through active struggle involving political education and criticism and self-criticism.

The Fitewerari section is not only for the training and education of young men and women. It is also a place for the correction of many young citizens who are deceived and sent by the enemy to commit crimes against their country and people. There is no means which fascist Ethiopian colonialism does not use to exterminate the Eritrean people and strangle their just patriotic struggle. It is evident that our people today, with their natural and human resources plundered by foreign rulers and their livelihood destroyed by the brutal war of extermination of fascist Ethiopian colonialism, are living under miserable conditions of poverty, deprivation and hardships. Exploiting this deplorable situation, the fascist Dergue endeavors to use even innocent children, who are hardly aware of the consequences of their acts, as instruments of its fascist aggression. This heinous crime has two fascist designs. First, to spoil the future of the young boys and girls, whom a just society would otherwise have availed of the opportunity for education as well as trained and groomed for service to their people, by making them tools of its dirty objectives and fascist policy of extermination. That is, it poisons their lives by immersing them into the quagmire of its network of spying, treachery and murder right from their early years. Second, to annihilate the youth and people of Eritrea by sending hundreds of young boys and girls on various destructive and spying missions so they would be

caught while committing crimes and liquidated on the spot. Through this and its customary massacres of our people, the fascist Dergue strives to exhaust the source of our continuing revolutionary struggle.

The principal missions of these young boys and girls include the poisoning of wells and water springs, estimating the number of fighters and identifying the leaders, studying the quantity and quality of weapons, breaking and destroying materials, and spoiling food. It promises them a lot of money upon their return after committing these crimes. The majority of them are lumpen elements from the urban areas while few come from the rural areas. In addition to those sent by Ethiopia, there are also others sent by some internal reactionary quarters for spying and poisoning the wells from which the Fitewerari fetch their supply of water.

Many of these young enemy "agents" repent before they finish training, confess on their own and expose their collaborators. The majority however, are identified by the consciousness of the fighters and the vigilance of the organization. Several of them confess that they, as enemy agents while in the cities, had committed crimes against the people and caused the jailing of hundreds of innocent civilians, but that they are now sincerely repentant of and sorry for the crimes they had committed. Once they become conscious and realize the gravity of the crimes for which they were sent, many of them are corrected and play an exemplary role in their assigned tasks and activities. Indeed, when one observes them studying, working or fighting, it is difficult to believe that they were sent by the enemy for spying and destruction. This further reiterates that the enemy is digging its own grave.

Thus, the fascist schemes of Ethiopian colonialism end up in failure. First and foremost, the internal situation of our revolutionary organization does not allow the agents to accomplish their missions or inflict any damage. Not only is their chance of remaining unidentified in the field very slim but it is virtually impossible for them to accomplish their missions and return to the enemy. Contrary to the fascist Dergue's expectations, our revolutionary organization on its part does not kill the children who had been deceived into spying when it catches them. It patiently teaches, educates, politicizes and arms them to fight their real enemies—the criminal Ethiopian colonialists who sent them to be killed. Thus, the fascist Dergue's conspiracy boomerangs. The young boys and girls whom it dispatched to serve as its tools join the revolution and become its grave diggers.

Thus in brief, the Fitewerari, as their name implies, are the guides and leaders of our people's continuing struggle, the guarantors of their future victory, liberation and progress. They are truly a permanent bridge connecting our past revolutionary struggle with that of the present and our present struggle with that of the future. The collective life, work and production that they begin to lead right from the outset, combined with

their literacy and political education, gradually weakens their old outlook and relations and develops a new progressive outlook and comradely relations. Thus, when the Fitewerari are assigned to revolutionary work and struggle upon completing political and military training, they really become new men and women with a new outlook. This basic transformation that comes about within less than a year is in itself one example of the great ability of the EPLF revolutionary organization to change people.

This new generation, being cultivated through a progressive outlook, practical revolutionary struggle and active production work, free from the old views and relations, is the real guarantee of the continuous victories of our revolution and the creation of our new society. Although the present revolutionary generation is striving hard to lay the foundations of the coming new society, its main force is directed at the destruction of the prevailing oppressive and exploitative colonial system. Thus, the principal task of the new generation of young men and women who are already being groomed by scientific theory and tempered by practical struggles is the building of a new society free from all forms of oppression and exploitation. To properly fulfil this task, they must strive to raise their ideological level and strengthen their revolutionary vigilance by ceaselessly learning from the revolutionary experience of the world's fighting people and the fighting people of Eritrea.

Therefore, the youth of Eritrea have a great historic responsibility to loyally and resolutely carry the revolutionary torch now aflame all over our country for the sake of genuine national independence and freedom, human dignity and equality, and social justice and progress and assure that a permanent flame of revolution remains lit in Eritrea by adding new fuel through their continuing toil and struggle. To properly shoulder this historic responsibility, they must constantly learn, work and struggle.



The "fitewrari" in one of their weekly cultural programs of singing patriotic and revolutionary songs and poetry reading.

Reportage: The Revolution School

On March 22, 1977, at 9:30 pm, a military communique was issued simultaneously to all EPLF units heralding the news of the fall of Nacfa (the capital city of Sahel Province) to the EPLF after six months of siege.

By coincidence, the Revolution School happened to be celebrating the end of the first semester on this evening. When the news of the fall of Nacfa broke in the School, it gave added brilliance to the celebrations and rejoicing already in process. This became an occasion of double celebration—rejoicing at the spectacular progress made by the Revolution School (a boarding school established by our organization for the children of martyrs, poor peasants and the displaced) and the fall of one of the biggest enemy bases.

The presence of the Branch of Culture, made up of Vanguarders, amidst the children who are the flowers of progress of the “new society with the new culture,” and hundreds of fighters gave a new dimension to the festive occasion. Revolutionary cultural shows and patriotic songs, throbbing with the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and progressive content of our new-democratic culture, filled the evening.

Following in the footsteps of their older comrades, these children, who are no more than five years old were excitedly shouting “Nacfa has fallen,” “the EPLF People’s Army has put Nacfa under its control,” “all enemy soldiers have been captured,” etc. Whoever watched these children for an hour at that moment of intense excitement—jumping, dancing, rejoicing—could truly read the history of the Eritrean people in their faces. Indeed that moment represented the absolute negation of the history of oppression and suffering of the Eritrean people.

These children are no strangers to the injustices perpetrated by Ethiopia against our people. In fact, most of them have been its victims. Their villages have been burnt down by Ethiopia, their homes and crop fields

bombed by Ethiopian planes, and their parents brutally murdered by the barbarous Ethiopian colonial army. They will never forget their many comrades who perished from hunger and thirst on the way while covering hundreds of kilometers on foot to escape from Ethiopian atrocities.

This evening was a highlight of the long history of the Eritrean people. Colonialist Ethiopia had set up a fascist trap to finish off these children so that they would not become the bearers of the flaming revolutionary torch. This new generation, born at a time when artillery and gunfire are reverberating all over the mountains, valleys and plains of Eritrea, have joined the battle to eradicate all forms of oppression and exploitation and to guarantee the right to life and dignity.

The long history of confrontation between colonialism and our revolution, between the backward colonizer’s barbarous war of extermination and our people’s heroic war of national resistance of the last sixteen years—all this was vividly expressed in the joy and determined spirit of the children. This evening was a great consolation to the children who were deprived of their parents by the savage atrocities of the Ethiopian occupation army. For instance, seven brothers who lost their father in the first massacre of Hirgigo and their mother in the second were singing along with their comrades: “We are fortunate in joining the right organization for we have a future.”

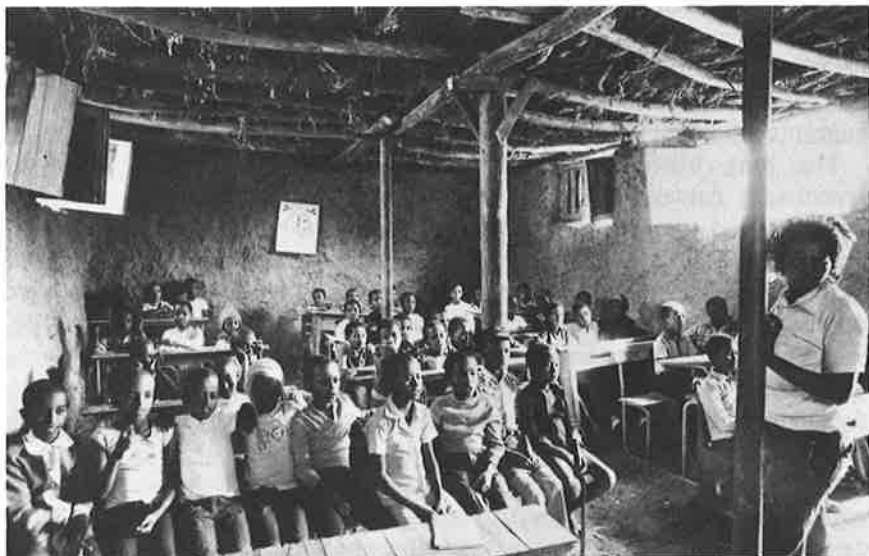
Conditions have changed in the course of many years of struggle. The patriotic struggle has become truly revolutionary, the enemy has been dealt devastating blows everywhere, and the cheap reactionaries have been weeded out. A revolutionary organization representing the basic interests of the masses and capable of building a new revolutionary generation has been created. The preservation, consolidation and expansion of this achievement has become the principal task of the revolution. In the struggle between the old and the new, the past and the present, the triumph of the new over the old is certain.

Even though the pupils are normally orderly and obedient, the director of the school was that evening unsuccessful in persuading them to sleep on time, lest they be too tired for school the next morning; they were totally immersed in the rejoicing. The essence and truth of this joyous experience bring home the profound significance of the past history and on-going successes of our revolutionary struggle. The real meaning of our victory is the happiness of these young flowers and our toiling masses.

The dancing and rejoicing that filled this festive night was unprecedented for the school children who are the flowers of our revolution and the harbingers of our future society. At the same time, the members of the Branch of Culture were presenting newly composed songs hailing the victory of Nacfa and praising the heroism of the EPLF People’s Army.

This was not only the day of the greatest victory in the whole history of

our revolution but also the eve of the first anniversary of the expulsion of the reactionar clique of the ex-Foreign Mission. In appropriating EPLF property, the ex-Foreign Mission sought to starve us into submission. Thus, our victory, scored despite the machinations of the reactionary blood-suckers, underscores the truth that the masses alone are the makers of history and the architects of their victory.



The revolution school is building a new generation free from all colonial relations and reactionary tendencies and sentiments that are the legacy of the backward society."

The progress of our organization in 1976 has been spectacular. The dreams and strivings of the reactionary clique to put our organization under its control, or else, strangulate it within a year, have been crushed. In 1977, the EPLF has smashed one of the strongest principal enemy bases. So, on this historic date, it is fitting that the children are singing and dancing, the Vanguards of the Branch of Culture raising the slogan of "Victory to the Masses!", and the stage illuminating the banner of "A New Culture for a New Society."

Change, creation and victory are interrelated dialectical processes. Revolution is a struggle that entails resolute war against colonialism, reactionary colonial culture, and backward social relations. The summation of all these struggles leads to the creation of a new society with a new culture. The Revolution School, as one of the principal bases for this, is building a new generation free from all colonial relations and reactionary tendencies and sentiments that are the legacy of the backward society.

The celebrations went on all night. The pupils of the Revolution School



Revolutionary discipline is an important aspect of the educational process.

sent their heroic comrades who achieved the victory of Nacfa congratulatory songs and poems via wireless. Classes were cancelled the next day to enable the students, tired from night-long dancing, to rest. But, as the pupils have other duties besides attending classes, they spent the day gathering firewood and helping their guardians.

The Revolution School, established on January 1, 1976, is a great achievement of our revolution in the liberated areas. The pupils of this school are the children of martyrs, nomads and the displaced. The building of such a school, as a cornerstone of our objectives, was under consideration for a long time. There have, for instance been efforts by individuals as well as the Department of People's Administration to place teachers in the rural areas. However, a school like the Revolution School could not be established then because of the prevailing conditions. Not only did the Organization have limited resources, but it was also in a difficult political and military situation.

Although the Organization had to rely on its own human and material resources to establish the school, it was able to overcome its difficulties within a short time and build a big school with an appropriate curriculum compatible with the changing society.

In describing the experience of the school, the comrade in charge states: "Although we had limited capacity and little experience when we started our work in the school, the progress made so far is considerable. The prin-

cial question is not only building the school and educating the children but also, since it is a boarding school, providing and caring for them all year round. Tremendous effort is required to educate and provide the necessary care for the children as well as create the means whereby they can freely, without any pressure, develop their skills and talents.

“The school started with 265 students (both boys and girls) mainly in the first grade. Shortly afterwards, on September 1, 1977, classes for the second and third grades were started. With the improvement of its material and human capacity, the school accepted 70 children of martyrs and refugees from the Sudan. A little later, it admitted a large number of 10 to 14 year old children. Then the school took 110 children, no more than 10 years of age, whose villages were burnt by Ethiopian soldiers. Now, the main problem is the ever increasing flow of new children who want to attend the school. To accommodate this growing number of school children, we have to expand the existing size and facilities and build similar schools throughout the liberated areas.”

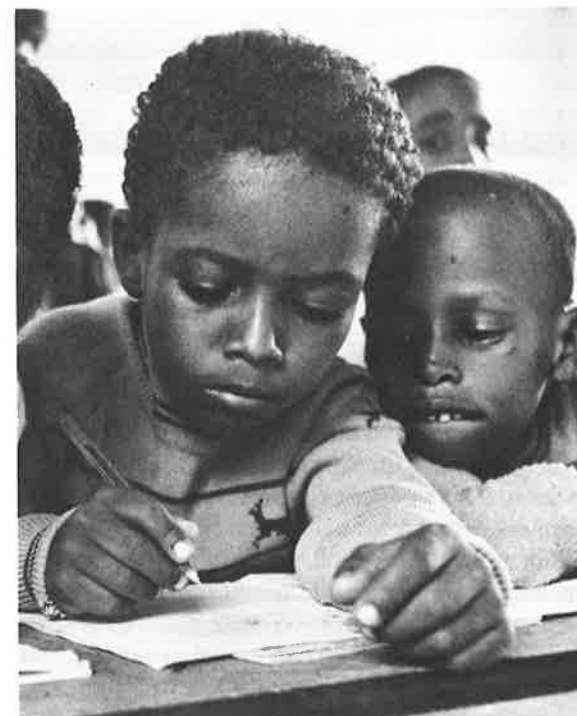
When the comrade was asked about the number of students, the proportion of girls and boys, the number of teachers and guardians, and the method of teaching, he replied: “At this time, the total number of students is 600, 45% of whom are girls. There are 16 qualified teachers and 23 women guardians.

“As far as the curriculum is concerned, the second and third grade students are offered courses in languages (Tigrinya, the languages of other Eritrean nationalities, Arabic, and English), geography, science, arithmetic and general politics.

“First grade students are taught languages, elementary arithmetic operations, political education in the form of songs, and health care. In addition, all students receive general education on agriculture and physical training. They farm small plots of land and have already become self-sufficient in vegetables.”

The main problem faced, as it was explained to us, is that certain students who come from the cities—though of comparable age with those coming from rural areas—started school under the enemy’s curriculum and have different levels and kinds of education. These students are made to start at the first grade so that they can cope with the revolutionary curriculum.

When asked about the daily life and conduct of the students, the comrade replied: “The children make a conspicuous effort to look like fighters. For instance, although it is normal for their age to miss one’s parents, they do not show this phenomenon at all. What is amazing is that, in their daily conversations, they say that “there is only one day that every fighter is longing for, and that is the day of liberation.” Moreover, their popular topics of discussion include: “a fighter never quarrels with his comrade; he resolves any contradiction through criticism and self-criticism.” These sen-



“The real meaning of our victory is the happiness of the young flowers and our toiling masses.”

timents are the fruit of the great effort that the guardians are making to bring up this new generation in a revolutionary spirit. This revolutionary struggle is indeed praiseworthy.

In responding to the last question, which was on the results of the first semester examinations, the comrade stated:

“The results of the examinations and the proportion of those who passed (75% in all the courses) have surpassed our estimates. I would like to add that physical training is now given three times a week, football and basketball teams have already been formed, and the frequency of other sports is increasing in accordance with our resources.”

In conclusion, we would like to extend our revolutionary thanks to all those who are educating, cultivating and caring for this generation and, in particular, to the guardians and those who are making a great effort to build “a new society with a new culture.”

More victories must be gained so that the smiles and joys of these young flowers may continue and oppression and exploitation vanish!

Expose the Dergue's Colonialist Lies

History shows that the Eritrean people have for centuries fought against Turkish, Egyptian, Italian and British colonial aggression. It is also to be recalled that U.S.-led world imperialism imposed the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952 against the wishes and interests of the Eritrean people. From the moment it set foot in Eritrea under the guise of federation, Haile Selassie's puppet feudal regime ruthlessly trampled upon the national, democratic and human rights of the Eritrean people. These injustices were not all. In 1962 it unilaterally abolished the federal system in violation of the international resolution and imposed its open dictatorship in Eritrea.

The Eritrean people on their part never accepted the scourge of oppression, exploitation and suppression inflicted upon them low-headed. They continued their relentless resistance, at first via peaceful means, and, when peaceful means proved to no avail, they launched the armed struggle. Thus, the resolute armed struggle that we are waging today against Ethiopian colonialism, world imperialism and zionism is the continuation and further advance of our people's long and glorious history of anti-colonial struggle for national independence and democracy. This patriotic struggle is not only just and progressive but it is also a struggle that reflects the fundamental wishes and aspirations and enjoys the wholehearted support and participation of the Eritrea people.

To cover up this basic truth, there is hardly any conspiracy or lie that Ethiopian colonialism has not hatched or perpetrated ever since the inception of the armed struggle. In the early stage, Haile Selassie's now defunct feudal regime used to pretend that our armed struggle did not exist. It strove hard to deceive many claiming that the Eritrean people had accepted Ethiopian annexation in peace and with joy! As the struggle developed, won increasing mass support, inflicted heavy losses on the Ethiopian colonial army and received greater international publicity, Haile Selassie's colonial regime was compelled to change its tactics. Even though it slandered and belittled our patriotic movement using the epithet of "bandits," it was forced to admit the bitter truth that there existed armed struggle in the Eritrean field. Meanwhile as the armed struggle advanced further, dealt the Ethiopian aggressor army heavier blows and enjoyed greater international support, it

was subjected to more slanders and distortions; in addition to the epithet of "bandits," it was now vilified as a "secessionist," "religious," etc., movement aiming to "sell Eritrea to the Arabs."

For many years, Haile Selassie's feudal regime, backed by imperialism and zionism, had tried to militarily crush our just struggle for national liberation on the one hand, and to misrepresent, slander and vilify it on the other. It strove hard to realize its expansionist ambitions in Eritrea by distorting the true history of the Eritrean people, by trying to conceal the real meaning and objectives of their struggle from the peoples of Ethiopia and the world, and exploiting the internal weaknesses of the national movement. However, all its military and propaganda campaigns failed miserably. Smashed by the revolutionary force of the Eritrean patriotic movement and the Ethiopian people's resistance, the decadent feudal regime was finally swept away into the junk yard of history.

Meanwhile, as there was no strong political organization capable of coordinating and leading the democratic struggles of the Ethiopian people to win complete victory, a clique of military officers, who have built their careers as loyal mercenaries of feudalism and groomed lackeys of imperialism, were able to usurp state power. While still trying to consolidate its power, the Dergue pretended to be a friend of the Eritrean people and in favor of peace. It began to condemn the brutal crimes and atrocities which Haile Selassie's feudal regime committed against the Eritrean people and talked about the imperative of finding a peaceful solution to the Eritrean question. In particular, the Dergue was, if for a brief period, busy declaring in speeches and in writing that the Eritrean people are a hard working and justice loving people and not "bandits," as the defunct feudal regime used to call them; that they were forced to rise up in arms because of the injustices and oppression of the ancient regime; etc. Nevertheless, its practice exposed its real essence and objectives within less than a year of its seizure of power.

First of all, it set out to break the backbone of the Ethiopian people's mass movement whose inconclusive victories served the Dergue as a ladder to its usurpation of power. It trampled underfoot all the democratic and human rights of the people, ruthlessly crushed the democratic forces opposing it, and established a fascist dictatorship. It issued meaningless pseudo-progressive declarations and slogans to camouflage its fascism. Although the fascist military regime has effected certain reforms in the decadent feudal system, it has failed to solve the fundamental problems and the most urgent questions of the Ethiopian people. On the contrary, it has been busy hatching new plots to divert the Ethiopian people from their basic and urgent social problems.

With respect to Eritrea, the outlines of the Dergue's policy were clear-cut right from the beginning: a new conspiracy of a "peaceful solution" to

camouflage a new aggression on a larger and higher scale. It embarked upon all-out military preparations while talking of "peaceful solution." It collected its most seasoned and battle-fit troops from all over Ethiopia for a military build up in Asmara. Its objective was, on the one hand, to confuse and divide the masses of the Eritrean people, to deceive the Ethiopian peoples, to hoodwink world public opinion, and to isolate the Eritrean revolution from its international friends and supporters; on the other hand, to muster all available military forces and capability to exterminate the Eritrean people and strangle their revolution. However, the Dergue's planned war of extermination boomeranged on it in February 1975 because of the heroism of the Eritrean fighters and the determination of the masses. Its crushing defeat scuttled its fascist colonial strategem.

After this humiliating defeat, the fascist Dergue, cheaply peddling the very epithets for the use of which it had earlier reproached the Haile Selassie regime, launched a more intensive campaign to slander and vilify the Eritrean revolution. Following in the footsteps of Haile Selassie, its political mentor, it denigrated us as "bandits." It unleashed a slanderous propaganda against our just struggle, labelling it a "religious movement," "collaborator of imperialism," "tool of reactionary Arab states," etc. Resorting to vile chauvinism and fascist demagoguery, it sought to pit the Ethiopian masses against their Eritrean class brothers and use them as cannon fodder in its war of colonial aggression. Under the banner of "Arab invasion," "unity of the motherland," "land and property grants in Eritrea," "grab Arab money and gold," it tried to arouse the people. Thus, using deceit and compulsion, the Dergue had mobilized thousands of wretched peasants in the name of "volunteers," only to have them completely annihilated before they could even set foot on Eritrean soil.

However, as reactionaries never learn from their experiences and cease their counter-revolutionary activities until they enter the grave, the fascist Dergue continued to escalate its war of aggression in an effort to prolong its colonial domination of the Eritrean people. To counter and defeat this escalation, the EPLF People's Army set the flames of people's war ablaze all over Eritrea; it wiped out numerous enemy camps, liquidated and put out of action thousands of the Ethiopian mercenary troops, captured hundreds of enemy officers and men, and seized or destroyed enormous quantities of enemy materiel. In the last few months alone, the Ethiopian colonial army has suffered unprecedented historic defeats in Naro, Mai Atal, Habregeqa, Debarewa, Karora, Ruba Anseba (Keren), Nacfa and Afabet. More than 3000 aggressor troops were liquidated and over 500 captured.

These brilliant victories, without parallel in the history of the Eritrean people's armed struggle, are the outcome of our correct military strategy of protracted people's war and the firm determination and heroism of our People's Army. These great victories of our just patriotic struggle have

dealt a telling blow to Ethiopian colonial aggression and the expansionist ambitions of the Ethiopian ruling classes. All this signifies the strategic superiority of our revolutionary People's Army over the counter-revolutionary Ethiopian colonial army. This superiority is bound to grow and expand under any circumstances until we win final and complete victory.

These magnificent triumphs have dealt a terrible blow to the Ethiopian mercenary army and driven the fascist Dergue crazy. Consequently, the Dergue has been shouting itself hoarse—"Ethiopia has been transgressed upon and insulted!", "How can the Ethiopian army be defeated!", "The Ethiopian soldier dies but never surrenders", "Defend your motherland from Arab invasion!", "Rise up!", etc.—to whip up chauvinist hysteria in a frantic campaign to arouse the oppressed Ethiopian people against the neighbourly Eritrean people who are their class brothers. Obviously, the humiliating defeats suffered have dealt an indelible injury to the crass arrogance and banal chauvinism of the Ethiopian ruling classes in general and the fascist Dergue in particular. Indeed, the Eritrean people's war of national liberation has become a poisonous pill in the mouth, a death knell in the ears and blood in the eyes of the Dergue which, in its death throes, is barking like a mad dog.

It is against this background then that the Dergue's recent cry of aggression must be viewed. Resorting to the reverse logic of all aggressors, the perpetrator of aggression is claiming to be the victim of aggression! Why? To understand the real meaning and objectives of this brazen lie, we shall quote and analyze the relevant (to the Eritrean revolution) portions of the speech of Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam, chairman of the Dergue, addressed to the "Ethiopian people on Radio and Television" in Addis Ababa on April 13, 1977:

The Eritrean secessionist anti-people organizations...conducting anti-people and anti-revolutionary hit and run operations for the last two and a half years, have today grown bigger and stronger and passed to an open interventionist aggression.

The Sudan, going beyond organizing and arming anti-people groups, has openly committed an act of aggression against the unity, dignity and existence of Ethiopia by providing artillery and tank fire. On this basis, an invasion, involving the intervention of foreign forces, is in progress in northern and western Ethiopia, i.e., in the cities of Tessenei, Om Hager, Nacfa, Afabet,... with large scale support of Sudanese tanks and artillery, the battle to take away the northern part of our country is in full swing. The borders of our revolutionary motherland and our inviolable unity are being transgressed upon by foreign invading forces.

As the aggression and transgression being committed against our revolution and unity, and against our national existence in general, have reached a critical situation,... we have, through the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), notified all member states that the Sudanese Government

shall be responsible for the consequences and effects on the peace of the region of the aggression started with El Numery's call; on the other hand, we have also notified the peace-loving countries of the world.

Jafar El Numery...strengthening the Eritrean reactionary secessionist groups through tanks and artillery, deploying the Sudanese army with the Eritrean secessionists and E.D.U....is waging war on the Ethiopian peasants and armed forces to separate Eritrea from its revolutionary mother country, destroy our national existence...strangulate our revolution and disrupt our unity.

Oppressed Ethiopian workers, oppressed Ethiopian peasants, true Ethiopian progressive forces, Ethiopian patriots, all the Ethiopian broad masses in general, now is the time when you have to fight alongside the men in uniform to destroy the foreign interventionist aggression that has been started to violate your dignity and independence, dismember your country, and subvert the revolution that has freed you from oppression and exploitation. As you will soon receive a detailed explanation of the general damage inflicted on your country and revolution as well as the urgent call of the motherland, await prepared for this proud, very necessary and historic sacrifice.

Except to defend our own independence, rights, boundaries and revolution, we do not attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of another country or violate its borders; nor do we do it. We call for the elimination and abolition of racism, colonialism...oppression and exploitation. We call for the reign of complete independence, complete equality, justice and complete democratic rights in the world...Be prepared...Down with the anti-people Eritrean secessionist organizations that sell the independence, dignity and existence of their motherland for petro-dollars!"

First of all what we would like to remind the assassin Mengistu and his fascist clique is that the just struggle of the Eritrean people for national liberation is not something that has grown "during the last two and a half years" but has for sixteen years been fighting them and their masters of long-standing—the Ethiopian feudal regime, U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism—and relentlessly crushing their counter-revolutionary forces of aggression. Has it slipped their memory that the reactionary Ethiopian army (including Mengistu and his fascist clique) had, as the mercenaries of Haile Selassie's decadent feudal regime and tools of imperialism and zionism, waged a brutal war for thirteen years (1961-74), prior to the Dergue's seizure of state power, to crush the Eritrean revolution and exterminate the Eritrean people and failed? The whole world knows that these fascist puppets were, in the first place, able to seize state power when the Haile Selassie feudal regime, whose henchmen they were, crumbled under the powerful revolutionary blows of the Eritrean people's resolute armed struggle and the Ethiopian people's mass uprising. Whom would these new

lies deceive then? Perhaps only the oppressed Ethiopian people who are still groaning under extremely backward conditions of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty!

Otherwise, it is manifest that the fascist Dergue's accusation that the Sudan has invaded Ethiopia is a brazen lie without an iota of truth. It is intended to cover up the heavy defeats being dealt it by the forces of the Eritrean revolution. In particular, the aim of the malicious lie that the Sudan, deploying its tanks, artillery and army alongside the Eritrean secessionists and E.D.U., is waging war against the Ethiopian peasants and army is not only intended to incriminate the Sudan for a crime it has not committed; it is a counter-revolutionary conspiracy hatched to liquidate the legitimacy of the Eritrean revolution by presenting it as a conflict between Ethiopia and the Sudan and undermine its justness by distorting and lumping it together with reactionary movements like the E.D.U.

It could not have slipped the Dergue's memory that the E.D.U. feudalists were the overlords of the Ethiopian army until 1974. The present reactionary Ethiopian army has been built by feudalism and imperialism, to protect the interests of the imperialists and their feudal Ethiopian puppets. It is an army which, as an instrument of feudal oppression and imperialist exploitation, has demonstrated its counter-revolutionary essence not only by serving to suppress the Ethiopian masses and waging a war of aggression against the Eritrean people, but also by participating in the imperialist aggression against the peoples of Korea and the Congo. The pseudo-progressive "anti-imperialist" Dergue itself is proud of this shameful neocolonial role. This is not slanderous at all, for it is an act which the Dergue's leader, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam himself, vociferously boasts of. For instance, in a major speech he made in Addis Ababa on February 18, 1975, while he was still a major he exposed his real essence and outlook when he 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 interest of international peace and security."

There is hardly anyone who does not know that the Ethiopian reactionary army, as the tool of feudal expansionism and imperialist interests, has incessantly been engaged in a war of extermination against the Eritrean people for the last sixteen years. Thus, during the many years when the Eritrean people's just struggle for national independence and democracy was smashing the Ethiopian feudalists, the Dergue's fascist clique and its reactionary army, now wallowing in the helm of power, were Haile Selassie's henchmen serving and defending the interests of the feudalists who are today in the E.D.U. The Eritrean revolution, on its part, has irreconcilable interests and antagonist relations with all the past and the present feudal and expansionist Ethiopian ruling classes. After all, the views and fundamental policy of the Dergue and E.D.U. regarding the just struggle of the Eritrean people

do not differ from each other.

Therefore, when the fascist Dergue slanders and berates the Eritrean revolution today by lumping it together with the E.D.U. in all its propaganda, it is not because it is unaware of the irreconcilable contradictions and antagonistic relations that exist between the Eritrean revolution and the E.D.U. Rather, this is a deliberate policy designed to undermine the legitimacy of the Eritrean people's national liberation movement, to conceal the just nature of the Eritrean people's struggle, and to cover up the hitherto unparalleled brilliant victories of the Eritrean revolution and humiliating defeats of the Ethiopian colonial army.

Let us just take a glance at the Eritrean towns where the Sudanese army, using tanks and artillery, is allegedly "waging a war of aggression." Casting aside for the moment the out and out lie of "Sudanese invasion," is it true that a war is going on in these towns? The town of Nacfa (capital of Sahel Province) fell into the hands of the heroic E.P.L.F. People's Army on March 22, 1977, after a siege of six months. This is an incontestable fact that even the various international journalists and visitors who have seen Nacfa firsthand while under siege and after liberation have attested to and the world press has extensively publicized. The whole world also knows that the town of Afabet was seized by our heroic People's Army on April 6, 1977, after a siege of less than a week. The Dergue can hardly cover up these facts. The 385 officers and men, with their commanding colonel and major, taken prisoner in the capture of these two towns alone are a living indictment to the Dergue's blatant lies. There have also been repeated reports by the E.L.F. and in the world press that the town of Tessenei has fallen to the fighters of the E.L.F.

Thus, the Dergue itself knows full well that the forces which, after liberating the entire Eritrean countryside, are today relentlessly smashing the Ethiopian colonial army and seizing major towns are the forces of the Eritrean revolution and not "the Sudanese army waging an interventionist war in Ethiopia." We can, if necessary, give an account of the great number of ex-Ethiopian camps that have been seized by our revolutionary forces. Without going far, it is enough to mention the camps in the Asmara suburbs of Quazien, Imba Derho and Selae Daero which our heroic People's Army has captured from the Dergue's aggressor troops. The Dergue is barking that the Sudanese Army, tanks and artillery have invaded Nacfa, Afabet, and Tessenei; what about Karora, Halib Mentel, Debarewa, Adi Tekelezan, Habrengaq, Mai Atal, Sehatit, Balineki, Agbet, Sheka Wodi Besrat, Elabered, etc.—in fact, who has invaded and occupied the entire Eritrean countryside today? The Sudan?

Obviously, the Sudan is being used as scapegoat because it is our immediate neighbor; otherwise, it has neither invaded Ethiopia nor deployed its troops in Eritrea. Hence, the Dergue's mendacious propaganda has four

principal objectives:

First, to cover up the magnificent victories of the Eritrean revolution over the Ethiopian colonial army;

Second, to suppress the central question of the Eritrean people's just struggle by posing the problem as if it were merely a contradiction between Ethiopia and the Sudan;

Third, to obstruct the oppressed people of Ethiopia from identifying their real enemy and fighting the fascist Dergue with all might and main; and

Fourth, to arouse and swindle the Ethiopian masses through chauvinist demagoguery against a non-existent "foreign aggression" and throw them into the red-hot furnace of our revolutionary war.

After all, is it not the lie of lies when the fascist Dergue slanders the Eritrean people's resolute armed struggle that has been annihilating the Ethiopian colonial army for more than a decade and half "as an invasion started with the call of El Numery"? It even has the insolence to declare, in an effort to swindle those who may not know, that it has notified the O.A.U. member states and the world's peace-loving countries that Sudanese aggression has become the detriment to peace in our region. There is one point that must be clarified here once and for all, and that is, that the real detriment to peace in our region is not the Sudan's non-existent aggression but Ethiopia's expansionist aggression and brutal colonial war against the Eritrean people.

The people of Eritrea are fighting against Ethiopian colonial aggression for national independence and freedom. This just patriotic struggle, having traversed a long, hard and tortuous path, has today made tremendous advances and reached the stage where independence is in sight. All the world's peace and freedom-loving peoples must know that it is only the patriotic forces of the Eritrean revolution, and no other force, foreign or otherwise, who are fighting against Ethiopian aggression in Eritrea. To all those who may have the desire or interest to verify this truth—the O.A.U., the U.N.O., any country or organization—we invite you to visit our extensive liberated areas and observe the situation firsthand.

If the Dergue does not interfere in the internal affairs of another country or violate its borders, as it claims, what else is it doing in Eritrea then? What meaning does the Ethiopian war of colonial aggression, which has become the graveyard of thousands of its troops, have other than the transgression of Eritrean borders and the attempt at the forcible subjugation of the Eritrean people? If the Dergue were genuine about its "calls for the abolition of oppression and exploitation," why is it then that it has imposed its fascist dictatorship on the Ethiopian masses and continues to perpetrate untold oppression, exploitation and injustices against them? If it were calling for the reign of complete independence, equality, justice and democracy in the world, why then is it waging a war of extermination against the Eritrean

people whose only crime is their ardent desire for independence and democracy? The fact of the matter is such that no glittering words or crafty lies can conceal the Dergue's extremely oppressive fascist dictatorship.

When the fascist Dergue declares that the "separation of Eritrea constitutes the destruction of Ethiopian existence," it expresses not only its crass ignorance of history but also its extreme expansionist ambitions. Is it not a fact that Ethiopia used to exist without Eritrea from the time it was forged into a feudal empire at the close of the last century to the time of the Ethio-Eritrean federation? Even today, the independence of Eritrea does not have to mean the destruction of Ethiopia. The age of colonialism has come to a close in our era and virtually all the European colonial powers have been expelled from their former colonies. Yet, they have not been destroyed. It is to be recalled that certain of the officers who overthrew Caetano's fascist regime held the view that if Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola were to "separate" from Portugal, Portugal would be finished. However, when the peoples of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola obliterated Portuguese colonialism and seized their independence, Portugal was not destroyed. Yet, even if the independence of a colonized people were to cause the destruction of the colonial state, the colonized people do not have to remain victims of colonialism forever.

Ethiopian colonialism in Eritrea serves only the interests of the Ethiopian ruling classes and imperialism. There is no interest which the oppressed people of Ethiopia derive from the oppression of the Eritrean people. Worse still, the war has become the source of more oppression, exploitation and continuing backwardness for them. The poor Ethiopian people are forced to pay more taxes and offer their children to run the aggressive war in Eritrea. The wealth, resources, labor, lives, etc., being wasted in the war could have been used to improve the livelihood of the people. Thus, as long as the Eritrean people are subjected to Ethiopian colonial oppression, the Ethiopian people can neither be free nor make progress.

At a time when its unjust aggression in Eritrea is being smashed by the Eritrean people's revolutionary and patriotic forces, the Dergue is crying that it is being invaded. Instead of all this lying and crying, however, it would behoove the Dergue to draw lessons from its own experience as well as the experience of all aggressors that its forcible eviction from the few remaining towns still under its control is inevitable, admit its defeat, halt its aggression and withdraw its troops from Eritrea without further losses and destruction.

Instead, however, it is making preparations to commit new crimes and atrocities against the Eritrean people and pit the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses against each other. Under the pretext of "foreign invasion" and "call of the motherland," the Dergue's mendacious propaganda and fascist demagogy are whipping up a dangerous chauvinist hysteria to arouse the

Ethiopian masses and use them as pawns in its plan of extermination against the Eritrean people. Yet, it is certain that even though this may inflict more suffering on the Ethiopian people and demand greater sacrifices of the Eritrean people, it will not meet an iota of success.

The Eritrean people are fighting for their independence and freedom. The Dergue's banality notwithstanding, the Eritrean people are fighting and paying great sacrifices not "to sell their country for petro-dollars" but for the sacred goal of expelling Ethiopian colonialism and regaining their real national independence and human dignity.

In a May Day speech delivered in Addis Ababa, top fascist Mengistu Haile Mariam boasted that "we shall ensure our right to the Red Sea with our red blood." The fact of the matter is that Ethiopia without Eritrea has no business in the Red Sea. The south-western coasts of the Red Sea stretching for 1000 km. from Ras Kasar to Ras Dumeira are wholly and entirely Eritrean. Over two-thirds of these coasts have already been put under the control of our People's Army. The remaining parts, mainly around Massawa and Asseb, just like the rest of the cities, are soon bound to fall into our hands. And, no matter what, the blood of the Dergue's mercenary troops cannot be redder than the blood of the heroic fighters of our People's Army.

The Dergue's colonialist lies notwithstanding, the victory of our just patriotic and revolutionary struggle is certain.



The Ethiopian colonial army of aggression has seen but humiliating defeat in Eritrea: Aggressor troops surrendering with their armored car to the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Army in Sēgeneiti.

Oppressed Ethiopian People be Aware

This honest message has four main objectives. First, to remind the oppressed Ethiopian people, the urban workers and rural peasants alike, of the danger of being roused into becoming cannon fodder in the Dergue's policy of extermination against the Eritrean people. Second, to safeguard the long-standing historical and human ties and neighborly relations between the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples and the mutual relations that are bound to continue because of our presence here in this place. Third, to assure that the Ethiopian people do not reap hostility by being pushed through deceit and compulsion into committing aggression against the Eritrean people who are engaged in a just struggle against foreign aggression for national independence, liberation and dignity. Fourth, to call upon the Ethiopian people, who have themselves suffered under colonial oppression and struggled against foreign aggression for their independence, to realize that they cannot be a free people while they commit aggression to snatch away the independence of another people.

Taking these objectives as our premise, we are convinced that this message shall be a historic document bearing witness to the forthcoming events. Whether or not the Ethiopian people misled by the junta shall have a direct or indirect role in the ensuing developments, we have no doubt whatsoever that our just struggle in defense of our national rights and to safeguard the interests of our revolution shall triumph over any aggression.

The Dergue, as a fascist regime, can bring any pretext for preserving its colonial domination of Eritrea. However, it is certain that it will be defeated in the end. The certainty of final victory is not the unique attribute of our revolutionary armed struggle but a universal truth that the experience of the world's fighting people has verified. When we issue this call to the Ethiopian people today, it is not out of fear, weakness or the slackening of our resolve and correct principles, but rather out of a profound concern for the present and future relations of our two peoples and their interests of development, prosperity and peace. The importance of this clear stand springs from the genuine revolutionary spirit and truly patriotic and demo-

cratic outlook of our people that rejects all chauvinism against all oppressed peoples. It is clear from our understanding of the nature of the Dergue, its class origins and reactionary ideology that its attempts to subvert the Eritrean revolution are aimed at the realization of the old dreams and expansionist ambitions of the Ethiopian ruling classes.

Today, the ability of the Dergue to stay in power is linked to the fate of its aggression against the Eritrean people. The Dergue has made the Eritrean question the focal point of its social demagoguery to divert the oppressed Ethiopian people from their basic problems and subvert their ongoing struggles against the Dergue for the establishment of people's power. It is striving hard to foster a reactionary and chauvinist colonial mentality among the Ethiopian peoples, to submerge their revolutionary movement, and to turn them back into the dark ages of aggression, plunder and massacres that were the salient features of the era when the Amhara feudalists invaded other peoples in the pursuit of expansionism. In the name of "Ethiopian socialism and the defense of the motherland," the Dergue is frantically maneuvering to make the Ethiopian people a sacrificial lamb by stirring them up against "Arab invasion" in Eritrea. Of course, neither the lies nor the plots of the Dergue can mask the patriotism of the Eritrean revolution and the justness of the Eritrean cause because they spring from the many years of profound suffering of the Eritrean people under Ethiopian colonialism as well as their age-old revolutionary struggles against various colonial powers. This is precisely why our people have today shattered forever the Dergue's colonialist ambitions, just like they had shattered those of its predecessors in the past, by scoring victories in their continuing struggle.

All the attempts of Ethiopia failed because they were crushed by the rock-solid determination of our people and People's Army. Its cowardly hodgepodge army that was mobilized in the name of red and yellow, "berari nebir" (flying tiger) and "nebalbal" (flame brigade); etc, fell everywhere like autumn leaves. While we on our part provide humane treatment and care to Ethiopian soldiers captured on the battlefield, the Dergue cruelly tortures and perpetrates untold suffering on the innocent Eritrean civilians whom it incarcerates on grounds of suspicion alone. This illustrates the difference between the progressive and humane principles of our revolution on the one hand and the reactionary and fascist policy of Ethiopian colonialism on the other. The amazing thing is that the Dergue tries to justify its massacres of Ethiopian workers and democratic forces and its extensive nazi-like atrocities against the Eritrean people in the name of progress and revolution! Thus, the whole people of Ethiopia have a historic responsibility to grasp the nature of the Dergue and its conspiracies and rise up to oppose and foil them.

Today, the Dergue, using all its material and propaganda resources, is making preparations to launch a new peasant "volunteer campaign" against the Eritrean people to "destroy the counter-revolutionary forces led by the Eritrean secessionist groups, coordinated by imperialism, receiving Arab support, and reinforced with their tanks, artillery and troops." These shamelessly cheap tactics which the Dergue is employing to hide its defeats and mislead world opinion with allegations of a non-existent foreign aggression signifies the downfall of its reactionary regime. At a time when the Eritrean field is dealing the Ethiopian colonialists telling blows, they have failed to draw the correct lessons and are, like a scared ostrich, seeking to bury their heads in the sand hoping that nobody would notice them.

Thus, we would like to remind the oppressed people of Ethiopia to draw a lesson from the experience of the last "volunteer campaign" and avoid becoming the victims of the Dergue's new conspiracy. We admonish them to learn from the contradictions and problems of their objective conditions and shoulder their historic responsibility by standing up against the Dergue's dictatorial regime at this opportune moment. Furthermore, we would like to explain to them that the Eritrean revolution which helped to destroy the Haile Selassie regime will contribute to crushing the Dergue's regime. The campaign underway can thus only result in the slaughter of the oppressed masses who are being poisoned by the Dergue's propaganda and misled into a mad adventure.

The Eritrean struggle is not anybody's tool or puppet. The forces fighting in Eritrea are the same popular forces of liberation that have been fighting with arms in hand for the last sixteen years against Ethiopian colonialism for national independence. Their arms are used in the defense of their national dignity and freedom and not against the Ethiopian people. The Eritrean people harbor no hostility toward the Ethiopian people. Nevertheless, they shall never waver from resisting any aggression. After all, it is the just and legitimate right of the Eritrean people to defend themselves even if the Ethiopian people misled by the junta participate directly or indirectly in the unjust war that has become the graveyard of thousands of people and resources.

The Ethiopian people must realize that the Eritrean people have the right to determine their destiny freely and in accordance with their wishes. Only the Eritrean people themselves and no other force can determine the destiny of Eritrea and its people. We would like to reiterate here that as long as the Eritrean people have a gun in their hands, no force whatsoever can dictate or impose its wishes on them. The Eritrean people have no doubt that, adhering to a correct line and relying on the justness of their cause, they shall win final and complete victory. This profound conviction that is so deeply ingrained in our people and their revolutionary vanguard is the principal weapon used against any enemy and the sure guarantee of our inevitable

victory.

Oppressed, exploited and downtrodden people of Ethiopia, be aware that you do not fall victim to the Dergue's capricious designs. Far from showing any concern for your well-being, it is setting fires and digging graves for you. We admonish you to learn from your own experience as well as the experience of the world's other peoples who had fallen victim to similar conspiracies and refuse to be pushed by the junta's chauvinism, arrogance and superstition into the blazing fires of the unjust war.

Finally, moved by the common interest of the oppressed, exploited and downtrodden, we invite you to take a correct internationalist stand against colonialism, imperialism, fascism and domestic reaction and in support of the movement for liberation, progress and peace in our region and the world.

Reportage: EPLF Provides Humane Treatment to Ethiopian POWs

Ethiopian colonialism in Eritrea has a dirty record of brutal cruelty and untold atrocities. For twenty-two years, Haile Selassie's puppet feudal regime strove to liquidate the Eritrean national movement and forcibly subjugate the Eritrean people under its colonial domination. When the Eritrean people's unyielding anti-colonial resistance developed into armed struggle in 1961, in particular, Ethiopia intensified its barbaric suppression of the Eritrean people. Massacring the unarmed civilian population, burning down whole villages, setting crop fields afire and looting the people's property became the daily practice of the Ethiopian colonial army. To escape from Ethiopia's deliberate policy of extermination, the Eritrean people were forced to leave their country en masse and seek refuge in the neighboring countries. These inhumane conditions went on deteriorating until the downfall of Haile Selassie's feudal regime.

Ever since coming to power, the fascist Dergue on its part has, following the colonial policy of Haile Selassie's expansionist regime, been striving with all might and main to strangle the Eritrean revolution. Conducting brutal military campaigns, hatching political conspiracies and applying

economic pressures against the Eritrean people's just struggle for national independence and democracy, it attempted to crush our revolutionary movement. Although these attempts caused enormous harm on the unarmed civilian population, they were unable to realize their objective as they were shattered by our heroic People's Army. The Ethiopian colonial army, caught in the flames of our resolute people's war, sustained heavy losses with thousands of its aggressor troops killed, wounded and taken prisoner.

At the present moment, there are hundreds of captured Ethiopian officers and men in the hands of the EPLF. The Ethiopian soldiers who give their hands voluntarily and in peace are not considered prisoners of war and once they reach our hands, they have the opportunity to go wherever they choose. For instance, many of those who had voluntarily surrendered have returned to their villages in Ethiopia to resume normal civilian life, some have gone abroad to live in exile while others have joined the democratic organizations in Ethiopia fighting for the people's liberation and progress. It is also to be recalled that the war prisoners captured in the so-called peasant "volunteer campaign" have, after being held humanely for ten months and receiving the standard literacy and political education, been released to resume their normal lives (see *Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 2). Thus, when we speak of Ethiopian prisoners of war (POW's), we mean only the officers and men of the regular Ethiopian armed forces captured in the battlefield.

These POW's are mercenary soldiers and officers who have come from all units of the Ethiopian armed forces (ground forces, navy, paratroopers, commandoes, nebelbal, etc.). Their ranks span from a simple soldier to a lieutenant colonel. While some of them are new recruits, the majority are veteran soldiers who have served from 10 to 20 years in the Ethiopian feudal army. Some of them had taken part in the imperialist aggression against the peoples of Korea and the Congo. Many are veterans of the Ethiopian war of colonial aggression who have fought for 3 to 13 years in Eritrea. Those with less than two years' service are very few. The POW with the shortest stay in Eritrea is the major who was captured in Afabet within less than two weeks of his return from training in the U.S.

The majority of the POW's had received special military training in anti-guerrilla warfare by Israeli military experts and advisors. The Nebelbal and Commandoes in particular have all been specially trained by Zionist anti-guerrilla experts to crush the Eritrean revolution. In addition, virtually all the officers with the rank of captain and above had received specialized military training abroad, i.e., in Israel, U.S. and France. Some of them have been groomed by going to Israel and the U.S. two or three times for training.

Thus, the reactionary Ethiopian army has been trained by and armed to the teeth with the modern weapons of imperialism and zionism. It is of

course, not secret to anyone that these POW's, as the soldiers and officers of the Ethiopian colonial army and the tools of the Ethiopian ruling classes and imperialism, had invaded our country to kill our people, loot their property and burn their homes and crop fields. Their mission was to liquidate our just patriotic struggle and maintain the colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation of the Eritrean people. The majority have stated that, in conducting the war of aggression, they had fought several battles against our patriotic forces, participated in the burning of many villages, the massacres of hundreds of people and the looting of civilian property, and committed untold crimes and atrocities against the Eritrean people.

Nevertheless, the EPLF, based on its correct revolutionary and humane principles and in accordance with the provisions of its National Democratic Programme, provides humane treatment and care to the soldiers captured in the service of the Ethiopian army. Appropriate punishment is meted, after proper examination and verification, on those who had committed special crimes against the people. At the time of capture, the wounded and the sick receive immediate medical care. Those seriously wounded are taken to our Central Hospital where they receive emergency services and the best available medical treatment and care on a par with our wounded fighters. In this way, many POW's who had completely given up hope of ever living have been saved. The medical services, treatment and care rendered them is the first phenomenon which really astounds them beyond belief about the essence of our organization.

The POW's in good health and those needing only first aid treatment are directly taken to their assigned camp. Those under medical care join them immediately after recovery. Once in their regular camp, they are under the supervision of the Department of Revolutionary Security. Their daily livelihood is exactly like that of the EPLF fighters in their surrounding area. They receive all the necessary medical services and health care. They are free to move about and exercise within their compound. They keep clean by washing and bathing once a week. They eat the same meals as our fighters. They are given all the clothing and blankets they need. As one of the POW's who had been held for over a year and a half explains:

In my view, the general treatment accorded and the health care rendered us by the fighters since coming here are extremely gratifying and something that I did not expect. This is completely different from the picture I used to have. I mean that the bad things I used to hear before, the allegations of torture and what not—I found all this to be incongruous with the reality here. Myself, I have not had any problem since coming here. If I get sick, I am given medical care; I am fed properly and I drink whenever I am thirsty. I am very well so far. I am also in a good emotional and mental state.

The EPLF has a literacy and political education program especially prepared for POW's. Many of the ordinary soldiers are unable to read and

write. Thus, in the first place, the completely illiterate are taught to read and write in their respective languages (Amharic, Tigrinya, etc.). Those who are barely able to read and write are given special lessons to help them develop their literacy skills. In this way, every POW learns to read and write within five to six months. For the first time in his life, he writes a letter to his family. The first experience of writing a letter so over-joys many of them that they feel as though they have been reborn. As the POW's are free to write to their families, the letters written are forwarded through the Red Cross. When asked about these POW's by the Red Cross, the Dergue has denied their existence. The POW's could hardly believe this "betrayal" until they themselves heard it on Radio Ethiopia. Then, they were very astonished to the point of regretting their past military service.

The EPLF's regular political education program for POW's has six sections:

1. The history of the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples;
2. General political education—the development of society, democracy, political economy, etc.;
3. The history of the Eritrean people's struggle;
4. The formation and essence of the various movements in Ethiopia;
5. The revolutionary solidarity of the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples; and
6. Analysis of the Dergue's declarations and statements.

Moreover, they are provided with reading books in accordance with their ability. To develop their skills and spirit of initiative, someone from among them often prepares a given topic in advance and presents educational lectures. They are regularly briefed on current affairs and important new developments in the world and Ethiopia as well as the daily victories of the Eritrean revolution.

The political education program has met with satisfactory results. It has achieved over 80% effectiveness so far. After eight months' education, the POW's show marked changes in their outlook and mutual relations. They practice criticism and self-criticism as a means of correcting their mistakes and teaching each other. Since the majority of the POW's are ordinary soldiers who come from the oppressed classes, they are able to easily grasp the basis of their oppression and identify their real friends and enemies. Upon reaching this level of consciousness, virtually all the Eritreans come to really regret their past roles and ardently request that they be given the chance to redeem themselves by siding with their people and fulfilling their national duty in a new spirit. Today there are many (Eritrean) ex-Commandoes of the Ethiopian army fighting in the ranks of the EPLF with great courage and determination for national independence and liberation.

One day when we were having discussions with the POW's, we asked them, at random, several questions. To give our readers an idea about the

general conditions and outlook of the POW's, we present here some of their answers verbatim.

Question: As the soldiers of the Ethiopian army, you have served both the Haile Selassie and the Dergue's regimes. What differences do you see between them?

Answer: First of all, I came to realize that the Haile Selassie regime was an oppressive regime only on the basis of the education I have received after coming here. Ever since the Dergue replaced it, I have heard numerous declarations on the radio. However, I have not seen any of them implemented. I have seen no improvement whatsoever. If there is any difference between the two of them, I find that there is now more killing of the people, more bloodshed, more suppression, etc.

Question: Ever since the beginning of the Eritrean people's armed struggle, and after 1967 in particular, many villages have been burnt down, unarmed civilians massacred, crop fields set ablaze and property looted in Eritrea at first by Haile Selassie's feudal regime and later on by the Dergue's military regime. Of course, all this has been perpetrated by you, the Ethiopian soldiers. What were your feelings while these atrocities were being committed?

Answer: It is true that whenever we were going to or coming from a battle, we used to burn many villages on the way, kill anyone in sight and take away whatever property we could put our hands on. This cannot be denied. For instance, I can recall, when we were engaged in a battle near Keren around December 1967, seeing many villages such as Babjengren, Halhal—I do not remember the names of all the villages now—being burnt down and people being massacred. Again in the February 1975 war, I saw the villages of Quazien, Adi Gin and Woki being burnt down and their residents being massacred with my own eyes. I have also seen Beleza, Adi Nefas and many other villages around Asmara set ablaze by the Ethiopian army.

It is better to speak the truth. The views and sentiments I used to have when I first came to "fight bandits in the area aiming to sell their country to the Arabs" were such that I did not think then that the injustices perpetrated on the people were bad at all. After a while, however, I began to entertain certain doubts about the validity of the claims of the Ethiopian government. But, it was only after I was captured and brought here, when the line and objectives of your movement were clarified for me through the political education I have received that I began to feel the awful extent of the brutality and injustices committed against the people.

Question: You know that you came to Eritrea to fight against us. Could you explain to us your view about the Eritrean case before and after your capture?

Answer: Before I came here, I used to think that "Eritrea was Ethiopia"

and believe that all the government's radio broadcasts about Eritrea were true. After I came here, however, I have learned of what kind of colonizers—the Turks, Egyptians, Italians, British and finally the Ethiopian government—have successively changed hands in Eritrea in an uninterrupted chain. I now understand the colonial situation of the people and their just cause.

Question: Many of you know that it is normal practice for the Haile Selassie regime or the Dergue to incarcerate suspected Eritrean patriots, let alone fighters captured in the battlefield, under extremely hazardous jail conditions, subject them to harsh beatings and even torture them to death. The EPLF however, having captured you in the battlefield, treats you in such a humane manner. How do you account for the differences that exist between these two ways of handling POW's?



Ethiopian POWs in a political education session.

Answer: These two ways of treatment are of course fundamentally different. The viewpoint I had in the beginning and the one I have now are also different. Before coming here, I had a very low level of consciousness. Moreover, the Dergue used to scare us by saying that “if they catch you, the bandits will kill you, torture you mutilate your bodies, etc.” Thus, I never had any qualms about the atrocities committed in Asmara and the surrounding villages; I never felt sorry for them. But having seen through this situation now, I understand that the Dergue's suppression of and atrocities against the people are not just. The EPLF on its part, as it fights for and protects the people, is living in a harmonious union with the masses.

When our camp at Habrengewa was attacked by the fighters of the EPLF on December 26, 1976, 116 of the 170 soldiers and officers present were killed in the battle while 54 of us were taken prisoner. In the first few days, I used to have sleepless nights, haunted by the memory of the Dergue's stories of torture. Shaken by fear, I was saying to myself, “Will they kill us today or tomorrow? When shall they begin to torture us? It is better if they kill us soon!” Through talks with several fellow soldiers at the time, I understood that the majority had the same feelings. Instead of the anticipated death and torture however, we found here amazing humane kindness and fraternal spirit. It is really astounding for you to accord us such treatment while we have committed untold crimes against the Eritrean people and your struggle. If we could return to the cities and recount all this to the Ethiopian soldiers falling everywhere, they would not believe us. Thus, when we compare and contrast the situation in which we were, with the one in which we are, we can clearly see that the Dergue is oppressive while this Front is compassionate and just.

Question: You are aware that the Dergue has declared “Ethiopian socialism” and is endeavoring to confuse people through pseudo-progressive slogans. On the other hand, some of you have just recently returned from training in the U.S. and Israel. The “Nebelbal,” in particular, you have been trained by the Israelis. And there are some of you here who intimately know that the zionists are today training the Ethiopian army in anti-guerrilla warfare. What views do you have about this?

Answer: We ourselves had asked about the role of Israel. There are four places where the Israelis are now training in Ethiopia. We were trained in a place called Arba, 25 km. to the east of the town of Awash, in Harar Province. At the time we were selected from all divisions of the Ethiopian army and began to take special training under the name of the “Nebelbal,” for instance, we had asked that “At a time when the government has cut diplomatic relations with Israel, how come that Israel is permitted to provide military training?” In reply, the Dergue stated that:

“The cutting of diplomatic relations is only superficial. With Israel in particular, we have historic relations dating back to the ancient era. Moreover, both of us are surrounded by the Arab counties which are our common enemies, and it is necessary for us to cooperate against these common enemies.”

Thus, although the Dergue has declared “Ethiopian socialism” to swindle the unknowing, it has not, in my opinion, terminated its relations with imperialism and zionism.

Question: You have heard that the Dergue's chairman, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, has in a speech on April 13, 1977, given in Addis Ababa, alleged that Sudan has invaded Ethiopia. Nacfa and Afabet in particular are among the Eritrean towns which Sudan is accused of invading. What are

your views about this, especially those of you who have been captured in Nacfa and Afabet?

Answer: There is nothing secret about this. The Dergue may say and do whatever it wants. We, however, used to hear these kinds of things before; we also used to believe them when we were in the cities. For instance, I am one of the 215 soldiers and officers captured in Afabet. Those who captured me are all Eritreans. Having seen the great determination of the Eritrean fighters in the battle, I find the Dergue's lies truly cheap and shameless. They may, however, manage to deceive people who do not know. This is a criminal conspiracy designed to arouse the Ethiopian people against the Eritrean people. Nevertheless, the strength and determination of the Eritreans that I have seen has convinced me that your victory is beyond doubt. For instance, I have been astonished at how easily you were able to seize Afabet because I had thought that it would be a difficult operation, considering that it is a flat plain.

Question: *You have heard from Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam's speech that the Dergue is making preparations for a new "Wodo Zemach"* campaign against the Eritrean people. What advice would you like to give the Ethiopian people concerning this?*

Answer: The Dergue is now taking a desperate step in vain, perhaps pushed by the colonial ambition of preventing the abandonment of a colony that was acquired at the time of Haile Selassie. This is pure madness. I cannot see how it can solve the problem by mobilizing the "Wodo Zemach" from all over the countryside in a short time. How can the "Wodo Zemach" face the war that the well-trained and well-equipped regular Ethiopian army has been unable to stand? This problem must first be properly and truthfully explained to the Ethiopian people. The conditions of the Eritrean people must be made known to them. If after all this, the Ethiopian people take part in the campaign, it can then be said that it is their responsibility. In any case, I am convinced that when the Ethiopian people, deceived by allegations of "Sudanese transgression and Arab invasion," come to Eritrea and see that they are fighting against Eritreans only, they will be demoralized and defeated. The current campaign can thus have no aim other than the slaughter of the Ethiopian people. This is the Dergue's desire. Therefore, I am of the opinion that this step should be thought over before being taken and that the Ethiopian people should be taught.

* The Dergue's recent preparations for a campaign of aggression against Eritrea using armed peasant "volunteers" as cannon fodder.



The more than 4,000 Ethiopian POWs are humanely treated and cared for by the EPLF.

Question: *If you were given the opportunity to return to Ethiopia soon, what would you do?*

Answer: In the beginning, I used to think that if I were to return to Ethiopia, I would become a peasant or a dependent or seek refuge abroad. Now, however, since my attitude has changed as a result of the political education I have received here, I feel that this would be running away from responsibility. If I could return to Ethiopia, I would particularly endeavor to participate in the struggle of the broad masses of the people and wholeheartedly fight for the real independence and liberation of my country. □

Comrade Tesfai Debessai is Murdered

On March 25, 1977, Comrade Tesfai Debessai was murdered in his home in Addis Ababa by the Fascist Dergue. Comrade Tesfai was one of the principal founders and leaders of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (E.P.R.P.). As the one in charge of the party's political and domestic affairs, this comrade has played a big and significant role in the life and political activities of the party.

Comrade Tesfai was a revolutionary fighter. While in school, he stood on the side of the oppressed masses of the Ethiopian people in their struggle against the reactionary chauvinist line of the opportunist intellectuals who are today serving as the chief sycophants and henchmen of the fascist Dergue; he endeavored for the adoption of a correct line so that the Ethiopian student movement could play a revolutionary role in the anti-feudal and anti-imperialistic struggle of the oppressed Ethiopian masses. With the founding of the E.P.R.P., he strove hard for the adoption of a genuine revolutionary line to enable the Party to correctly lead the struggle of the Ethiopian people and, in particular, to take a correct internationalist stand on the just struggle of the Eritrean people.

It is to be recalled that he was among the E.P.R.P. delegates who came to the Eritrean field in March 1976 and signed the Joint Statement of the E.P.L.F. and E.P.R.P. Tesfai Debessai, the mature, humble, courageous and resolute fighter, was a revolutionary internationalist comrade.

The fascist Dergue, unable to impose its dictatorial rule on the Ethiopian masses in peace, is like a mad dog frenziedly moving to crush all popular democratic opposition and especially the E.P.R.P. The whole world knows that it has indiscriminately liquidated over 2,000 democrats and civilians in the last few days alone. Just as Hitler, its mentor, was committing enormous crimes against his progressive and democratic opponents in the name of "National Socialism," so the Dergue tries to legitimize its fascist liquidation of the progressive and democratic forces in the name of "Ethiopian Socialism." It is falsely slandering progressives and democrats as "counter-

revolutionaries," "collaborators of feudalists," "imperialist spies," etc., and murdering them everywhere. Obviously, all these brutal murders and anti-people practices arise out of weakness and desperation.

The death of Comrade Tesfai Debessai is a great loss to the Ethiopian revolution and the E.P.R.P. in particular. The death of this revolutionary internationalist fighter has deprived the Eritrean revolution and the E.P.L.F., in particular, of one of its firm friends. The fascist Dergue, on its part, has taken its murder of this determined revolutionary for a great victory, been bragging like mad. However, that the blood of a revolutionary gives rise to many revolutionaries is a logic of history that the fascist Dergue and all reactionaries cannot understand. Thus, when the Dergue murdered Tesfai Debessai, it only murdered one revolutionary and not the revolutionary principles and objectives for which he fought. There is no doubt that the spark of the revolutionary objectives which comrade Tesfai Debessai died for shall set a huge revolutionary fire all over Ethiopia that will turn all reactionaries to ashes.

The Campaign of Mercenary Journalists Against the EPLF

It is not a new phenomenon to learn that many hired journalists infiltrate a revolution for espionage. It is also equally not strange to note that many mercenary newsmen are hired by various antagonistic forces to defame and politically isolate a liberation front. Fully aware of this matter, the EPLF is capable of properly evaluating journalists and their articles. Everyone knows well that for quite a long period of time various newsmen have been engaged in defaming the EPLF. However, anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the history of political struggles and uses his brain properly cannot be confused and led into believing what is said and written against the EPLF. Confident of its own identity, the EPLF did not bother itself to reply to the countless false accusations made against it. Such baseless charges have been aptly replied by its works and deeds as well as by genuine journalists who are faithful to their profession.

At the end of June, 1977, a very cheap Sudanese newsmen, called Asir, wrote in *Al Ayam* (a Sudanese newspaper) quoting Ziyad Bare (the President of Somalia) as having said that Cuba, Somalia, the Dergue, the

government of South Yemen and the EPLF met in Aden. First of all, the EPLF did not take part in such a meeting; it is not true. Moreover, Ziyad Bare has not made such a statement; this is also untrue. Therefore the question that arises is: What is this unfounded allegation aiming at?

There is no doubt that its main aim is to isolate the EPLF both from the Eritrean masses and friendly countries—the Sudan in particular. To achieve that cheap and despicable aim, the above named perfidious newsman had to write in favor of what his imperialist masters and their lackies try to “prove” in vain the unfounded allegation that “the EPLF has come into terms with the Dergue.”

It must be clear to everybody that the EPLF does all what is necessary to win the support of, as well as to establish good relations with different systems during its struggle to liberate Eritrea. However, it has never allowed itself in the past nor will it allow itself in the future to gain such supports and relations at the cost of Eritrea’s independence. The EPLF has never been confused, not even for a moment, as far as the just cause of its struggle is concerned. It has been confirming its stand in practice and it will continue to do so, not for the sake of those who are suspicious about it, but because it deems that as one of its fundamental tasks.

All what we would like to say about that cheap Sudanese newsman, Asir, is to attest that he is either a tool of imperialism and Ethiopian colonialism, or a very cheap newsman hired by internal reactionary forces to campaign and brazenly write junky articles and lies against the EPLF.



Away With All Pests!