



BUILD BROAD SUPPORT FOR THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION

US Marxist-Leninists, revolutionaries and progressive people have a great deal to learn from our Eritrean brothers and sisters. There is likewise much material and political support the we can give them that will speed the day of liberation everywhere.

What can revolutionaries and progressive people in the US do to aid Eritrea?

- 1) We should work closely with Eritrean revolutionaries to develop support work, linking our efforts on a nationwide basis and in close consultation with representatives from the liberation forces, especially EPLF.
- 2) We should produce revolutionary materials about the Eritrean struggle- spread far and wide the lessons and example among the US people and the various movts.
- 3) We should organize to prevent any type of intervention on the part of the US imperialists in Eritrea & educate people about the truenature of Soviet imperialism and Cuba intervention.
- 4) We should organize to use the revolutionary example of Eritrea to develop the revolutionary struggles in this superpower, organize to prevent its entry into an imperialist war, and fight all forms of opportunism which objectively aid imperialism.
- 5) Move the building of a genuin# vanguard party of the US working class to center stage in all the revolutionary struggles we are involved in.

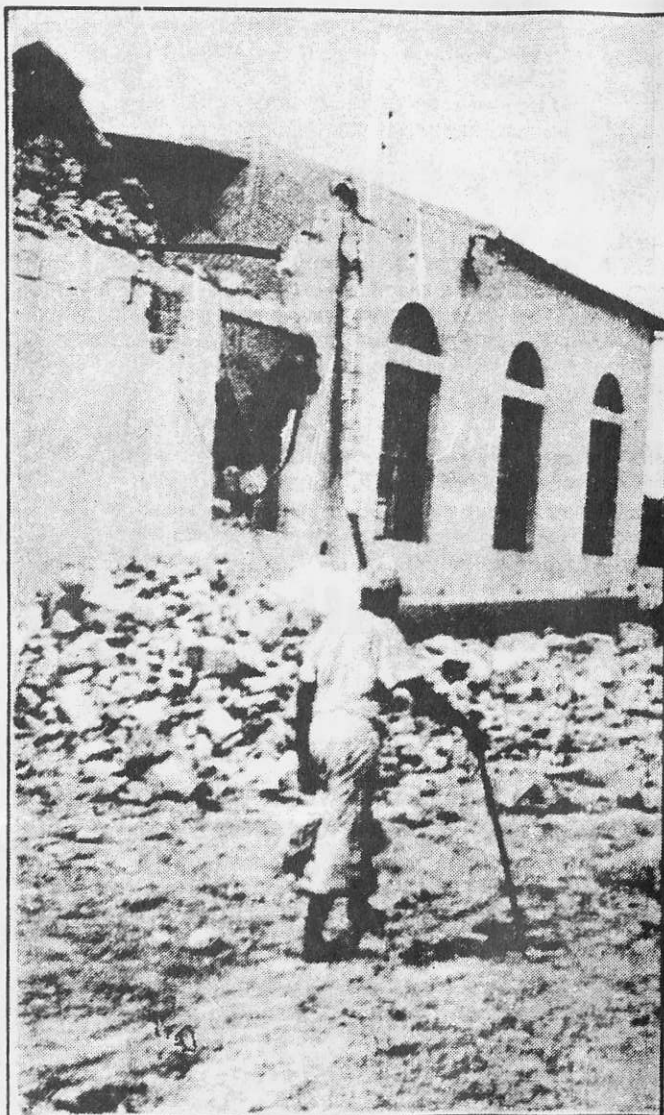
VICTORY TO THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION !  
 LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIOARY UNITY BETWEEN THE  
 ERITREAN AN THE AMERICAN PEOPLES!  
 DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM AND ITS LACKEYS!

★ **REVOLUTIONARY  
 WORKERS PRESS**  
 PO BOX 11421 ★  
 DENVER, CO 80211

# Eritrea: At War with Revisionism and Soviet Social~ Imperialism



EPLA fighters atop one of the 10 Soviet supplied T-54 Tanks captured in Massawa on December 12, 1977.



One of the residential houses in Massawa demolished by the savage shelling of Soviet warships.

For more than 300 years the African continent was subjected to colonialist domination by all the European powers. To the great powers of the "civilized world", the rest of the world and its people were merely a reservoir of wealth to be tapped at will. Africa was private property, to be conquered, traded as war "booty" and exploited as its colonial owners saw fit. Its people were without rights. Slave trade was wide spread. Elsewhere the colonialist plundered the land for its resources. The imperial powers of that day, as is still the case today, stole from the poor nations to fill the coffers of the ruling classes abroad.

So it was with the history of the Eritrean people who for half a century were colonized by Italy. As a losing imperialist power, the Italian Fascists were forced to relinquish their Eritrean colony after World War II to the British victors. We have been taught that WWII was waged so that all humanity could be free from foreign domination and free for democracy. The US had been a colony itself prior to 1776. At the turn of the century it became a colonizer. In 1945 it reached to fill the shoes of the former European colonizers of Africa. Among its first moves was to federate Eritrea to its strong ally- Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

The history of the world is a continual process of humanity seeking to liberate itself from oppression and exploitation. The 1950's and 60's saw the African people rise up across the continent and smash old style colonialism in a tidal wave of popular revolutions. Eritrea was one of the few colonies where the people were not able to achieve formal independence, but all the foundations for the present struggle were laid in those early years. For 18 years the revolution moved step by step closer to victory. It would have achieved victory long ago if it were not for the bloody intervention of US imperialism, Israeli Zionism, and now Cuban and Soviet Social-Imperialism (Socialism in word, imperialism in deed). The unquenchable thirst for liberation of the Eritrean people is one of the epic struggles of our day. It deserves the full support of all revolutionary and progressive people of the world.

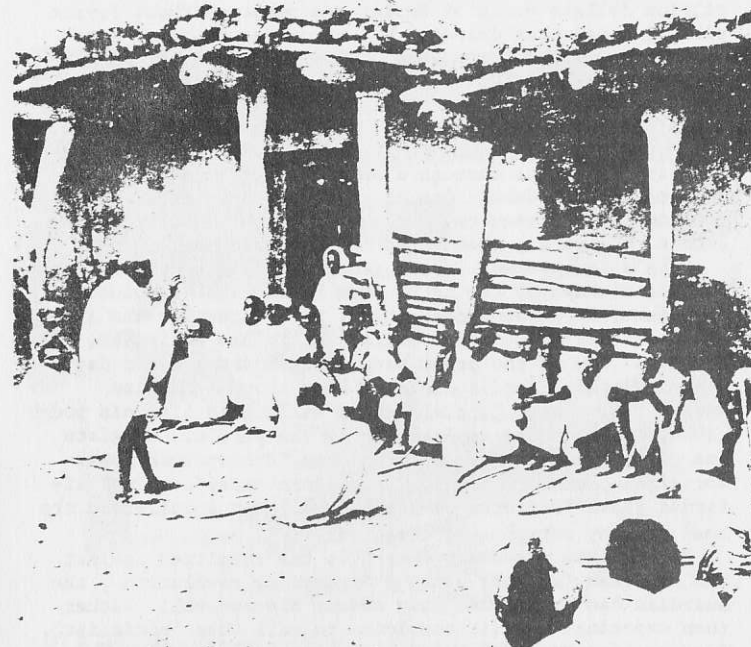
The particular purpose of this statement is to defend the Eritrean revolution and its leadership and to expose some of the main forms of opportunism that reveal themselves in relation to the Eritrean revolution. Marxism-Leninism teaches that opportunism and revisionism liquidate revolution and there by strengthen imperialism.

Eritrea is an excellent example of how this occurs in practice & why as Lenin so aptly put it,

*"the struggle against imperialism is a sham without the struggle against opportunism."*

What are the main forms of opportunism surrounding the Eritrean revolution?

The birthplace of Lenin and Stalin, and the first country to establish socialism is now one of the two imperialist superpowers. The US and USSR together constitute the main enemy of the people of the world. In few places can the imperialist design of the Soviet Union be as clearly seen as in their support for the military dictatorship in Ethiopia. They have actively participated in & financed the bloody slaughter of the Eritrean people. Imperialism has no regard for human rights or political principle as it gains a foothold in a foreign country. . The military clique of Ethiopia (the DERG) was in search of massive quantities of weapons with which to suppress its own people. The USSR was willing to take up where the US had left off. In 1974 a massive social upheaval of the Ethiopian people removed the political forces of former Emperor Selassie. But in the absence of a genuine party of the working class, the military was able to seize control by using a revolutionary smokescreen to hide its repressive plans. The US was willing to flood this regime with military "aid" at a level that exceeded that given to the Emperor. The US and Israel also extended their help in suppressing the Eritrean revolution. The tyranny of the Derg has only been surpassed by its greed for military hardware. When the US hesitated to write a blank check, the Derg turned to the other superpower. Ethiopia suddenly declared itself "socialist" and received a staggering 1 billion dollars worth of Soviet military equipment. In exchange, Ethiopia was to become a strategic military outpost of Soviet expansionism. There remained only one obstacle to the Soviets' objectives; the Eritrean revolution. Ethiopia is landlocked. Without Eritrea, Ethiopia would be almost worthless. The Soviets like others before them wanted to control the coast line along the Red Sea where a large percent of the world's oil has to pass. Failing to either buy-off or subvert the revolution from within, their only alternative was to smash it militarily. Today 150,000 Soviet backed troops, with Soviet and Cuban advisors, Soviet tank and fighter pilots are carrying out a policy of genocide against the Eritrean people. Such is the so-called "socialism" of revisionist Russia. And who do we find singing high praises of "socialist" Russia and "socialist" Ethiopia, while they launch armed struggle against the Eritrean revolution? The same class traitors who call for "peaceful" revolution in the USA- the Communist Party USA, the Communist Labor Party, & Workers World Party. It should be abundantly clear to all, that these phoney communists are actually the agents of Soviet Imperialism and should be driven from behind their "socialist" cover.



People's democracy in practice: A village meeting in session

THE CENTRISTS: APOLOGIZING FOR THE REVISIONISTS

Centrists are those who try to find a "center" position between two mutually exclusive positions. They seek an unprincipled peace between what is revolutionary and what is counter-revolutionary. In the 1960's, when it became clear that the Soviet Union had taken the revisionist course, the Albanian, Chinese and other Marxist-Leninist Parties exposed the restoration of capitalism taking place in Russia. Centrist forces criticized the Soviets, while at the same time covering for them. The essence of centrism is therefore rightist. As Stalin said,

*"Centrism must not be regarded as a spatial concept; the rights, say sitting on one side; the 'lefts' on the other, and the Centrists in between. Centrism is a political concept. Its ideology is one of adaptation, of subordination of the interests of the proletariat to the interests of the petty bourgeoisie..."* (Vol. 11, pg.293)

In relation to the Eritrean revolution, Centrist forces like the Guardian Newspaper (who can also legitimately be called revisionists) hesitates to clearly identify the main enemies of the liberation movement. It should be evident that the Ethiopian Derg with their Soviet and Cuban backers are the main enemies in Eritrea. Without the one

billion dollars worth of Soviet equipment, without Soviet pilots, Cuban tank drivers, and countless military strategists and without the huge propaganda efforts on the part of these foreign interventionists, the Eritreans would be free today! The mask of socialism has allowed the Cuban mercenaries to carry out the dreams of the Soviets. What greater asset could an imperial power have than the ability to operate through a small "progressive" little neo-colony like Cuba? One of the important tasks in supporting the Eritrean revolution should be to fully expose Cuba's role as a puppet of Soviet expansionism.

Cuba's involvement in the genocide against Eritrea has been documented by the EPLF. From behind its 'revolutionary' mask, Cuba has become the #1 advertiser for the Ethiopian military dictators. Fidel Castro has called Lt. Col. Mengistu "One of the great Marxist-Leninists of our day"! What does this fascist dictator know about socialism except that Soviet "socialism" is willing to line his pockets and aid in the suppression of the people. Mengistu one day proclaimed from on high that "Ethiopia is now a socialist country", "Socialism is born today". "Yes" affirmed Fidel "Ethiopia is socialist". And a bullet in the head for any patriot who disagrees.

For all the treachery that Cuba has committed against the Eritrean (and the genuine Ethiopian) revolution, the Guardian has maintained only modest disapproval. Rather than exposing Cuba, it continues to call Cuba 'socialist'. For the last year the Guardian has advanced one rumor after another, that Cuba is having second thoughts about its involvement in Ethiopia. Meanwhile the bombs keep falling as they are making up their minds. The Centrists provide social-imperialism with the 'socialist' mask it so vitally needs to continue its plunder.

#### THE "LEFT" OPPORTUNISTS: LIQUIDATES REVOLUTIONARY SUPPORT

Though "left" opportunism is a secondary danger in the US, it also does its part in undermining revolution. The situation among Eritrean students and North American supporters has been a good case in point. Recently there has been a split within the Association of Eritrean Students in North America (AESNA). The political dispute has apparently been limited to this continent (similar student groups in Europe have not fallen prey to this factional activity). The group now calling itself EFLNA together with the so-called "Central Organization of US Marxist-Leninists" have disrupted support work for the Eritrean revolution in the midst of the largest offensive in the history of that country. The accusation of these 'left' opportunists is that the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) has capitulated, sold-out to the Derg and Soviet imperialism. There is as yet no concrete evidence to substantiate these charges.



EPLF extends modern medical service in Keren

It is true that the EPLF does not speak of Soviet Social-Imperialism as a system. No revolutionary should apologize for this dangerous mis-conceived analysis of the Soviet Union. Many revolutions have been betrayed as in Viet-Nam, Angola and Cuba. There are forces within the EPLF that do identify Soviet Imperialism as well as force who still believe that Russia is socialist. Marxist-Leninists can not accept this stand nor fail to criticize it. But should support be withheld because of this shortcoming, when it is obvious that the EPLF is fighting a pitched battle against Soviet forces? Absolutely not. If the EPLF had actually capitulated we should not support them. But the EPLF has not submitted to either military or political pressure from the Soviet bloc. It must also be emphasized to the infantile idealists that to offer to negotiate (with the enemy) is not the same as selling out to them.

In the December 78 issue of Mekalih Sewrana, the newsletter of the EPLF a strong condemnation of Soviet aggression is available for those people who question whether a sell-out has occurred. The EPLF states in part; (excerpts) (see "on Soviet Aggression")

THE ERITREAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT  
**on Soviet aggression**

Mekalih Sewrana

Dec. 1978

For quite some time now and in a bitter ironic reversal of history, the Soviet Union — once an ardent advocate of Eritrea's independence — has been vehemently pursuing a politico-military strategic objective... while, simultaneously, it has been supplying massive highly sophisticated weapons as well as other technical support to the Ethiopian fascist junta. This double-faceted policy had as its central theme the isolation and military weakening of the EPLF and thereby pressurizing it into accepting a bogus "peaceful solution" expounded by both the Soviet Union and the Dergue. The EPLF had however both contained the various military offensives unleashed by the Dergue and also theoretically refuted and exposed the banal content of the so-called "peaceful solution"...

The first phase of the offensive, however, utterly failed to achieve its strategic objective. It is at this juncture and under these circumstances that the Soviet Union decided — realizing that albeit all the highly sophisticated destructive weapons and military advice it was providing the Dergue, the Dergue would never defeat the Eritrean people's struggle nor weaken the EPLF — to intervene directly and assume

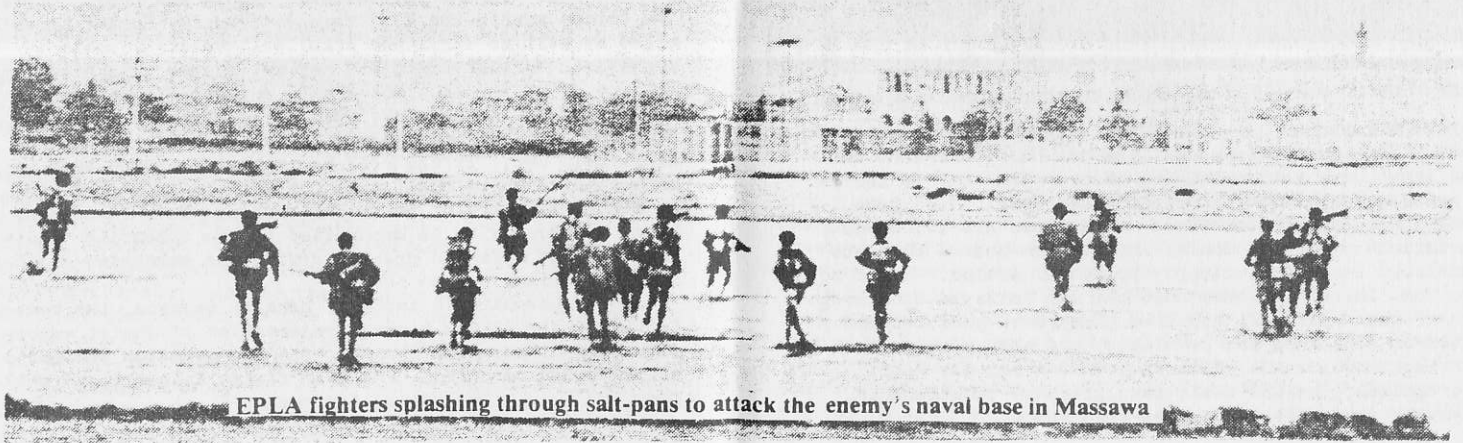
a frontal role in the second phase of the offensive launched on November 18, 1978...

The present all-out predatory offensive is planned and executed by Soviet war experts and generals. Soviet Generals and other high ranking officers are leading this deplorable offensive. Hundreds of Soviet troops, pilots and marine are involved. The heavy guns and artilleries shelling our positions are fired and manned by Soviet troops. The Migs which are starfing our liberated areas and civilian centers are flown by Soviet pilots...

The aggression of the Soviet Union, the herendous crimes being committed against the just struggle of the Eritrean people, is an affront to all peace-loving peoples and countries. To stay aloof, to remain neutral, and not to condemn Soviet aggression is to counterpose, to negate, international justice —international responsibility. Not to condemn Soviet aggression is to forget opposing all injustices and crimes against innocent women, children and the aged, and humanity at large...

All socialist and democratic governments recognize the right of oppressed nations and colonies to self-determination...

Thus, it is inconceivable that a socialist regime can continue to forcibly occupy a country whose people have made their desire for independence absolutely clear. It is also inconceivable that a genuine socialist state would deliberately commit barbarous atrocities on un-armed men, women and children in the pursuit of annexationist aims.



EPLA fighters splashing through salt-pans to attack the enemy's naval base in Massawa

It is clear from the foregoing brief exposition that there is no justification whatsoever, no "revolutionary" or other "rational" to the blatant intervention and aggression of the Soviet Union. The unjust Soviet intervention negates the fundamental Leninist revolutionary principles on the sovereignty of a people — the rights of nations and peoples, however weak, however small — to freely determine their own affairs. It is an affront to all peace loving peoples, but more particularly to world revolutionary forces since this crime is being committed on a just and genuine revolution in the name of "defence against ...imperialism", "proletarian internationalism", etc... The blatant distortion of correct revolutionary ideals

The Eritrean people and the EPLF call all the revolutionary forces, all the peace loving peoples and countries to condemn Soviet aggression in Eritrea.



A scene of the destruction of the junta's criminal air raid in Massawa

Does this sound like the EPLF is describing a 'socialist Russia'? No! Does this sound like the "capitulation" the 'leftists' have been screaming about. The EPLF is carrying on armed struggle at an unprecedented level. Concrete deeds speak louder than words. What good are 10,000 denunciations of Soviet Social-Imperialism unless they are translated into revolutionary political action. Is it not then the 'lefts' who have sold-out and betrayed the revolution at this critical juncture? They have pocketed money raised on behalf of the revolution and are using it to push their own cause. This exemplifies why the "left" opportunists, for all their revolutionary pronouncements, serve the interests of counter-revolution.

In content Chinese revisionism is not much different than the Soviet brand. In form it is a bit different. The Chinese foreign policy seems bent on providing the US imperialists with a 'socialist' partner.

From 1960 to 1969, when China was still a socialist country, they supported the Eritrean revolution both materially and politically. China's support of national liberation struggles won it world wide respect as one of the foremost examples of revolutionary internationalism. In the early 70's Chinese foreign policy started to make some sharp reversals of correct positions. China began courting the Shah of Iran and others including Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. When the Emperor visited China he was given a lavish "heroes welcome" and proclaimed "a great African leader". State to state relations between socialist and capitalist countries <sup>can be</sup> a good thing. ~~But~~ What was done went far beyond the mere establishment of formal ties. The feudal and repressive character of this Emperor was covered from view by later Chinese statements. The long standing neo-colonial relationship between Ethiopia and the US was no longer reflected in Chinese analysis. The counter-revolutionary nature of the developing Chinese policy became clearer when they unilaterally cut off aid to the Eritrean liberation movement and sent aid to the oppressor instead — the Emperor. In 1974 when the Derg took power in Ethiopia, the Chinese were among the very first to recognize it diplomatically. They immediately sent hundreds of technicians and hailed the (then US supported) regime as a "great revolution". The Derg did sound progressive, perhaps even revolutionary, but no genuine Marxist-Leninist was really fooled. Nor were the Chinese fooled. Their policy was not a mistake. They knew that the Derg had banned demonstrations and was actively opposing the workers and peasants movements. They knew full-well about Mengistu's boasting about his courage in fighting the liberation forces in Korea and the Congo. The Chinese purposely sacrificed revolutionary principle for pragmatic diplomacy.

The 'Three Worlds Theory' (TWT) is a full blown extension of this counter-revolutionary line. It subordinates the interests of the working class and national liberation struggles to be able to propagate relations with the bourgeoisie, as in the case of Selassie. This bogus 'theory' also covers for US imperialism and hides the existence of neo-colonialism.

As the worlds laboring people cryout against US imperialism, our chauvinists begin to get cold feet. "Be gentle with the US aggressors" they appear to be pleading "the US is on the decline. Besides if we smash the US imperialists the Soviets will gain more." In other words the Chinese are saying that we must suspend the class struggle against

the oppressor for fear that another oppressor will take his place. The TWT proports to be creating an alliance with the US, '2nd world' imperialism, and '3rd world' oppressors in order to prevent war. In essence all they are doing is throwing class struggle out the window. Imperialist war cannot be opposed without fighting the classes that thrive on war.

Nationally "three world" groups have played a very minimal role in Eritrean support work. In some cities none at all. Since China has not supported Eritrea in recent years, "three worlders" have had to squirm for all kinds of excuses to justify their non-involvement.

For any US revolutionary doing liberation support work, one of the essential tasks should undoubtedly be to expose the imperialist nature of their own ruling class among the masses. In the Eritrean Support Committee of Colorado the "Communist Party ML" and CORES (before they both decided they couldn't participate) stated that it "didn't matter" to them if the Principles of Unity reflected a stand against US intervention as well as Soviet intervention. This points to the manner in which the TWT leads to class collaboration. Contrary to what the Chinese revisionists state, the US still controls major wealth and power of the Middle East and North East Africa. While it defends its present position it is still capable of taking the offensive as it did with the Camp David Accords. Nor can it be forgotten that US imperialism engineered the annexation of Eritrea and controled it for almost a quarter of a century. Today a new "third force is arising in Eritrea, which is known as the Sabbe Clique (or the ELF-PLF). The Sabbe Clique is financed by other Arab Nationalists, Saudi Arabia, and the Kingdom of Arab Emirates. Through the Sabbe Clique the US is hoping to lay the ground work for its future intervention.

It is dangerous to belittle US imperialism. It is treachery to pass it off as part of the united front. Nevertheless Teng Hsiao-ping urges that the '2nd and 3rd world'...

*"establish a united front against hegemonism (the Soviet Union-ed) ...and this united front includes the United States." TIME Magazine interview February 5, 1979, page 34*

It should not surprise anyone if the Chinese use their 'socialist' mask to give legitimacy to the pro-American Sabbe Clique, calling it a genuine liberation force.

The "three worlds theory" falls apart in the face of concrete reality. The Third world countries' of Cuba, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, the Shah's Iran and the the Kingdom of Arab Emirates have not worked together to oppose the two Superpowers. Why? Because the class leadership of each of the above countries is dependent of Imperialism for its survival. As neo-colonies these countries act



Residents of Massawa displaced from their city by the enemy's ferocious violence await to be moved to the rear base.

generally (not in every specific case) according to the interests of the imperialist bloc of which their country is a part. China is willing to denounce the neo-colonial relationship of the Soviet bloc countries like Cuba and Viet Nam, but covers for US lackeys like Zaire, Chile & Egypt etc. The unity between genuine liberation movements of these countries is possible and desirable. But strategic unity between the oppressed peoples and the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie (in order to supposedly fight imperialism) is a hoax! It can never happen.

The TWT claims that solidarity between all '3rd world' countries and the solidarity between the '2nd and the 3rd world countries' will smash the foundations of imperialism. Peking Review emphasizes how <sup>the</sup> world's economic structure is being reformed piece by piece as the countries of OPEC and the Common Market compete against the imperialist institutions. They claim that the economic development of each oppressed country alone will mystically lead to social progress without revolution. The Chinese claim (that <sup>thru</sup> solidarity) all elements of society, regardless of their class origin, have come to realize their opposition to the world wide imperialist institution and will unite to fight it. This idea of "3rd world unity" is

idealist. This theory will never guide the proletariat in revolutionary class struggle. ONLY class struggle can provide the motor for qualitative social progress. It almost seems that Lenin was polemicizing against the "theory of the three worlds" when he said,

In what lies the main mistake of all these opportunist reasonings? In that, in these reasonings, the socialist theory of class struggle as the single real moving force of history is in fact supplanted by the bourgeois theory of "solidarity," "social" progress. According to the teachings of Socialism, i.e., of Marxism (now, one cannot even speak seriously of non-Marxist socialism) the real moving force of history is the revolutionary struggle of classes; reforms are the by-product of this struggle, a by-product because they express the unsuccessful attempts to weaken, to blunt this struggle, etc. According to the teachings of the bourgeois philosophers, the motive force of progress is the solidarity of all elements of society which have realized the "imperfection" of this or that institution. The first teaching is materialist, the second is idealist. The first is revolutionary. The second is reformist. The first provides the basis for the tactics of the proletariat in the present-day capitalist countries. The second provides the basis for the tactics of the bourgeoisie.

From "More on the Duma Ministry"  
(published in *Echo*, No. 6, June 28, 1906).

#### DEFEND THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION AND THE EPLF

The support of a national liberation struggle and the Right to self-determination is conditional on whether or not it conforms to the interest of the world wide working class. The EPLF has given the revolution just such a content. The EPLF has given a correct orientation to the New Democratic Revolution. It has practiced a policy of self-reliance and rejected the thesis of relying on one of the imperialist powers to fight the other. The EPLF has implemented social transformation in the city & the countryside where the peasants and laboring classes exercise democracy. The EPLF has developed and led people's war, relying on the masses and armed struggle as the primary vehicle to liberation. They have united the revolutionary classes, the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes, with the worker-peasant alliance as the main stay, and the urban petty bourgeoisie and revolu-

tionary intellegencia as allies; they have rejected alliance with the feudalists, bourgeois nationalists, and the compradors. They have correctly promoted united front efforts with the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) under proper conditions and have not bowed to pressure for unprincipled merger. The EPLF has developed ties with revolutionary Ethiopians and provided them with materials and training. The EPLF has transformed and distributed revolutionary literature among the people. All these features are progressive developments within the liberation struggle. Hopefully they will continue to develop.

The Eritrean struggle is lacking a working class party. It lacks a united front and a people's army under the leadership of such a party. These would be the only guarantee that the revolution will be carried through to the end and the only guarantee of the hegemony of the proletariat and the leadership of a proletarian line. As Lenin explained,

"...only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting and organizing a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people...and of guiding all the united activities of the whole proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people." Draft Resolution, 10th Congress..on the Anarchist Deviation. March 1921

But, no one should deny Eritrea support simply because a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party does not yet exist. That would be a Trotskite error. We base our support on the objective content on the liberation movement and the realization that a liberated Eritrea would be a great blow to imperialism.

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