

DEMAGOGY OF EPLF LEADERS EXPOSED

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The 17 year old national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people is today facing the most vicious attack of the Soviet revisionists and their puppets, the Ethiopian fascist Dergue and the Cuban mercenaries. A scorched earth campaign of genocide planned and conducted by the Soviet revisionists, now in its height, has placed our people's struggle in a grave situation. As a result, the strategic highways as well as several cities and towns including Keren have been recaptured by the aggressor forces. The suffering that our people are enduring is enormous: many densely populated villages have been razed to the ground, crops burnt on a mass scale, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes and thousands more killed.

At the same time, at this crucial stage of the Eritrean revolution, when the situation has demanded full preparation in every aspect of the struggle so as to frustrate the multi-faceted attacks of the powerful enemies, the line of capitulation, spearheaded by the "leaders" of the Eritrean revolution, has reared its head in the ranks of our peoples national liberation struggle. The EPLF and ELF leaders have tailed behind failing miserably to appropriately answer the burning question of identifying the Soviet Union as our enemy and effectively countering in every aspect its counter-revolutionary intervention and that of its mercenaries. The so-called leaders have knelt before Soviet revisionism by presenting it as "the strategic ally of the Eritrean revolution," thus leaving the struggle without a correct leadership and the masses without the necessary weapon to fight their enemies.

Throughout the past two years, which saw growing Soviet intervention against our revolution, the so-called leaders kept silent and several times openly apologized for the crimes of the Soviet revisionists against our people and their just struggle. The EPLF leaders have been teaching the masses that the Soviet

Union is socialist and the contradiction our revolution has with it is a secondary contradiction "within the world revolutionary forces" that can be "rectified" through criticism and self-criticism. At the time when the latest massive Soviet aggression was being launched in mid-November 1978, the EPLF Secretary-General had this to say. "One can no longer deny the presence of Soviet aid Cubans in the war. Therefore, we will continue, as in the past, to work toward changing these countries' mistaken attitudes. We will continue this effort vis-a-vis the world's democratic forces, in the certainty that ultimately our toils will be crowned by success." (L'Unita-- Newspaper of the revisionist Italian Communist Party, November 14, 1978) Thus, not only have the EPLF leaders by openly cooperating with the primary enemy failed to prepare the masses for a life and death struggle but also have been branding those revolutionary and patriotic Eritreans who opposed Soviet revisionism as "anarchists", "adventurists" and "pro-imperialist reactionaries" (See Eritrea: Revolution or Capitulation pp. 91 and 96).

But also like all opportunists and demagogues, the EPLF leaders are employing deceptive tactics to camouflage their true reactionary nature and in order to continue riding over the mass movement. Lately, when the intervention of the Soviet revisionists has assumed peak height, when as the EPLF leaders themselves have confessed that "there is nothing to hide now, the Russians are commanding the battles" and "their direct participation in this war is known to everyone here," (Vice-Secretary General of EPLF interview, Observer, November 12, 1978), the EPLF leaders have issued seemingly strong and militant statements of "condemnation" of Soviet aggression in Eritrea. Their counterpart, the ELF leaders, as if they haven't said "We believe that since these countries are progressive, they cannot possibly be against self-determination... and the fact remains that we don't see them intervening against our armed forces" (Eritrean Newsletter, No. 26, August 1978), have also begun "criticizing" their Soviet masters (for the emptiness of this "criticism" see the revelation on page 18). In its October 9, 1978 meeting the Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Council of the ELF stated, "The EC asked the Socialist Camp, especially the Socialist Republic of Cuba and the Soviet Union to terminate their military supplies to the regime in Ethiopia. The statement emphasized that increased military support to the Dergue does not only threaten the Eritrean revolution but the whole

liberation movement in the Horn of Africa. This also jeopardizes the interest of peace and security of the peoples of the area at large. The EC urged the Socialist Camp to stand on the side of the just struggle of the Eritrean people. " (Eritrean Newsletter, November 1, 1978)

These so-called "opposition" statements, are, however, sham ones which only go to show the demagogy of the so-called leaders. The fact that to come out as an "opponent" of Soviet aggression after apologizing for it for the past two whole years clearly manifests their opportunism. What were these "leaders" doing during the past two years when the Soviet revisionists were viciously attacking our people's struggle both militarily and politically? What was the deal behind the cover-up of Soviet intervention, behind these "leaders" portrayal of the Soviet revisionists as strategic allies, as peace seekers and as supporters of Eritrean self-determination? There is no other explanation except to prove their open capitulation. To portray oneself "opponent" of Soviet aggression when in fact the Soviet revisionists and their mercenaries have already caused enormous suffering to our people and have caused serious setbacks to our people's struggle is sheer demagogy. As an opportunist clique the EPLF leadership is tailing behind the mass movement. Now in the face of the most massive Soviet intervention, the EPLF leaders know fully well that unless they "join in" with the mass movement and enlist their "opposition" they would be exposed. The EPLF leaders might say that now is the opportune time to expose Soviet aggression. This kind of reasoning is, however, fallacious. Even from the nationalist stand point the opportune time for exposing the Soviet revisionists was when they set foot on our soil. As we stated in our May 1977 letter to the EPLF Political Bureau a strong opposition to the Soviet revisionists from the outset would "shake them badly". The only correct way to expose the enemy is to do it immediately. As Lenin says, "As for calling the masses to action, that will come up itself as soon as energetic political agitation, live and striking exposure come into play. To catch some criminal red handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of 'calls'." (What Is to Be Done)

At a time when Eritrea has become the Soviet Union's Viet Nam it is natural for opportunists like the EPLF leaders to pose

themselves as "opponents" of Soviet aggression. This, however, doesn't amount to anything other than a self-saving demagogic venture.

Furthermore, in their so-called opposition statements the EPLF leaders portray Soviet aggression as a very recent development when in fact this has been a fact for the past two years. The EPLF leaders state that "the U.S.S.R. decided to intervene directly on 18 November at a time when the Ethiopian army had demonstrated its inability to complete the 'military solution' by itself". (Ermias Debessai, EPLF Central Committee member, press statement -- L'Unita, December 7, 1978). Direct Soviet intervention against the Eritrean revolution has been a fact ever since the Soviet revisionists began hailing the Dergue's fascist rule as "revolution" and slandering the Eritrean struggle as "imperialist instigated separatist movement" as well as arming and training the junta's troops. Stalin teaches that, "intervention is by no means confined to the incursion of troops, and the incursion of troops by no means constitutes the principal feature of intervention. In the present day conditions of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries, when the direct incursion of foreign troops may give rise to protests and conflicts, intervention assumes more flexible and more camouflaged forms. In the conditions today imperialism prefers to intervene in a dependent country by organizing civil war there by financing counterrevolutionary forces against the revolution." (Stalin: "On Chinese Revolution"). Even if the EPLF leaders argue that foreign intervention means merely the incursion of foreign troops, the incursion of Soviet, Cuban and South Yemeni troops in Eritrea is also of long standing. Cuban and South Yemeni mercenary troops actively participated in the battles against the heroic Eritrean People's Liberation Army fighters which were fought on the Asmara Dekemhare road between the months of August and December 1977. In the battle for Massawa in December 1977 Soviet advisors, warships and Cuban as well as South Yemeni mercenary troops played key role in defending the positions of the Ethiopian aggressor troops. In early 1978, by the EPLF's own admission, over 3,000 Cuban mercenary troops were dispatched to Eritrea. During the June 1978 Ethiopian offensive, in which all of the ELF held cities along with the EPLF held cities of Segeneiti and Dekemhare were recaptured by the aggressor forces, Soviet and East German advisors played decisive role in planning and coordinating the battles. At the

present moment Soviet intervention has asserted itself in an all-round and intensive way. Evidence thus discredits the EPLF leader's assertion that Soviet intervention is a new phenomenon. After all, haven't the EPLF leaders admitted to releasing Cuban and South Yemeni prisoners of war as "a gesture of reconciliation"!

In presenting Soviet intervention as a new development, the EPLF leadership is hopelessly trying to justify for its cover up of and apology for the long standing Soviet intervention, thus once more exposing their opportunism. Contrary to what the EPLF leaders would like to have people believe, Soviet intervention against our peoples struggle is of long standing and the correct step was to expose it from the outset and teach the masses about its military, political and ideological implications.

Another aspect where the EPLF leaders expose their opportunism is in that their statement of "opposition" leaves out the Cuban mercenaries. There is no mention of Cuban involvement in the war. Justifying their apology the EPLF leaders say, "No Cuban presence had been observed. We are not denouncing their presence, because we have not seen them, even though they were indeed present in the first offensive, in the summer. " (L'Unita, December 7, 1978) Astonishing. That thousands of Cuban mercenary troops have invaded our country is an open fact which even the EPLF leaders have themselves admitted sometime ago, then what is the reason that makes the Cuban mercenaries "immune" from condemnation. When the Cuban mercenaries constitute our enemies the EPLF leadership is trying to portray them as "innocent", thus objectively whitewashing the crimes they are committing against our people.

The hypocrisy and demagoguery of the EPLF leaders is even more revealed in their statement being nothing more than a "strong criticism" of the "strategic ally" the Soviet Union to rectify its "errors". The EPLF leaders are not condemning the Soviet Union as an enemy; their "opposition" is only in regards to its intervention in Eritrea and in that, only its recent activities. In a statement entitled "Condemn Soviet Aggression in Eritrea" dated November 29, 1978, the EPLF leaders state."Having reached the threshold of victory after 17 years of bitter struggle, the Eritrean people are today threatened with extermination

through the criminal aggression of the Soviet Union which, in the 1940's and 1950's was itself, the ardent advocate of Eritrean independence. " The EPLF leaders place on equal footing the Socialist Soviet Union under Stalin which was the defender and advocate of not only Eritrean independence but also of the freedom of all oppressed peoples with the present day revisionist Soviet Union which constitutes one of the main enemies not only of the Eritrean people but also of all the world's peoples. Here lies the heart of the theoretical bankruptcy of the EPLF leaders.

What is even worse is that the EPLF leaders, in spite of issuing a statement of "condemnation" of Soviet aggression in Eritrea, still continue to teach the masses that the Soviet Union is a socialist country and a strategic ally of the Eritrean revolution. Through such false statements of "opposition" the EPLF leadership is further confusing the situation and is the main hindrance to the masses in their struggle to identify their real enemies on the basis of a scientific study. They are teaching the masses to conceive socialism as something that thrives on aggression. In speaking about demagogues like the EPLF leaders Lenin says they are "the worst enemies, because in the period of disunity and vacillation, when our movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods to mislead the masses, who can realize their error only later by bitter experience." (What Is to Be Done) At a time when the Eritrean masses have developed deep hatred towards the Soviet Union and have questioned its "socialism", the EPLF leaders for the sake of their selfish class interests, are by posing as "opponents" of Soviet aggression obscuring the situation and have become the main obstacle to the much needed political and ideological clarity in our revolution.

By attributing the serious setbacks in the Eritrean struggle to the military aspect only, the enemy's superiority in weapons and in men -- the EPLF leaders also in order to hide the disastrous consequence brought about due to their capitulationist line, are making much noise about continuing the peoples war. The main problem in the Eritrean struggle today is the absence of a correct political and ideological line on major questions of principle and strategy -- and in particular on the question of identifying Soviet revisionism as a primary enemy. It is precisely the capitulating attitude the EPLF leaders have adopted towards the U.S.S.R.

that has become the biggest stumbling block in our struggle. Thus, any talk about waging protracted peoples war without political and ideological clarity, clarity on who is the enemy and friend of our revolution doesn't make sense. In order to conduct protracted peoples war identifying the Soviet Union as our primary enemy must among other things be resolved first. Since the EPLF leaders have embraced the Soviet revisionists as strategic allies instead of primary enemies -- they have failed to lead the struggle and cannot lead the peoples war. Therefore, their talk about peoples war is another aspect of their demagogic schemes to confuse the masses and mask their treachery. For our people to wage protracted peoples war the capitulationist line of the EPLF leaders must be unmasked and done away with, and the party of the proletariat must assume leadership.

Through demagogy and deception of the most refined type the EPLF leaders are riding over our peoples' heroic struggle. They are using the victories reaped with the enormous sacrifice made by our masses for furthering their selfish class interests.

But our heroic people will through bitter struggle correct the errors being committed by the so-called leaders. Today, the Eritrean people are putting up stiff resistance with a firm NO to Ethiopian colonialism and Soviet aggression. Despite the military and political setbacks caused due to the massive intervention of the Soviet revisionists and the capitulationist line pursued by the so-called leaders of the Eritrean revolution our peoples' determination to fight till final victory is unshakable. As a ten year old youth expressed it, our peoples' will is that "we don't mind about the towns. Let the Ethiopians have them. We will attack from the countryside and we will smash them.