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INTRODUCTION

Eritreans for Liberation in North America is presenting this unofficial English version of the first issue of Vanguard, the monthly journal of the Eritrean Liberation Front - People's Liberation Forces (E.L.F.-P.L.F.). It has been translated from the original Tigrinya (Vol.I, No.1, January 1973). Eritreans for Liberation in North America, and not the E.L.F.-P.L.F., is solely responsible for any errors or distortions that may arise in translation.

For the last thirteen years, the people of Eritrea have been waging an armed struggle for national liberation. However, the Eritrean national liberation struggle was, for almost the first ten years of its armed phase, characterized by the absence of a clearly defined political line or programme. Opportunists and reactionaries monopolized the highest political and military organs of the Eritrean Liberation Front and committed enormous crimes of murder and plunder against the Eritrean people as well as freedom fighters. They ceaselessly sowed and cultivated the seeds of national, religious and regional discord among the Eritrean people. In opposition, there arose a progressive voice demanding an end to these reactionary and divisive tactics and calling for the adoption of a clear line and a correct programme. The sharpening of the contradictions between progress and reaction within the Front led to the birth of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (E.P.L.F.) in April 1970.

Ever since, the revolutionary tide in Eritrea has been steadily rising, administering powerful blows to the enemy. On the military front, heavy and lasting losses have been inflicted on feudal Ethiopia's occupation troops and their Zionist and imperialist backers. In the countryside, the operational zones are being steadily expanded. In the cities, highly successful and spectacular military operations have been performed against enemy agents and installations. Firm and positive measures are being taken to defend the national wealth and resources of our country against foreign exploiters. Not only has the E.P.L.F. been able to staunchly defend the revolutionary achievements of the Eritrean people won during many years of heroic political and armed struggle, but also

to continuously consolidate and advance them further along the path of national liberation.

Even more spectacular are the advances being made in the political and organizational fields. The E.P.L.F. has consolidated its unity, clarified its line in light of the strategic tasks facing the Eritrean revolution, and begun to mobilize the Eritrean people using correct, progressive principles. "All our guns against foreign oppression, a democratic solution to the secondary contradictions!" has consistently been their position with regard to the Eritrean civil war. We hail the E.P.L.F. for this correct stand and fully support its constant efforts to find a democratic and just solution to the burning questions of national and organizational unity that have plagued the Eritrean revolution since its inception in 1961. Any contradictions existing or arising within the ranks of the Eritrean people and freedom fighters, being secondary, must be solved only through peaceful democratic methods, such as dialogue, persuasion, agitation, etc. Eritreans for Liberation in North America reiterates its unequivocal and resolute condemnation of all those who resort to violence against genuine freedom fighters in order to settle differences or resolve contradictions that are necessarily non-antagonistic. At the same time, it firmly supports and strongly identifies with all genuine Eritrean freedom fighters who are striving hard to bring about the unity of all patriotic fighters.

The E.P.L.F. has consistently called for dialogue and democratic debate instead of arms in solving the organizational problems of the Eritrean revolution while the reactionary clique, the so-called "Revolutionary Council", which is singularly responsible for the Eritrean civil war, persists in its liquidationist program. The E.P.L.F. is committed to a democratic method of work internally as well as in organizing the people while the "Revolutionary Council" continues to employ terror, intimidation, liquidation or coercion against the fighters and the people under its hegemony.

The E.P.L.F. is the product and continuation of the historic political and armed struggle of the Eritrean people for national independence. At the same time, it heralds a new beginning of the Eritrean revolution, in

which the armed struggle is being waged on the basis of a clearly defined political line and correct revolutionary principles. Self-reliance is the cornerstone of its policy and programme. Indeed, the organizational and political achievements of the E.P.L.F. during the last two years constitute the solid foundation for the ultimate victory of the Eritrean struggle for national liberation. This is the basis of our deep conviction and great confidence that the E.P.L.F., embodying the consolidation of the achievements of the Eritrean revolution to date, is capable of leading the Eritrean people to complete victory.

ERITREANS FOR LIBERATION
IN NORTH AMERICA



This, the first issue of Vanguard, the monthly journal of the Eritrean Liberation Front Peoples Liberation Forces and Eritrean Liberation Forces, published in the field, is a significant step in the advance of our struggle against Ethiopian colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

The main goal and task of Vanguard is to develop political unity and clearly explain to our people the principles and lines of the Eritrean struggle, and to inspire and arouse them to fight vehemently for national independence and human dignity, against Ethiopian colonialism and its master, U.S. imperialism. In this way the Eritrean people can condemn their enemies in one voice and fight them as a united front.

The Eritrean people have been fighting against the Amhara feudalists and U.S. imperialists for a long time; at first through peaceful political means and then through full-fledged armed struggle. Since the Eritrean people have to persevere in a protracted struggle, they need a vanguard party that can clear the path of the armed struggle and lead the people according to correct patriotic principles, free from tribal, religious, sectarian or egotistical considerations. Vanguard is our party's journal.

"Vanguard" means that which propels forward, shatters the enemy as it advances and leads and guides by fighting at the forefront. A party which starts and leads a movement to destroy oppression is known as a "vanguard" party. We have given our journal the name Vanguard because it declares our guiding line and principles, points out the path of the Eritrean people's struggle, and is the voice and echo of the people and the fighters who are beating back the enemy in the front lines.

In the past, the feudalists and reactionaries used to award this word as a rank. But we use it only in its literal meaning, namely, one who leads by fighting at the front, and not in its reactionary sense. Therefore, when we name our journal Vanguard it is in keeping with this new revolutionary meaning.

The reverberations of rifles heard in Eritrea on September 1961 signalled a forceful uprising without a clearcut political line, organization or revolutionary consciousness. The vanguard set out to lead Eritreans without analyzing the prevailing conditions or studying the existing religious and cultural diversity. As a result rather than consolidating all Eritreans against imperialism and colonialism thereby creating a national awakening, and instead of organizing Eritreans at home and abroad under one decent organization, the warlords and chieftains of Jebha proceeded to further their personal gains by creating religious and nationalistic discord among the people and among the liberation forces.

Those who understood the incorrectness of Jebha's line, its mistaken steps and organizational deficiencies were not few. However, in the interest of the people's salvation and the advancement of the revolution and in keeping with their revolutionary spirit, they struggled persistently to correct these errors from within. But they could not disrupt the fort of those opportunists. After considerable effort it was obvious that the way to correct the misguided political line and to establish a decent organization in which national issues could be dealt with properly was outside Jebha rather than from within. Thus, they disassociated themselves from Jebha.

In 1970, what are now known as Eritrean People's Liberation Forces: Divisions 1 and 2, and Eritrean Liberation Forces (Obel) came out of the Rebel Force previously known as the Eritrean Liberation Front. And Kaida el Ama remained a club of the opportunistic elements.

At the end of 1971 Kaida el Ama held a "National Congress," and claiming that it did not recognize these national fronts, declared that there was "only one front" (meaning only Kaida el Ama) in Eritrea; and on that basis passed a fascistic proclamation threatening that unless the other forces joined it within a limited time they were going to be decimated by force of arms.

True to its threats it set out in February 1972 to "unify" by force the Eritrean people's forces which were separate on the basis of principle and organization, thus starting the civil war. As the civil war began, the patriots who had gone our separate ways, convened and agreed to fight Kaida el Ama, the club of opportunists, in concert while leaving the internal affairs of our individual organizations intact. While we were working together against Kaida el Ama we did have differences--principle and organization; however, the points that united us were far greater than our differences. In our early conventions we could not resolve all our differences because the urgency of our conditions did not provide ample opportunities. Yet we agreed to unite our forces and began to fight against the opportunists of Kaida el Ama as a single front.

As the civil war progressed, the autonomous administration of each of the three organizations presented difficulties in our work, and the need for centralized leadership became clear. On October 1972 the three organizations agreed to create one central body. They established guidelines for this body. On the basis of these agreements a central administrative committee and subcommittees in charge of news and political education, military activities, security, medical division, finance and supplies were established. The main aims of centralizing the administration and functional departments were to eradicate the division and divisive spirit that existed among the three autonomous organizations, and also to establish efficient administration and to create a new unity on the basis of a revolutionary spirit.

What has been achieved so far is not sufficient or final; our road to unity is long and difficult. Yet, the revolutionary task we have just accomplished is but the first step towards a higher unity which shall enable us to work in complete harmony without any domination to bring the Eritrean revolution to its just fulfillment. And this will be a new headache to those--at home or abroad--who persist in underestimating and ridiculing these steps towards national unity.

THE CIVIL WAR

"War is the extension of politics by other means." Among nations or political parties, war is the last resort used in the resolution of their contradictions. If the contradictions between two opposing political views cannot be resolved by democratic means, war, or armed combat, becomes the only means left for its resolution. Civil war is hence the armed confrontation which the people of a country, having divided themselves up into two camps or groupings, carry out against each other in the effort to resolve their underlying contradictions. The people of a given country resort to a civil war, however, only when democratic means have failed to resolve the contradictions. Any war between nations or political parties is, in the final analysis, an armed class struggle. It is a war between the exploiting class and the exploited classes, i.e., between the oppressor and the oppressed; it can also rarely occur between genuine freedom fighters and combatants whose class nature is of the exploited but have fallen prey to the maneuvers of opportunists. Therefore, civil war is the final method or solution by which two antagonistic classes settle their otherwise irreconcilable platforms.

The people of Eritrea, in their political struggle to win independence, will break the economic, military, and political power of the enemy and drive out imperialism and feudalism. It cannot be otherwise. However, the political and military strategy and tactics necessary for the achievement of this political objective must be correct and clear. Without correct strategy and tactics, it is impossible to attain the objective. The strategy and tactics pursued in the struggle to liberate Eritrea may be varied and many; yet, all, except one, are bound to be wrong.

When the armed struggle began, the pioneers did not base the Eritrean struggle on a solid national foundation by scientifically analyzing the conditions and studying the differences and contradictions of culture and consciousness prevailing among the various nationalities of Eritrea. At first, they tried to mobilize the people through religious appeals. However, they found religion a device incapable of binding the greedy together and incompatible with

personal pursuits. After this, the "tug of war", even though basically motivated by personal aggrandizement, assumed tribal dimensions. Thus, to consolidate their power, the opportunists used to strive to reinforce and enlarge the strength of their tribes in their respective spheres.

After the formation of the Fifth Division, from 1966 onwards, two tendencies began to emerge and take shape within the Eritrean struggle: a progressive faction seeking to build the Eritrean struggle on a single national foundation, and a reactionary faction with a feudal ideology striving to divide the Eritrean people on tribal and regional grounds in order to safeguard its class interests. The former, adhering to a correct line, set out to push the struggle forward, to politicize and mobilize the masses and to advance the revolution; while the latter persisted in dragging the struggle backwards. The attempts of the progressive faction to rectify the situation and to advance the struggle proved unsuccessful because of their relatively low level of consciousness and small size. Besides, whenever the progressive forces initiated corrective measures, the opportunists, from within and from without, were sabotaging them.

As the fierce internal strife and struggle thus unfolded between the progressive forces and the reactionary faction, the Unity of the Three was established in 1968; then the reactionary faction called for total unity in order to nip the new unity in the bud. In August, 1969, the Adobha Conference was held. At this Conference, the General Command (Kaida el Ama), in charge of field operations, was established. After a few months, violating the resolutions of the Adobha Conference, the reactionary faction, which dominated the General Command, began arresting certain progressive members of the General Command as well as leaders and fighters, and liquidating cadres in the field and abroad. When the General Command was liquidating more than 200 fighters, there was no reason whatsoever as to why this cannot be called a civil war other than the fact that the fighters so liquidated had no arms with which to defend themselves. Even in the present civil war, not more than 200 have been lost. The contradictions that have been simmering for many years, now acute, now obtuse, exploded, giving rise to a split. Those who had been

trying hard to correct the mistakes of the Eritrean struggle set out to resist the General Command. Consequently, they had to separate from it.

This happened in the first third of 1970. The patriotic fighters, whom the conspiracy of the opportunists and saboteurs had hitherto denied the opportunity, separated from the General Command in droves. They proceeded with their persistent task of correcting the mistakes of the General Command with progress. The advance of the progressives struck terror into the hearts of the opportunists who, motivated by personal gain and intoxicated by power and haughtiness, had brought about the division in the front for the liberation of the Eritrean people. To stem this tide of progress, to uproot it from its foundations, they began to maneuver and intrigue. Realizing that they could firmly safeguard their personal interests only by wiping out the progressive forces, they composed and embarked upon the singsong of "national congress".

Liquidation is not a new phenomenon, especially among certain individuals; it has been in existence for a long time. However, due to unsuitable conditions, its practice has not been so overt. Thus, the civil war is not a development that emerged from the Ar Congress (so-called national congress). Impregnated, now boiling over, now seemingly cooling off, it has remained an explosive situation for a long time. The so-called national congress was a conference of the "Jebhaists" through which the opportunists and liquidationists sought to lend their long awaited scheme of liquidation a nationalist and democratic garb, and condemning the People's Liberation Forces and the Eritrean Liberation Forces as counter-revolutionary, to legitimize their resolutions by shrouding them in revolutionary rhetoric. It is within this context that the Jebhaist Congress passed the following resolutions:

1. We believe national unity to be the basic (central) objective of the Eritrean people.
2. The Eritrean field cannot tolerate anything except one revolution under one organization and leadership.

3. All nationalities are equal. Any attempt to build a dominant nationality would be considered anti-nationalist.
4. We shall militarily attack those separated unless they submit to the administration of the Eritrean Liberation Front within a certain time.

..., etc.

National unity is the main step that will lead us to the road of victory. Without national unity, our revolution cannot be a national democratic revolution, and there will be no victory. However, when "Kaida el Ama" calls for national unity, it means that all Eritreans who struggle must be under its authority. And we will oppose this to the end. Experience is a great teacher. The leadership of "Jebha" are those who, from the beginning to this day, have divided and split the Eritrean people on tribal and regional grounds in order to promote their personal interests. As long as they are in power, national unity will remain an illusion. National unity is attainable not under the General Command (Kaida el Ama) but rather under the leadership of a correct political line, unified organization and firm strategy and tactics, safeguarding the equality of nationalities. To undertake national unity with the General Command (Kaida el Ama), it is first necessary to bring about revolutionary change from within. In such an event, the General Command would cease to exist as an organization. It is only then that national unity can be realized.

Besides, they proclaim that the Eritrean field cannot tolerate but one revolution, organization and leadership. When they say this, however, they mean that there should not exist a front other than the General Command. The cause for the existence of two fronts in the Eritrean field today is the General Command. For we too stand for the principle of "one front in the Eritrean field". However, when we say "one front in the Eritrean field", we mean one correct national democratic front. This principle can be operative only when the General Command ceases to exist as an organization. This is because, having rejected the democratic solution to the secondary contradictions

of the Eritrean revolution, the General Command has brought about the division of the front of the Eritrean people and plunged the freedom fighters into the fratricide.

The proclamation of the opportunists goes on to say that "all nationalities are equal...". In the history of the armed struggle of the Eritrean people, the nationalities of Eritrea have never enjoyed equality. The experience of the past twelve years of armed struggle provides solid evidence for this; for the history of Jebha has been nothing but the history of the domination of one nationality by another.

On top of this, they decreed that "unless those [freedom fighters] who are now separated return to the administration of the Eritrean Liberation Front (Kaida el Ama) within a specific period of time, we will attack them with force." When they passed this resolution in the so-called national congress, it was merely to legitimize or disguise, their old plan of liquidation by parading it as a measure supported by the popular will. Accordingly, the so-called "revolutionary council", in its meeting of 2/22/72, declared that "no remedy has been found except elimination by military force." On the second month, they set the civil war ablaze.

Eritrea is a country composed of various nationalities with uneven development. The Eritrean revolution thus necessarily embodies internal contradictions. However, as our people are under the oppression of imperialism and feudalism, their primary task is to resolve the contradictions with the colonialism of the Amhara feudalists and with U.S. imperialism and to wipe out oppression and exploitation. The past and present contradictions of the Eritrean struggle ought to have been resolved through dialogue and internal struggle. Even if such efforts fail, the primary contradictions should be dealt with first rather than giving primacy to the secondary contradictions and attempting to resolve them through bullets, for this would do more harm than good. Yet the "Jebha" liquidationists and their philosophers turned the secondary contradictions into primary and relegated the primary contradiction to the position of the secondary. What else could this elevation of the

secondary contradiction to the stage of the primary be except an act of opportunism?

We doubt that they know the consequences of the explosion they set off. The consequence of this civil war is truly saddening. The opportunists have made the liberation front, which the enemy with his modern and heavy weaponry had failed to break for many years, a depository of death and fatigue. Large quantities of ammunition and bombs that ought to have roasted the enemy have been wasted against each other. Many heroic combatants capable of destroying the enemy have perished. All this because of the deviationist war which the opportunists and liquidators unleashed in order to safeguard their personal interests within the struggle and after victory.

The divisive spirit and the tribal and religious ill-feeling that the opportunists have cultivated during the last twelve years and the civil war that they have now embarked upon have incited hostilities and contradictions among the struggling peoples of Eritrea. The opportunist leadership of Jebha has been busy dividing instead of politicizing and uniting the peoples of Eritrea. Many are those who accepted arms from the enemy and those who became alienated from their own struggle when confronted with the civil war.

Above all the civil war has rendered service and given hope to the camp of the enemy. Taking advantage of the civil war, the enemy renewed its heretofore frustrated propaganda efforts. Encouraged by the reactionary activities of the opportunist leaders, it strove to revive its bogged down attempts to liquidate the Revolution. This can be seen from the flurry of campaigns of deceit that it is engaged in, in the villages. At the same time U.S.-led world imperialism which is working to suppress people's liberation struggles in the Middle East and East Africa has found a windfall in the work of the opportunistic leaders who caused this very civil war. Because of the civil war the Eritrean Liberation Front, which after correcting its past mistakes, could have proceeded to smash imperialism and feudalism which are lurking in Eritrea in particular and East Africa in general, is found in its present marred condition. Thus, the reactionaries and liquidationists are indirectly serving the interests of U.S.-imperialism and Amhara-

feudalism. It is true that if two opposing political groups cannot resolve their contradictions democratically, they have to resolve it by means of arms. But the contradictions within our revolution were secondary and could have been resolved democratically. When in a revolution an attempt is made to resolve internal contradictions by means of arms, a great service is done to the enemy. Those who are consciously or unwittingly taking such steps are becoming the right hand of imperialism. Their deeds will go down in history as criminal acts against the people and the revolution.

Thirty years have passed since the Eritrean Revolution was launched to smash European Colonialism and subsequently imperialism and Amhara-feudalism. Since the Forties of this Century, enmity and conflict sown by our enemies (foreign feudalists and imperialists) has been creating division and discord among our people. The "Jebha" leadership, as beginners of the armed struggle, should have resolved these contradictions (resolvable as they were) and consolidated the struggle. But instead, they went on to sharpen the existing contradictions and caused civil war to materialize. By so doing they retarded the progress of the Eritrean Revolution.

So far the Eritrean Revolution has been the struggle between progressive and reactionary forces. And today the civil war is already ten months old. However, to think that the progressive forces will be defeated, or to look forward to and fight for its defeat is tantamount to an attempt to turn back the clock of history. Victory is inevitable and the reactionaries will be defeated and eliminated. We shall never cease to perform our revolutionary task. We are prepared to eliminate the enemies of the Eritrean Revolution, without deviating from our political line and principles and by applying a correct strategy and tactics.

Nowadays the liquidationists are running around claiming to be the true revolutionaries. But writing or reciting revolutionary phrases does not make one a revolutionary. The only judge of a correct theory is practice. Those who claim to be the true revolutionaries and slander us by calling us counter-revolutionaries and opportunists are placed along with

us on the scales of practice. Only our deeds can clearly show our true natures. Time will come when their cover will be unmasked and their true nature exposed to all. (We already know them.) Only time!

Victory to the Eritrean Revolution!

Down with imperialists and their lackeys!

Down with opportunists and liquidationists!

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL FREEDOM FIGHTERS

The internecine killings and the programmatic liquidation unleashed against the People's Liberation Forces has been a big advantage to the enemy in his attempt to crush the struggle and to encourage the desertion of combatants. During months of bitter civil war, the People's Liberation Forces have acted only in self-defence without committing any errors. Rather, in pursuit of its basic aims to liberate the people and to exonerate the dying, the P.L.F. has continued to fight with all its might against the main enemy.

The intrigues that are being hatched by the so-called "revolutionary council" and the "executive committee", besides undermining the revolution and serving imperialism, are counter-revolutionary acts which help to abort the anti-imperialist movements of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Therefore, after a long period of study, we appeal to all freedom fighters - those who left the field to escape from the sinking ship of the liquidationists, those who were not coaxed into participation as well as those who were maneuvered and compelled to take part in the civil war and to all Eritrean patriots to unite in defence of our revolution. When we come up with this revolutionary proposal, it is with full confidence in our strength. We would like to repeat here that we were forcibly dragged into the civil war a war which we basically condemn, for we believe that the defeat of one part of our revolution amounts to our collective

failure. We must collectively explore and create the means by which we can transcend our presently harmful conditions and adopt a revolutionary program that can enable us to fulfill the aspirations of the Eritrean people for liberation and progress.

Of course, the liquidationists are "our own brother combatants" who have not stopped their counter-revolutionary intrigues. The Ethiopian government has not yet relented from striving to wipe out the Eritrean revolution militarily and economically. How is this different from the actions of the deviationist clique? Even if they (the liquidationists and the Ethiopian regime) do not jointly discuss and plan their programs, they are united in their actions.

The People's Liberation Forces, recognizing that the civil war, as well as any internal bickering within the revolution, serves only the enemy, has firmly condemned, in the field as well as outside, both in principle and in practice, the bloodshed among Eritreans and the turmoil inside the revolution.

Fellow freedom fighters! the disturbance that has been created within our ranks can have no effect other than loss and exhaustion for the revolution and assistance to the enemy. Let us not forget that, as when a part of our body is injured our entire anatomy suffers, the loss of one part of our revolution also means a loss or a burden to all of us. We are convinced that the civil war is an erroneous step that sabotages our revolutionary advance and cancels the resolute efforts and the matchless precious sacrifices made by our valiant people for ten years. On this basis, the People's Liberation Forces invites all freedom fighters genuinely concerned with the fate of the revolution to unite with it in putting an end to the fratricide and in waging the struggle to completely achieve our just objectives, for which thousands of our people have sacrificed themselves, with the slogan "[Direct] all our forces and capabilities against our primary enemy."

Moreover, the People's Liberation Forces holds no grudges of any kind against any freedom fighter. Revolutionary duty obliges it to declare a stand of no vengeance against those who participated in the civil war, especially since it recognizes that they did so

due to inadequate consciousness and under threat of force from the leaders of the deviationist clique. As the path of our revolutionary journey is protracted and arduous, higher and better consolidation, harmony and coordination are imperative. Our enemy, the Ethiopian government and its masters, the American imperialists, are still armed and powerful. To annihilate them without letting up, it is necessary to consolidate and unify our forces and to intensify our struggle.

Had all the forces and people sacrificed in the fratricide been used against the main enemy, we would have scored even greater victories and our revolution would have achieved greater advance in its political work. Now, however, is not the time to complain, bemoan, or sulk over the situation. For, the revolution which triumphs in the end is only the one which emerges having overcome as big problems and obstacles as ours and learns from its experience. It is now necessary to take up our obligations without delay, to wage our struggle in unity, and to pull our revolution out of its present muddle so as to fulfill the expectations that the people - the peasants and workers - have placed on it.

In conclusion, the People's Liberation Forces repeatedly reminds all combatants who, coerced by the lies of the liquidationists, have participated in the civil war, to join the genuine revolutionaries and to deny the liquidationists and opportunists the chance to prolong and extend the fratricide; this will advance our revolution forward.

The People's Liberation Forces extends its open arms to all those who were deceived and misled by the liquidationists and opportunists as well as those revolutionaries who (for the sake of advancing our revolutionary work) were and are demanding to be armed against our primary enemy so that they can struggle to realize the aspirations of the Eritrean people for liberation, progress, peace and development.

Down with the civil war and its perpetrators!

Defeat and shame to the enemies of the people, to the reactionaries and opportunists!

May our heroic martyrs be remembered forever!

We would like to once more bring to your attention the plunder and destruction we are faced with and the miserable lives we have been forced to lead.

The Ethiopian army and their commandos murder countless of our old, our young, our women and destroy our homes along with our belongings. On top of this, they are now forcing us to carry the dead bodies of our children on our shoulders. So many of our children have already sacrificed their lives in the battlefield but we have ceased to measure the extent of this sacrifice for we have come to understand it to be the only way we can determine our own destiny. Prisons are overflowing and in them our people are suffering under deplorable conditions, a variation only in degree from the everyday suffering of the masses of our people. Still we are cognizant of the fact that the struggle is long and shall be tainted with more misery and death.

Of course, it is our principal enemy Haile Selassie -- the butcher -- who has driven us from our land and the land of our ancestors, forcing us into exile. Carrying nothing but our lives; hungry and ill-clad, we crossed the harsh desert under the scorching sun and through dusty winds to come to the Sudan where we are living in severely degrading conditions.

It must especially be known that as we live here under an alien label of "refugees" so many of us have been maimed and killed. We face starvation and suffer from communicable diseases. As a result, we have lost many of our old, suckling babies and pregnant mothers. Our wish and hope has been to return to our country in freedom and that our troubles would be over. However, the price of liberating our country is dear and our cause is the cause of all Eritreans who must fight together irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliation. Many of our fighters and civilians have died for the salvation of our country and many more will. However, it is well known that anyone, no matter how big or how powerful, cannot indefinitely intervene in the life of a society and impose his will against that of the people.

As this is written in the words of God, we accept whatever befalls on us and may your wishes coincide with those of the Creator.

In the name of the Refugees
Sheik Ousman Alula

WHY ARE WE WAGING A STRUGGLE?

Ever since the advent of colonialism, the Eritrean people have been involved in a ceaseless struggle. As we look back into Eritrean history and examine the events of the past 90 years, not only do we see that Eritrea has been exploited by foreign powers and its people jailed and murdered, but also that in every case the Eritrean people have persistently fought against such domination. It is this experience that has steeled the Eritrean peoples' determination and given them courage to fight Ethiopian aggression and international imperialism.

The resistance during Italian rule generally took the form of uncoordinated rebellion. However, from 1945 onwards, organized political parties of a nationalist nature began to emerge. As the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea were closed to trade due to the Second World War, a trade vacuum was created in the Middle East. This caused Eritrean industries to flourish temporarily and the number of workers grew. The timely increase of workers and the associated increase in awareness made the creation of political parties possible. In 1946, the "Eritrea For Eritreans" party was established. Then followed the "Unionist Party". In 1947 "Rabita Islamia" (the Moslem League) was organized. Thus, Eritrea became a hotspot of political activity and its people's participation in the determination of their future continued to expand.

These three parties initially followed divergent political lines. Thus, the Eritrean people were plunged into a state of rivalry and open hostility, thereby creating particularly opportune conditions for their oppressors.

On the other hand, the Amhara overlords of Ethiopia, with the aid of British and U.S. imperialists, have been feverishly sowing the seeds of dissension and strife among Eritreans in attempts to gain outlets to the sea and to plunder Eritrean agricultural and mineral wealth. The Amhara feudalists attempted to stifle the newly emerged people's movements by hiring bandits and spreading them in the towns and countryside to terrorize and assassinate leaders and members of the Rabita Islamia and the "Eritrea for Eritreans" parties. Abdelkader Kebire and Blatta Kahsai Malou are martyrs of that era.

Due to the strategically significant geographic location of Eritrea in East Africa and the Middle East, imperialist U.S. was determined to retain its military base, which it had established in Eritrea during the British colonial occupation. Consequently, the U.S. colluded in an evil conspiracy with the Amhara feudalists in order to exploit the natural resources of Eritrea and Ethiopia and to put Eritrea under Ethiopian control and, indirectly, under its own hegemony.

When the Eritrean case was brought before the United Nations General Assembly, the imperialist U.S.A. concealed its true motives for pushing the Federal Resolution in the guise of "peace and security" in East Africa, Ethiopia's interests on "historical, geographic and economic grounds" and "Ethiopia's legitimate claims of access to the sea." The U.S. also used its political power to bring about the subjugation of Eritrea by Ethiopia so that the U.S. would not lose its economic interests and its military base. Contrary to the interests of our people, and utterly disregarding their wishes, the imperialist U.S.A. managed to push the Federal Resolution through the United Nations and ensured the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, thereby securing the interests of imperialism and feudalism. As if it were not enough for Eritreans to have suffered under Italian and British colonialism, again they were put under a third colonial power. Oppression by the Amhara feudalists was thus taking root and imperialist exploitation consolidated its base in Eritrea and its neighbouring countries.

On the basis of Federal Resolution 390-A/5/ of the U.S.-controlled United Nations, Eritrea was allowed to establish an autonomous government with its own

National Assembly, Constitution and a Flag "under the Ethiopian Crown". Although Eritrea was allowed to have her own flag, assembly and constitution, affairs like foreign relations, defense, finance, transportation (air, sea, land) and telecommunications were still under Ethiopian control. There was only limited independence and Federation was only an interim arrangement to prepare for complete Ethiopian annexation and domination of Eritrea.

This was how federal union with Ethiopia was introduced; and subsequently the Amhara feudalists gradually eliminated the democratic newspapers, banned peaceful demonstrations, disbanded workers' unions and abolished civil rights - converting Eritrea into a police state. The patriots who courageously resisted political oppression were imprisoned or exiled in an attempt to quell the resistance.

During Italian colonialism, rich fertile lands were given to foreign settlers. By collaborating with such holders of large commercial farms as well as owners of factories and foreign traders in order to keep the ownership of these economic enterprises in the hands of their holders, the Amhara feudalists aggravated the oppression of the workers and peasants. It was this economic strangulation that led to the emigration of Eritreans en masse to the Middle East, the Sudan and Ethiopia.

On November 14, 1962, in violation of the Federal Resolution, the Ethiopian feudalists abolished the Eritrean Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly and officially annexed Eritrea to their Empire.

After removing the remaining obstacles in their way, they proceeded to replace Eritrean laws and institutions with their own laws which were alien to our people. They abolished the official languages of Eritrea and introduced Amharic in their place. They proclaimed Amharic to be the only language of communication in public offices, schools, courts and trade and they have not ceased to prevent the development of any of our national languages.

Eritreans were thus locked into a bitter state of political, economic and cultural oppression. Peaceful political means were used in an attempt to resolve the

situation but they did not succeed. The heroic Eritreans who saw the futility of peaceful resistance against armed oppressors, understood that the solution could only be found through armed struggle; and in September 1961 the sound of the first gun shot reverberated across the Eritrean fields. The Eritrean people had set out to liberate their country through armed struggle. Unfortunately, this armed uprising lacked a clearcut political line and well-defined program of action, and instead of mobilizing all the people, the uprising led to competition and disunity among various national elements. Almost dormant religious and ethnic hostilities were rekindled by the opportunists and counter-revolutionaries who took this chance to enhance their self-interests and bring the Eritrean struggle into disarray.

What does a correct analysis of the conditions of the Eritrean people show us? The oppression and injustices that the Eritreans are being subjected to are obvious to any observer, let alone to the Eritreans themselves. We are being ruled by foreign oppressors who have imposed alien political and cultural institutions upon us. There are also Eritrean collaborators who are oppressing and exploiting us in concert with our external enemies. We see large concession farms owned by foreigners while Eritrean workers and small traders are oppressed and being exploited.

Although many want and should be able to receive an education, we see this opportunity being given to only a chosen few. We see our people suffering from diseases, poverty, and ignorance; living as they do, with their mouths shut for they may not speak out and their hands tied for they may not write.

While the fertile land is being given to big capitalists and feudalists, we find the Eritrean peasant downtrodden and poor, incessantly toiling to barely subsist.

The lack of freedom and equality has made prostitution the highest opportunity for Eritrean women; and the lack of work and education has forced many of our young men into becoming "thieves" and "murderers".

Fully aware of these conditions and growing tired of bitter oppression and exploitation, we have picked up arms, gone to the battlefield where we wage armed struggle. It is not a desire to live as wanderers or the fancy to carry weapons that has driven us to the battlefield, but our desire to uproot and change prevailing conditions of exploitation, oppression, degradation and the deprivation of our human rights.

We fight:

So that the people may own the land and be the beneficiaries of its fruits.

In order to transfer ownership of factories and commerce into the hands of a people's government so that the democratic rights of workers may be fully safeguarded.

So that women may regain their full rights and participate in work and politics with equality.

In order to work for the development of industry and agriculture for our country cannot move forward without such development.

In order to eradicate diseases and ignorance so that our people can be enlightened and healthy.

In order to protect the rights of all nationalities in Eritrea so that they may develop with equality. To abolish war and aggression and bring about peace and prosperity for all our people.

In order to bring about conditions of progress for every Eritrean and to guarantee him/her adequate nutrition, clothing, health care and education, which are now exclusively enjoyed by the feudalists and imperialists who control the fertile land, industries and trade.

For complete independence from colonialism and imperialist and feudalist exploitation. We are waging a national democratic revolution and are fighting with all our might against Ethiopian feudalism and U.S. imperialism. And we will be victorious!

Victory to the Eritrean Revolution!

Down with Imperialism, Feudalism and their lackeys!

THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

The main aim of the Eritrean revolution is to annihilate colonialism, imperialism and Amhara feudalism from Eritrean soil, to replace colonialism with freedom for the nationalities of Eritrea and to substitute a popular democratic government for the present state of political oppression. The government power in Eritrea is in the hands of the Amhara feudalists, imperialists and their servants, their Eritrean stooges. With the exception of these few running dogs who are not fighting against colonialism and imperialism, in other words, with the exception of those who collaborate with colonialism and imperialism, the Eritrean revolution unites all the people. Thus, we can say that our revolution is a national democratic revolution fighting against colonialism, imperialism, and feudalism.

When we state that the Eritrean revolution is national democratic, what does it mean? The Eritrean revolution advocates "the right of a people to their country", "Eritrea for the Eritreans", that the destiny of the Eritrean people can be determined only by the Eritreans themselves. It is in pursuit of these goals that we are persevering in a struggle against foreign colonialism.

Democracy is people's government, meaning a government elected by and responsible to the people and whose constituent members can be replaced at any time.

It is a government under which the people enjoy full political rights, such as freedom of the press and assembly, freedom of self-expression, freedom to organize political parties and labour unions, freedom of worship, the emancipation of women and the equality of nationalities. In short, a free government and people able to exercise basic human and civic rights and able to enjoy fundamental freedoms in every aspect of national life.

As a building must be erected on a firm foundation, so must democracy stand on a sound economic basis. If the foundation is not firm, whatever stands on it cannot stand firmly. Haile Selassie, the butcher, constantly bluffs claiming that "each citizen has the right to elect his representative". The millions of subsistence peasant farmers suffering under feudalist oppression cannot exercise these democratic rights. This is merely murderer Haile Selassie's ploy to camouflage the oppressive and repressive nature of his government and to blind people to the truth; otherwise, there cannot be any real democratic rights in a feudalist society. The reason is simply that the exploitative feudalist basis has not been destroyed. Democracy requires a firm economic foundation. For instance, in the countryside the produce of farmers and herdsmen must exclusively be put to their own use. If this happens, they will be spared from economic oppression. This can be realized only when all the land in the country is in the hands of those who work it. The so-called government domain and pasture land was stolen from the people, and all of it must be returned to the people. Land being held by both the small and big feudal lords must also be returned to its rightful owners - the farmers. Only then can the farmer regain his economic rights. This also means that feudalism would be destroyed and a solid foundation for democracy laid down in its place; in other words, a people's government could be established with solid, firm and unshakeable roots. This is the primary structural basis capable of sustaining democracy.

There is a second structural basis which assures national independence and consolidates democracy. And this is the establishment of firm control of the industries and natural wealth of Eritrea in the hands of the Eritrean people. At present, our industries and

natural wealth are jointly controlled by the imperialists, the Amhara feudalists and their Eritrean lackeys. Let us ask the question: What does American imperialism gain from our country and from the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America? U.S. imperialism controls the natural resources of our country and those of the other countries as well. It exploits our countries as sources of cheap raw materials for its manufacturing industries, while our peoples, languishing under backward conditions - engaged in primitive farming and herding are used as markets or, rather, as dumping grounds for its excess production. Our workers are paid only a tiny fraction of the wages of their American counterparts. All this enables the imperialists to augment their capital wealth by reaping superprofits from the exploitation of our peoples - the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Imperialism and feudalism are striving to perpetuate our backwardness; but they will not succeed. As imperialism and feudalism are the bases for colonialism, enslavement and national oppression, we must destroy these underlying sources of our exploitation and oppression by force of arms.

Then, what should replace these bases of exploitation? If we examine the nature of the industries in our country, we can observe two types of oppression. On the one hand, the national oppression of our country by the imperialists and the Amhara feudalists has prevented the rise of an independent Eritrean capitalist class capable of owning and running industries on its own. Consequently, the large commercial farms and industries are found in the hands of foreigners. It is their subjection to this kind of national oppression which causes some elements of the Eritrean bourgeoisie to oppose colonialism. On the other hand, there is the basic oppression of workers. The workers have no defined working hours; twelve-hour working days are very common. The factory owners can at any time fire any worker arbitrarily without any provision for pension and workers have no legal recourse. The working conditions are deplorable and extremely hazardous to health and the workers are denied adequate medical treatment for injuries sustained at work. On top of these miserable conditions, they are paid extremely low wages - it is very common for workers to receive less than a dollar (U.S. \$.40) per day. Women workers are especially

subjected to dual oppression. They are doing what used to be men's jobs at substantially lower wages, and this is because they do not enjoy equal status. The colonial government of the Amhara feudalists prevents Eritrean workers from collectively fighting these injustices by denying them permission to organize labour unions.

The Eritrean revolution will destroy this obstacle, for to change this basis of oppression is to defend the democratic rights of workers. If the working hours are legally defined, the minimum wage fixed, equal pay established for equal work irrespective of sex, adequate pension provided, and comprehensive medical treatment guaranteed for work-related accidents, then the fundamental rights of workers will have been safeguarded. It is only a people's democratic government whose power is based on the masses of the countryside (peasants and nomads), the workers and the patriotic bourgeoisie that can protect these rights.

If the people of any country, however large or small, are courageously determined to persevere in a protracted armed struggle, in following a correct revolutionary line within the framework of a broad-based and principled National United Front, and aided by the world revolutionary movement (in terms of providing arms, political support, and by weakening the common imperialist enemy in their respective spheres of confrontation), they are assured that victory is inevitable. The people of Eritrea, along with the dependent and oppressed peoples the world over, are waging a struggle that will lead them to final victory. When we speak of the world revolution, we are referring to the ongoing struggles of the peoples of the world to wipe out colonialism and neo-colonialism from their respective countries and to obliterate their regressive and reactionary order prevailing in the industrialized imperialist nations.

Our country, Eritrea, is suffering under colonialism. There are also many other countries suffering from similar colonial oppression. Most of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are dominated by neo-colonialism. The industrial Western European countries and the U.S. are the major centers of imperialism. In our era, any form of oppression operates to serve first and foremost the interests of

imperialism. Secondarily, their lackeys throughout the world (the Amhara feudalists, for example) derive certain benefits from it.

Before the First World War imperialism enjoyed worldwide supremacy. The big imperialist countries, competing among themselves militarily and politically, had divided and subdivided the world. The supremacy of imperialism seemed complete and enduring. However, the burgeoning proletarian socialist movement was able to administer the first and most telling blow to imperialism. This was the great October Socialist Revolution which triumphantly exploded in Russia in 1917. This revolution gave the proletarian socialist and the anti-imperialist nationalist movements a tremendous momentum. In between the two World Wars, these movements developed and grew ever stronger.

After the Second World War, and especially in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a dangerous situation was created for imperialism. In many countries of Asia, the masses became engaged in armed struggle and, fighting with their full strength, they scored decisive victories setting imperialism along the path of its eventual downfall. The most telling and memorable blows that imperialism received from the peoples of Asia during this time are the resounding victories of the Chinese people in 1949, which liberated China from neo-colonialism, and of the Vietnamese people in 1954 which liberated Vietnam from French colonialism. In addition, India became independent in 1947. These and other defeats for imperialism became an example to the national liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. From this time onward, imperialism was forced to change tactics in an effort to ensure its continued domination of the world. It replaced colonialism with neo-colonialism and disguised nominal independence as real. Federating Eritrea with Ethiopia was merely a chapter in this new tactical adjustment.

The people of Africa have always fought against imperialism both in its colonialist and neo-colonialist forms. The Algerian and Kenyan struggles for independence stand out as shining examples of the anti-colonialist struggles of African peoples and, after the Second World War, many countries were able to win "independence". At present, Angola, Mozambique and

Guinea Bissau are still under Portuguese colonialism while Azania (South Africa), Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), and Namibia (Southwest Africa) remain under the oppressive colonial rule of racialist white settler regimes. In the three Portuguese "colonies" and in Zimbabwe, armed struggles for liberation are being waged. In the other colonized countries, peaceful political struggles are going on. This signifies that, along with the Eritrean armed struggle, there are five anti-colonialist armed national liberation struggles in Africa. There are also numerous peaceful political movements for liberation.

Most African countries are found under a new form of imperialist domination. When the imperialists "granted independence" to these countries, they retained full control over their natural and agricultural resources and all other sources of wealth such as the big commercial enterprises. In fact, imperialism was able to further consolidate its economic power and romp at will all over these countries. Thus, these countries are not truly independent as their domestic affairs and foreign relations are subservient to the interests of imperialism. Ethiopia is an excellent example of these neo-colonial, dependent countries.

The peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America are waging an active struggle against this kind of neo-colonialism. The anti-neocolonialist struggle in Africa and the struggle of the Arab peoples, against imperialism and zionism hold a prominent place in the worldwide anti-imperialist movement.

Thus, Eritrea has a historic relationship with the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is because the history of Eritrea under colonialism is in general similar to and closely tied with the histories of these countries. Because imperialism exploits and oppresses all peoples and has a reactionary nature, it is our common enemy. The world revolution is in general an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-feudalist and anti-collaborationist movement.

Their common anti-imperialist struggle unifies the peoples of the world. The victory of one people is the victory of all peoples, while the defeat of one harms all. When a people fight for national independence,

they are fighting for the independence and liberation of the whole world. This is because imperialism and its stooges are being destroyed in that front. When imperialism is destroyed on all fronts, the world will be wholly liberated. The Eritrean Revolution is, thus, an integral part of the World Revolution.

We believe that the popular struggles against Portuguese colonialism, the struggles of the peoples of Zimbabwe and Azania, the struggle of the Arab peoples against U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism, the struggles of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia against American imperialism, and also the political and armed struggles of all other peoples are of great help to the revolutionary struggle of the Eritrean people.

Victory to the Eritrean Revolution!

Victory to the World Revolution!

Eternal Glory to the martyrs of Revolution!

STUDENT MOVEMENT IN ERITREA

Since the beginning of this year (September) all high schools in Eritrea have been closed. The students' complaints are the following:

1. The regime has asked the students to pay fees for ESLC (Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate) examinations. Students refuse to pay.
2. The present high schools in Eritrea are twenty years old. Since then no new high schools have been opened. Why?
3. The students demand the right to establish a student union.

4. Lack of school facilities and good teachers as compared to some of the provinces in Ethiopia.
5. The fees for the 6th, 8th and 12th grades' examinations have been increasing yearly. What happens to the 2% educational tax that the parents pay?
6. What is the use of completing the 12th grade? (Translator's note: This is explained in terms of unemployment and the fact that the university enrolls a very small percent of the whole 12th grade student population.)
7. Why is government taxation increasing every year?
8. In general the rights of the students are not respected.

To the above listed grievances of the students, the regime replied that it would answer their questions when the students resumed classes. The students on their part refused to go back to classes until and unless their grievances were met. The parents' committee told the parents to force their children to start classes. The order of the parents' committee was accepted by only a few families. But those students forced by their families stood to their belief and joined the general student body.

The parents' committee desperate of its first attempt called for the parents' general assembly at the Queen of Sheba Stadium. The assembly was adjourned without any final decision. It was a failure. The regime then began to arrest students. Tear gas, beating, and flogging became the lot of the students. Yet the regime couldn't succeed. None of the students gave up their cause despite the beating and imprisonment. On the contrary, their moral force has been heightened.

Here is an example that shows how the Ethiopian army exercises its suppression. All students in Eritrea were present during the funeral ceremony of Yohanes Fekadu. (Translator's note: one of the participants in the recent attempted hijacking). During the ceremony the Ethiopian army had surrounded

the cemetery at "Tsetserat" in Asmara. When the students were returning in line to the house of the deceased to show their condolence, the soldiers opened fire and the crowd was dispersed. A few students, disregarding the shooting, continued to march in line. The Ethiopian army surrounded and arrested them.

At present the high schools are still closed. The Ethiopian regime in radio broadcast warned that it would close down the schools unless the students resumed classes. The deadline was also specified. However, none of the students has started classes.

At such moments the student movement has declared its unity with the Eritrean Liberation Front.

In an attempt to isolate the student movement from the workers and the peasants, the feudalist Ethiopia and their running dogs will definitely label it as an upheaval caused by a foreign hand. Nonetheless, this movement has its root cause in the economic and political oppression in Eritrea. It is also true that this movement transcends from the towns to the countryside.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

- July 14, 1972, in a place called "Adi Nefas" during a festival day, the Eritrean Liberation Front had an operation to eliminate Ethiopian spies; one spy was killed. During the confrontation five innocent persons were killed.

- July 15, 1972, at a place called "Gerat Segum" the enemy soldiers ambushed the freedom fighters. Five patriots died heroically and two others were wounded.

During early September, an hour's armed confrontation between Eritrean freedom fighters and the enemy soldiers took place at a village called "Emba Dorho."

- 26/10/72, in the morning at a place called "Deda" there was a battle that lasted for 1-1/2 hours between the Eritrean freedom fighters and the enemy.

- 5/11/72, Asmara, at 10:45 p.m., in the so-called Haile Selassie Street, a hand grenade was thrown by the Eritrean Liberation Front. As a result two policemen were wounded.

- 20/11/72, Asmara, at 11:30 a.m., by "Villagio Giugnio" in a bar called "Meradoro" the Eritrean Liberation Front shot a colonel to death. This colonel was one of Haile Selassie's running dogs who are exploiting and torturing the people of Eritrea.

- 21/11/72, Asmara, at 8:30 p.m. in Haile Selassie Street, the commandos of the Eritrean Liberation Force threw a handgrenade at the Commercial Bank. As a result, the electric wires, the windows of the bank, and two cars were damaged.

- 9/12/72, Addis Ababa, there was an attempt to hijack an Ethiopian Airlines jet by a fighter from the Eritrean Liberation Force and six other Ethiopians and Eritreans. Two of them were determined and resolute women. This mission was undertaken by the cooperation of the Ethiopian and Eritrean progressives. Their demand was the release of political prisoners held by the enemy. A special issue will be published on this.

- 16/12/72, Asmara at 6 p.m. in "Edaga Hamus" near Y.M.C.A., Habtom Asgedom, a running dog of the enemy, was shot dead by the Eritrean Liberation Front. Habtom was a long-standing member of the Unionist Party. (Translator's note: a party that advocated union with Ethiopia.) He was also the one who had participated in the ambush against our Force when we lost five of our comrades.

- This month (December) the agents of the enemy have been found and caught spying within the Eritrean Liberation Front. Further information will be released to clarify this matter.

- Progressive Ethiopians with the spirit of internationalism have joined the Eritrean Liberation Front to struggle for the liberation of Eritrea.

- Fighting illiteracy: On top of the regular political education that is given to all the fighters, there has been for the last three months an all-out effort to conquer illiteracy within our Force. 75% of our Force were illiterate. Now, under the slogan of "Literacy Campaign", illiteracy within our Force has been totally wiped out.