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EDITORIAL

"ZULU PROJECT"

THE DERGUE'S NEW AGGRESSION IN ERITREA

As their colonial rule in Eritrea draws to a close, Addis Ababa's disciples of Hitler and Mussolini are frantically engaged in devising all sorts of unjust plans of aggression to demolish the land and people of Eritrea. It is to be recalled that in the past the Dergue, resorting to a demagogy woven with disgusting lies and feudal chauvinism as well as deceiving and compelling the poor peasants and workers of Ethiopia - whose basic social problems remain unsolved and whom it contemptuously views as "unfit to hold power because they are not yet conscious" but does not consider them unfit to be used as instruments of its dreams - had hatched the unsuccessful aggressive conspiracy of the "Raza Project" dubbed as the "volunteer campaign" to portray it as a spontaneous peasant mobilization. Today, a second conspiracy is underway precisely for the same kind of aggression under the code name of the "Zulu Project". Addis Ababa's handful fascists are making frantic preparations while their propaganda machine is whipping up chauvinist hysteria about "Arab invasion" and "Defence of the motherland" in an effort to conceal the blows being dealt them by the Eritrean people's relentless struggle, arouse the Ethiopian people and swindle world public opinion.

Ethiopian colonialism has perpetrated barbarous atrocities against the Eritrean people in order to secure its economic, strategic, territorial and maritime interests in Eritrea. Ever since coming to power, the fascist Dergue has steadily escalated its war of aggression. Although the Dergue, as the agent of Ethiopian colonialism in power, paints its regime with glittering and enchanting colours or labels to camouflage its un-

just occupation of Eritrea, the essence of its colonial nature cannot confuse anyone with a just conscience.. Even if it comes up with new tactics and new artillery, it cannot change the just wishes, unshakable determination and resolute struggle of the Eritrean people for independence and freedom. Hence, its frenzy proves only its weaknesses and failures. On the contrary, the resolve and struggle of the Eritrean people have grown stronger, winning victory after victory.

Both the campaign of aggression that failed and the new one underway are a historic manifestation that the Eritrean people have said NO! to Ethiopian colonialism. To coerce the Ethiopian peoples to commit aggression through fascist demagoguery while the entire Eritrean people are demanding independence on their own land clearly demonstrates that the Ethiopian colonialist's claim that their occupation of Eritrea in 1962 represented "the wishes of the Eritrean people" has always been a baseless lie. This does not represent any wishes other than that of a handful of fascists. As the main objective of the conspiracy is to obstruct the Ethiopian people from identifying their enemies and rising up against the Dergue in pursuit of their fundamental demands, its failure is inevitable.

From the very beginning, the Dergue boasted of crushing the Eritrean revolution and made countless attempts to do so. Its attempts of three years have been smashed and the Eritrean people's struggle, under the E.P.L.F.'s vanguard role, has won and continues to win victory after victory. This truly historic phenomenon proves that only the justness of the Eritrean struggle and the resolute determination of the Eritrean people are the key to victory. Since imperialism, the Dergue and all reactionaries are incapable of comprehending history otherwise, however, they seek the causes of their defeats and failures not in the hatred, resistance and power of the people but in the lack of an adequate mercenary army as well as quantity and quality of arms. Hence, they hasten to increase mercenaries and duped

elements and add more iron with every defeat. It is thus in line with this anti-historical philosophy that they are making frantic preparations for the "Zulu Project". And they shall never refrain from committing aggression until history crushes and obliterates them.

On this occasion, the E.P.L.F. which, as usual, crushes the enemy's plans and forces everywhere to give practical effect to its words, would like to state that it is ready for it with clenched teeth and has made the necessary preparations to annihilate this new unjust campaign of aggression. The Eritrean people everywhere should follow the guidelines given by the People's Army concerning military movements and other related activities and preparations so that the operations and collective effort may be timely and coordinated. Moreover, since the forthcoming battles shall be waged on a larger and greater scale, the E.P.L.F. would like to reiterate that the Eritrean people will make all-round preparations. The People's Army shall at all times be at the forefront of the people.

EXPOSE THE DERGUE'S COLONIALIST LIES

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

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

To cover up this basic truth, there is hardly any conspiracy or lie that Ethiopian colonialism has not hatched or perpetrated ever since the inception of the armed struggle. In the early stage, Haile Selassie's now defunct feudal regime used to pretend that our armed struggle did not exist. It strove hard to deceive many claiming that the Eritrean people had accepted Ethiopian annexation in peace and with joy! As the struggle developed, won increasing mass support, inflicted heavy

losses on the Ethiopian colonial army and received greater international publicity, Haile Selassie's colonial regime was compelled to change its tactics. Even though it slandered and belittled our patriotic movement using the epithet of "bandits", it was forced to admit the bitter truth that there existed armed struggle in the Eritrean field. Meanwhile as the armed struggle advanced further, dealt the Ethiopian aggressor army heavier blows and enjoyed greater international support, it was subjected to more slanders and distortions; in addition to the epithet of "bandits", it was now vilified as a "secessionist", "religious", etc., movement aiming to "sell Eritrea to the Arabs".

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

Meanwhile, as there was no strong political organization capable of coordinating and leading the democratic struggles of the Ethiopian people to win complete victory, a clique of military officers, who have built their careers as loyal mercenaries of feudalism and groomed lackeys of imperialism, were able to usurp state power. While still trying to consolidate its power, the Dergue pretended to be a friend of the Eritrean people and in favour of peace. It began to condemn the brutal crimes and atrocities which Haile Selassie's feudal regime committed against the Eritrean

people and talked about the imperative of finding a peaceful solution to the Eritrean question. In particular, the Dergue was, if for a brief period, busy declaring in speeches and in writing that the Eritrean people are a hard working and justice loving people and not "bandits", as the defunct feudal regime used to call them; that they were forced to rise up in arms because of the injustices and oppression of the ancien regime; etc. Nevertheless, its practice exposed its real essence and objectives within less than a year of its seizure of power.

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

With respect to Eritrea, the outlines of the Dergue's policy were clear-cut right from the beginning: a new conspiracy of a "peaceful solution" to camouflage a new aggression on a larger and higher scale. It embarked upon all-out military preparations while talking of "peaceful solution". It collected its most seasoned and battle-fit troops from all over Ethiopia for a military build up in Asmara. Its objective was, on the one hand, to confuse and divide the masses of the Eritrean people, to deceive the Ethiopian peoples, to hoodwink world public opinion, and to isolate the Eritrean revolution from its international friends and supporters; on the other hand, to muster all available military

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forces and capability to exterminate the Eritrean people and strangulate their revolution. However, the Dergue's planned war of extermination boomeranged on it in February 1975 because of the heroism of the fighters and the determination of the masses. Its crushing defeat scuttled its fascist colonial stratagem.

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

However, as reactionaries never learn from their experiences and cease their counter-revolutionary activities until they enter their grave, the fascist Dergue continued to escalate its war of aggression in an effort to prolong its colonial domination of the Eritrean people. To counter and defeat this escalation, the E.P.L.F. People's Army set the flames of people's war ablaze all over Eritrea; it wiped out numerous enemy camps, liquidated and put out of action thousands of the Ethiopian mercenary troops, captured hundreds of enemy officers and men, and seized or destroyed enormous quantities of enemy materiel. In the last few months alone, the Ethiopian colonial army has suffered unprecedented

historic defeats in Naro, Mai Atal, Habrengaga, Debarawa, Karora, Ruba Anseba (Keren), Nacfa and Afabet. More than 3000 aggressor troops were liquidated and over 500 captured.

These brilliant victories, without parallel in the history of the Eritrean people's armed struggle, are the outcome of our correct military strategy of protracted people's war and the firm determination and heroism of our People's Army. These great victories of our just patriotic struggle have dealt a telling blow to Ethiopian colonial aggression and the expansionist ambitions of the Ethiopian ruling classes. All this signifies the strategic superiority of our revolutionary People's Army over the counter-revolutionary Ethiopian colonial army. This superiority is bound to grow and expand under any circumstances until we win final and complete victory.

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

It is against this background then that the Dergue's recent cry of aggression must be viewed. Resorting to

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

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

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

" As the aggression and transgression being committed against our revolution and unity, and against our national existence in general, have reached a critical situation,... we have, through the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.), notified all member states that the Sudanese Government shall be responsible for the consequences and effects on the peace of the region of the aggression started with El Numery's call; on the other hand, we have also notified the peace-loving countries of the world.

" Jafar El Numery... strengthening the Eritrean reactionary secessionist groups through tanks and

artillery, deploying the Sudanese army with the Eritrean secessionists and E.D.U. ... is waging war on the Ethiopian peasants and armed forces to separate Eritrea from its revolutionary mother country, destroy our national existence, ... strangle our revolution and disrupt our unity.

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

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

First of all what we would like to remind the assinine Mengistu and his fascist clique is that the just struggle of the Eritrean people for national liberation is not something that has grown "during the last two and a half years" but has for sixteen years been fighting them and their masters of long-standing the

Ethiopian feudal regime, U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism - and relentlessly crushing their counter-revolutionary forces of aggression. Has it slipped their memory that the reactionary Ethiopian army (including Mengistu and his fascist clique) had, as the mercenaries of Haile Selassie's decadent feudal regime and tools of imperialism and zionism, waged a brutal war for thirteen years (1961-74), prior to the Dergue's seizure of state power alone, to crush the Eritrean revolution and exterminate the Eritrean people and failed? The whole world knows that these fascist puppets were, in the first place, able to seize state power when the Haile Selassie feudal regime, whose henchmen they were, crumbled under the powerful revolutionary blows of the Eritrean people's resolute armed struggle and the Ethiopian people's mass uprising. Whom would these new lies deceive then? Perhaps only the oppressed Ethiopian people who are still groaning under extremely backward conditions of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty!

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

It could not have slipped the Dergue's memory that the E.D.U. feudalists were the overlords of the Ethiopian army until 1974. The present reactionary Ethiopian army has been built by feudalism and imperialism, to protect the interests of the imperialists and their feudal Ethiopian puppets. It is an army which, as an

instrument of feudal oppression and imperialist exploitation, has demonstrated its counter-revolutionary essence not only by serving to suppress the Ethiopian masses and waging a war of aggression against the Eritrean people, but also by participating in the imperialist aggression against the peoples of Korea and the Congo. The pseudo-progressive "anti-imperialist" Dergue itself is proud of this shameful neocolonial role. This is not slanderous at all, for it is an act which the Dergue's leader, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam himself, vociferously boasts of. In a major speech he made in Addis Ababa on February 18, 1975, while he was still a major, for instance, he exposed his real essence and outlook when he declared that "Let alone in defending its own territorial integrity, Ethiopia has made itself well known throughout the world by sending its heroic children to fight in Korea and the Congo in the interest of international peace and security".

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

Therefore, when the fascist Dergue slanders and berates the Eritrean revolution today by lumping it together with the E.D.U. in all its propaganda, it is not because it is unaware of the irreconcilable contradic-

tions and antagonistic relations that exist between the Eritrean revolution and the E.D.U. Rather, this is a deliberate policy designed to undermine the legitimacy of the Eritrean people's national liberation movement, to conceal the just nature of the Eritrean people's struggle, and to cover up the hitherto unparalleled brilliant victories of the Eritrean revolution and humiliating defeats of the Ethiopian colonial army.

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

Thus, the Dergue itself knows full well that the forces which, after liberating the entire Eritrean countryside, are today relentlessly smashing the Ethiopian colonial army and seizing major towns are the forces of the Eritrean revolution and not "the Sudanese army waging an interventionist war in Ethiopia". We can, if necessary, give an account of the great number of ex-Ethiopian camps that have been seized by our revolutionary forces. Without going far, it is enough

to mention the camps in the Asmara suburbs of Quazien, Imba Derho and Selae Daero which our heroic People's Army has captured from the Dergue's aggressor troops. The Dergue is barking that the Sudanese Army, tanks and artillery have invaded Macfa, Afabet, and Tessenei; what about Karora, Halib Mentel, Debarewa, Adi Tekelezan, Habrengessa, Mai Atal, Sehatit, Balineki, Agbet, Sheka Wodi Besrat, Elabered, etc. - in fact, who has invaded and occupied the entire Eritrean countryside today? The Sudan?

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

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

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

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

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

After all, is it not the lie of lies when the fascist Dergue slanders the Eritrean people's resolute armed struggle that has been annihilating the Ethiopian colonial army for more than a decade and a half "as an invasion started with the call of El Numery"? It has even the insolence to declare, in an effort to swindle those who may not know, that it has notified the O.A.U. member states and the world's peace-loving countries

that Sudanese aggression has become the detriment to peace in our region. There is one point that must be clarified here once and for all, and that is, that the real detriment to peace in our region is not the Sudan's non-existent aggression but Ethiopia's expansionist aggression and brutal colonial war against the Eritrean people.

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

If the Dergue does not interfere in the internal affairs of another country or violate its borders, as it claims, what else is it doing in Eritrea then? What meaning does the Ethiopian war of colonial aggression, which has become the graveyard of thousands of its troops, have other than the transgression of Eritrean borders and the attempt at the forcible subjugation of the Eritrean people? If the Dergue were genuine about its "calls for the abolition of oppression and exploitation", why is it then that it has imposed its fascist dictatorship on the Ethiopian masses and continues to perpetrate untold oppression, exploitation and injustices against them? If it were calling for the reign of complete independence, equality, justice and democracy in the world, why then is it waging a war of extermination against the Eritrean people whose only crime is their ardent desire for independence and democracy? The fact of the matter is such that no glittering words or crafty

lies can conceal the Dergue's extremely oppressive fascist dictatorship.

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

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

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

Instead, however, it is making preparations to commit new crimes and atrocities against the Eritrean people and pit the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses against each other. Under the pretext of "foreign invasion" and "call of the motherland", the Dergue's mendacious propaganda and fascist demagoguery are whipping up a dangerous chauvinist hysteria to arouse the Ethiopian masses and use them as pawns in its plan of extermination against the Eritrean people. Yet, it is certain that even though this may inflict more suffering on the Ethiopian people and demand greater sacrifices of the Eritrean people, it will not meet an iota of success.

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

In a May Day speech delivered in Addis Ababa, top fascist Mengistu Haile Mariam boasted that "we shall ensure our right to the Red Sea with our red blood". The fact of the matter is that Ethiopia without Eritrea has no business in the Red Sea. The south-western coasts of the Red Sea stretching for 1000 km. from Ras Kasar to Ras Dumeira are wholly and entirely Eritrean. Over two-thirds of these coasts have already been put

under the control of our People's Army. The remaining parts, mainly around Massawa and Asseb, just like the rest of the cities, are soon bound to fall into our hands. And, no matter what, the blood of the Dergue's mercenary troops cannot be redder than the blood of the heroic fighters of our People's Army.

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

THE OPPRESSED ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE, BEWARE!

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

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

The Dergue, as a fascist regime, can bring any pretext for preserving its colonial domination of Eritrea. However, it is certain that it will be defeated in the end. The certainty of final victory is not the unique attribute of our revolutionary armed struggle but a universal truth that the experience of the world's fighting people has verified. When we issue this call to the Ethiopian people today, it is not out of fear, weakness or the slackening of our resolve and correct principles, but rather out of a profound concern for the future relations of our two peoples and their interests of development, prosperity and peace. The importance of this clear stand springs from the clean revolutionary spirit and truly patriotic and democratic outlook of our people that rejects all chauvinism against all oppressed peoples. It is clear from our understanding of the nature of the Dergue, its class origins and reactionary ideology that its attempts to subvert the Eritrean revolution are aimed at the realization of the old dreams and expansionist ambitions of the Ethiopian ruling classes.

Today, the ability of the Dergue to stay in power is linked to the fate of its aggression against the Eritrean people. The Dergue has made the Eritrean question the focal point of its social demagogy to divert the oppressed Ethiopian people from their basic problems and subvert their ongoing struggles against the Dergue for the establishment of people's power. It is striving hard to foster a reactionary and chauvinist colonial mentality among the Ethiopian peoples, to submerge their

revolutionary movement, and to turn them back into the dark ages of aggression, plunder and massacre that were the salient features of the era when the Amhara feudalists invaded other peoples in the pursuit of expansionism. In the name of "Ethiopian socialism and the defence of the motherland", the Dergue is frantically maneuvering to make the Ethiopian people a sacrificial lamb by stirring them up against "Arab invasion" in Eritrea. Of course, neither the lies nor the plots of the Dergue can mask the patriotism of the Eritrean revolution and the justness of the Eritrean cause because they spring from the many years of profound suffering of the Eritrean people under Ethiopian colonialism as well as their age-old revolutionary struggles against various colonial powers. This is precisely why our people have today shattered forever the Dergue's colonialist ambitions, just like they had shattered those of its predecessors in the past, by scoring victories in their continuing struggle.

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

of the Dergue and its conspiracies and rise up to oppose and foil them.

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

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

The Eritrean struggle is not anybody's tool or puppet. The forces fighting in Eritrea are the same popular forces of liberation that have been fighting with arms in hand for the last sixteen years against Ethiopian colonialism for national independence. Their arms are used in the defence of their national dignity

and freedom and not against the Ethiopian people. The Eritrean people harbour no hostility toward the Ethiopian people. Nevertheless, they shall never waver from resisting any aggression. After all, it is the just and legitimate right of the Eritrean people to defend themselves even if the Ethiopian people participate directly or indirectly in the unjust war that has become the graveyard of thousands of people and resources.

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

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

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

REPORTAGE

THE E.P.L.F. PROVIDES HUMANE TREATMENT TO ETHIOPIAN PRISONERS OF WAR

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

Ever since coming to power, the fascist Dergue on its part has, following the colonial policy of Haile Selassie's expansionist regime, been striving with all might and main to strangle the Eritrean revolution. Conducting brutal military campaigns, hatching political conspiracies and applying economic pressures against the Eritrean people's just struggle for national independence and democracy, it attempted to crush our revolutionary movement. Although these attempts caused enormous harm on the unarmed civilian population, they were unable to realize their objectives as they were shattered by our heroic People's Army. The Ethiopian colonial army, caught in the flames of our resolute people's war, sustained heavy losses with thousands of its aggressor troops killed, wounded and taken prisoner.

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

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

The majority of the POW's had received special military training in anti-guerrilla warfare by Israeli military experts and advisors. The Nebelbal and Com-

mandoes in particular have all been specially trained by Israeli zionist anti-guerrilla experts to crush the Eritrean revolution. In addition, virtually all the officers with the rank of captain and above had received specialized military training abroad, i.e., in Israel, U.S. and France. Some of them have been groomed by going to Israel and the U.S. two or three times for training.

Thus, the reactionary Ethiopian army has been trained by and armed to the teeth with the modern weapons of imperialism and zionism. It is of course, no secret to anyone that these POW's, as the soldiers and officers of the Ethiopian colonial army and the tools of the Ethiopian ruling classes and imperialism, had invaded our country to kill our people, loot their property and burn their homes and crop fields. Their mission was to liquidate our just patriotic struggle and maintain the colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation of the Eritrean people. The majority have stated that, in conducting the war of aggression, they had fought several battles against our patriotic forces, participated in the burning of many villages, the massacres of hundreds of people and the looting of civilian property, and committed untold crimes and atrocities against the Eritrean people.

Nevertheless, the E.P.L.F., based on its correct revolutionary and humane principles and in accordance with the provisions of its National Democratic Programme, provides humane treatment and care to the soldiers captured in the service of the Ethiopian army. Appropriate punishment is meted, after proper examination and verification, on those who had committed special crimes against the people. At the time of capture, the wounded and the sick receive immediate medical care. Those seriously wounded are taken to our Central Hospital where they receive emergency services and the best available medical treatment and care on a par with our wounded fighters. In this way, many POW's who had completely given up hope of everliving have been saved.

The medical services, treatment and care rendered them is the first phenomenon which really astounds them beyond belief about the essence of our organization.

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

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

The EPLF has a literacy and political education program especially prepared for POW's. Many of the ordinary soldiers are unable to read and write. Thus, in the first place, the completely illiterate are taught to read and write in their respective languages (Amharic, Tigrinya, etc.) Those who are barely able to read and write are given special lessons to help them develop their literacy skills. In this way, every

POW learns to read and write within five to six months. For the first time in his life, he writes a letter to his family. The first experience of writing a letter so over-joys many of them that they feel as though they have been reborn. As the POW's are free to write to their families, the letters written are forwarded through the Red Cross. When asked about these POW's by the Red Cross, the Dergue has denied their existence. The POW's could hardly believe this "betrayal" until they themselves heard it on Radio Ethiopia. Then, they were very astonished to the point of regretting their past military service.

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

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

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

The political education program has met with satisfactory results. It has achieved over 80% effectiveness so far. After eight months' education, the POW's show

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

One day when we were having discussions with the POW's, we asked them several questions at random. To give our readers an idea about the general conditions and outlook of the POW's, we present here some of their answers verbatim.

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

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

Question: Ever since the beginning of the Eritrean people's armed struggle, and after 1967 in particular, many villages have been burnt down, unarmed civilians massacred, crop fields set ablaze and property looted

in Eritrea at first by Haile Selassie's feudal regime and later on by the Dergue's military regime. Of course, all this has been perpetrated by you, the Ethiopian soldiers. What were your feelings while these atrocities were being committed?

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

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

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

Answer: Before I came here, I used to think that "Eritrea was Ethiopia" and believe that all the government's radio broadcasts about Eritrea were true. After

I came here, however, I have learned of what kind of colonizers - the Turks, Egyptians, Italians, British and finally the Ethiopian government - have successively changed hands in Eritrea in an uninterupted chain. I now understand the colonial situation of the people and their just cause.

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

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

When our camp at Habrengessa was attacked by the fighters of the EPLF on December 26, 1976, 116 of the 170 soldiers and officers present were killed in the battle while 54 of us were taken prisoner. In the first few days, I used to have sleepless nights, haunted by the memory of the Dergue's stories of torture. Shaken by fear, I was saying to myself "Will they kill us today or tomorrow? When shall they begin to

torture us? It is better if they kill us soon!". Through talks with several fellow soldiers at the time, I understood that the majority had the same feelings. Instead of the anticipated death and torture however, we found here amazing humane kindness and fraternal spirit. It is really astounding for you to accord us such treatment while we have committed untold crimes against the Eritrean people and your struggle. If we could return to the cities and recount all this to the Ethiopian soldiers falling everywhere, they would not believe us. Thus, when we compare and contrast the situation in which we were with the one in which we are, we can clearly see that the Dergue is oppressive while this Front is compassionate and just.

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

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

"The cutting of diplomatic relations is only superficial. That with Israel in particular, we have historic relations dating back to the ancient era. Moreover,

both of us are surrounded by the Arab countries which are our common enemies, and it is necessary for us to cooperate against these common enemies."

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

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

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

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

Answer: The Dergue is now taking a desperate step

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

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

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

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
STRUGGLE

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

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

In a colonial and feudo-capitalist society like ours, for instance, there prevails a feudo-capitalist economy and politics. Reflecting this feudo-capitalist economy and politics on the ideological plane is the dominant feudo-bourgeois culture. From their daily struggles to live and improve their livelihood, the

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

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

Our country Eritrea is a colonial and a feudo-capitalist country. Under the yoke of successive colonial rule, its people have long remained the victims of untold oppression, exploitation and suppression. With their natural and human resources plundered by foreigners and their living conditions declining from bad to worse year by year, they lead a miserable life, suf-

fering from distressing poverty, backwardness, ignorance and diseases. Moreover, Ethiopian colonialism and world imperialism have been striving hard to destroy the Eritrean identity by suppressing the culture and traditions of the Eritrean people and spreading their own decadent cultures and traditions in our society. They have endeavoured to poison the mentality of our young men and women in the cities so that they may fritter away their golden time on selfish and decadent activities instead of on the affairs of their country and the cause of their people.

Pursuing the vicious policy of divide and rule, they have, either directly or through the agency of their lackeys, never refrained from the attempt to sow religious, nationality, tribal, regional, etc., discord and sharpen the non-basic contradictions among the people in a futile effort to weaken the unity of the Eritrean people and obstruct the development of our struggle. In our country, colonialism, decadent imperialist culture and backward feudal culture are closely intertwined and have formed a triple alliance. This cultural alliance between colonialism, imperialism and domestic reaction is a reactionary alliance reflecting their common economic interests and political views based on the oppression and exploitation of the toiling masses of Eritrea. This reactionary cultural alliance sanctions and fortifies the oppression of women, fosters hatred of labour and contempt for the toiling masses, foments tribal, nationality and provincial discord, and nurtures religious fanaticism. Backward feudal culture in particular is not only the instrument of oppression, exploitation and suppression in the service of the ruling classes but it is also a tool of colonial aggression and imperialist domination.

Culture is a very important factor in the life of a people. For this reason, the suppression, paralysis and destruction of the cultural life of a people is one of the principal instruments which colonialism and imperialism use to colonize and plunder them. Dur-

ing the last 25 years, Ethiopian colonialism and its imperialist overlords have inflicted enormous harm on our country and people through the unreserved use of brutal violence. They have not only committed fascist aggression to forcibly subjugate our people and plunder their natural and human resources, but there is also hardly and conspiracy they have not hatched to break our people's heroic resistance; suppress our national culture, languages and traditions, and foment national division and discord.

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

Thus, the cultural struggle against colonialism must necessarily be based on the culture of the masses. The negative factors and the reactionary aspects of the culture that are an obstacle to the advance of the struggle and the progress of society should be attacked, weakened and eliminated step by step. The positive and progressive elements of the culture that support the patriotic struggle and strengthen the unity of the people must be consolidated and developed. In this way, the EPLF, as the vanguard of the Eritrean national

liberation movement, has, through arduous struggles in the cultural field, already shattered the reactionary cultural alliance of colonialism, imperialism and domestic reaction against the masses and social progress. On its ruins, it is building a new national culture based on the progressive and democratic content of the culture of our toiling masses.

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

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

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

Cultural resistance is a great moving force in the course of the armed struggle. When the people, who for many centuries have suffered from illiteracy, ignorance, diseases and repression, receive opportunities for education, medical care and democracy for the first time, their cultural level is rapidly raised. The conscious masses then mobilize their boundless creative energy in the service of the revolution. Thus the expansion and widespread dissemination of education, literature, the arts, music and patriotic songs play a big role in the awakening of the masses and raising their level of consciousness, morale and revolutionary participation.

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

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

The new democratic culture being built in the course of the armed struggle is national. It opposes all colonial oppression, imperialist domination and feudal backwardness; it works for the independence and dignity of Eritrea; and it endeavours for the emancipation and progress of its people. This national culture has an internationalist content. It has no relations whatsoever with any reactionary imperialist or feudal culture. However, it is closely linked with and develops by drawing from the progressive culture of the world's workers and toiling masses. Our progressive national culture can be enriched by drawing from any progressive foreign culture. However, this does not mean that we should blindly copy. It should be done selectively, by relating and integrating it with the concrete conditions of our society and the experience of our struggle. It is only when the culture we absorb from other countries and peoples is integrated with the particular features of our country and society and takes on a national form that it can be of service to our struggle, the development of our culture and the progress of our society.

The new democratic culture of the new Eritrea is scientific. It is based on the democratic and progressive content of the old culture of our toiling masses, draws from the developed and revolutionary cultures of

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

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

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

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

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

THE PRESENT AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE FUTURE

The revolutionization of the masses and a high level of patriotic work is advancing along with the uninterrupted developments that our national democratic struggle is achieving in each of its tasks. Although satisfactory fruit is being reaped from this work, we should not forget that more work lies ahead. Nevertheless, it has been assured that our firm line is capable of magnificently overcoming and defeating all problems. It is true that our country has been destroyed by the brutal forces of Ethiopian colonialism and imperialism. Nevertheless, we are, relying on revolutionary will and conviction, endeavouring to transform the present objective conditions.

Colonialism is the worst scourge of our era the burden of whose exploitation and oppression crushes the masses. All colonialism, irrespective of place, time and appearance, has the same objectives. However, one colonizer may differ from another in its tactics and the extent of injustices it perpetrates. For instance, although our people have for centuries been the victim of successive colonialism, they have been subjected to the worst suffering and atrocities under the backward rule of feudal Ethiopia. This however, does not mean that we are preferring one colonialism to another but merely comparing the bad with the worse and the bitter with the more bitter.

Thus, when we focus our attention at the past and present colonialism, we get an idea of the essence of our patriotic struggle at this stage and our country's prevailing social and economic conditions. Our people's centuries-old resistance and unceasing struggle, ascertaining the historic inevitability of victory is today on the verge of attaining its aims.

The brutal colonial aggression of backward Ethiopia and the atrocities and bloodshed perpetrated on our people have only strengthened their resolve and spirit of self-sacrifice. Continuous victories are being won

in the revolutionary struggle to bring about basic changes in the existing situation. The destruction and havoc that can be seen in the liberated towns, such as Nacfa and Afabet, clearly attests to the brutal cruelty and ruthless exploitation of Ethiopian colonialism.

Anyone who takes a glance at the streets of the towns of Nacfa and Afabet can properly see the extent to which feudal colonialist Ethiopia has arrested the development and progress of the Eritrean people. Many of the buildings, structures and services that were the signs of a relatively vigorous society on the march before the occupation have now crumbled under the weight of Ethiopian aggression. On the dilapidated walls and ruins of the buildings and streets, one can read the old efforts to build a developed urban society, the dark history of destruction of the past two decades, and the new hope of a better future of freedom, rebuilding and progress.

Formerly, life in these cities used to have its own calm and harmonious pace. Compared with the wandering and backward life of the surrounding nomads, it was fairly developed.

The hospitals, schools, streets and buildings that were built with care and great effort have long been reduced to ruins. Anyone familiar with the old situation is forced to remember the formerly active life of the towns with people moving back and forth in their normal day to day business, children playing on the streets, going to and from school, outpatients lined up at the gate of the Hospital, construction workers actively building, etc. After this fleeting moment with the past, one inevitably returns to the present with all the bomb damage and dilapidation of the buildings and disruption of the fabric of social life in the towns. The school and the hospital are in ruins; the doors and windows of the residential buildings had been snatched away by the enemy troops to fortify their trenches and camps.

What about the people? Where have they gone? They have spread all over the surrounding hills and valleys to escape from the atrocities of the aggressor troops. The towns were thus ruined with the coming of the Ethiopian colonial troops, the barbarians of the twentieth century. The Ethiopian aggressors, pursuing the Nazi-like policy of exterminating the Eritrean people to occupy their land, are perpetrating enormous suffering on our people. Our people, on their part, are resisting these brutal atrocities to the end and completely reject any form of a peaceful solution that perpetuates the aggression.

Now, after the bitter battles and resolute sacrifices, people are abandoning their hiding places returning to their homes in the towns to resume normal life. The darkness of injustices that had enveloped our country ever since the coming of the Turks has now been cleared and the masses of the people have begun a new life with a new project under a clear and bright sky. Although arduous struggle lies ahead, there is now an excellent situation for the consolidation of our victories and the further development of the liberation war.

Nacfa and Afabet provide only a limited example of the destruction and suffering that Ethiopian colonialism has wrought all over Eritrea. At the same time, the victories that have been won in these towns are a harbinger of the new life of freedom, progress and happiness.



FROM THE SOLIDARITY MESSAGES TO THE FIRST
ORGANIZATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE E.P.L.F

The Delegation of the People's Democratic Republic of
YEMEN :

Comrade Participants of the Congress,

In the name of the United Political Organization of the National Front, we salute the E.P.L.F.'s Organizational Congress now in session in this liberated area.

Comrade Participants of the Congress,

On the occasion of this Organizational Congress of the E.P.L.F., we would like to cite the relations that exist between the peoples of Yemen and Eritrea. This relationship has deep roots in our history, both ancient and modern. It is based not merely on the proximity of our geographic position but also on the fraternal relations of our two peoples that are continuously developing, consolidating and deepening, on the common interest of our ongoing struggle against colonialism and reactionaries for democracy and progress.

Our organization views your Congress with great concern because it is a summation of many years of struggle and is being held under difficult circumstances. The unity of the forces of the Eritrean revolution, that is of those social forces that have a real interest in social progress and democracy, is one of the principal questions that must be given priority. Of course, you will have to wage a hard struggle to accomplish this big task. As this question is the guarantee for the revolution, its solution will show your ability to determine your destiny and satisfy the wishes of your people.

The unity of the forces of the Eritrean revolution is an internal question that concerns you. And it is you who determine it and choose the methods of its achievement. However, it has dialectical relations

with the progressive and democratic forces around you in particular and the world over in general.

At this historic juncture, while struggling for the unity of the forces of the Eritrean revolution, you have to also wage political and ideological struggles, appreciating the harmful consequences of the tribal, religious and ethnic struggles. This is because once the imperialists and reactionaries fail in the revolutionary storms of the social struggle, they try to arouse this kind of sentiments so as to sidetrack the revolutionary mass struggle and make it serve the interests of imperialism and reaction.

Comrade Participants of the Congress,

Today, imperialist and reactionary conspiracies based on political and military alliances are keenly following the developments around East Africa. They are making numerous attempts to obstruct the liberation movements. All this is connected with the conspiracies to destroy and strangulate the progressive and liberation movements in the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula.

At this moment, the imperialists and reactionaries are hatching plots to liquidate the Palestinian people's cause and deprive them of their minimum human rights. Iran, on its part, is committing military aggression against our territory to annihilate the Omani revolution. And these attempts are being made to ensure imperialist dictation and domination of the region.

Comrade Participants of the Congress,

Our United Political Organization of the National Front, which has a firm stand in favour of liberation and progress the world over, wishes your congress success that serves the forces of liberation and progress in the world.

Victory to the International Solidarity
of the World's People!

The Delegation of the Communist Party of Italy

Dear Comrades,

I convey to you the fraternal greetings of the Italian Communists engaged today in a decisive and arduous struggle to lead the working class to seize state power and bring about the socialist transformation of the society. Like in Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Western Sahara, etc., the Italian Communists are on the side of the Eritrean people and actively support your right to self-determination and independence. I am very happy therefore to be with you here in the liberated areas - the base of your revolutionary work and struggle - to reiterate, with appreciation of your successes, our support for the Eritrean struggle for independence. It is also our wish that the much desired unity of the two liberation fronts be realized based on the real, profound and conscious unity of interest of the Eritrean people.

In the past, various factors have contributed to isolate the EPLF from the international socialist and working class movement. Among these has been the strategic power interests which the friendly countries have placed above internationalist duty. There was also the problem of the ex-Foreign Mission of the EPLF which you have now resolved, already showing certain positive signs in terms of clearness of relationship and flow of information.

But there are also, on the part of Italian and European progressive forces, procrastination and lack of attention. To hide these facts would be hypocritical and would not allow further advance. As regards the Italian Communist Party in particular, a certain Eurocentrism, which arose from the particular conditions of our struggle, has caused this inattention, that does not refer only to Eritrea. Nonetheless, we are conscious of all this and our presence here, alone from the communist parties, signifies something.

Nevertheless, the relative international isolation of the Eritrean struggle for independence and the EPLF

had not impeded the victorious development of your struggle. On the contrary, it has allowed you to develop an original revolutionary experience free from international pressures and strings.

We are not here to give definitions and labels. It is not us or others who can decide who is revolutionary or Marxist and who is not. Facts show what you are. But, if you would allow me to express a judgment of merit, I would say that this political and ideological independence of yours is an important asset of your movement which should be defended and strengthened. It is such a contribution that the socialist and international anti-imperialist struggle needs today more than in the past: an original contribution which enriches the ideology of liberation of the peoples from exploitation and guarantees the nation's real independence and autonomous development.

Thus, it is with friendship and esteem that I greet your Congress and wish you fruitful work and new successes in the struggle till final victory and the creation of an independent and free Eritrea where power really resides in the hands of the toiling masses.

NEWS AND VIEWS

The E.P.L.F. and the E.L.F. Hold a Meeting

On 21 - 22/4/77, a meeting was held between members of the Political Bureau of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (E.P.L.F.) and the Executive Committee of the Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.). Although this meeting, which is an introduction to dialogue, has not come out with any points for official declaration until subsequent other meetings, it has raised and discussed various internal and external issues. Such meetings shall, from now onwards, continue inside the Eritrean field without the pressure or interference of other forces. The EPLF shall make the necessary effort not

only to utilize this kind of meetings for propaganda purposes but to make them bear fruit.

The E.P.L.F. Celebrates May Day

On May 1, 1977, the EPLF celebrated May Day throughout the liberated areas of Eritrea and in all its camps by presenting political and cultural seminars about the historical development and victories of 'the workers' struggle. Workers and mass organizations in the cities celebrated it by conducting clandestine political lectures. EPLF mass organizations abroad (in the Middle East, Europe, North America) also celebrated it in cooperation with the progressive and revolutionary movements around them.

May Day, as the international workers' day, is celebrated throughout the world by the socialist countries, progressive workers' movements in the capitalist countries, the national liberation movements of the colonized and oppressed peoples, and all the world's progressive people in general. In particular, it is celebrated as an official holiday in the socialist countries while its celebration is legally banned in almost all the capitalist countries.

May Day was chosen by the International Socialist Congress of the Second Socialist International held in Paris in 1889 to celebrate the long and arduous struggles, so replete with sacrifices, of the world's workers against the rule, oppression and exploitation of the bourgeoisie. The Congress resolved for all workers to stop work, through direct coordination, on May 1, irrespective of the day on which it falls, and celebrate the victories of their struggle. Ever since, May Day in every capitalist country has become a day of confrontation and clashes between workers and police forces (as the instruments of bourgeois rule).

As a class, workers emerged with the development of capitalism. When, after two and a half centuries (from the 17th century to the beginning of the 19th century) of long tortuous and hard struggles, the in-

dustrial revolution took place in Western Europe, first in England and then in France, Germany and America, feudalism was shattered and replaced by capitalism. The struggles waged against the old decadent feudal system represented a world shaking social movement led by the then revolutionary bourgeois class and in which the masses, the workers and peasants in particular, played a great role. The victory of capitalism over feudalism brought forth new phenomena and great developments unprecedented in human history. There occurred a tremendous development in technology and the productivity of labour power, a great advance in the forces of production and the means of production, and an enormous growth in social production.

As the forces of production, the means of production and production itself grew and developed however, the living conditions of the workers and broad masses deteriorated, declining from bad to worse. Thus, the workers' movement is a revolutionary movement that arose, and continues to be waged in most countries of the world, to bring about a fundamental solution to this basic social contradiction. The workers, on the one hand, form trade unions and wage economic struggles to raise wages, reduce working hours, improve working conditions and upgrade their livelihood; they struggle against the bourgeoisie who directly exploit them to solve their common short-term problems. On the other hand, realizing that the economic struggles alone cannot bring about the basic solution, they wage political struggles, leading and in coordination with the economic struggles, to radically change the exploitative capitalist system.

Thus, the historic mission of the working class is to build a society free from all forms of oppression and exploitation through relentless, courageous and resolute struggles in accordance with the general laws of social development and the concrete historical conditions of society. Eritrean workers, as a part of the world's proletariat, have been waging unyielding national and class struggles ever since their emergence with the rise of colonial capitalism. Although the

economic destruction brought forth by colonial conspiracy has reduced many of them to unemployment and emigration, Eritrean workers at home and abroad have never stopped fighting for national independence, social justice and freedom. In the first ten years of the armed struggle, Eritrean workers were unable to play their proper revolutionary role because of the reactionary line and opportunist leadership of the E.L.F. In the last seven years, the EPLF, as the vanguard of the Eritrean revolution, has strove and continues to endeavour to enable Eritrean workers to play their vanguard role by organizing and politicizing them in accordance with a clear and correct line.

The Eritrean revolution is an integral part of the world revolution. The struggle of Eritrean workers is also an integral part of the struggle of the world's workers. The fighting people of Eritrea, and Eritrean workers in particular, are today rendering a great support to the international anti-imperialist camp by struggling hard against Ethiopian colonialism, imperialism, zionism and domestic reaction. The great and brilliant victories they are winning on the basis of the correct principle of self-reliance are primarily the concrete expression of the natural solidarity of our struggle with all progressive and revolutionary movements.

May Day, as the international workers day, is an important day on which the world's workers and oppressed peoples sum up the experiences of their past struggle, express their solidarity, consolidate their victories and map out the future tasks of their struggle. When the EPLF, as an internationalist revolutionary organization, formally celebrates this occasion, it expresses its revolutionary unity and solidarity with the oppressed peoples, and particularly the workers, of the world. Moreover, it affirms its determination to continue the patriotic popular struggle for national independence and liberation, social justice and progress, and human dignity and equality until complete and final victory.

Public Transport Services on Liberation Road

It is to be recalled that the EPLF had, in 1976, constructed a 1500 km. long Liberation Road connecting all our liberated areas. (See Vanguard, Vol. II, No 1). It is also known that the EPLF has long been providing public transport services in the Southern Zone along the portions of the Liberation Road extending from Saharti to Tserona. Likewise, it provides freight transport services from the Red Sea coasts all the way to the suburbs of Asmara. So far in 1977, four towns (Karora, Nacfa, Afabet and Elabered) have already fallen into the hands of our heroic People's Army. It is obvious that this has, by putting strategic roads formerly used by the enemy under our complete control, greatly extended and expanded the Liberation Road.

Today, we are happy to inform you that new public transport services have been put into operation in our extensive liberated areas. With the Afabet - Nacfa - Karora line now in service, the people are now utilizing EPLF transport vehicles at a fair price. This opens up a new chapter in the advance of our revolutionary struggle and in the field of transportation in particular. This new revolutionary victory facilitates the people's transportation problems and creates favourable conditions for better communication and interaction among them and the consolidation of their unity.

Cultural Shows in the Liberated Areas

It was stated before (Vanguard, Vol. II, No 1) that the Branch of Culture has been moving around several camps, towns and villages all over the liberated areas and presenting revolutionary cultural shows and patriotic songs to the masses and fighters. Continuing this important revolutionary task, it has since then presented to hundreds of thousands of people in Nacfa, Afabet, Mefer Geri, Anseba, Gadem Halib, Elabered,

Shieb, Solomuna, Filfil, Zager, etc. It is still continuing its travels.

The program of the cultural show generally includes a political seminar, revolutionary patriotic songs, cultural performances from different nationalities, films and slide shows showing the development of the EPLF, and a photo exhibit highlighting EPLF activities. This cultural show has won the enthusiastic acceptance and widespread admiration of the people. People have travelled from afar in their thousands, even from the cities still under enemy control, by cars and on foot, walking upto a day in order to attend the cultural shows. The people in the areas where the Branch of Culture has not yet visited are looking forward to its coming with great anticipation.

This new cultural movement has a big revolutionary role in our patriotic struggle. It is an important factor that helps to awaken the masses of our people, fire their patriotic sentiments, consolidate their unity, strengthen their confidence in certain victory, and raise their revolutionary participation. This new progress of our revolutionary work, with all its positive consequences, is bound to advance our struggle and accelerate our victory by imbuing the masses of our people with warm revolutionary enthusiasm.

Eritrean Students in Kuwait Hold their Annual Congress

The Fourth Annual Congress of the General Union of Eritrean Students (Kuwait Branch) was held in March 1977 under the slogan: "Struggle to strengthen the democratic movement of the students in the stage of the united front for the sake of a single democratic front in the Eritrean field."

This Congress was held at a time of new changes in the Eritrean field. This important situation involves the great military victories which the Eritrean revolution has scored and continues to score over the forces

of the Ethiopian military clique, especially in Karora, Nacfa (capital of Sahel Province) and many other places. This Congress was also held after the convening of the First Organizational Congress of the EPLF which passed great and important resolutions, especially on the question of the national unity of the two forces of the Eritrean revolution (the EPLF and ELF). Furthermore, the Congress was held at a time when the colonial, imperialist and zionist conspiracies being hatched against our unyielding and invincible popular revolution, which the forces of the fascist Dergue that are now completely surrounded in the cities cannot defeat, have reached new heights. Under these circumstances, the Congress came out with several resolutions.

The following are some of the major ones:

- The congress supports the resolutions and recommendations of the First Organizational Congress that satisfy the aspirations of the Eritrean people for complete independence and the building of a new-democratic society. It is also filled with pride at the victory which the EPLF has won in liberating the whole Province of Sahel relying on its correct military strategy of liberating the land step by step.
- It condemns the conspiracies of reactionary and opportunist Eritreans to obstruct the Eritrean revolution, especially on the question of national unity, in order to protect their interests.
- It condemns the inhuman atrocities which the Ethiopian military regime is perpetrating against the Eritrean people who are fighting for complete independence and liberation.

The Congress passed resolutions supporting all national liberation and progressive movements on the international field.

Consulates Expelled from Asmara

The Dergue has expelled all consulates (French, Italian, British, Sudanese, Belgian, etc) and foreign correspondents and representatives. This step was taken after Mengistu Haile Mariam had cried out:

" Our country has been invaded by foreigners! Be prepared and rise up against the Eritrean secessionists who want to sell their country for petro-dollars!"

The expulsion of the consulates demonstrates the extent to which the Eritrean revolution has shaken the Ethiopian regime on the one hand and that the Dergue is scheming to commit new atrocities and crimes against the people in the cities still under its control on the other. Moreover, the step represents an attempt to prevent news of the Eritrean revolution from spreading around the world.

It is to be borne in mind that, barking like a mad dog, Mengistu has accused neighbouring countries of committing aggression and interference. Of course, this is to conceal the great advance and capability of the Eritrean revolution which, having passed from the defensive to strategic offensive, is liberating many camps and bases everywhere from the hands of the enemy. Besides, following the colonial policy of its predecessors, the Dergue has begun spoiling factories and other economic and social institutions in order to wreck the Eritrean economy. This demonstrates that the fascist Dergue, fully aware of the doom of Ethiopian colonialism, is striving to cause maximum damage and destruction in Eritrea until its final and complete defeat.

The People of Djibouti Choose Independence

Last month, the people of Djibouti chose independence by a vote of 95%. The nationalist parties which received 65% of the vote in the referendum are bound

to have a big role in the government to be established. This outcome entitles Djibouti, as a state, to become a member of the U.N.O. and the O.A.U. It is evident that Djibouti has been the last European colony in the Horn of Africa. This strategically important country on the southern entrance to the Red Sea, overlooking the rich oilfields of Iran and the Arab Gulf, has long remained under the yoke of French colonialism. Its strategic location has served for the security and control of the interests of French colonialism is particular and imperialism in general.

Revolutionary movements have been rapidly advancing in the region surrounding Djibouti, particularly after the expulsion of British colonialism and the setting up of a progressive regime in South Yemen, the establishment of a progressive regime in Somalia, and the development and growing strength of the Eritrean revolution. The sum total of these objective conditions has weakened colonialism in the region. These changes directly exerted a powerful influence on the struggle of the Djibouti masses and strengthened the nationalist parties fighting against French colonialism and its domestic collaborators.

The struggle of the people of Djibouti for independence has not been an easy one. They have overcome internal problems and stood firmly united in their anti-colonial struggle, unperturbed by the threat of external pressures. Despite the colonial efforts to sow discord among the nationalities of the colonized society, they consolidated their national unity. There is no doubt that once a given people succeed in frustrating these colonial tactics, they can solve whatever problems face them in building the new society. In the end, we would like to congratulate the people of Djibouti for their great national victory and express our wishes for their progress and prosperity.

Ethiopia's Expansionist Ambitions over Somalia

In its "'Abiot' Forum", "The Ethiopian Herald", the Ethiopian government paper published in English daily except Mondays, states that:

" Somalia did not exist as a country and Ethiopian sovereignty extended to most of what is today known as Somalia. ... Ethiopia had historical claims to the Somali territories lying upto the Indian Ocean coast. But Ethiopia abided by the wise decision of the African leaders who closed once and for all the chapter of territorial claims... obliging all African countries to respect the boundaries which they had inherited at the time of the attainment of their independence." (Sunday 3 April, 1977, p.2).

This expansionist ambition is not a new thing for the Ethiopian ruling classes. Rather, it is a dangerous cancer permeating their blood. It is to be recalled that Haile Selassie's puppet feudal regime pushed an expansionist policy claiming "Somalia and Eritrea on historical grounds" when the case of the former Italian colonies (Eritrea, Somalia, Libya) was brought before the Big Powers for discussion. It is also to be recalled that this expansionist policy met with a temporary success over Eritrea with the backing of world imperialism. Following in the footsteps of its feudal predecessors, the fascist Dergue that has declared "Ethiopian socialism" is here today officially expressing its expansionist ambitions over the Democratic Republic of Somalia while waging a war of colonial aggression in Eritrea.

All this clearly shows the boundless ambition of the Ethiopian ruling classes to annex the whole of the Horn of Africa, to subjugate its peoples under their colonialism, and to exploit their natural and human resources. The domination of the large and strategic territory of the Horn of Africa, extending from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, has been the perennial dream

of Ethiopian feudalists. The annexation of Eritrea in 1962 represented the first step toward this objective. Today the people of Somalia, safeguarding their independence, dignity and sovereignty, are struggling to develop their country and build a progressive society; the people of Djibouti are about to achieve their independence; and the Eritrean people are triumphantly smashing Ethiopian colonial aggression and resolutely advancing toward the very gates of independence. When, under this favourable revolutionary situation, the fascist Dergue alleges "historic claims over Somalia" - all this clearly attests to the dangerous threat which the vile chauvinism and expansionist ambitions of the Ethiopian ruling classes pose to the independence, peace and progress of the peoples of the Horn of Africa.

May Day Massacre in Addis Ababa

On May Day, the international workers' day, Ethiopian workers in Addis Ababa held a demonstration under the slogan of "Down with the Dergue, victory to the People's Democratic Republic" in protest of the fascist Dergue's brutal atrocities and crimes against them. While fascist Mengistu was shouting himself hoarse in a public square, his mercenary troops massacred the workers and democratic forces taking part in the demonstration. The streets of Addis Ababa were littered with corpses and the flowing blood of the toilers. Over one thousand workers and students were murdered in the ruthless fascist massacre carried out.

The fascist Dergue that is committing brutal atrocities and sucking the blood of the masses is indistinguishable from the fascist military regime in Chile which has exterminated thousands of workers. The fascist Dergue which is massacring people, destroying communities, crushing Ethiopian workers, and striving to liquidate the Eritrean people and force them to

abandon their country in the name of "Ethiopian socialism" shall, just like all the oppressors before it, soon be junked.

Ever since seizing state power, the Dergue has, outdoing the world's other fascist regimes, liquidated an enormous number of oppressed people and democratic forces. In the city of Addis Ababa alone, it has murdered over 4000 members of the democratic movements that have refused to submit to its fascist dictatorship. The vast majority of these victims are workers, students and democratic intellectuals. Moreover, it has destroyed several towns and hundreds of villages, massacred scores of thousands of people, and wiped out enormous property of the unarmed civilian population in Eritrea.

Condemning all the brutal atrocities of the fascist Dergue, we reaffirm our firm support for the Ethiopian workers and democratic forces who are paying great sacrifices for the cause of liberation, democracy and peace.



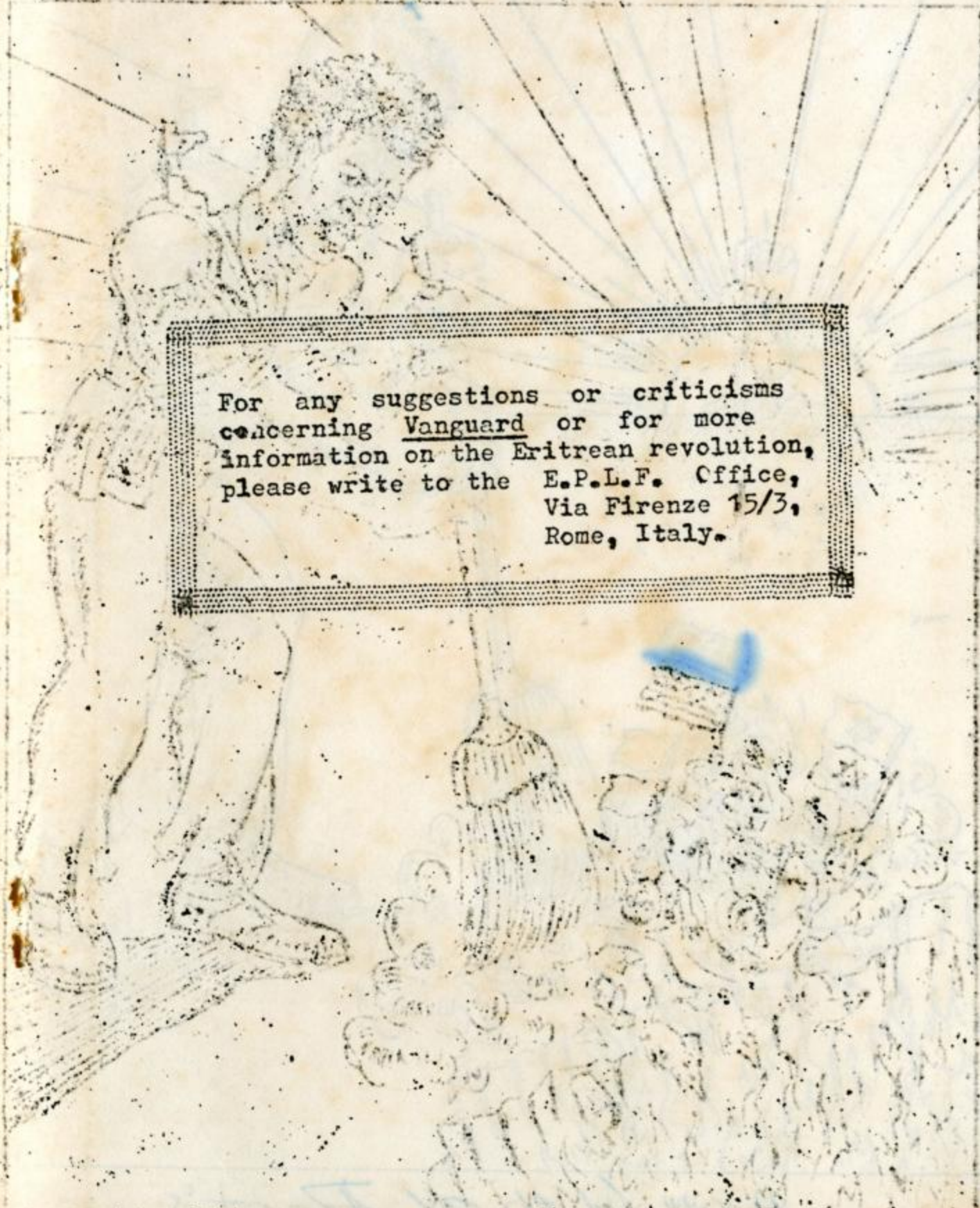
MILITARY COMMUNIQUE

1. Massawa, April 2, 1977: Units of our People's Army seized two vehicles (a Tigreto and a Toyota) and returned safely to our base camp in the vicinity.
2. Asmara, April 19, 1977: An enemy tank was demolished on the Asmara-Beleza road (8 km. from Asmara) by a mine emplaced by the Engineering Corps of the People's Army and all the seven troops aboard were turned to ashes.
3. Massawa, June 4, 1977: As Ethiopian colonial troops were moving in a convoy from Massawa to Asmara, one vehicle (Maag) was set ablaze by a mine emplaced by the Engineering Corps of the People's Army on the 100th km. Seven of the soldiers aboard were killed while twenty were seriously wounded.
4. Massawa, June 4, 1977: As a convoy of Ethiopian colonial soldiers was moving from Massawa to Asmara, an armoured car was demolished on the 34th km. by a mine emplaced by the Engineering Corps of the People's Army. Eight of the soldiers aboard were killed while another eight were seriously wounded. The Ethiopian aggressor troops then vent their anger by brutally murdering eight peasants in the area.
5. Asmara, June 4, 1977: Units of the People's Army demolished the Asmara - Massawa electric cables and put it out of use.
6. Tigrai, June 14, 1977: People's Army units seized from inside Tigrai four of the Dergue's buses assigned to transport troops and peasants for the so-

called "Volunteer Campaign" and placed them in the service of the revolution.

7. Massawa, June 14, 1977: As a convoy of Ethiopian aggressor troops was moving from Massawa to Asmara, two vehicles (Fiat 82 N 3's, one with a freight of 170 quintals of sugar and 100 quintals of grain and the other with a freight of 60 barrels of oil) were turned to ashes by mines emplaced by the Engineering Corps of the People's Army.
8. Asmara, June 25, 1977: As a convoy of Ethiopian troops was moving from Asmara to Massawa, one vehicle (Maag) along with its load of 40 soldiers was turned to ashes by a mine emplaced by the Engineering Corps of the People's Army.

Victory to the Masses!



For any suggestions or criticisms
concerning Vanguard or for more
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Away With all Fests