



ERITREA IN STRUGGLE

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AESNA, Box 1247, N.Y., N.Y. 10027

Enemy Attempt to Break Asmara Seige Frustrated; EPLF, ELF Jointly Attack Enemy Garrison in Barentu

In mid May 1978 amidst world wide reportage of "a major Ethiopian offensive" against Eritrea, the Ethiopian aggressor troops besieged in Asmara once again tried in vain to break the seige of the city. With Mengistu, the leader of the fascist junta making much noise about conducting "a concerted war" to crush the Eritrean liberation movement an estimated 40,000 troops of his demoralized army occupying our country's capital city Asmara with the support of thousands of Cuban troops and sophisticated Soviet supplied weapons made a hopeless attempt to get out of the city in order to attack the liberated areas, burn crops and villages and massacre civilians.

Although the aggressor troops made every effort to penetrate into the liberated areas, the Eritrean People's Liberation Army (EPLA) has successfully contained them. In the heavy battles that were fought for three days, the EPLA inflicted enormous human and material losses on the aggressor troops which in the end retreated to their confinement in the center of the city. The EPLA maintains its full control of the area surrounding Asmara and continues to lay seige on the city.

Meanwhile, the junta's intensified air bombardment has reached appalling proportions. The junta's Soviet and US supplied warplanes are making many rounds of bombing raids every day dropping napalm and cluster bombs in the liberated cities and villages.

Though this criminal action is intended to weaken the EPLA's positions and demoralize the masses, on the contrary, it has, made the EPLA and the masses even more determined and resolute to carry on the struggle.

On another front, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) implementing the unity agreement they signed have joined forces against the enemy garrison in Barentu in the western part of Eritrea. Barentu has been under ELF seige

for over a year. The EPLF has sent forces including a tank brigade in order to smash the aggressor troops and liberate Barentu in cooperation with the ELF.

The step taken by EPLF to smash the enemy in cooperation with the ELF has aroused tremendous jubilation and optimism among the Eritrean people in the province of Barka. The EPLF's tank brigade was warmly received throughout Barka on its way to Barentu. In support of the EPLF-ELF unity agreement and the step taken by the EPLF the population unanimously decided to condemn the counter-revolutionary Sabbe clique.

The joint EPLF-ELF attack on Barentu has overwhelmed the enemy troops. Holding the upper hand the EPLF-ELF forces are heavily pounding the aggressor troops who are completely encircled from all directions except the air. It has become clear that it is only a question of time before Barentu is liberated by the EPLF-ELF joint efforts.

Despite the heavy defeats they are suffering at the hands of the Eritrean revolution the Ethiopian aggressors have not given up their policy of genocide in Eritrea. Insisting on solving the Eritrean question by means of brute force they have made all round preparations to conduct a large scale war of aggression against the Eritrean people. Having amassed over 100,000 troops including thousands of Cuban troops and huge amounts of sophisticated Soviet supplied weapons in Asmara and Assab and on the southern Eritrean border, the launching of the Ethiopian fascists' all out large scale genocidal war is imminent.

The EPLF and the Eritrean masses on their part are in full readiness to counter and smash this diabolic offensive. "Let them come and learn a lesson they will never forget" is the answer from every Eritrean—men and women, children and the aged—to the Ethiopian aggressors.

Association of Eritrean Peasants Holds First Congress

After years of arduous and bitter struggle, the first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants (AEP) was held between March 11 and 15, 1978 in the liberated city of Keren under the revolutionary slogan "Consolidate the workers-peasant alliance." The congress which exemplified the unity of the Eritrean peasant masses was attended by 287 representatives of the poor, middle and other patriotic peasants from all corners of Eritrea. Members of the

EPLF's central committee and representatives of the other mass organizations also attended the congress.

The realization of the first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants and the fact that it was held in the liberated regions is a glaring example of the EPLF's great achievements in organizing the Eritrean masses in general and the Eritrean peasant

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try in particular. It is an indication of the full participation of the peasantry in the armed struggle and in the deep going revolutionary transformation that is taking place. The EPLF, keenly aware of the decisive role of the masses in the revolution, has since its inception placed its energies in organizing the masses of our people on the basis of their class background and social grouping. The Association of Eritrean Peasants representing 80% of the population is one of the forces that has been cultivated by the EPLF and which has a decisive position in the course of the Eritrean revolution. The first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants is the culmination of the EPLF's concerted effort to organize the peasant masses, the efforts it made in setting up branches of the Association at the district and provincial levels. Thus the first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants represents an important precedent in the EPLF's long and bitter struggle to organize, politicize and arm the Eritrean peasantry.

The historic first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants was officially opened by a militant speech by Comrade Romadan Mohammed Nur, Secretary General of the EPLF. Comrade Romadan's speech highlighted the historical significance of this first and important congress of the Eritrean peasantry in the history of the Eritrean people's struggle and its revolutionary impact on the advancement of the revolution as a whole. (See insert for excerpts from Comrade Romadan's speech.)

Under the slogans:

- Consolidate the worker-peasant alliance!
- Land reform is a fundamental democratic right of the peasant masses!
- Improve the living conditions of the masses through cooperatives!
- The people's militia fights in the interest of the workers and peasants!

the deliberations of the congress were conducted with active participation of the delegates.



The 1st congress of the AEP in session. The slogan in the rear reads "The People's Militia is born in struggle."

The congress dealt with the many aspects and questions of the Eritrean people's revolutionary struggle in general and the many tasks and achievements of the peasant masses in particular. After making a thorough study and after analyzing the short and long run objectives of the Association and those of the revolution, the congress, considering the present national democratic stage and the many victories registered by the revolution, passed resolutions that encompass the principles, aims and general direction of the struggle and the Association. Finally, the congress delegates democratically elected a thirty-four (34) member central committee to guide, lead and implement the tasks of the Association.

The great significance of this congress is that it was convened at a juncture when the Eritrean revolution though under attack from various powerful reactionary forces is heroically advancing forward, at a time when the EPLF led Eritrean revolution by dealing decisive blows to the fascist junta is on the threshold of establishing a people's democratic Eritrean state and at a time when the EPLF has registered big victories against the internal reactionaries.

Furthermore, the historical and revolutionary significance of this congress is that it is the first democratic congress in which the

peasants have strengthened their unity, in order to reinforce their struggle against the colonial and feudo-capitalist order and against the backward feudal culture and customs.



The peasant masses are increasing production in order to raise their standard of living and support their revolution.

The peasantry which comprises 80% of the Eritrean people has been subjected to the most brutal colonial oppression and the limitless feudo-capitalist exploitation, starvation, disease and ignorance. Arising from this objective fact, it is apparent that the peasant masses constitute the backbone of the on-going national democratic revolution and hold a decisive position. However, due to the reactionary line that had dominated the Eritrean revolution in the past, the peasant masses were largely alienated and relegated to the role of spectators. Since the birth of EPLF the Eritrean peasant masses have taken their rightful position—that of active participation as the backbone of the revolution. Today, the EPLF is waging a life and death struggle to ensure the proper role and the democratic rights of the masses of the working people in the revolution. Though the internal reactionaries are putting every effort to sow discord among the peasant masses on nationality and religious lines, the EPLF, aware that the solid unity of the masses is the guarantor of the revolution, has succeeded in consolidating the Association of Eritrean Peasants which represents the peasants of all the nine nationalities.

This first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants affirms that the peasants need to be organized, politicized and armed in order to protect their interests and struggle for their demands, by building solid alliance with the working class. That the above is clearly understood by the delegates to the congress has shown that the masses of peasants have the same interests, aspirations and destiny with all the working people. The congress exposed the various schemes that the reactionaries and opportunists utilize in order to sow confusion and exploit the peasant masses. It concluded that the best way to combat this is by strengthening the unity of all the nationalities and by looking at social relations and questions from a class point of view.

That the above points have full validity can be seen in the many speeches of the delegates and more importantly in the revolutionary resolutions the congress passed. Below are excerpts from the resolutions of the 1st congress of the AEP.

The Congress—

- Condemns Ethiopian colonialism for depriving the Eritrean people of their right to self determination and conducting a war of aggression to liquidate the just struggle of the Eritrean people. The Congress, fully supporting the EPLF vanguard, reaffirms the determination of the Eritrean masses to persist in their struggle until total independence is achieved.

- Rejects colonialist Ethiopia's "peaceful solution" which is designed to hoodwink the world people and isolate the Eritrean revolution from its real friends. The congress extends its support for the proposal for peaceful solution adopted by the EPLF at its first organizational congress.

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- Supports the unity agreement that was signed between the EPLF and ELF on Oct.20, 1977.

- Asserts that Eritrean peasants will make an all-out effort to increase agricultural production so as to translate the slogan of self-reliance into reality.

- Fully supports Eritrean women in their struggle to bring about the social transformation of our society.

- Reaffirms that the peasants who have been and still are the backbone of the Eritrean revolution will stand on the side of the EPLA and fight with arms in their hands until final victory is achieved.

- Expresses its unflinching support to the oppressed peoples throughout the world and particularly the oppressed peoples of Palestine, Oman, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe, Azania, Namibia and East Timor in their just and revolutionary struggle against imperialism, colonialism, zionism and internal reaction.

- Reaffirms its support for the democratic and revolutionary movements of the proletariat of the capitalist countries and expresses its determination to struggle side by side with the oppressed masses of the world in the fight against imperialism.

- Supports the struggle of all democratic forces in Ethiopia; calls on the oppressed masses of Ethiopia to condemn the Dergue's war of aggression in Eritrea and to struggle against the Dergue's chauvinist slogan "The call of the motherland."

- Expresses its gratitude and appreciation to those governments and organizations who at this critical moment of our revolution give us material and political support. The Congress calls on them to continue their support at a higher level.

Excerpts From the Opening Speech of the Secretary-General of the EPLF to the First Congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants

In the name of the EPLF, in the name of all the members of the Eritrean People's Liberation Army, in the name of the entire Eritrean people, and in the name of all those martyred during the liberating struggle of our people, I open this congress.

Comrades, this congress representing the peasant masses consolidates their struggle and is undoubtedly a great advance and a pointer to the victory of the masses of our people, who making great endeavor, undergoing many sacrifices and experiencing exile, fought for the political line that defined the class character of this association.

In founding this association the Eritrean peasant masses waged a long and bitter struggle. For the peasant masses to consolidate their unity, defend their class interests and forge a solid alliance with the workers it was a historical necessity that they would establish their own organization. Indeed, this Congress is a giant step pushing the victory of the Eritrean masses closer to its final objectives. Thus, the first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants is the result of the bitter and long struggle that the Eritrean peasant masses waged for over seventeen years, that is to say, a result of the various stages that the peasants have traversed and of the many difficulties suffering and want they had to withstand in the bitter struggle against the barbaric acts of the enemy. As such, it is a great historical culmination. The Eritrean people, especially the peasant masses in the countryside, are faced with want, disease, ignorance and backward social relations. However, they have never held back from struggling on the side of their revolution.

As a democratic association, the Association of Eritrean Peasants is the arena where democratic struggles will be conducted in order to shape its class character. The democratic struggle that

- Calls on all countries to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the Eritrean revolution, particularly in matters concerning the national unity of the Eritrean Fronts.

The Congress resolved to struggle:

- To organize the broad masses of the peasantry to join the Association of Eritrean Peasants, heighten their political consciousness and fully participate in their revolution.

- To make all villages and districts the iron bastion of the revolution and every peasant a member of the people's militia.

- To train in a short period of time a large number of capable cadres that can lead the Association of Eritrean Peasants.

- To smash the power of the reactionaries and feudalists in every village and set up democratic people's assemblies of the peasant masses.

- To consciously and arduously put into practice the principles, objectives and resolutions of the Association of Eritrean Peasants.

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The Association of Eritrean students in North America hails the first congress of the Association of Eritrean Peasants as an important political gain for the EPLF-led Eritrean revolution. It praises the Eritrean peasants for the courageous struggle they waged in building the AEP and for successfully holding their historic first congress. Calling on the peasants to further consolidate the AEP, AESNA is confident that the AEP will discharge its heavy revolutionary responsibility in rallying the Eritrean peasants in their entirety behind the on going national democratic revolution.

will be waged inside the association will continue, scoring big victories on its path, until the final goal has been attained. In other words, until the poor peasants are assured a place of struggle in the revolution and until their rightful social, economic and political place in the new Eritrea is attained, the struggle that will be waged within the Association of Eritrean Peasants will continue.

You can see today that you have crossed a new stage and have entered into one of the most important stages of the struggle. Having taken up arms and having built a strong principled alliance with your working class comrades, you are now in the stage of waging intense national and class struggle to seize political power. As your vanguard organization, the EPLF will protect your interests, direct your struggles, and stand on your side against all of your enemies until final victory, that is, until it has liberated the Eritrean people and land.

In concluding this brief presentation, I would like to point out that the Association of Eritrean Peasants, as one of the democratic mass organizations that represents the masses of our peasants, has a strong bond with all the other mass organizations of workers, women, youth and democratic students. The struggles that all the above mentioned organizations conduct are not separate from each other, but are dialectically linked.

In conclusion, I express my confidence that the proceedings of this congress will be successful.

Long Live the Worker-Peasant Alliance!
Long Live the Eritrean Revolution!
Awet Nehafash!

From the Pages of Eritrean History: The Eritrean Question in the UN in 1950

In 1950 the United Nations under the direction of US led world imperialism passed Resolution 390 A/V which forced a sham federation with feudal Ethiopia on the Eritrean people. This resolution blatantly ignored the expressed wishes and aspirations of the Eritrean people. It was a gross violation of their right to self-determination. The imposed federation was pure annexation of small Eritrea by an imperialist supported larger Ethiopia. The Eritrean people strongly expressing their aspiration for independence were forced to live under a new colonizer, Ethiopia, in order to satisfy the interests of imperialism.

The Eritrean people have a long history of resistance to foreign invaders—the Turkish and Egyptian expansionists, the Italian and British imperialists and the Ethiopian expansionists. Prior to the 1940s however, this resistance, though vigorous, was localized and uncoordinated.

During the period of British colonialism (1941-52) following the defeat of the Italian fascists in Eritrea, political parties were formed in Eritrea. In the early 1940s the Mahber fecri Hager was formed as the first patriotic organization. Other parties such as the Moslem League, the Liberal Progressive Party, the New Eritrea Party, the Independent Eritrea Party, the Intellectual's Association, the Veterans of War Association, and the National Moslem League were also set up later on. These parties, though led by the petty bourgeoisie and even certain feudal elements, did voice an aspiration held by the masses of the Eritrean people—the demand for national independence. There was only one party opposed to independence—the Unionist Party. This party, composed of scums and traitors, established, funded and directed by Haile Selassie, advocated union with Ethiopia.

The imperialists also had plans for Eritrea. When Italy renounced its former colonies (Eritrea, Libya and Italian Somaliland) in 1947 the case of the colonies was transferred to the Allied Powers. A Four Power Commission was sent to Eritrea "to ascertain the wishes of the population." In its finding the commission disclosed that the majority of the people favored independence. However, the US, French and British imperialists putting the Eritrean people's demand for independence under the rug sought to accomplish their greedy imperialist designs. The Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin, opposing the imperialists' scheme, supported self determination for the Eritrean people. Consequently the Four Powers couldn't agree and the matter was referred to the UN General Assembly.

In the U.N. it was decided that Somalia and Libya would be grant independence but as one bourgeois writer pointed out "the fate of Eritrea would be determined by the character of power relationships conducted on a broad field . . . with the control of a strategically vital area rich in oil and dominating some of the most important intercontinental routes of communication."

The British imperialists, eager to preserve their rule in Eritrea, put forward the Bevin-Sforza plan before the UN. This proposal called for the partition of Eritrea between the Sudan and Ethiopia which were Britain's colony and neo-colony respectively. The British colonialists, in order to justify their scheme to destroy Eritrea as a country, came up with the fabricated argument that the Eritreans were too divided by nationality and religion to live together in one state and that Eritrea couldn't stand alone economically. Indeed the British were bent on destroying Eritrea. In a book he wrote in 1945, Stephen Longrigg, the chief British administrator in Eritrea, had said, "Eritrea would cease to exist." To provide some backing to their claims the British, using their dirty trick of "divide and rule," tried to foment conflicts among the Eritrean people. They also dismantled many Eritrean industries and shipped the equipment and supplies to their other colonies and neo-colonies. As the Guatemalan and Pakistani delegates of the UN Commission to Eritrea witnessed "economic development of Eritrea had been retarded by colonial policies and practices especially that of the British." The Eritrean people however made a mockery of the British imperialist claims about Eritrean "incom-

patibility" when they rose up unanimously to denounce the plan to partition Eritrea.

The US, the dominant power in the capitalist world, also had its eyes set on Eritrea. The US was motivated by what Eritrea had to offer its imperialist appetite. As the 1920 report of the US Consul in Aden vividly testifies, "The incorporation of Eritrea into American commerce would offer the US a loyal outpost to guard the route to the east and suppress Arab nationalism and that this Italian colony would provide the US with raw materials and markets." During the 1940s, the US had begun constructing bases in Eritrea. Its aim, according to a US government publication, was to see Eritrea become "the focal point of an effort to blanket the Middle East with airfields, ordnance depots and support bases."

In 1943, the US completed the construction of the first transmitter and receiver sites in the interference free Eritrean highlands. By imposing a sham federation with Ethiopia on the Eritrean people the US hoped to realize its plans to expand these facilities and guarantee its strategic military and economic interests in Eritrea. The then US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles plainly stated the US's views: "From the point of view of justice the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless the strategic interests of the US in the Red Sea basin and considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that this country has to be linked with our ally Ethiopia." Towards this end the US proposed a sham federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The expansionist Ethiopian feudal regime set out to gain international backing for the US proposal. Even though as the bourgeois ideologues of Colonialism admitted that "no conscious sense of national solidarity could bind Eritreans with Ethiopia," Haile Selassie promoted a falsified history of Eritrea, claiming that it had always been an integral part of the Ethiopian empire and that the Eritrean people desired "reunion with their Mother Country." It is not surprising, Haile Selassie laid claim over Somalia too. Ethiopia and its imperialist backers also tried to gain support for their plan by asserting that the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia against the expressed wishes of the Eritrean people was justifiable as compensation to Ethiopia for her invasion by Italy in World War II.

In collaboration with the British imperialists, the Ethiopian feudal regime was engaged in concerted expansionist activities in Eritrea, intimidating the independence forces and grooming supporters among the church hierarchy, feudalists and the upper petty bourgeoisie.

As the Eritrean people were overwhelmingly in favour of independence the Haile Selassie government employed other means in addition to its creation of the Unionist Party to raise a voice inside Eritrea favorable to federation. It mobilized thousands of Ethiopians from Tigrai (the northern most province of Ethiopia) and sent them to Eritrea to pose as Eritreans and voice support for the federation plan.

Full time "shiftas," terrorists, supplied from and sheltered in Ethiopia, were also employed on a mass scale by the Haile Selassie regime. Faced with an Eritrean population which, according to the British colonial administrator Trevaskis, found the idea of unity with Ethiopia "entirely unacceptable, indeed horrifying" the Ethiopian government unleashed a mass campaign of bombings, lootings and assassinations to blackmail the Eritrean people into accepting the sham federation.

Notwithstanding the terroristic activities of the expansionist Ethiopian regime and the intrigues of the imperialists, the Eritrean people stood firmly on their demand for independence. With the exception of a small minority of traitors and capitulationists, the overwhelming majority of the Eritrean people demanded nothing short of independence. The Guatemalan and Pakistani delegates of the UN Commission to Eritrea witnessed this fact. They reported: "We saw that a large number of people were opposed to the annexation of the territory to Ethiopia and in favour of independence. We were impressed by the way in which these people behaved as

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well as by the courage and firmness with which they often expressed their views, notwithstanding the risks to which they often exposed themselves." In 1949, all the political parties advocating national independence formed the Independence Bloc to frustrate the imperialists' plots. The Guatemalan delegate stated: "During our travels in Eritrea, we were able to see how important were the parties which form the Independence Bloc, and that experience convinced us that the great majority of the population oppose the idea of federation."

The Eritrean people presented their case before the U.N. On behalf of the Independence Bloc Ibrahim Sultan declared before the U.N.: "We refuse to accept such an ambiguous scheme (Federation—Ed.) . . . We demand complete independence."

The Soviet Union, the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe and some African, Asian and Latin American countries resolutely supported the Eritrean people's demand for national independence and condemned the imperialist imposed sham federation. The Soviet Union and the People's Democracies exposed the forcible federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia as merely disguised annexation and contrary to the principle of self-determination: "A decision is being imposed on the Eritrean people without its consent and hence, in violation of the fundamental principle of the right of self-determination of peoples." (USSR) "Under the name of federation, it (the resolution—Ed.) provides for nothing less than annexation." (Poland) "Contrary to the fundamental purposes of the charter (of the UN—Ed.), it would deny the people of Eritrea the right to self-determination and impose on them a federation with Ethiopia which the great majority oppose. Instead of maintaining peace in that part of the world, the resolution would foster civil war and discord. Instead of assisting an oppressed and exploited people to achieve freedom and independence, it would attempt to cover up the annexation of a small state by a larger state." (Czechoslovakia) (For the full text of the position statements of the socialist countries in 1950 refer to "In Defence of the Eritrean Revolution" published by AESNA and AEWNA in February 1978.)

The so-called federation was a "cloak for the imperialist design of the colonial powers of Eritrea." (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic). Ignoring the Eritrean people's aspiration for national independence the imperialists conspired to annex Eritrea to their neo-colony Ethiopia in order to satisfy their imperialist greed. Eritrea was to become "an autonomous state federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown." This sham federation was not a federation between two equal states on a voluntary basis but the forcible annexation of Eritrea to Ethiopia. In implementing this imperialist conspiracy the very charter of the body, the UN that passed this unjust verdict was even violated, i.e.



An EPLF poster depicting the crimes committed against the Eritrean people in the UN in 1950.

"respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples (Chapter 1 Article 1)." The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic stated that the decision was not "in conformity with the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the right of all peoples to national independence and self-determination."

The US, making use of its dominant position in the UN, succeeded in having the sham federal resolution adopted in 1950. In 1952, the federation resolution went into effect. Soon after the feudal regime of Haile Selassie, with full US support, began systematic suppression of the Eritrean people. The democratic rights of the Eritrean people were trampled upon. Eritrean factories were dismantled and removed to Addis Ababa and Eritrea was virtually turned into a playground of imperialism and an army camp of the Ethiopian expansionists. In 1962, the Haile Selassie regime declared Eritrea the 14th province of its empire.

In 1953 the US and Ethiopia concluded an agreement permitting the establishment of US military and communications bases in Eritrea in exchange for US supplies and training for the Ethiopian army. The immediate prize for the US imperialists was the setting up of Kagnew station in Eritrea's capital Asmara, the largest US military communications base outside the US itself which used to monitor liberation movements throughout Africa, the Middle East and Asia. According to Major General Godding of the US Army, Kagnew was "instrumental to the global mission of the US Army Security Agency."

The US imperialists and their puppet Haile Selassie gloated over their "triumph" forgetting one important thing. Ibrahim Sultan raised a key point in his presentation of the just cause of the Eritrean people in the UN. He said: "It is the cause of the independence of a people who refuse and reject any form of annexation, dismemberment or a return to the hated colonialism no matter what type it would be, whatever form it takes or from which direction it comes . . . This indisputable right to independence to which our country is attached cannot be ignored without creating a new area of strife in East Africa, since the Eritrean people will never accept Ethiopian domination."

The Eritrean people have never accepted Ethiopian domination. They have said NO to Ethiopian colonial occupation and have firmly persisted on the demand "nothing short of total independence." During the 1950s they resisted Ethiopian colonialism through peaceful means and since 1961 they have been waging a heroic armed national liberation struggle. Though the road has been by no means easy, today the true victors—the Eritrean people led by EPLF—on the verge of achieving their age old aspiration for independence and liberation, are smashing Ethiopian colonialism and its imperialist sustainers to bits.

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March 8 and May Day Celebrated in the Liberated Areas of Eritrea

International Women's Day and May Day 1978 were celebrated with enthusiastic mass participation all over the liberated areas of Eritrea.

In commemoration of March 8, 1978 the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) organized mass rallies, peaceful demonstrations and seminars as well as film and cultural shows in the liberated villages and cities. With members of the Association of Eritrean Women in the forefront, members of the other mass organizations and thousands of others vigorously participated in the March 8 celebrations. In Dekemhare the participants included the Red Flowers (politically conscious youth between the ages of 7 and 15). The demonstrators, carrying placards with revolutionary slogans, expressed their staunchest support to the struggle for the emancipation of women. They shouted slogans such as "Long Live March 8!", "Long Live the Association of Eritrean Women!," "Workers of all countries, unite!," etc.

A special statement which the EPLF prepared for the occasion also the marriage law promulgated by the second regular meeting of the EPLF central committee were read during the proceedings of the rallies.

Representatives from the EPLF's Department of People's Administration as well as representatives from the Association of Eritrean Women addressed the rallies. The EPLF praised the fine daughters of Eritrea for the heroic struggle they are waging under the leadership of EPLF to liberate the fatherland from the Ethiopian aggressors and called on them to fasten their belts for a more difficult struggle to complete the liberation of the country, rebuild it and rout the internal reactionaries. Speakers from the AEW spoke on the miserable condition women have been subjected to under Ethiopian colonial occupation and feudalism, the struggle being waged to transform this and the active role women are playing in the national liberation struggle. The AEW speakers affirmed that their struggle is an inseparable part of the world wide struggle of working and oppressed women. Reiterating their position they said, "Led by our revolutionary organization EPLF we are glad and feel proud that today we are able to celebrate International Women's Day with all oppressed women of the world. We affirm that our association the AEW...is part and parcel of the international women's movement."

May Day 1978 was also celebrated in the same manner. On the occasion of May Day the EPLF published in both Tigrinya and

Arabic a special pamphlet entitled "Long Live May Day, the International Working Class Day." The pamphlet deals with the significance of May Day, the struggle of the Eritrean working class and its role in the ongoing national liberation struggle. Included in the pamphlet is also a reprint of the section of the EPLF's National Democratic Program on worker's rights and the Tigrinya and Arabic translations of the "Internationale."

On the significance of May Day and the role of the proletariat in the revolution the pamphlet states, "Workers of the world have a common interest expressed through their revolutionary slogan 'Workers of all countries, unite!'"...May Day is the most important day not only for the proletariat but also for all oppressed peoples of the world. The reason being that in the present era it is only the proletariat that can lead both the democratic and socialist revolutionaries to victory. Except under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and its scientific ideology the oppressed masses cannot build a new world without oppression and exploitation."

In regards to the role of the Eritrean working class in the Eritrean revolution the pamphlet states, "Under the leadership of EPLF the Eritrean workers have taken their rightful position in the Eritrean national liberation struggle." The pamphlet enumerates the active role being played by the Eritrean working class in all fields of revolutionary struggle: on the battle fronts against the Ethiopian aggressor troops, in the various work shops, in organizational work and in the struggle against feudalism by forming solid alliance with the peasant masses. Expressing the EPLF's satisfaction with the great victories scored by Eritrean workers the pamphlet calls on them "to be prepared for a protracted and difficult struggle in order to fulfil their historic mission of building a society without the exploitation of man by man."

Elucidating the EPLF's principled internationalist position the pamphlet concludes "On the occasion of May Day the EPLF forwarding its revolutionary greetings to the courageous Eritrean workers in both the liberated areas and the enemy occupied areas as well as to those who are living as refugees abroad reassures them that it will struggle to the end to build a people's democratic Eritrea. The EPLF also reassures the peoples of the world and in particular the workers of all countries that it will resolutely shoulder to the best of its ability its national and international duty by dealing decisive blows to imperialism and all reaction in the strategic Horn of Africa and by giving its principled support to the revolutionary struggles in the region and throughout the world."

EPLF Condemns Zionist Aggression in Lebanon

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) has strongly condemned the recent naked aggression committed by the Israeli Zionists against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. The EPLF's statement which appeared in the April issue of its official organ, *Vanguard*, exposing the Zionist aggression said, "This Israeli aggression . . . is an imperialist conspiracy to drive out the Palestinian revolution from its base in southern Lebanon and strangulate it." Expressing the EPLF's confidence in the Palestinian struggle the statement added, "The Palestinian resistance movement convinced of its just cause and relying on the heroism of its people as well as the support of the progressive peoples of the world is, under difficult conditions, resolutely waging its revolutionary struggle. In cooperation with the patriotic forces in Lebanon, the Palestinian

struggle is, by conducting persistent attacks, inflicting big losses on the Israeli aggressor army."

The EPLF has always given its principled support to the heroic Palestinian struggle. Hence, in the statement the EPLF once again reiterating its staunch support for the Palestinian struggle, declared, "Condemning the imperialist supported Israeli aggression in Lebanon, the Eritrean masses and their vanguard EPLF express our firm principled support for the Palestinian people's struggle and the patriotic forces in Lebanon."

EPLF's Stand on the Ethiopian People's Struggle is Correct and Revolutionary

The EPLF's stand on the Ethiopian people and their struggle is clear, correct and revolutionary. Emanating from its correct internationalist line, the EPLF's stand aims at safeguarding the long standing fraternal relations between the neighbouring Eritrean and Ethiopian masses and to forge a principled unity in struggle between the two peoples.

The EPLF has been fighting long and hard to put this correct internationalist line into practice. The EPLF's internationalist line began at home, with its own masses. In its own country, the vanguard front has been waging relentless struggle to teach the Eritrean masses to distinguish between the Ethiopian ruling classes and the oppressed and exploited Ethiopian masses.

Consistent with this line, the EPLF has been giving consistent and principled support to all those democratic Ethiopian organizations fighting the fascist junta.

At the same time it has consistently pointed out to the Ethiopian people that Ethiopia's imperialist backed colonization of Eritrea is in the interest of the Ethiopian ruling classes and imperialism; that they cannot be free so long as they become cannon fodder in the war to exterminate the Eritrean people; that the Ethiopian rulers' policy of genocide in Eritrea is an expansionist ambition. In a document entitled "Oppressed Ethiopian People, Be Aware!" issued last year (*Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 3), the EPLF made it explicitly clear that the call was made "out of a profound concern for the present and future relations of our two peoples and their interests of development, prosperity and peace." It also added that this clear, revolutionary stand emanated "from the genuine revolutionary spirit and truly patriotic and democratic outlook of our people that rejects all chauvinism against all oppressed peoples."

Therefore, any amount of fascist lies, fabrications and denigrations to distort this principled and clear stand of the vanguard front cannot change reality. It only shows the desperation, and the fascist nature of the junta.

There is virtually no conspiracy the fascist junta has not hatched to denigrate the just, popular and revolutionary nature of the heroic Eritrean people's struggle for independence and liberation.

First, in order to confuse people and use Eritrea as the focal point in its campaign to divert the direction of the main blow of the Ethiopian masses, it falsifies history and fabricates historical events to justify its expansionist policy in Eritrea. Using such banal statements as "Eritrea has always been part of Ethiopia," it beats the same old trail of annexationism that led its predecessor and mentor, Haile Selassie to his doom.

There is also the endless list of demagogic bugaboos that the fascist Dergue conjures up every day to confuse the real issues. Such cheap propaganda as "Arab invasion," which the Dergue uses to characterize the Eritrean national liberation struggle, keeps the junta's propaganda machine busy.

Its colonial designs in tatters, its colonial army in Eritrea irrevocably battered and badly shaken, the Dergue also employs one political camouflage after another to prolong its rule. The Dergue has been crying itself hoarse claiming that "Eritrean independence is an obstacle to the unity of Eritrean and Ethiopian workers," that "Eritrean narrow nationalists are fighting against the interest of the Ethiopian masses," that the Eritrean liberation struggle is the work of "petty bourgeois separatist groups" and that "the Eritrean people are *not* fighting for their independence."

However, the truth is that such unbridled fascistic aberration cannot change the genuine revolutionary demands of the Eritrean masses. Nor will it have any impact on the indomitable will of the Eritrean people or the nature of their thoroughgoing revolutionary war whose immediate aim is to set up a people's democratic state of Eritrean workers, peasants and other sections of the broad working masses.

The Eritrean people are aware of the importance of unity in struggle between the neighbouring Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples. As two peoples fighting the same enemies in order to support each

other in their struggles, their stand on each other must be absolutely clear. One thing that must be explained is that the EPLF's principled material, moral and political support given to those Ethiopian democratic forces fighting the junta, is not to peddle in the name of internationalism but to concretize proletarian internationalism.

The relationship between the oppressed Eritrean and Ethiopian people is one of principle and political line.

Due to EPLF's serious efforts, today, in the minds and practices of the Eritrean masses there is no confusion between the broad Ethiopian toiling masses and the Ethiopian ruling class.

The enemies of the Eritrean people are the fascist junta, imperialism, zionism and internal reaction, and not the Ethiopian masses who are waging a life and death struggle to smash the same enemies. The fascist Dergue with an unprecedented Soviet and Cuban military and political support is committing the most heinous crimes on both the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples and trying to crush their struggles. The Eritrean people are in arms to win national independence and liberation thus to shatter the Ethiopian rulers' expansionist ambitions in Eritrea once and for all.

EPLF's principled stand on the fraternal Ethiopian people and their struggle is among other things concretely manifested in its treatment of the Ethiopian POWs. The EPLF and the struggling Eritrean people don't have even a tinge of inimical feeling against the captured Ethiopian soldiers used as the main tool in implementing the Dergue's policy of killing innocent Eritrean civilians, destroying their property as well as any other crime one can imagine. Because the vanguard front is fully aware that the Ethiopian POWs, practically all of whom are from the peasantry and working class, all victims of the successive Ethiopian rulers' expansionist dreams and designs, it treats them as humanely as possible. The POWs are given literacy and political education, clothing and medical treatment as the EPLF's limited resources allow. This fact is corroborated repeatedly by those already released POWs and the 6,000 who are still in EPLF's hands.

In its vain attempt to foment hostility between the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses, the fascist junta is and has been taking the most barbaric military steps in Eritrea and its propaganda organs are whipping up chauvinist hysteria such as "our mother country or death" to such a pitch that it reminds one of the heydays of the god-father of fascism, Adolf Hitler.

Does it surprise anybody, therefore, when Ethiopian rulers shout that their genocidal policy and practices in Eritrea are "in the interest of peace and development and the best interest of the masses?" This is nothing but the ideology of fascism in its truest color. Like all reactionaries, the Dergue uses all deceptive slogans to pretend to represent the interests of the masses.

However, though the fascist Dergue and its imperialist sustainers are trying to erect a Chinese wall between the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples, such a wall will tumble down like a house of cards by the thunderous advance of the Eritrean revolution and the struggle of the Ethiopian people.

The Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples will undoubtedly establish new and democratic states in their respective countries which will further strengthen their principled unity for further struggles based on mutual interest and equality.

Such is the unshakable conviction and principled internationalist practice of the vanguard EPLF and the Eritrean masses.

**Long live the revolutionary solidarity
between the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples!**

This article is based on an article that appeared on the EPLF's organ *Vanguard* (Vol. III, No. 3)

AEWNA Conference

Chapters of the Association of Eritrea Women in North America (AEWNA) recently held successful regional conferences. The purpose of the conferences was to study the political paper on the importance of the Women's Organization in the revolution which the AEWNA prepared.

Chapters of the Eastern region met in New York between May 20 and 21. Over 60 members and non members actively participated in the meeting. In the same manner, the Mid Western conference was also held in St. Louis from 27 to 28 May.

In conjunction with the conferences, Eritrean nights were also organized in both New York and St. Louis. More than 200 people attended the one organized in New York. The AEWNA chapters presented revolutionary songs and plays depicting the condition and struggle of Eritrean women. In support of the AEWNA and

the EPLF-led Eritrean revolution, the participants in the Eritrean night evenings shouted slogans such as "Long Live the Struggle of Eritrean Women," "Long Live EPLF," etc.

The AEWNA nationwide conference as the first big political meeting of the organization since its formation in August 1977 is an important achievement for the AEWNA. AEWNA members expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of the Conferences.

Though AEWNA is only 9 months old it has made rapid advances. The struggle to consolidate the organization is going thoroughly.

Supporting the recent successful conferences of our sisterly mass organization AEWNA we are confident it will score even more victories in the future.

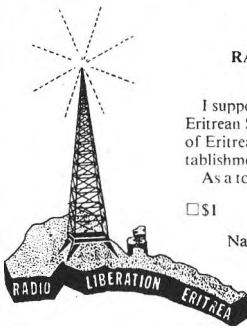
Radio Liberation—Eritrea

It has been seven months now since the Radio Liberation—Eritrea fundraising campaign was launched. The campaign is a task undertaken by both the Association of Eritrean Students in North America and the Association of Eritrean Women in North America in order to raise funds towards the establishment of a radio station in the liberated areas of Eritrea.

The setting up of a radio station in the liberated areas of Eritrea is vital for both disseminating mass education and for combating the anti-Eritrean propaganda waged by the enemies of the Eritrean revolution.

The Radio Liberation—Eritrea fund raising campaign is gaining success. Many comrades and friends have positively responded to our call. We appreciate their support very much. However in order to be able to reach our projected target of \$50,000 by August 1978 we would like to once again call on all progressive and democratic organizations and individuals to contribute to Radio Liberation—Eritrea.

The establishment of Radio Liberation—Eritrea will be of great service to the EPLF vanguard and the Eritrean masses in their heroic struggle for national independence and liberation.



RADIO LIBERATION—ERITREA

I support the fundraising campaign launched by the Association of Eritrean Students in North America (AESNA) and the Association of Eritrean Women in North America (AEWNA) towards the establishment of a radio station in the liberated areas of Eritrea.

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Association of Eritrean Students in North America, March 1978

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