

MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM: "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT"



On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution on September 12 and of Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin's official friendly visit to Ethiopia, MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and Council of Ministers of Socialist Ethiopia, granted the following interview in Addis Ababa to our special correspondent Boris Asoyan.

The achievements of the Ethiopian revolution, Mengistu Haile Mariam said, have to be viewed against the background of the heroic struggle that the broad masses had to wage to safeguard the revolution and the country's territorial integrity and unify against internal reaction and external aggression, instigated and co-ordinated by international imperialism. The overthrow of the monarchy, followed by radical agrarian reforms and the nationalization of the major means of production and distribution, as well as of financial institutions and urban lands and extra houses and, furthermore, the proclamation of the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution in 1976, was a major success for the revolution which caused consternation in the counter-revolutionary camp. The imperialist mass media unleashed hostile propaganda against us. Internal class enemies, organized and armed, stepped up their counter-revolutionary activities in many parts of the country, particularly in the north, in an attempt to defuse and reverse the revolution. The regime in Somalia, encouraged and financed by international imperialism, launched a war of aggression to annex the southern and eastern territories of Ethiopia. Thus, we were in a situation similar to the one in Russia in the wake of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

As the great Lenin said, no revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself. We had to mobilize the entire Ethiopian people to defend the revolution and safeguard the territorial integrity of the Motherland. Accordingly, we were able to

organize and arm the broad masses, who under the slogans of "Revolutionary Motherland or Death" and "We Will Win" struggled against their internal and external class enemies.

Finally, we crushed the internal counter-revolutionary groupings and put to shame the imperialist puppets who ventured to invade our country. In this struggle we were not alone. In the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the Soviet Union, Cuba and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen contributed to the consolidation of our defence potential.

While the struggle against external and internal enemies continued, the Ethiopian revolution went on implementing the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution to release the country's productive forces from all feudal and imperialist production relations and to accelerate the economic development of the country in order to raise the standard of living of the broad masses. This task was made more complicated by the destruction caused by external aggression and the reactionary secessionists of Eritrea. Yet we were undaunted and launched the National Economic and Cultural Development Campaign. The establishment of producers' co-operatives, encouragement of professional artisans, a countrywide afforestation programme, and an intensive literacy campaign are some of the steps taken by the Revolutionary Government to transform the socio-economic and cultural life of the people on the road to a socialist society.

Backward agrarian Ethiopia is today the scene of socio-economic and cultural activities on a scale that has no parallel in the developing countries. Agricultural and industrial production has shown a considerable increase. Agriculture is being modernized and peasants are encouraged to start co-operative farming, the advantages of which are being realized. School attendance throughout the country has registered an all-time record, while more schools, clinics and roads are being built.

One of the accomplishments is the politicization of the broad Ethiopian masses in line with Marxism-Leninism. This is a very important aspect of the Ethiopian revolution. There is no institution where workers and employees do not spend two hours a week to equip themselves with Marxist-Leninist ideology. One feature of the political education is to expose the true colours of Maoism, which had in the early stages of the revolution confused many people. Along with the politicization of the broad masses, we are also advancing towards the establishment of a working-class party in the very near future.

We have recorded many achievements and have scored glorious victories at the price of heavy sacrifice. We are striving to achieve greater victories in the future with lesser sacrifice. We are confident that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries will remain on our side throughout our struggle to lead the revolution to its historic goals. The signing of the Ethiopian-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation was a landmark in the development of Ethiopian-Soviet relations which are gaining in strength with each passing day.

After five years of bitter struggle we can confidently say that the Ethiopian revolution and the country's unity are generally safe and secure. Yet we have no reason to be complacent. We are now tackling the enormous task of economic reconstruction. As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the revolution, we are confident that we will attain our final objective by getting leadership from a strong working-class party and raising high the banner of proletarian internationalism.

The Ethiopian revolutionaries are firmly convinced that victory in the political and economic fields can be attained only through struggle and

will not come of itself. In this struggle we are inspired by the history of the Bolshevik Party which launched the Great October Socialist Revolution under the leadership of Lenin and ushered in the new era of socialism.

The cornerstone of the foreign policy of Socialist Ethiopia is proletarian internationalism. Our cooperation with the socialist countries is based on this fundamental principle. The socialist countries, in particular the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the German Democratic Republic, and also the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, have not only given us material and moral support to safeguard our revolution, but also extend all-round aid in our efforts to build our economy on a firm socialist basis.

Towards the end of last year I

visited the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia in response to invitations from the leaders of these countries. The outcome of the talks with them was a series of declarations and joint communiqués expressing full support for the Ethiopian revolution. Some of the material aid, like tractors, bulldozers, harvesters and trucks which we received from the socialist countries were displayed during a grand parade at which the National Revolutionary Development Campaign was launched. The broad masses of Ethiopia are using the material assistance from socialist countries to improve their standard of living.

It is a fact of history that Socialist Ethiopia is today indissolubly linked to the ever powerful and dynamic

socialist community. Ethiopia is committed to the cause of peace, justice and social progress and is determined to stick to her anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist foreign policy and to combat all manifestations of international reaction and racism.

I take this opportunity to express on behalf of the broad masses of Ethiopia sincere gratitude for the all-round assistance the socialist countries are providing to Ethiopia. We take pride in the fact that the Soviet government, people and Communist Party leadership, particularly Comrade Leonid Brezhnev, are genuine and proven allies of the Ethiopian revolution. The Ethiopian people thank the Soviet Union for its staunch support and militant solidarity.

Addis Ababa, September 9

COMMENT

DANGEROUS POLICY

The Sadat-Begin meeting in Haifa earlier this month would not have attracted attention were it not for the demonstrative character of the Egyptian President's new concessions. He accepted Israel's concept of an "indivisible Jerusalem," thus going back on the fundamental Arab demand for the return of the eastern part of the Holy City. He also pledged to supply Israel with oil from the Sinai fields. Lastly, he adopted Begin's plan for a joint Egyptian-Israeli force to "supervise" the evacuation of Israeli troops from the Sinai.

What did he get in return? To all practical purposes, only somewhat earlier withdrawal of the occupation

forces from the southern part of the peninsula, where the St. Catherine monastery is located. It is to be used for a spectacular ceremony to mark the second anniversary of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

And so, Sadat paid a very high political price for gracious permission to hold the ceremony at this ancient site.

The Camp David agreements are obviously to the advantage of Tel Aviv, for they pulled Egypt out of the Arab front against Israeli expansion. It would therefore seem that the Begin government should be interested in consolidating the Camp David deal. In practice, however, Tel Aviv reluctantly deigns to accept concessions from its Egyptian partners. Its only concession, in the words of Yasser Arafat, is but a "handful of Sinai sand." Furthermore, Begin is not even pretending to meet Sadat halfway on the Palestinian question. But, then, the Egyptian leadership doesn't really want much. Its only concern, it

would seem, is prestige, but Tel Aviv is not out to boost Egyptian prestige. More, it wants to create the impression that it is prepared to risk the whole Camp David system if it does not receive the "maximum" from President Sadat.

What the Israeli expansionists hope for is no secret. They have already gained a good deal. The Camp David agreements helped strengthen their military positions. For, first, they "neutralized" the Egyptian front and, second, brought fresh deliveries of American weapons in payment for agreement to cooperate with Egypt. And these American weapons are being widely used for aggression in Southern Lebanon. Now Tel Aviv has gone a step further—it is blackmailing both Washington and Cairo by threatening to expand the aggression. This in itself should make it perfectly clear that these latest concessions in Haifa are very dangerous ones.

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