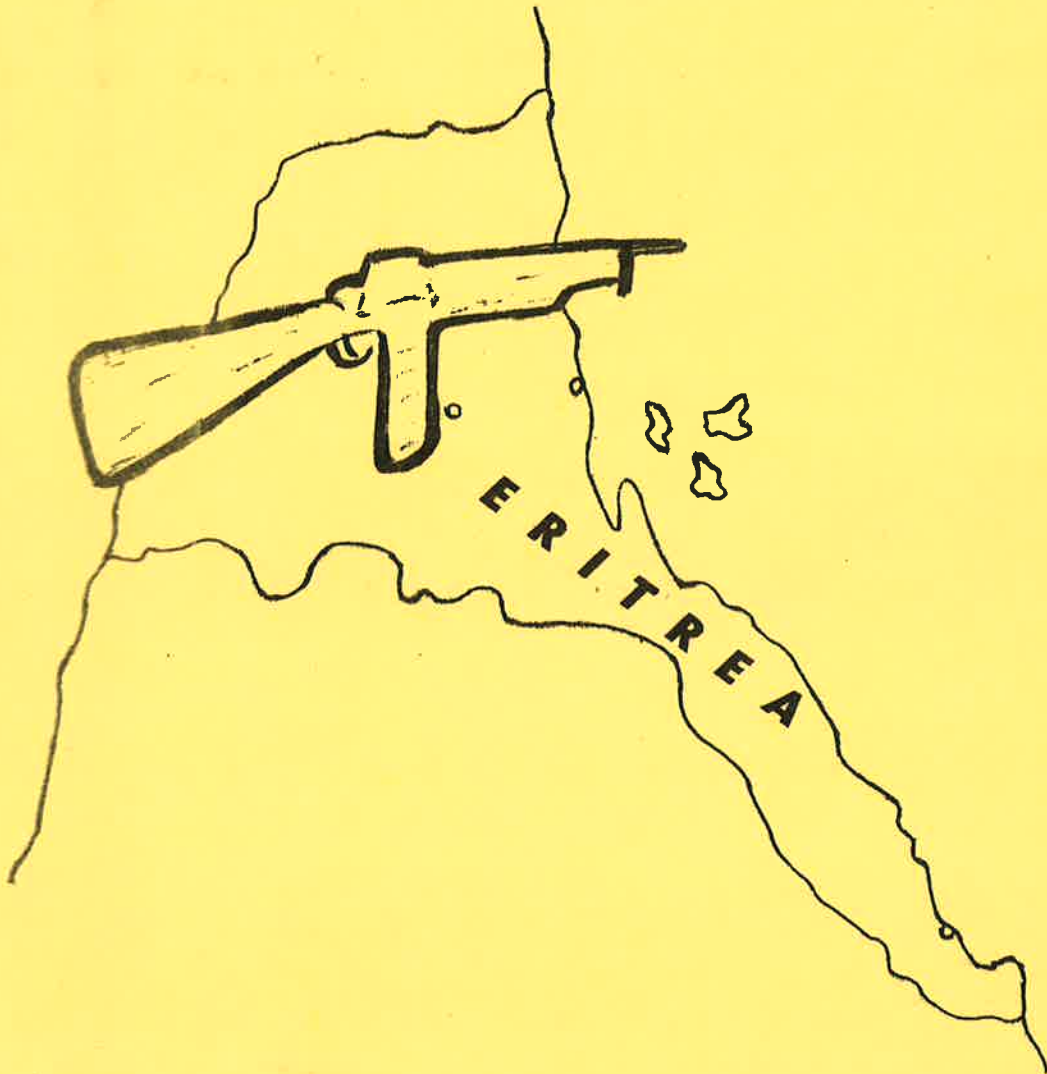


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LIBERATION

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EDITORIAL

The Eritrean Revolution has entered a new phase in its development to achieve final victory. The recent escalation of the war has unfolded before the world the determination and the will of the Eritrean people to free themselves from Ethiopian colonialism and U.S. Imperialism. On the other hand the Ethiopian Occupation army, in an ever-deteriorating war against the Liberation Forces, has committed savage atrocities against the civilian population.

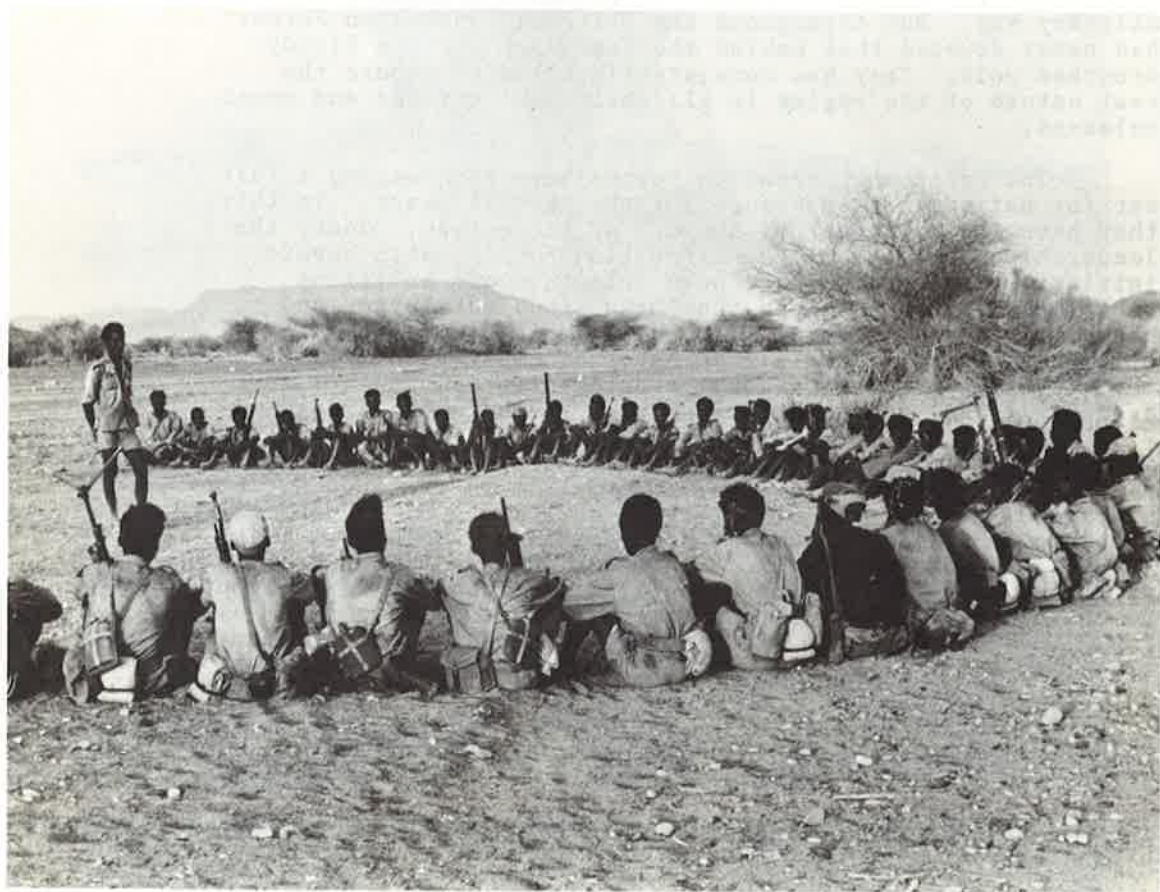
In the preceding months the Ethiopian regime had tried to wear a peace-loving mask, especially in its statements to foreign leaders and journalists. The junta was everywhere expressing its desire to solve the Eritrean case in a non-military way. But throughout the Eritrean Liberation Forces had never doubted that behind the lamb-mask lay the bloody-drenched wolf. They had consistently tried to expose the real nature of the regime in all their publications and press releases.

The Eritrean Liberation Forces have been waging a just war for national independence for the last 14 years. In this they have the wholehearted support of the masses. Under the leadership of E.P.L.F., the liberation forces, with heroic initiative and daring, have been able to score brilliant victories. Time and again they have wiped out larger and better armed enemy troops. From all available sources the Eritrean fighters certainly do have the upper hand. In fact, the Ethiopian occupation army is being attacked and harassed even in its few remaining strongholds in the urban areas.

As the Ethiopian junta gets deeper into its inextricable position, the presence of U.S. Imperialism in the area presents a grave danger for direct intervention. The U.S. is presently stepping up military supplies to "socialist" Ethiopia. This is part of its overall policy in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. In Oman, it is using Iranian troops in its attempt to crush the Omani Liberation Movement and to harass the P.D.R.Y. Further North U.S. Imperialism and Israeli-Zionism are still conspiring to liquidate the Palestinian Revolution.

This special issue of "Liberation" will try to show the roles being played by the imperialists and their regional watchdogs in the Red Sea - Arabian Gulf area. In addition it attempts to squeeze the sham socialism decreed by the Ethiopian junta. In light of the current intensification of the National Liberation Struggle in Eritrea and as the heroic Eritrean

people daily defend their gains from the genocidal war unleashed on them by the fascist Ethiopian Junta, E.F.L.N.A. urges all progressive organizations and individuals to show their solidarity with the Eritrean Revolution and render it all political and material support.



IMPERIALISM, THE ETHIOPIAN JUNTA AND THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION

IMPERIALISM SHIFTS FOCUS

The history of Eritrea is an integral part of the history of the Third World. Before the First World War, imperialism enjoyed worldwide supremacy. The victories of the Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions dealt serious blows to imperialism and inspired the toiling masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America to intensify their anti-colonialist struggles. Imperialism was forced to change tactics by replacing colonialism with neocolonialism that allowed for nominal independence. Most countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America today are found under this new form of imperialist domination.

It is in the nature of imperialism for a particular region to be the centre of a fierce struggle between the world revolution and world reaction in any specific time. During the last 30 years, such a centre was Southeast Asia in general and the Vietnamese revolution - in particular.

Today, it is the Middle East in general and its southern flank in particular. It is essential that revolutionary forces be aware of this, lest they be caught by surprise or, worse still, become imperialism's unwitting ally. Imperialism has already begun to operate according to a definite plan in this region. It is playing its last rearguard tactics in Southeast Asia. The brilliant victories of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have made a great contribution to the struggle of the oppressed peoples and nations against imperialism.

The world revolution should now carefully look at the struggle in the southern flank of the Middle East. The recent events in the region are not isolated, coincidental facts. They are parts of one intricate imperialist jigsaw. The war in Eritrea, the events in Ethiopia, the harassment of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (P.D.R.Y.), the efforts to contain the Palestinian revolution, the Iranian invasion of Dhofar, and the concerted imperialist movements in the Arabian Gulf cannot be fully understood otherwise. These events are clearly an orchestrated preliminary phase of a protracted war between progress and reaction.

ERITREA'S STRATEGIC LOCATION

Eritrea is located at the cross-roads of the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, which contains three-fourths of the world's proven oil reserves. It is an African country with close ties with the Arab World. With over 1000 km. of coastline along the Red Sea, Eritrea occupies "one of the most

important strategic areas in the world" at the entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. Eritrea also possesses abundant oil, natural gas, copper, potash, gold, iron ore and other minerals. The economic and strategic significance of Eritrea and its neighbours in the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf has increasingly made them the centre of armed confrontation between reactionary forces led by imperialism and progressive forces led by the national liberation movements.

With its military defeat in Indochina, U.S. imperialism has devised the policy of "Vietnamization" - arming local puppets to carry on counter-revolutionary wars on its behalf. In the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, U.S. imperialism is arming the reactionary regimes of Israel, Iran and Ethiopia, etc. to serve as its regional watchdogs against national liberation movements.

U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism have been conspiring to undermine the Palestinian revolution. The strivings of U.S. imperialism to settle the "Arab-Israeli" conflict is primarily directed at isolating the Palestinian people's struggle and preventing the further radicalization of the toiling Arab masses.

U.S. imperialism has also been heavily arming the Iranian puppet regime to serve as its gendarme in the Arabian Gulf region. Here, the people of Oman have been waging a war of national liberation against the regime of Sultan Qaboos. The puppet regime and its imperialist masters have failed to break the heroic determination of the Omani people, fighting under the leadership of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (P.F.L.O.). This has led the U.S. to instigate Iranian military aggression against the Omani revolution. The Shah's regime has annexed Omani islands to its empire. The Iranian invasion force of 11,000 troops in Oman's Dhofar region is also harassing and provoking the P.D.R.Y. Furthermore, the U.S. has recently acquired the Omani island of Messirah as a base from which it can reinforce its imperialist domination of, and counter-revolutionary subversion, in the region.

To secure its strategic and economic interests in Eritrea, U.S. imperialism, in collaboration with its zionist agents, has used its stooge, the Ethiopian feudal regime, to suppress the aspirations of the Eritrean people for national liberation. Israel maintains the Eritrean islands of Fatmah and Haleb as naval bases and provides counter-insurgency training for Ethiopian army commandoes fighting the Eritrean revolution. The U.S. maintains the Kagnew Military Communications Base in the Eritrean capital of Asmara which, at an altitude of 7,600 feet near the equator, is interference-free and indispensable to the worldwide military intelligence and spying system of U.S. imperialism. In return, the U.S. has been the main prop of the Ethiopian regime and armed forces. Since 1953, Ethiopia

has been receiving more than half of all U.S. military aid to Africa. The Ethiopian army, air force and navy are U.S. trained and equipped. Without this vital U.S. support Ethiopia could not have occupied and waged its war of aggression against Eritrea for the last 14 years.

However, even this massive U.S. military assistance could not stave off its defeat. In fact, the position of the Ethiopian occupation army in Eritrea has deteriorated so much that the military junta had urgently requested the U.S. for and has been receiving emergency air-lift of arms and ammunition. Thus, U.S. imperialism is stepping up its military supplies to the Ethiopian occupation army waging a war of genocide against the Eritrean people.

World imperialism, headed by the U.S., has always tried to reverse the inevitable motion of history toward independence, liberation and revolution. U.S. intervention in Indochina dates back to 1945 when it supported and financed France to recolonize Vietnam. Later, in the 1960's, it committed direct aggression by deploying over half a million troops in Vietnam.

Massive U.S. support notwithstanding, Portuguese fascism and colonialism have been shattered by the struggle of the peoples of Guinea (Bissau), Mozambique and Angola for national liberation as well as the democratic struggles of the Portuguese people. The same fate awaits U.S. imperialism and its stooges in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Azania.

Today, despite its military defeats and reverses in Indochina and elsewhere in the world, its intervention in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa has become the main threat to peace and progress. The Eritrean revolution and the other revolutions in this strategic region should thus be viewed in the overall context of the real and growing danger of U.S. imperialist intervention and aggression.

HISTORY OF AGGRESSION AND RESISTANCE

Due to its strategic location, Eritrea has been a victim of colonial aggression and expansion since the sixteenth century. The people of Eritrea have vigorously and heroically fought the Ottoman Turks (1557-1865), the Egyptian expansionists (1865-1875), and the Italian (1869-1941) and British (1941-1952) colonialists respectively.

In 1952, the then U.S. dominated United Nations forced Eritrea into a pseudo-federation with the land-locked feudal Ethiopian Empire. This imperialist instigated federation was contrary to the wishes and legitimate aspirations of the Eritrean

people for national independence. In 1962, the now deposed and disgraced regime of Emperor Haile Selassie unilaterally abrogated the federal resolution, and forcibly annexed Eritrea, declaring it the "14th province of the Ethiopian Empire".

The federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, and its subsequent annexation, was dictated by the overriding interests of world imperialism, headed by the U.S. The Ethiopian occupation of Eritrea is now maintained by the imperialists and Zionists whose interests it serves.

Thus, for centuries on end colonialists, and now pro-imperialist African expansionists, have invaded Eritrea, erased its boundaries and confiscated its wealth. They have tried to falsify the history of Eritrea, arrest its socio-economic development, and suppress the languages and cultural life of its people. In short, colonialism has been robbing the Eritrean people of their natural resources, the fruits of their labour, their democratic and national rights and human dignity.

The Eritrean people have consistently risen up to redress these historical injustices. Never in their history have they accepted foreign domination and oppression low-headed. Today, the Eritrean people are fighting to liberate their country from the clutches of Ethiopian colonialism, U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism. The present war of national liberation is therefore a continuation of the historic struggle of the Eritrean people against colonial domination and for national independence.

ARMED STRUGGLE BEGINS

The Eritrean people started the armed struggle in 1961, under the leadership of the Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.), after all possible peaceful avenues to independence were blocked. The struggles of the colonial and neocolonial peoples for independence have amply demonstrated that, in this epoch of declining imperialism, there can be no real decolonization by peaceful means.

To be successful, however, these struggles must be rooted in the masses and guided by a correct political and ideological line. The axiom that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" has been proved by the Eritrean experience. The Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.) lacked a correct revolutionary line. There were many internal contradictions. The reactionary leadership followed an opportunist line both at home and abroad. The democratic and progressive elements strove for the adoption of a correct

revolutionary line and programme. From 1965 to 1970, a protracted, bitter struggle was waged within the E.L.F. during which the struggle for national liberation suffered a number of setbacks. These struggles culminated in the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (E.P.L.F.) in April 1970.

The E.P.L.F. set out to unify all the progressive and democratic fighters who opposed the opportunist line and rejected the reactionary leadership of the General Command of the E.L.F. It established a democratic front and correctly defined the objectives of the Eritrean revolution, clarifying its minimum and maximum programmes. It has consistently called for a democratic dialogue to resolve the internal contradictions of the revolution. According to Vanguard (the monthly journal of the E.P.L.F., No. 8, July 1974), the present stage of national democratic revolution aims to liberate Eritrea from foreign domination and gain national independence.

The Eritrean struggle is national because it unites all patriotic classes and nationalities in Eritrea against colonialism, imperialism and Zionism and fights to regain their national rights. It is democratic because it represents the basic interests and aspirations of the toiling masses and struggles to attain their social liberation. Based on the alliance of workers and peasants and guided by proletarian ideology, the national democratic revolution is laying the foundation for the upcoming socialist transformation of Eritrean society.

On the other hand, the opportunist and reactionary "Revolutionary Council" (R.C.) clique of the E.L.F., unable to distinguish between the primary and secondary contradictions of the revolution, hence their correct and incorrect methods of revolution, launched the civil war to liquidate the E.P.L.F. which it characterized as the "counter-revolution". The incorrect line of the R.C. clique and its sectarian politics have split the ranks of the Eritrean struggle and caused it enormous harm.

Despite the difficulties created by the civil war, the E.P.L.F. has been able to mobilize, organize and lead the masses in the struggle for liberation. To assure the success of the national democratic revolution, the E.P.L.F. persistently strives to raise the political consciousness and the ideological level of the fighters as well as the masses. It has wiped out illiteracy from among its fighters and launched a program of intensive political education to eliminate the backward sentiments that were the inevitable remnants of the sectarian politics of the E.L.F. It is laying the groundwork for a

protracted war of national liberation on the basis of national unity and self-reliance, that is, primary reliance upon the energy and resources of the toiling Eritrean masses. The E.P.L.F. has built a politically conscious people's army that is committed to the total eradication of all forms of foreign domination and social oppression - be it class, national or sex.

Today, the Eritrean people are united more than ever before to drive out the Ethiopian occupationists and their imperialist-zionist backers. They have cleared the Ethiopian colonizing army from the countryside and isolated it in the urban centres. Now in its 14th year, the Eritrean struggle has become the longest independence struggle in Africa. Yet, it is little known and even less understood. What confuses many people is the nature of the enemy that the Eritrean people are fighting against. They are not fighting an European colonial power, but a reactionary African expansionist regime that has forcibly occupied their country and turned it into a base of imperialism and zionism. The reactionary, backward and puppet nature of Haile Selassie's regime has always been obvious. Today, however, the Eritrean people are confronted with a reactionary but deceitful enemy waving the banner of socialism.

Whether under Haile Selassie's autocracy or the new military regime, the toiling masses of Eritrea and Ethiopia have always faced the same enemies. The democratic struggles of the Ethiopian people and the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people together brought about the downfall of the old regime. Although the uprising of the Ethiopian masses was spontaneous, totally lacking in organization and leadership, its democratic spirit was enough to scare U.S. imperialism into installing the military in power.

Once in power, the junta proclaimed the slogan of "Ethiopia First" and schemed to crush the very social forces whose struggles toppled the old regime. It swept aside and suppressed the trade union movement, the student movement and other democratic forces in the country and became a fascist military dictatorship.

While carrying out fascistic repression in Ethiopia and a war of aggression in Eritrea, the junta has declared "Ethiopian Socialism" to deceive the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses and to confuse and swindle progressive world opinion. It has even decreed the nationalization of all rural land and certain firms to this effect. However, it is doubtful that this will effect basic changes in the age-old enslavement of the peasant masses. For, who is going to implement the much

orchestrated decree? Those who have been charged with its implementation are bureaucrats and ex-military officers, many of whom are themselves landlords. Besides, no meaningful agrarian revolution is possible without the effective mobilization of the peasant masses, under the guidance of a revolutionary organization, to seize the land and to release their energy and initiative for organizing production and utilizing it for their own benefit.

The military junta has nationalized a number of foreign-owned companies and taken majority stock in others, promising to compensate the owners. At the same time, it has announced that "foreign investment will be given ample opportunities and will be assured fair and adequate returns". In effect, the junta has taken over certain minor foreign interests and expropriated the shares of some aristocrats while leaving the door wide open for foreign exploitation in such lucrative fields as mining, oil exploitation, foreign trade, tourism, etc. But, even if the nationalization were genuine, would it really serve the interests of the workers and peasants? How could it when all democratic liberties have been trampled upon? After all, the old labour relations code remains in force, the trade union movement is suppressed with its leaders in jail and the right to strike banned. In fact, government partnership with foreign capital facilitates the exploitation of workers by helping to "discipline" the labour force. Every just demand of the workers can then be branded as against the "national interest".

The character of any regime can be accurately judged not by its pronouncements alone; nor even by some of its actions taken in isolation; but fundamentally by the nature of the social forces and class interests that it represents. After all, even Nazi Germany was "national socialist" that had put many firms under state control.

Socialism is not a system that can be decreed into existence. In the era of imperialism, socialism can be established through either a proletarian revolution in the industrial capitalist nations or a national democratic revolution in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal nations. What is clear is that both processes require the forcible overthrow of the capitalist or feudo-capitalist modes of production and their attendant superstructures. Both roads necessitate the violent destruction of the existing state apparatus - the army and the bureaucracy - and its replacement by a new one in the service of the toiling classes. In short, socialism is necessarily the inevitable outcome of a violent protracted struggle of the oppressed and exploited classes and the embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Ethiopia is a backward country with a literacy rate of less than 3%. More than 90% of its people live on subsistence. Over 60% of the peasantry are tenants. There is only one doctor for every 80,000 people. The urban population is less than 5%, with about 0.5% of the labour force engaged in wage labour. The dominant mode of production is feudal, with the vast majority of the peasantry still condemned to servitude. Besides, the Oromo, Somali, Tigrean, Afar, Gurage, and other nationalities are ruthlessly oppressed by a pro-imperialist Amhara ruling class. The Ethiopian regime not only subjugates the Somali people in the Hand and Ogaden regions but also continues to entertain expansionist ambitions over Jibuti and the Somali Democratic Republic. Ethiopia also continues its forcible colonization of Eritrea.

The junta has vowed to fight the Eritrean national liberation struggle "to the last drop of blood". Not only is the war of aggression a terrible human and economic burden to the Ethiopian masses, but also the very source of their continued enslavement. For, as Marx said, "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations".

How then can backward, feudal Ethiopia transform itself into a socialist Ethiopia? Experience in China, Vietnam, the P.D.R.U. and other countries shows that the Ethiopian people would have to wage a national democratic revolution, which would lay the foundation for the socialist transformation of their society. The national democratic revolution would be victorious only as a result of a protracted revolutionary struggle against feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism. The national democratic revolution, as well as the subsequent socialist revolution, must be guided by the proletarian ideology of scientific socialism and based on the worker-peasant alliance. A people's democratic Ethiopia would also recognize the right of the Eritrean people to national independence.

Who then are these men in uniform who have decreed socialism into existence as a result of a "bloodless revolution" in Ethiopia? What class do they represent and what is their ideological basis? The military officers who presently rule Ethiopia come from the right wing of the petty-bourgeoisie. Many of them like the chairman of the junta were trained and groomed in the United States. The military junta has weakened the political power of the aristocracy and the landlord class but has left untouched the commercial and comprador bourgeoisie.

The military junta is ideologically bankrupt. Early in September when it deposed Haile Selassie, the junta put forward the slogan "Ethiopia First" and declared its intention to form an "anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-communist" regime. Three months later in December, it declared that its

"political philosophy" was "Ethiopian Socialism". The declaration of December 20, 1974 states, "The political philosophy should spring from the culture and soil of Ethiopia and not be imported from abroad. This philosophy which emanates from one great religion which teach the equality of man and from our tradition of living and sharing together as well from our history so replete with national sacrifice is Hibre Hesebawinet (Ethiopian Socialism). Hibre Hesebawinet means equality, self-reliance; the dignity of labor; the supremacy of the common good; and the indivisibility of Ethiopian unity."

A glaring self-exposure of the bankruptcy of "Ethiopian Socialism" which has nothing in common with scientific socialism. Genuine socialism is based on: science, not religion; the experience of the toiling masses throughout the world, not the feudal traditions of Ethiopia; calls for the dictatorship of the exploited over the exploiting classes, not for abstract "equality", "common good", etc.; proclaims the right of nations and colonies to self-determination, not the forcible "unity" of a country.

The seemingly progressive slogans and declarations of the Ethiopian junta are thus so many words to deceive the broad masses of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples as well as progressive world opinion. The reactionary, pro-imperialist and fascistic nature of the Ethiopian regime becomes crystal clear when one looks at its practice.

The military junta has deprived the Ethiopian masses of the basic democratic gains they had won after hard struggle. It has outlawed strikes and protest demonstrations, suppressed the freedoms of speech, press and assembly, including the right to form political parties. It has dispersed the students, who are vocally opposed to it, to the countryside under the guise of spreading literacy among the peasantry. With none of the contradictions that led to the February uprising resolved, the Ethiopian people are still groaning under the ravages of famine, disease, unemployment and repression.

Despite its anti-imperialist pretensions, the Ethiopian junta is nothing but a tool of U.S. imperialism. It has reassured the U.S. imperialists and the Israeli Zionists of continued use of their military bases in Eritrea. U.S. and Israeli military experts still train and advise the Ethiopian army. Consistent with imperialist propaganda against Afro-Arab solidarity, the Ethiopian junta has raised hue and cry about supposed Arab invasion of black Africa. Outdoing Haile Selassie, it has hinted its readiness to resume diplomatic relations with Israel. The junta even boasts of the fact that Ethiopia participated in the imperialist aggression against the peoples of Korea and the Congo. Major Mengistu, the so-called strongman

of the junta declared in a speech on February 18, 1975 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 interests of international peace and security". What an anti-imperialist!

Nowhere is the reactionary, fascistic essence of the junta more clearly evident than in its actions in Eritrea. It has vowed to draw in blood the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people. How can a socialist regime continue to forcibly occupy a country whose people have made their desire for independence absolutely clear? How can a socialist regime deliberately commit barbarous atrocities on unarmed men, women and children? All Socialist and even democratic regimes recognize the right of oppressed peoples to self-determination. Thus Ethiopia which is oppressing Eritrea is neither Socialist nor democratic. The Ethiopian junta has nothing to do with socialism, but is a fascist junta waving the banner of socialism. As Marx and Engels remarked about feudal socialism, the junta, "in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter".

THE STRUGGLE SURGES

Vowing to mobilize "six million reservists" more, the Ethiopian military junta has committed 60% of its armed forces to its war of aggression in Eritrea. There is a tremendous escalation of the war now, with the liberation forces enjoying the upper hand. The liberation forces of both the E.P.L.F. and the R.C., who are more united than ever and have launched many joint attacks, are winning fresh victories. They have administered a well-coordinated series of brilliantly planned and heroically executed military blows against Ethiopian naval, air and army bases and installations in the urban areas.

The Ethiopian occupation army, despite its superiority in numbers and materiel, is being harassed, attacked and annihilated in its strongholds with heroic boldness and daring. The Eritrean liberation forces are scoring stunning victories. With its morale sapped and its will to fight exhausted, the Ethiopian occupation army has already suffered humiliating defeat. In frustration, the army has let itself loose upon the civilian population. It is raining bullets and bombs on the Eritrean people. Trying to mobilize the Ethiopian masses against their class brothers in Eritrea, it is daily whipping up anti-Eritrean chauvinist hysteria.

The Ethiopian fascist junta is exploiting the ignorance and backwardness of the oppressed Ethiopian masses. It slanders the valiant Eritrean freedom fighters as "a handful of bandits" trying to "sell Eritrea to the Arabs". It claims Eritrea as its "14th province", just as fascist Portugal used to claim its African ex-colonies as its "overseas provinces". Colonialism has always used violence and lies as its main weapons. But, as A. Cabral states, when the colonizer is a fascist regime, when its own people are poor and largely illiterate who neither know nor enjoy the fundamental human rights; when furthermore its economy is underdeveloped, as in the case of Ethiopia, then "violence and lies reach an unparalleled height", and its brutalization of the Eritrean people knows no limits. It is carrying out barbarous massacres and atrocious mutilations of civilians and looting their property.

Of course, this is not new to the Eritrean people. It is a culmination of the fascist terror that the Ethiopian expansionists have habitually administered on the Eritrean people in reprisal for their military defeats. However, the result has consistently been the same: the steeling of the resolve of the Eritrean people to fight and of their determination to win.

The Eritrean revolution has now become the key to revolution in Ethiopia. The victory of the forces of national liberation in Eritrea will help smash fascism in Ethiopia. The Eritrean struggle will not only liberate the Eritrean masses, but will also make a worthy contribution to the liberation of the Ethiopian peoples. After summing up their experiences, the toiling masses of Ethiopia are bound to rise up. For the moment, however, the Eritrean national liberation struggle is the only organized revolutionary force fighting and exposing the junta's fascism and its client nature to U.S. imperialism. It is the valiant struggle of the Eritrean people that is shaking the fascist junta to its very foundations. Indeed, the heroic Eritrean people, along with the toiling Ethiopian masses, are destined to sweep away the fascist junta into the junkyard of history in the footsteps of Haile Selassie.

It took over 30 years of struggle and sacrifice to defeat U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and Indochina. Despite this experience, however, there exists a real danger that U.S. imperialism will escalate its intervention in Eritrea. Recognizing this, all progressive forces should extend the Eritrean revolution full political and material support and oppose U.S. military aid to Ethiopia.

The struggle of the Eritrean people is a struggle against colonial domination and for national independence and democracy. The Eritrean liberation forces represent freedom and justice

and enjoy the whole-hearted support of the Eritrean masses. On the other hand, the Ethiopian army is fighting to occupy and dominate. It represents oppression and tyranny. It is hated and resisted by the whole Eritrean people. No matter who supports it and to whatever extent, its defeat is inevitable. Guided by the correct revolutionary line of the E.P.L.F. and supported by progressive and democratic forces the world over, the Eritrean people are bound to win.

In the final analysis, it is essential to recognize that the national liberation movement has become the motive force of world revolution. The African national liberation struggles are the vanguard of the African revolution. It is only after the complete liberation of the African peoples that their genuine unity is possible.



Recent Political & Military Events in Eritrea

In the months proceeding the recent escalation of the Anti-Colonial War in Eritrea, the Ethiopian Junta had been preparing for a massive military offensive to crush the Eritrean Revolution. Towards this end the Junta, with the U.S. fully behind it, embarked on a two-pronged campaign. Overseas, the Junta delegated an assorted lot of officials to dissuade sympathizers of the Revolution from continuing to do so. Exploiting the genuine desire of the African and Arab peoples for peace and socialism it stated its desire for a "peaceful solution". While still working hand in gloves with the imperialists, the regime announced that Ethiopia has become a 'socialist state'.

In Eritrea, the Junta attempted to create a third force by appointing chiefs and religious leaders as its negotiating counterparts. With the liberation fighters out of the picture, the Junta hoped to get a sellout settlement. At the same time it reached itself for a military solution through a steady inflow of additional troops, munitions and vehicles that amassed 80% of the Ethiopian army on Eritrean soil.

The Eritrean liberation forces, aware of the danger hovering over the Revolution took certain steps to confront it. The insane Civil War launched by the Revolutionary Council, the reactionary leadership of ELF was stopped. The clear voice of the Eritrean people, which considered the Liberation Fighters as their sole representative prevented the appointed Eritreans from playing any traitorous role. A concerted effort was undertaken to prepare the masses for the defense of the revolution as well as their lives and property. Internationally Ethiopia's duplicity was exposed and the mission of the delegates sent to Arab and African countries ended in total failure.

Having failed in both ventures Ethiopia has gone back to its old position. It has continued the preceding regimes counter-revolutionary war, only this time on a larger scale. In response to the punishing attacks from the Eritrean Liberation Fighters, the Ethiopian regime has once again vented its rage at the unarmed population. Conservative estimates of innocent killed by aerial bombing and napalm, machine gun and bayonets put the number at more than 4,000. Ethiopian troops went into a wild shooting spree, "shooting at anything that moves". The Washington Post report on February 14, 1975 that the soldiers broke into homes, looting them, then killing the residents ---- Many women had their earlobes hacked off with bayonets by soldiers stealing earrings. In the village of Wol Duba, Ethiopian troops rounded up the villagers, whom they accused of aiding the guerrillas, and ordered them into a church. Then they started firing 100 villagers were killed including four priests as well as women and children."

These barbarous massacres have only furthered the peoples' trust in the liberation forces as their only saviour. On their part, the Liberation Forces adequately prepared have handed initiating defeats to the aggressors.

Following is a summary of the battlefield victories administered on the Ethiopian occupation army, as released by the military communique of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Forces (E.P.L.F.).

1. On Friday - 1/31/75 at 7:30 P.M. units of E.P.L.F. made a concerted attack on the headquarters of the Ethiopian Army and Navy, in the center of Asmara. Using mortars and automatic weapons they hit and destroyed enemy military installations. In the fighting that raged till morning many Ethiopian soldiers were killed and wounded while in their barracks.

2. On Saturday - 2/1/75 Ethiopian troops supported by planes and heavy artillery went out to 3 villages, 14 km west of Asmara, and engaged the Eritrean fighters. The Liberation Forces, composed of frontline Revolutionary Council members and the E.P.L.F., in a swift and methodically executed campaign totally annihilated the enemy soldiers. Later another big force of Ethiopian troops was sent to an area 5 km north of Asmara. This force was not only successfully halted by the E.P.L.F., but a heavy loss was inflicted on it as well. In a few hours 5 enemy planes were shot down and the Ethiopian troops were dislodged from the village of Beleza.

3. Sunday morning (2/2/75) saw more enemy reinforcement of ground forces with a large support of armed cars and artillery. In the ensuing battle the revolutionaries cut short the enemy's intention of reoccupying Beleza and Emba Dorho. He was forced to take heavy casualties on his troops and equipment.

4. On Monday (2/3/75) at 6:00 P.M., fighting continued around Beleza and Adei Nefas. Using captured enemy weapons, the villagers: men and women, the old and the young, heroically fought on the side of the fighters. The waves of planes and the heavy artillery used by the enemy were unable to help him make good his aim of seizing Beleza. In this battle the Ethiopian army sustained its heaviest losses yet. Besides the many killed and wounded, 13 soldiers were taken prisoners, the rest fleeing to their barracks in Asmara. Various types of enemy weapons were captured including 150 American made (M-14) automatic guns, one 75 m.m. gun, 4 field radios and innumerable ammunition and hand grenades.

In the evening E.P.L.F. commandos destroyed the enemy's electric generator plant in Asmara.

5. On 2/4/75, under cover of darkness, an E.P.L.F. unit slipped into and attacked the 35th Brigade Camp in Asmara. The shelling of the camp resulted in the destruction of the buildings and the burning of several cars and trucks. The freedom fighters returned to their position with 36 captured guns.

6. On the 6th and 7th, using anti-tank weapons, E.P.L.F. attacked a convoy of 52 tanks, 20 armored cars and several supply tracks, which was heading north towards Asmara. A large part of this column was put out of action. The rest was bogged down and unable to proceed further.

7. At 10:00 P.M. 2/8/75 another reinforcement of 25 arms--carrying tracks was again trapped between Decamere and Asmara by seeded mines. After intense fighting, this column was very heavily damaged. Fourteen soldiers were taken prisoners. Two tracks (MARG) with 900 French made guns (MAAS) and a vast amount of ammunitions were also captured.

8. On the evening of 2/8/75 an E.P.L.F. commando force together with front-line unit of the Revolutionary Council hit the widely known Kagnas military base. In the base, where thousands of recently arrived Ethiopian troops have encamped, an armoured car and a heavy artillery weapon were destroyed. The revolutionary force burned a large number of cars and left the oil depots flaming.



February 11/1975

Urgent Call to the
Humanitarian Conscience
of all Peace Loving Peoples of the World

At this time, when the Eritrean revolution is waging a better struggle against the colonizing forces of the Ethiopian regime, and where it has scored continuous heroic victory over the occupation forces, the Ethiopian Military junta is committing the most barbaric and fascist crimes against hundreds of thousands of Eritrean civilians. On 10-11/2/75, Ethiopian Air Force planes dropped napalm bombs over all the villages to the north and west of Asmara. This savage bombing left 2,500 dead, and more than 100,000 people - old men, women, and children - have been forced to leave their demolished homes and scatter to the surrounding countryside. With gushing winds untended, severe after-effects of napalm, burning, hunger and thirst, they face slow extermination.

The Eritrean People's Liberation Forces thus makes this urgent appeal to the conscience of all humanity to work to save the Eritrean people from the verdict of mass annihilation being inflicted on them by the fascist Ethiopian military regime. The present fascist crime of the Ethiopian military junta is the culmination of the continuous barbaric repression of the Eritrean people by the last regime. Our people have continuously suffered untold crimes since our nation's forceful annexation by Haile Selassie regime in 1962. It is to be remembered that through the perpetration of continuous bombing and burning of defenseless peasants, villages, livestock and crops, the last regime has annihilated hundreds of thousands of innocent Eritreans, and forced more than 70,000 to run for their lives and take refuge in the Sudan. Ethiopia's fascist leaders, past and present, have thus carried out indiscriminate mass murder of defenceless peasants, burning of villages in entire regions, killing of livestock, and burning of crops in order to ensure their forceful occupation of Eritrea.

The only crime our people have committed is to ask for their just human and national rights, and to pick up arms after their peaceful efforts were brutally responded to by Ethiopian bullets.

In face of the barbaric crimes being committed by the Ethiopian military regime, which are similar to the inhuman fascist mass extermination drives of Hitler's regime, we urgently call on all progressive forces, and all peace loving humanity to move to save the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans that are threatened by mass extermination. We also urge all peoples, governments and organizations to condemn the barbaric crimes of the Ethiopians military regime, and to stand firmly with the Eritrean people in their just struggle for national liberation.

The Central Command,
Eritrean People's Liberation Forces

The Revolution In The Gulf

The current situation in the Gulf region is an explosive one. Direct U.S. interventionist threats have been repeated several times over the last few months. Policy makers in Washington have given ample indications of their intentions to use the military to stop what Kissinger called 'strangulation of the industrial world' by the interruption of oil supplies from the Gulf. U.S. media has been waging a psychological campaign aimed at preparing the American people for the possible eventuality of an intervention. The campaign has been coupled with several releases of documentary films, depicting Marine units training on the takeover of oil wells in the area. The Gulf region has received the widest coverage in the media since 1970.

The genesis of Washington's occupation with the Gulf affairs goes back to the late sixties. This came as a result of significant changes within the imperialist camp coupled with the successes achieved by the revolutionary and democratic forces over the last decade. Several elements have contributed to the change in relationships among the imperialist powers. The first element was the British decision in January 1968 to end its military commitment to the security of the imperialist interests in the Gulf region. The British move did not mean a disengagement from the Gulf affairs, rather it was a realignment of their role in line with the overall weakness of the ailing British Empire and an attempt to concentrate this limited capacity to face the most imminent danger to imperialist interests in the area emanating from the rising revolution in Oman led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the occupied Arab Gulf (now called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman; PFLO). American policy makers were further alarmed by the gravity of the world oil and energy situation. The Gulf area supplies around sixty percent of the oil consumed by the Industrial Western world: Western Europe, North America and Japan. This concern extends itself to the issue of security of oil supply routes where revolutionary changes in Southern Arabia and East Africa are viewed as direct threats to the continued flow.

The rising strategic importance of the Gulf area in relation to the imperialist network presented a serious problem to CENTO and NATO strategic planners in view of the rising revolutionary and democratic tide. The independence and the eventual accession to power of the left wing of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen coupled with the successes achieved by the PFLO were particularly alarming to these planners. The clear indications of an organized and militant working class and democratic movements in Bahrain, Saudi

Arabia and Kuwait was another source of alarm. Furthermore, the question of Palestine, particularly the galvanizing and mobilizing affects of the National Liberation Movement of the Palestinian people (more commonly known as the Palestinian Resistance) presented imperialist circles with a special challenge since it forced a material link between the struggle in the Gulf region and the struggle waging in the Palestine theatre.

In the period extending from 1968 to the end of 1971 a behind-the-scenes inter-imperialist rivalry ensued to create a new political structure capable of maintaining their respective interests. The rivalry was primarily between the British attempts to maintain the biggest possible presence as opposed to an all-out American arrangement. The net results were: 1. the creation of the independent states of Bahrain and Qatar. 2. the unification of the seven Sheikdoms on the Trucial Coast of Oman into the United Arab Emirates. 3. A face lifting operation for the despotic rule in Oman. The arch reactionary ruler Said Bin Taymur was replaced by the present ruler Qabus Bin Taymur, his son. 4. New security arrangements ensued along the lines of the Nixon doctrine from which the Vietnamization policy was derived.

The Nixon doctrine is designed to meet U.S. global security in the post Vietnam defeat. Recognizing the impossibility of U.S. directly policing the world Nixon announced the doctrine: 1. the need to create a local super power capable of securing imperial interest. 2. the creation and the maintainance of a U.S. logistic force capable of carrying supplies and ammunition to every region whenever the local power is unable to meet challenges from the revolutionary forces. 3. The ultimate U.S. intervention in the event that the first two security rims are unable to withstand revolutionary upsurge. In the Gulf Iran was chosen as the local gendarme. Military supplies to the Shah exceeded the two billion dollar mark in the period 1970 to 1972. More than twice that amount has been invested in building the Shah's forces since 1972. The Iranian forces have been equipped with an overwhelming airforce whose main striking force is the F-4 Phantom and Skyhawk airplanes. Recently FY-15 and FY-16 airplanes have been added together with the huge C-4 and C-5 cargo planes capable of delivering armoured units, supplies and ammunitions to as far as Somalia in the horn of Africa. A Helicopter gunship fleet was also supplied.

The Iranian Navy has been refurbished with several new naval units including an Aircraft carrier, a submarine force, several patrol boats and the world largest Hoover craft striking unit. The Hoover craft force is particularly important in view of the shallowness of Gulf waters. The Iranian army has been expanded and supplied with an assortment of tanks and mechanized units. The Shah's buildup went into

its first tests against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman when he intervened in 1973 in favor of the Qabus government. However, despite the presence of several thousand Iranian troops that are highly mechanized and supported by Helicopter gunships and all the might of the Iranian airforce the Shah's forces have failed the test of its first task as the local policeman. The consequences of this failure are visible today as the U.S. has taken it on itself to directly supply and train the Qabus forces. This was announced after the panic stricken Qabus visited Washington in December 1974.

Furthermore, U.S. direct intervention is now a reality. A huge airforce base is being built on the Island of Masira off the coast of Oman.

This base is designed to play a dual role: for supplying friendly forces with needed military hardwares and to directly intervene if such forces fail to defend oil resources against a strong popular movement. U.S. threats to intervene should not be viewed as actually directed against governments of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, etc. They are in fact threats directed against the popular movements of these countries. For the United States came to realize that local forces of repression might indeed not be capable to defend the flow of oil in the face of a revolutionary upsurge. It is this fact that explains the seemingly contradictory announcement emanating from Washington; where on the one hand a threat of force is presented against these countries and on the other hand the armament of for example Saudi Arabia, is also disclosed. The Vinell corporation deal where at least 1500 ex-U.S. army personnel are hired to train, equip and expand the national guard in Saudi Arabia is nothing more than the other face of the Nixon doctrine applied to Saudi Arabia. The threat of using force is in effect a restraining attempt on the revolutionary movement until the time when Saudi Arabia is equipped to partake its responsibility in defending the oil resources in the next two or three years.

An added dimension to U.S. interest in the Gulf is the financial crises precipitated by the sudden rise of oil prices in the last few years. This problem is often referred to as the problem of the petro-dollars. The rise in oil prices caused a sudden huge transfer of dollars to the countries in the region. The United States is determined to insure the stability of pro-U.S. regimes in the area. For the continued existence of these governments is the only insurance that a substantial amount of the petro dollars is returned to the U.S. by the purchase of U.S. manufactured goods, as payments for services, deposits in U.S. banks, and of few direct investments in the American economy.

ERITREA

REVOLUTION TO LIBERATE

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