



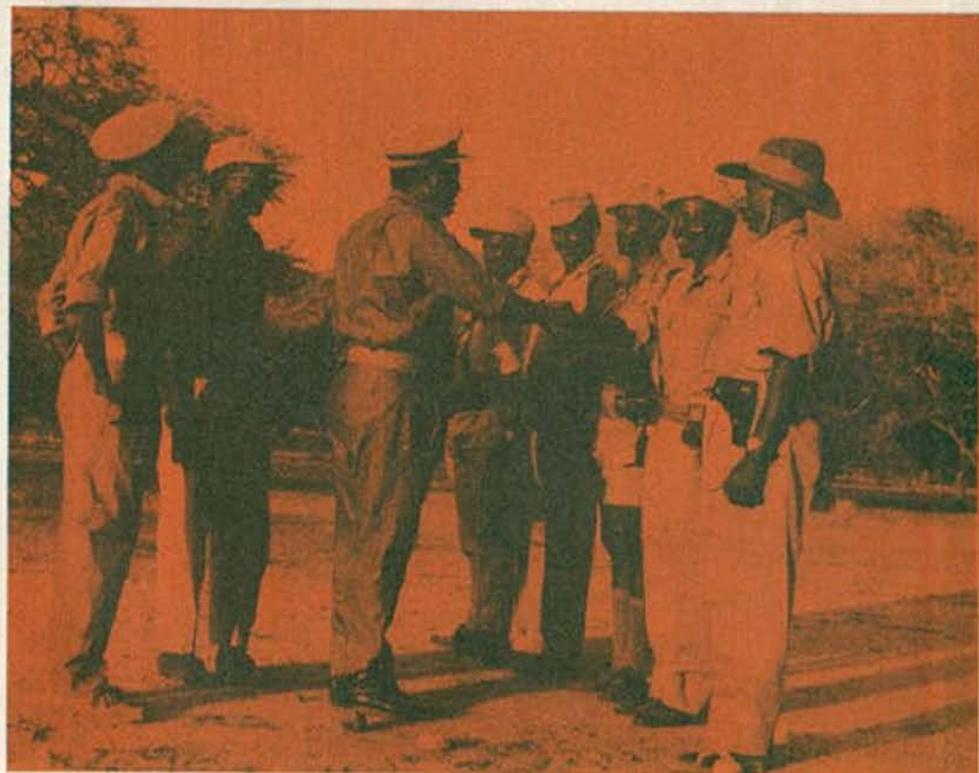
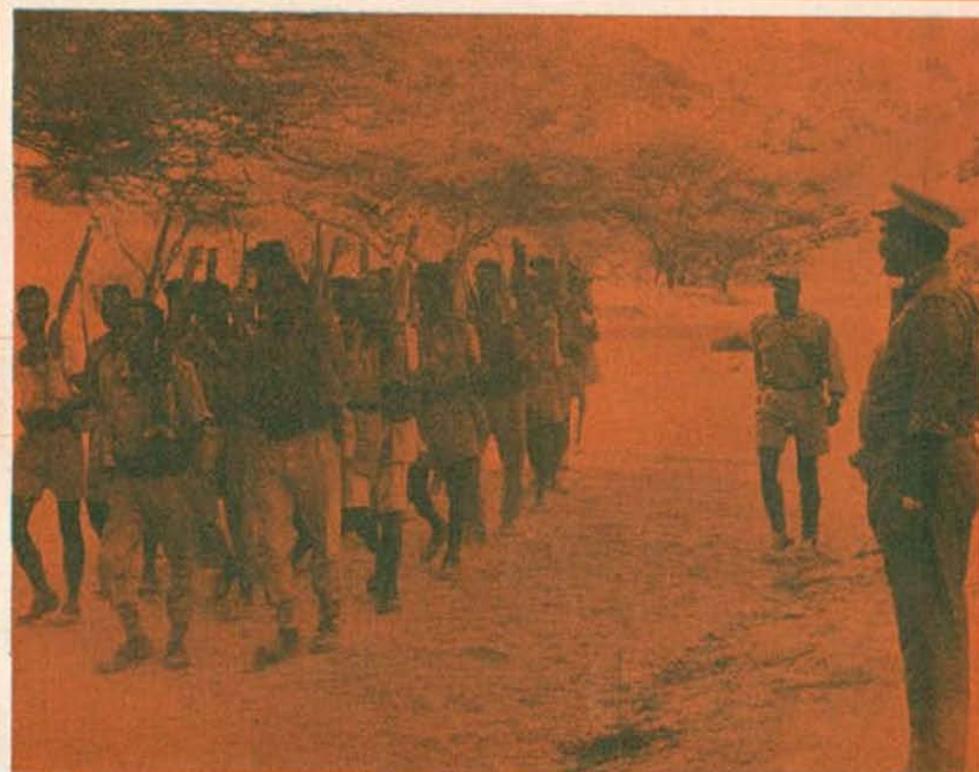
## Eritrea: Arms Against Oppression

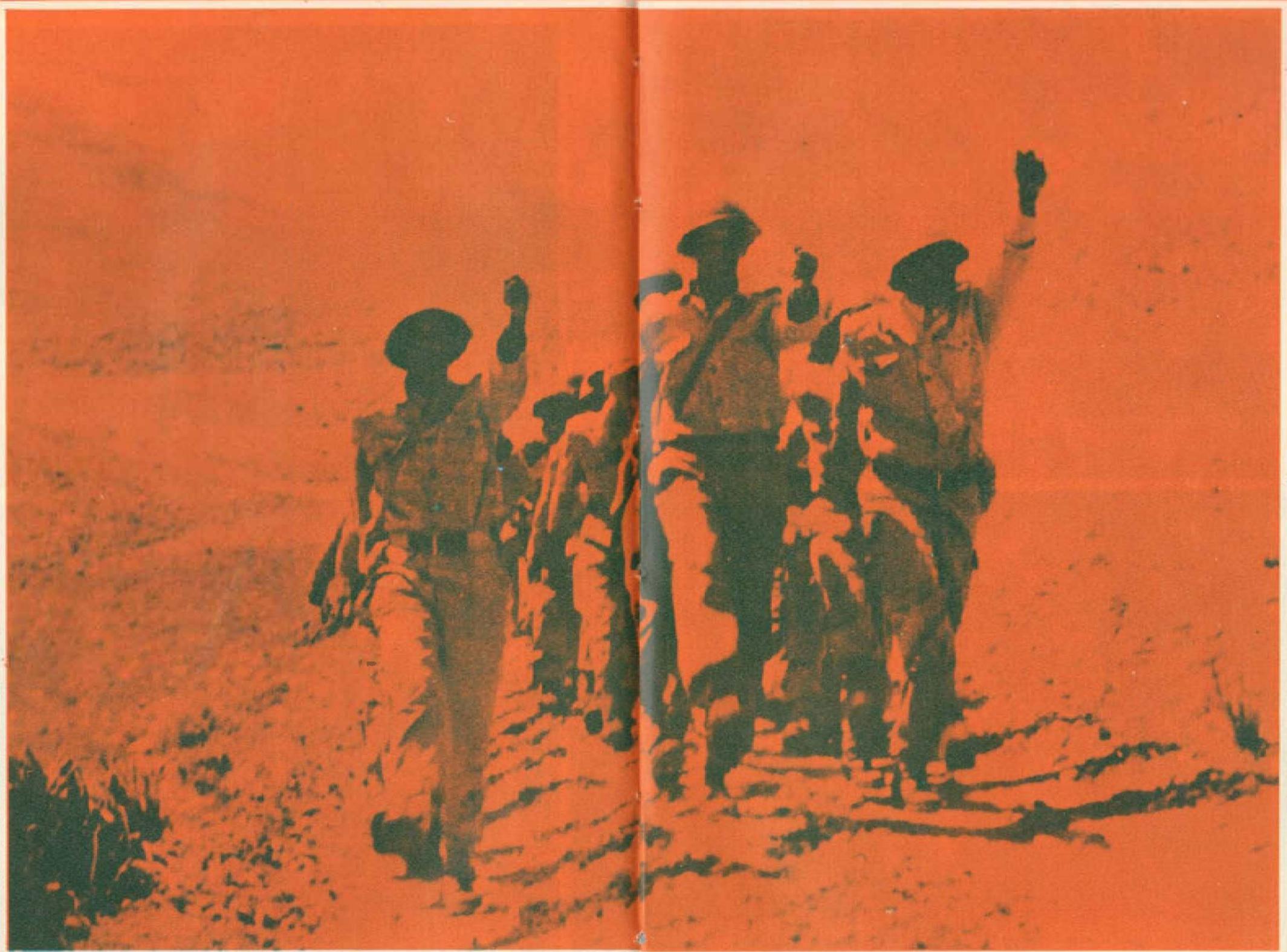
THE STRUGGLE of the Eritrean people for their freedom, their independence, and their sovereignty is the outcome of wide popular demands which have their roots deep in the pre-occupation period, when the people fought under the leadership of the Independence Block to regain their sovereignty against British colonization in the years 1941-52.

After the defeat of Italy in 1941, the national movement came into the open in the form of political parties expressing the ambitions of the people and their right to freedom, independence, and sovereignty. The colonial and imperialist forces and their agent puppet Haile Selassie tried with all their might to divide the national movement. But the will of the Eritrean people defeated all the colonial conspiracies and plans which were proposed through the United Nations, such as the proposal to join the Ethiopian Empire, the British proposal to divide Eritrea, and the Italian trustee-

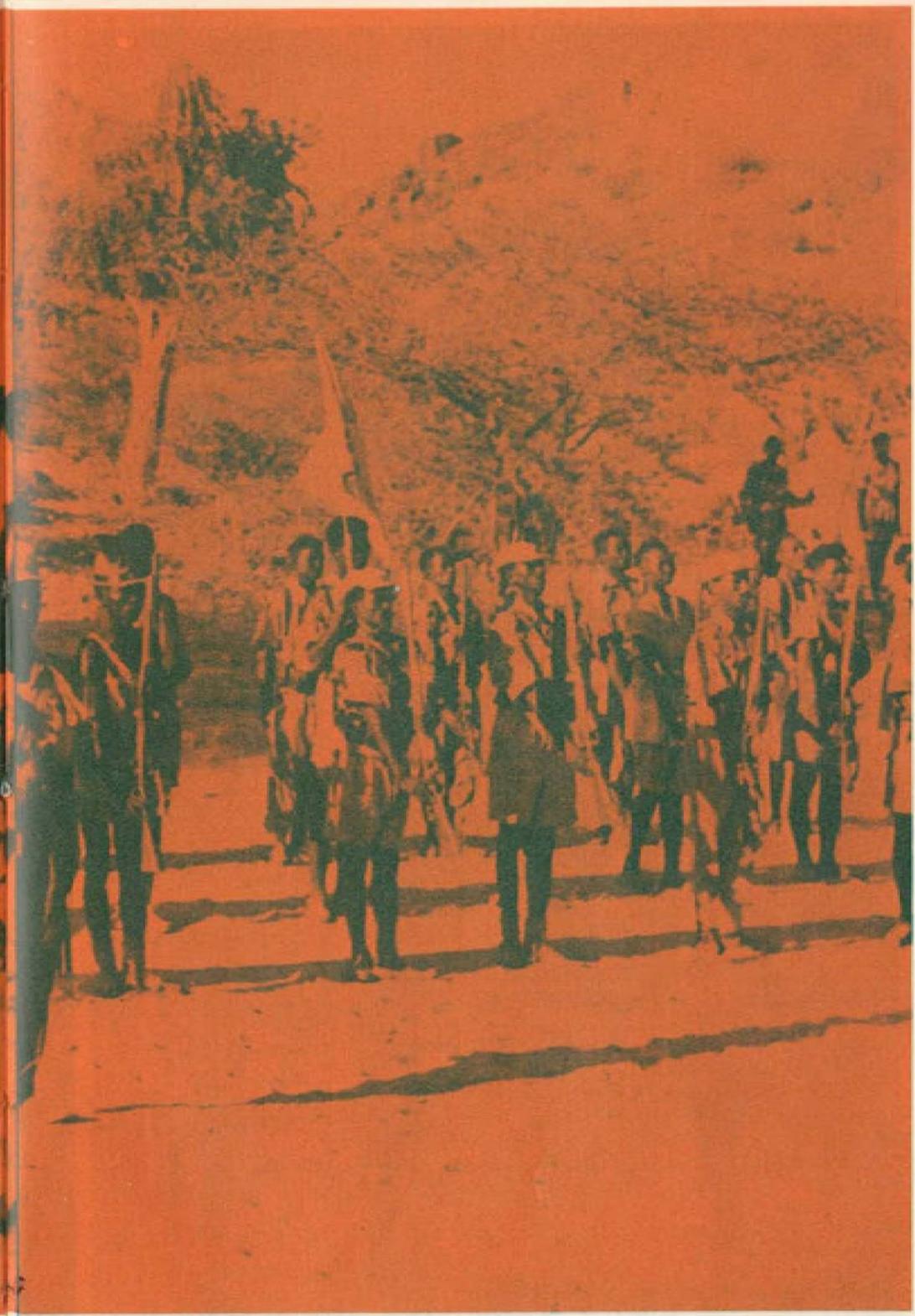
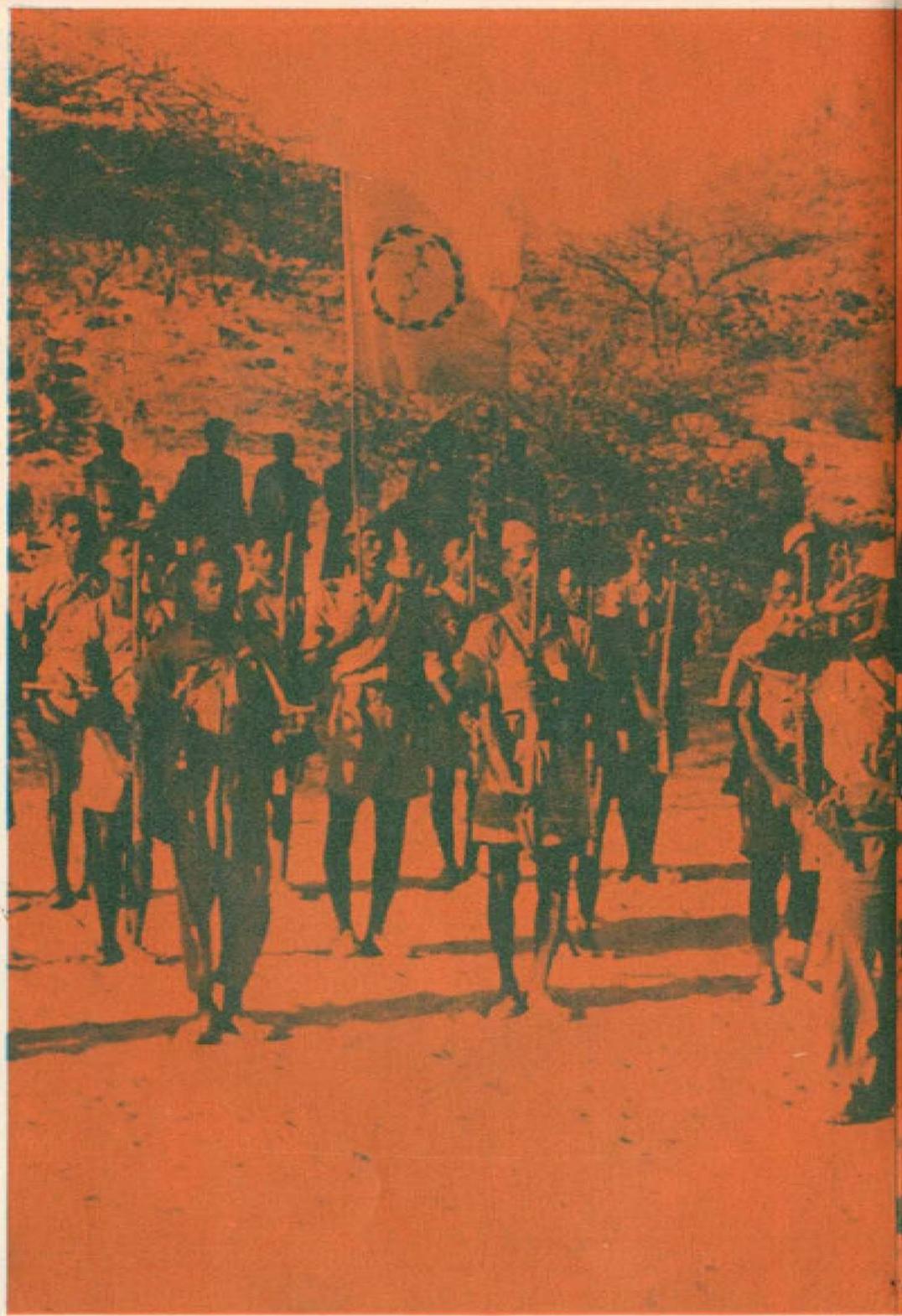
ship proposals. The United States, with all its influence in the UN General Assembly, put forward a proposal to tie Eritrea to the Ethiopian Empire in a federation. The UN approved the proposal on February 12, 1950, and it was implemented on September 15, 1952.

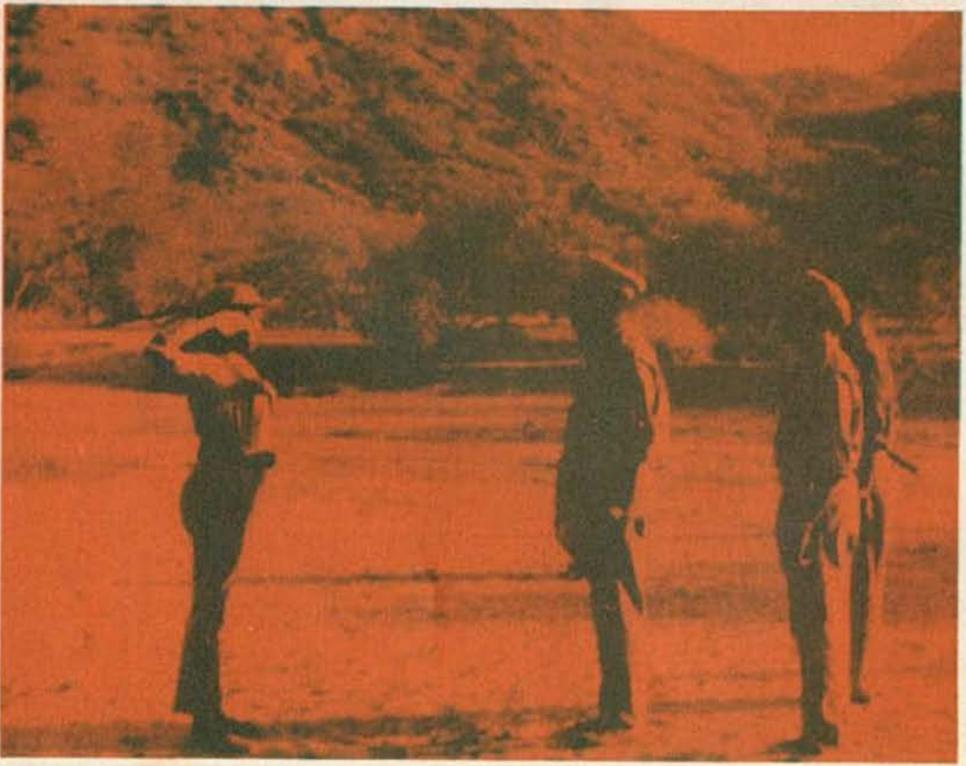
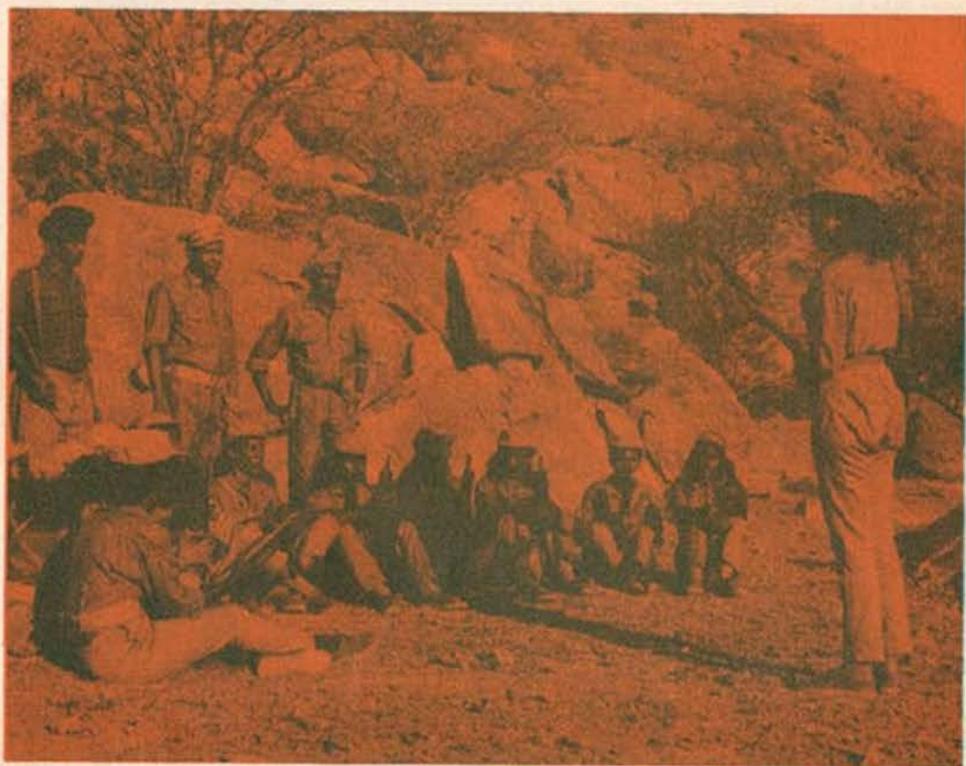
By the end of 1952, the Ethiopian occupation forces were in full control and domination of the whole territory of Eritrea. The Ethiopian authorities abolished political parties, banned the papers, filled up the prisons, removed the Eritrean flag, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the Parliament — "the Representative Assembly" — and the elected government. Furthermore, ministries and companies received instructions not to employ Eritreans, and the officials of the Ministry of Education received orders to reduce to a minimum the number of Eritrean students and the scholarships given them. The decade 1952-62 witnessed a police government in Eritrea under which thousands of Eritreans were imprisoned, tortured, and assassinated. In 1960, the Ethio-











pian repression reached its climax; the traditional political groups yielded to the enticements of Haile Selassie. The Eritrean revolutionary vanguard took the lead and formed the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) at the beginning of 1960.

On November 14, 1962, Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, unilaterally abolished the UN resolution.

The repression was evident proof to the Eritrean people that the only way to regain their rights was through armed struggle, since what they were deprived of by force can be regained only by force. At the same time, it was evident proof to the people that Ethiopia was denying and violating Eritrean sovereignty, and this is one of the factors which stimulated the revolutionary upsurge.

The Eritrean people resisted the Ethiopian occupation by peaceful means until 1961, when the revolutionary vanguard, under the direction of the ELF, decided to begin the armed struggle on September 1, 1961, with martyr Hamed Idris Awate as its leader. They were 12 people with only ten old Italian rifles. Today the Liberation Army has 8000 men equipped with modern arms, and controls the major part of the rural area of Eritrea.

The ELF is a coalition representing national unity, based on the principle of Eritrean liberation, and on armed struggle against the Ethiopian occupation as a necessary and inevitable means. Our war aims to liberate the land, to expel the occupiers and free the people and the economy, to establish a government of the working classes of our people. At this stage, the fundamental or principal contradiction is that between the Eritrean people, who

look forward to and fight for liberty, and the Ethiopian occupation engaged in the elimination of the Eritrean entity — our very existence and national being.

The object of the ELF is to force the colonialists to recognize the right of the Eritrean people to independence, and to bring the voice of our people to the attention of world public opinion and of international organizations to win their support of the people's just struggle.

The pyramidal organizational structure of the Front is composed of a supreme council, which is a politico-military instrument; then comes the revolutionary command, which is mainly a military instrument and includes political commissars and regimental and unit leaders. In the revolutionary command, the political commissars hold the same rank as the military commanders, and it is the political commissar who makes the final decision, even if the question under discussion is military. The responsibilities of the commissar include administration, education, judiciary and political guidance for the Liberation Army and for the masses.

The revolutionary forces control about two thirds of the territory of Eritrea. These liberated zones are in the rural parts of the country where the Liberation Army has cleared out the small Ethiopian camps. The Ethiopian army withdrew its forces from certain areas under the threat of a sudden commando attack. When it tried to regain control of some areas, it lost six North American fighters and 400 soldiers killed or wounded in bitter battles over a two-week period from

April 23 to May 7, 1969.

The most important recent operations of the Eritrean Liberation Front against the Ethiopian occupation are the work of the Iqab (punishment section) of the ELF. This commando group was formed at the beginning of this year and has directed the following operations to date:

The explosion of the Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 707 in Frankfurt, on March 11, 1969.

Demolition of railway lines, in the main Ethiopian railroad station at Djibouti, demolition of the railway line and the bridges between Djibouti and Ethiopia, and blowing up of the Ethiopian Consulate in Djibouti. These operations took place on May 17, 1969.

Partial demolition of the Ethiopian Central Bank in Addis Ababa, on May 19, 1969.

Attack on the Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 720 in Karachi, on June 18, 1969. The three commandos who led the operation are still under arrest in Karachi (Pakistan).

On June 19, 1969, the commando who had orders to blow up the Ethiopian Embassy in Rome in order to prevent Emperor Haile Selassie from continuing his visit to the European countries, died.

During the period between April 23, 1969, and May 7, 1969, previously mentioned, the Army of the Eritrean Liberation Front, in addition to the casualties it inflicted on the enemy, burned 13 military vehicles and blew up the principal electrical plant and electrical supply lines in the capital, Asmara.

The current aim of the ELF is to

paralyze and prevent the Ethiopian forces from moving between Eritrean cities, to gain as much maneuverability as possible, and to inflict maximum losses on the Ethiopians. We also intend to make surprise attacks on Ethiopian army centers, and on military and economic institutions in the cities, aimed at the final liquidation of Ethiopia's presence in Eritrea. This, of course, requires appropriate internal and international circumstances. We are making substantial preparations for this eventuality, beginning now, by increasing the size of the Liberation Army, improving its training, equipping it with modern arms, creating "independent" commandos and popular militia groups.

The Eritrea revolution stems, in the first place, from the aspirations of the Eritrean people for self-determination, national independence, and a national democratic state. The Front acts to win the broadest possible international support for its legitimate struggle and just cause — from all states, Arab and non Arab, of every different social system in the world.

The Front at the same time recognizes the ties and links that bind it strategically to free and progressive states — Arab and non Arab — and to the world revolutionary forces in the common fight against colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism. While it seeks the widest possible international support, the Front also guards against any control or influence that might contradict its objectives and its basic principles.

Ethiopia is a typical example of an African neocolonialist country. Under the Ethiopian occupation, a huge North American military base

has been established here. It is the base of Kagnew, in Asmara. The base serves various aggressive purposes. Its espionage activities reach out as far as the Soviet Union.

The United States gives Ethiopia half of all US military assistance that goes to Africa. To realize how important Ethiopia's reactionary regime is to North American imperialism, it is enough to quote this report from the magazine *US News & World Report*: "The importance of Kagnew base goes a long way toward explaining the heavy commitment the US has to maintaining Ethiopia's military strength..." The same article quotes a North American official as saying: "Our aid, plainly and simply, pays the rent on Kagnew base." The article continues:

Ethiopia receives more than half of all US military aid to nations on the African continent. The cost of this program has now climbed to more than 100 million dollars. And the US Military Assistance Advisory Group of some 100 officers and men in Ethiopia is the biggest in Africa. In addition, Ethiopia has received 150 million dollars in economic assistance. The United States clearly considers Ethiopia a force for stability, not only in the Horn of Africa, but in all the countries of Black Africa. In addition to its interests in Kagnew base, the US is clearly putting its money on the Ethiopia of Haile Selassie, and whoever his successor may be, as a base from which to maintain its influence in the Red Sea Basin.

Israel trains the Ethiopian commando forces and helps the Ethiopian economy with investments and modern agricultural machinery. It

established a military school in Decamare, Eritrea, to train Ethiopian soldiers in guerrilla warfare, to confront the Eritrean fighters. The school is directed by a group of Israeli officers headed by Colonel Ben Nathaw, and it has already trained some 5000 soldiers.

The Israeli officers also train the Ethiopian Marine Commando Forces, under the leadership of an Israeli Colonel called Don. The training course is two and a half years. The aims of the Marine Commando Forces are to fight the ELF along the coasts, to prevent the penetration or smuggling of arms, and to protect the Marine institutions from attacks by the revolutionary forces.

Therefore, the Eritrean people take their place on the front line, alongside all the world's oppressed peoples in the struggle against imperialism. In the course of the struggle for their national independence, they fight against the reactionary proneocolonialist regimes that control them. And their fight is directed against the North American military base and is aimed at its liquidation, and against Israel's influence and growing economic penetration in Eritrea.

The Eritrean people's struggle continues, on the one hand, to establish a democratic national state based on government of the people, by the people, and for the people; and on the other hand, for a nation which will oppose colonialism in all its forms, old and new, and which will start the people down the road of social and democratic progress in unity with the present international revolutionary movement.