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# VANGUARD

The Official Monthly Organ of the  
Eritrean People's Liberation Front

- \* Victories Won by the EPFL in 1976
- \* The National Democratic Program
- \* The First Organizational Congress
- \* The First Meeting of the Central Committee

February-March 1977

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## Editorial

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1976 was a year of splendid victories in various fields. It is necessary to sum up our past achievements and progress so as to focus on our future struggle and forthcoming victories. In 1976, the EPLF entered a new era in its revolutionary advance by overcoming the enormous political, organizational and economic problems that faced it at home and abroad.

The convening of the Organizational Congress was the principal revolutionary task accomplished in the past year. The Congress summed up our special experience of the last six years, clarified and crystallized our new relations, and ushered in a truly historic new chapter in the revolutionary struggle of our organization. The holding of an organizational congress has been a popular demand for the last three years. To meet this demand, many struggles were waged against various tendencies attempting to detour the revolution from its path. Of course, this struggle has not been easy. The democratic force had to carry out arduous struggles requiring great sacrifices in order to consolidate the revolutionary national democratic line. After protracted and complex struggles; the reactionary force that had long remained in the saddle of power suffered an irretrievable historic defeat when its backward politics was shattered by the rise in the standard of consciousness of the fighters.

In our revolution, 1976 was a special year with its own distinct qualitative feature; it infused our organization with new revolutionary depth in the various political, military and economic fields. It is clear that the principal question for any revolutionary movement is not the accumulation of age in years but rather the achievements made and the positive changes effected through struggle. Hence, the brilliant victories scored by our organization last year prove one truth. This truth is that the EPLF, absolutely convinced of the inevitability of revolutionary victory, has waged a correct struggle to awaken all available strength and capability, mobilize the broad masses, organize them in accordance with a clear revolutionary line, and raise their participation in the patriotic struggle. The accomplishment of these important revolutionary tasks and the winning of magnificent victories in all fields of revolutionary work were last year the principal distinguishing characteristics of the EPLF in the Eritrean field.

1976 was a year of real test, a year in which the reactionaries and opportunists strove hard to arrest the advance of the revolution and frustrate the will of the masses. Hatching a new conspiracy, they came up with a reactionary agreement (the so-called Khartoum Agreement) designed to serve their interests under the guise of unity. The EPLF in concert with the masses, dealt the camp of opportunism a devastating blow by smashing its reactionary conspiracy and tactics in the Eritrean field.

The colonial and imperialist forces also came up with a conspiracy of "peaceful solution" hatched to dampen the revolutionary determination of our masses. The objectives of this conspiracy were: to isolate our revolution by confusing and swindling the masses and the world's progressive people; to retrogress our resistance by aborting the brilliant victories that our people have already won; and thus to perpetrate the domination of our people under colonialism, imperialism and reaction. However, this conspiracy was also nipped in the bud thanks to the heightened consciousness and resolute determination of the broad masses and the revolutionary army.

The year 1976 saw brilliant military victories in Nacfa, Naro, Adi Tekelezan, Habrengoka, Debarewa, Quazien, Anseba, Karora, etc. It was a year in which, applying the EPLF's correct revolutionary principle of self-reliance, extensive land has been reclaimed and put under cultivation.

In the past year, our heroic fighters, instilling and implementing the slogan of "Fight with one hand and produce with the other," constructed the *Liberation Road* connecting all corners of our liberated land by traversing steep slopes, deep gorges and rolling plains.

Last year witnessed the implementation of our strategy of protracted people's war at a higher level and with greater success. The EPLF worked hard to tap the vast energy of the masses, to organize and politicize the people in the cities as well as to organize, politicize and arm them in the countryside. Besides, an extensive campaign of political education was conducted throughout the liberated countryside among the peasants, nomads, displaced people and refugees to eradicate illiteracy, raise the general level of consciousness, and wipe out the negative attitudes and sentiments reflecting the backward social and economic conditions of our society.

Likewise, our work in social welfare received a tremendous impetus last year. The EPLF provided refuge and continues to care for thousands of the victims of the fascist atrocities of Ethiopian aggression. These victims, with their villages burnt down and their property destroyed, would otherwise have become refugees in neighbouring countries. The EPLF has also established a special boarding school to educate orphans as well as the children of martyrs, fighters, and poor peasants.

Building upon the solid foundation of these achievements, we assure our freedom loving people and martyred comrades, whose blood and heroic sacrifices made all the advances of our revolution possible, that we shall endure the necessary sacrifices and overcome all difficulties and obstacles to continue our struggle for national liberation and social reconstruction until complete victory. □

## Victories Won by the EPLF in 1976

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### A. In the Political Field

Politicizing and mobilizing the broad masses of our people is the principal task of our democratic organization. The masses have to be organized in accordance with a correct revolutionary line and their ideological and cultural levels raised if they are to play their proper role in the revolution. Accordingly, the Department of Political Education and Culture has worked hard to raise the political and ideological skills of the masses by conducting lectures on selected topics relevant to the present conditions of the revolution as well as the livelihood of the people and the liberation army. This effort has been undertaken not only in the liberation army but also in the cities (through underground work) and the countryside in order to awaken, mobilize and organize the broad masses of the people.

The politicization of the masses of fighters and people is carried out in two ways. On the one hand, new combatants study while in training the *General Political Education for Fighters*, a text which sums up the experience of the Eritrean armed revolution in general and that of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in particular. Political topics of timely importance are often dealt with along with the text. On the other hand, publications dealing with the prevailing conditions on the Eritrean revolution are distributed and lectures given en masse. This great endeavour has shown positive results in raising the level of political consciousness of the new fighters of the EPLF as well as the organized and unorganized masses.

### 1. Education and Literacy

The EPLF gives priority to education and literacy because they are essential to the eradication of ignorance and the dissemination of learning and science in our society as well as to the spread of knowledge and the deepening of

consciousness among the fighters and people. Excellent results have been achieved in this field. In 1976 alone, more than 36 schools have been established throughout the liberated and semi-liberated areas to serve the masses. Depending on the living conditions of the people in its immediate surrounding, each school has hundreds of students above 5½ years of age. The students—both male and female—are divided into three groups—big, medium and small—in accordance with age.

One of these schools is a boarding school, with a current enrollment of 600 students in the 5½-10 years age bracket, which has been established especially for the children of martyrs, fighters, poor peasants, the displaced and refugees. The school curriculum is integrated with the concrete conditions of our revolutionary struggle and our work in production. It is run by an administrative body of revolutionary cadres and able teachers. This school has been established as a test case. To date, the outcome has been magnificent and of great significance. It concretely demonstrates the ability of our revolutionary organization to shoulder its historic responsibility of building a new society and a new generation of revolutionary men and women free from backward views and sentiments.

Our organization, in its endeavour to wipe out illiteracy and ignorance among the masses, has taught thousands of nationals to read and write. In this regard, we shall fight for the complete eradication of the social ills of ignorance which poses an obstruction to our ongoing social and ideological revolution. While this work goes on among the masses, compulsory literacy has been made an integral part of the training of every fighter of the liberation army. Once he successfully completes his training and is assigned to a particular unit, each fighter takes part in the regular political education program designed to consolidate his newly acquired skills and raise his standard of consciousness. Thus, the size and capability of the liberation army grows simultaneously through the systematic transformation of the quantitative changes into qualitative changes.

## **2. Training of Revolutionary Cadres**

The EPLF has established a Cadre School to provide advanced political and ideological education for fighters. The principal aim of this task is to transform the People's Army and train a mature vanguard. To integrate theory with practice, the cadres carry out productive activities; they participate in the building of houses, construction of roads and agricultural work. In this way, about 1000 cadres were trained last year alone. The vast majority of these cadres have their class origins in the proletariat and the peasantry, the classes that make up the backbone of the revolution and guarantee its victory. These cadres play an important role in the political activities and ideological work of the People's Army. Thus, the Cadre school has helped bring about tremendous qualitative changes in the EPLF and accomplish great revolutionary tasks.

## **3. Organizing the Masses**

The Department of People's Administration has exerted a tremendous effort to organize and politicize the masses in a correct way so that they can play their

proper role in the revolution. Last year, it was possible to organize a great many people into various mass organizations in accordance with the correct line and programme of the EPLF. A revolutionary peasants' association with scores of thousands of members has been formed in the countryside, functioning openly in the liberated areas and covertly in the semi-liberated areas. In the occupied cities and semi-liberated areas, an underground revolutionary workers' association has been organized. Various mass organizations of students, youth and women have also been formed both in the cities and the countryside. The establishment of a people's militia has already begun in the rural areas with the aim of arming the politicized masses in order to implement the strategy of people's war. The task of organizing and politicizing the broad masses of the people in advancing forward and scoring new achievements with the development of the EPLF.

## **4. Social Welfare**

The revolution waged to liberate a colonial society from the conditions of backward political and economic oppression afflicting it is a great and complex social process. Even though it is inevitably compelled to employ revolutionary violence to counter the barbaric reactionary violence unleashed to annihilate it, revolution is basically a movement with profoundly human aims. Thus we are resisting the counter-revolutionary forces of Ethiopian aggression with the revolutionary violence of the masses in order to liberate our people from the clutches of Ethiopian colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation and build a just, prosperous and peaceful society.

In the meantime, we are striving our best to defend our people from the fascist atrocities and savage crimes of Ethiopian colonialism and ease their present hardships. Having made the necessary studies, the EPLF is presently providing the people whose villages and property have been completely destroyed by Ethiopian aggression with all the assistance it can to help them settle in the liberated areas so they can rebuild their livelihood in their own country instead of languishing in refugee camps in the neighboring countries. Today, the EPLF is not only defending from the enemy the people who have taken refuge in the liberated areas under its control but is also supplying them with the necessary provisions, such as food, clothing, medicines and education. Furthermore, it encourages and aids Eritrean refugees abroad to return to their country to rebuild their lives afresh in the liberated areas and participate in the revolution. At the present time, the EPLF is fully supporting thousands of families who have been displaced from their homes in the various parts of Eritrea as a result of Ethiopian fascist atrocities.

## **5. Information and Propaganda**

Information and propaganda is an essential ingredient of our revolutionary movement whose big and important role grows with the conditions of our developing struggle and organizational capabilities. Given all its technical problems and shortage of facilities, this department has done a responsible and commendable job. It made a significant contribution to the basic political work of

our organization. Last year, its main achievement consisted of the publication of:

1. *Vanguard*, our monthly official organ;
2. *Combatant*, the internal organ of the People's Army;
3. *Voice of the Masses*, our bi-monthly journal expounding the viewpoint and aspirations of the masses;
4. *Spark*, our internal monthly theoretical organ; and several special publications each dealing with a specific timely political issue. All this played a significant role in helping raise the standard of political consciousness and ideological level of the masses of our people and fighters.

At the same time, various publications were prepared for literacy education and the *General Political Education for Fighters* issued. Furthermore, several pamphlets and books have been translated into Tigrinya, and many reprinted in Arabic, so as to enable the masses and fighters to learn from the revolutionary experiences and cultures of other peoples. The positive results of these significant tasks—all accomplished in the space of one year—can be seen in the outcome of the First Organizational Congress.

#### 6. Foreign Relations

Certain reactionary remnants of the old experience of the armed struggle managed, because of objective conditions, to ally themselves with the EPLF. These reactionary elements, who had for too long monopolized the external affairs of the Eritrean revolution, were detrimental to the work of the EPLF abroad. For many years, they used their monopoly over foreign relations as a big instrument of pressure. They strove hard to put the democratic force inside Eritrea under their control, prevent the reflection of its developments abroad, hide its progressive line from the world's people, and isolate it from its real friends. Thus, the contradiction between the progressive line of the EPLF and the reactionary line of the ex-Foreign Mission remained a cancer to the advance of our revolutionary struggle, particularly in the area of foreign relations. There was concern that the presence within the EPLF of certain reactionaries bound in common interest with the reactionary clique of the ex-Foreign Mission, even though weakening with the growth of the democratic force, might obstruct the progressive advance of the EPLF by opposing its correct line and sabotaging its achievements. But, these elements were progressively isolated, exposed and defeated in the course of the internal struggle.

Thus, the experience of the EPLF for the last six years has been replete with bitter and acute contradictions between the progressive democratic force in the Eritrean field and the backward and reactionary force abroad. For this reason, the EPLF could not win commendable political achievements abroad and consolidate its principled relations. The relations conducted under the auspices of the reactionary ex-Foreign Mission were underhanded and unclear. At a critical stage in our national democratic struggle, it proved its complete bankruptcy by taking a stand antagonistic with our correct line. With its time thus expired, it ignominiously fell off the steep slope of our revolutionary path. Ever since, it has been frenziedly maneuvering to consolidate its ilk—those

forces and elements at home and abroad who are its likes both in outlook and in practice—and hatch new conspiracies.

The EPLF thus won a tremendous victory. In getting rid of the reactionary clique in a single swoop, it swiftly freed its external work from the hegemony and domination of an utterly reactionary clique that primarily pursued its own interests to the detriment of the revolution. The EPLF won for itself the opportunity to conduct its foreign affairs in accordance with its correct line and progressive policy so as to serve the fundamental aims of our people's revolutionary movement. In appreciation of this excellent new situation, the Organizational Congress scientifically analyzed and summed up the theoretical and practical struggles waged both at home and abroad and set up a department of Foreign Relations that can function on the basis of the EPLF's correct line, policy and principled relations.

## B. IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD

### 1. Agricultural and Livestock Wealth

The EPLF attaches great importance to the development of agriculture and livestock breeding. Yet, neither conditions nor its capability allowed it to give practical effect to this correct viewpoint in its formative years. Accordingly, a great effort has been under way to liberate the land step by step and carry out a profound social and economic revolution in the liberated areas. Today, a large territory of our country has been liberated through the blood of our martyrs and big farms formerly in the hands of the colonial regime, imperialist exploiters and their Eritrean collaborators put under our control to serve the revolution and the masses. Thousands of hectares of land has also been newly reclaimed by our People's Army and put under cultivation.

In its first year of trial, the EPLF was able to harvest 25% of its annual need. Our agricultural production has been increasing with the expansion of the areas under cultivation and the advance in our agricultural skills through experience and the use of scientific methods. Last year, for instance, the EPLF produced 50% of its requirements for food by raising crops and vegetables on its own or in collaboration with the masses.

In the rural areas, modern fruit farms formerly owned by the colonialists and their lackeys have been put under our control in the service of the revolution. In the past year, 70% of the fruit harvest was consumed by the People's Army while the remaining 30% was sold in the domestic market. In addition, the EPLF runs large coffee plantations and vegetable farms. New projects are under way for the cultivation of cotton. As our agricultural production expands and grows, our organization shall attain self-sufficiency in food and advance at a greater pace. When it becomes self-sufficient in food, our front shall develop the production of cash crops and expand trade. There are also plans to establish in the near future light industries linked to agriculture with the aim of realizing self-sufficiency in clothing.

The significant point that one should bear in mind here is that the extensive agricultural lands that we have liberated and put to our own use today had for

too long been snatched away from our peasant masses by the colonialists and their feudal collaborators. Hence, the EPLF has returned most of this land to the poor peasants. It is also carrying out essential land reform in the countryside. In many villages, the inequitable system of land ownership is being radically changed. Landless peasants have received land and a new opportunity to develop production and improve their livelihood.

Our organization has been able to correctly resolve the innumerable land cases and conflicts that the enemy used to exploit as a means to inflame contradictions among peasants, villages or tribes. In the first place, it provided an atmosphere of dialogue and understanding to resolve the non-basic contradictions and conflicts among the people. Then, it set out to settle the land question in the interests of the masses. Today, there are projects to establish agricultural cooperatives that will nurture the spirit of collective labor and production which are the basis for the building of our national economy.

A special scientific body has been set up within the Department of the Economy to make land and livestock surveys, provide veterinary services and prepare certain vaccines. This body has, in the past year, accomplished a commendable task in providing vaccines to some 450,000 heads of livestock against a variety of diseases and collecting basic statistics on the conditions of agriculture and livestock. Furthermore, it has conducted experimental breeding of different animals using modern techniques and registered satisfactory results. All this is part of the overall effort to increase animal, fruit and vegetable production in order to assure an adequate supply of protein foods.

## 2. Handicrafts

Following our organization's revolutionary principle of self-reliance, small factories have been established to manufacture the goods we need in a planned way. These factories include: small arms and spare parts; electronic repairs such as radios, wireless, tape recorders, watches, mechanical tools; iron welding; carpentry, mainly of office, school and store furniture, wooden butts; and household utensils. At the present moment, priority is given to arms repairs and the manufacture in a rudimentary way of military weapons. The Handicrafts Branch, as the nucleus of the independent industry to be built in the coming Eritrea, performs an important economic function that grows with the general development of the revolution.

## 3. Trade

Realizing that the masses are the principal basis of the revolution, the enemy has declared economic warfare and blockade against them and banned any goods from leaving the cities. Whenever the people go to the cities to buy the goods they need, they are subjected to enormous difficulties and hardships. Not an insignificant number have lost their lives in this way. Thus, the masses cannot go to the cities to purchase essential consumer goods. To alleviate these hardships, the EPLF established the Trade Branch to import essential goods from neighboring countries and supply the masses at cost. It also sells them its excess products in exchange for the goods it needs. Today, the EPLF is striving

hard to meet the growing demands of the people. It has set up shops throughout the liberated areas to supply them with essential consumer goods at prices commensurate with their purchasing power. To a certain extent, these shops have succeeded in meeting the demands of the people.

The Ethiopian colonial conspiracy hatched to throw our people into more grievous economic hardships and thereby undermine our revolution has therefore boomeranged. The EPLF banned rural products essential to the enemy from entering the cities. It waged a vigorous struggle to mobilize all the economic resources of the countryside, develop agriculture and expand trade in order to solve the basic problems of the masses. Consequently, our people in the rural areas no longer have to go to the cities at the risk of their lives just to purchase a few essential items. At the same time, the people in the cities have devised their own ingenious means of securing the necessary rural products. Thus, in the final analysis, the one that had to bear the brunt of the colonial economic policy is Ethiopian colonialism itself! Its aggressive army, now completely encircled in its urban bases and fortifications, can no longer locally purchase its needs. It has to be supplied from afar by planes or convoys, with the latter often annihilated enroute by our heroic People's Army. This very costly operation corrodes Ethiopian colonialism, aggravates its economic crisis and accelerates its total collapse.

## 4. Construction and Transport

The major task of this branch is the construction of houses, storages and roads throughout the liberated areas. The EPLF commands scientific skills and has a mature experience in this area. At a time when the liberated areas are steadily expanding and our organizational tasks multiplying, the importance of construction and transport increases. Today, they have truly become the veins of our revolution. Our People's Army has so far almost bare-handedly constructed a 1500 Km. long *Liberation Road*, which traversing a difficult terrain of steep mountain sides, deep valleys and extensive plains, connects all our liberated areas. This alleviates our problems of transportation, creates efficient communication among the administrative zones, and greatly accelerates our revolutionary work. The *Liberation Road* is indeed one of the most outstanding achievements of our revolution.

Successive colonial rulers have deliberately perpetrated a state of mutual isolation and backwardness among our people and the different parts of our country. Today, the *Liberation Road* firmly heralds the shattering of this vicious colonial policy forever. It facilitates communication among the different productive regions of our country and helps bring our people closer. This in itself is a great contribution toward the development of our nation and the progress of our people.

## C. IN THE MEDICAL FIELD

For many centuries, the broad masses of the Eritrean people have suffered untold poverty and diseases on account of their oppression and exploitation by

successive colonizers. Medical services in our country have always been organized to suit the needs of our oppressors to the total neglect of those of our people.

During the period of Italian colonialism, the few hospitals were confined to the cities and their services limited to the European population. Except for a handful of dressers to serve Italian needs, Eritreans were denied the opportunity of even elementary medical training. Thus, without access to medical facilities, the Eritrean people lived under the most abject health conditions. This situation hardly changed under British occupation. Although the situation improved somewhat during the federation, it went from bad to worse after feudal Ethiopia's forcible annexation of our country, reducing our people to an appalling state of poverty, hunger and disease.

When the armed struggle began, Haile Sellassie's feudal regime closed down even the few clinics in the rural areas and small towns, stopped the malaria and locust eradication services, and let the few clinics and hospitals in the cities deteriorate. Thus, urban clinics and hospitals were reduced to 50% of their earlier capacity (serving mainly the needs of the Ethiopian occupation army) and rural health completely abandoned.

The Dergue (the present Ethiopian junta), although chanting pseudo-progressive slogans of "Ethiopian socialism," continues to follow the policies of its predecessor with the aid of U.S. imperialism. It has not made any effort to put to a halt the worsening conditions of public health even in the cities under its control. On the contrary, it has pursued an anti-people policy of deliberate aggravation, continuing Haile Sellassie's campaign of mass extermination with greater zeal, the fascist Dergue has committed extremely savage and brutal atrocities against the masses of our people: massacring men, women and children; burning down villages and crop fields; looting property; poisoning wells and springs; using famine as a weapon of war; etc. In short, it has left no stone unturned to exterminate our people, increase their misery, or aggravate their suffering.

On the other hand, the armed struggle, which remained under the leadership of reactionary elements for a long time, could not effect any changes in the living conditions of our people, particularly in the area of medicine and health care. Now, all this has changed for good. Under the leadership of the EPLF, the Eritrean people are smashing the chains of colonial domination and imperialist exploitation and laying the groundwork for the complete eradication of their attendant social ills.

The EPLF has always attached great importance to the people's health. However, in its early years and especially during the difficult conditions of the nearly three years of civil war (1972-74) when the EPLF had to defend itself against two enemies, its medical services to the people were at a low level. When the ELF's program of liquidation against the EPLF failed, the EPLF immediately set out to serve the masses with greater capability, more advanced means, and on a larger scale.

In the last two years, the EPLF has scored brilliant achievements. Its medical services have grown tremendously both in size and scope. Throughout the

liberated areas, the masses are, for the first time in our country's history, receiving progressive medical treatment and care and being relieved of the backward conditions of their existence. Defying all hardships and the acute shortage of medicines and equipment, the EPLF's Department of Public Health has worked hard, enormously expanded its facilities, carried out a scientific study of the conditions of health and kinds of diseases, and provided the masses with great and commendable services. The EPLF has been spending 20% of its total budget for the purchase of medicines of which over 80% is used for the care of the masses. Yet with the tremendous expansion of the liberated areas and the total reliance of the vast majority of our people on the revolution, the EPLF is hard pressed to fully meet the people's demand for medical services.

Today, the EPLF operates 4 big hospitals, 20 clinics and 11 mobile medical teams throughout the liberated areas. Medical work is carried out by 12 medical doctors, scores of health officers, many nurses, and over 500 "barefoot" doctors. The tables below show the number of patients treated in EPLF hospitals and clinics from 1974 to the first half of 1976.

**Table 1**  
**Outpatients**

Medical unit	1974	1975	1st ½ of 1976
1. Mobile teams	28,347	120,107	108,112
2. Clinics	20,019	306,501	295,010
3. Hospitals	44,260	62,444	59,732
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92,626</b>	<b>489,052</b>	<b>462,854</b>

**Table 2**  
**Inpatients**

Medical unit	1974	1975	1st ½ of 1976
1. Clinics	2,471	9,234	6,060
2. Hospitals	9,070	18,780	17,813
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,541</b>	<b>28,014</b>	<b>23,873</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b> (Tables 1 & 2)	<b>104,167</b>	<b>517,066</b>	<b>486,727</b>

**Table 3**  
**Number of Beds**

Medical unit	1974	1975	1st ½ of 1976
1. Clinics	82	401	452
2. Hospitals	667	1053	1392
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>1454</b>	<b>1844</b>

As the tables show, the total number of patients and beds in the first half of 1976 is respectively equal to or more than that of the entire year of 1975. Compared to the 1974 figures, the rates are almost 5 times and more than twice respectively, indicating manifold growth and progress. The figures given do not include the 219,110 people and fighters treated by the mobile teams of the People's Army.

A study of disease patterns has found (Table 4) that malaria, anemia, trauma, tuberculosis, dysenteries and upper respiratory infection are among the most common diseases afflicting our people. These diseases which are similar to those found in other third world countries are basically caused by backward living conditions and malnutrition. These and other essentially preventable diseases continue to claim the lives of thousands of Eritreans. Their predominance is not surprising, after all. They are the outcome of the brutal social oppression and cruel exploitation that have been the lot of our people under successive colonial enslavement.

**Table 4**  
**Incidence of Common Disorders Based on the**  
**489,052 Outpatients in 1975**

Disease	number
1. Tuberculosis	30,810
2. Malaria	42,058
3. Malnutrition	19,001
4. Anemia	36,678
5. Upper Respiratory Infection	29,730
6. Intestinal Parasites	5,012
7. Trachoma	19,560
8. Dysenteries	29,895
9. Deficiency Diseases	4,840
10. Trauma	38,635
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>256,220</b>

### 1. Hospitals

Each of the four EPLF hospitals, varying in size from 200-600 beds, has its own operation ward, laboratory, pharmacy, adequate medical personnel, and separate units for each of several common diseases. The medical personnel is made up of competent and hard working physicians, specialists, health officers, nurses and dressers. Despite the constant shortage of medicines and specialized equipment, they work day and night caring for the masses, the People's Army and the large and increasing number of Ethiopian war prisoners.

The surgical practice in the hospitals is excellent and has attracted tremendous attention throughout the country. Several chronic cases that had been declared hopeless in the best enemy-run hospital in Asmara have been successfully cured. This splendid reputation has contributed to the massive

inflow of patients from all over Eritrea. Bone and skull operations (35), tonsillectomy (27), appendectomy (112), chest operations (12), and bullet and bomb fragment extractions (261) were among the highly successful operations performed last year.

### 2. Clinics

The EPLF Department of Public Health also runs 20 clinics attached to army battalions in the liberated and semi-liberated areas serving the broad masses and the People's Army. The staff of a health officer and about seven "barefoot" doctors each provides medical care mainly for outpatients. But they also have an average of 20 beds each for inpatients of deliveries and simple medical cases referred to them by the "barefoot" doctors. Despite the serious shortage of equipment and chemicals, a heroic effort is underway to provide each with a laboratory and gradually convert the clinics into hospitals.

### 3. Mobile Teams

The task of providing services to the vast majority of the people belongs mainly to the 500 "barefoot" doctors of the armed mobile medical teams. Carrying his bag of medical supplies on his back, a "barefoot" doctor crisscrosses the depth and breadth of the liberated countryside administering treatment to the sick, conducting surveys of disease patterns, distributing the *Ray of Health* (the bi-monthly publication of the EPLF Department of Public Health) and other medical pamphlets, and providing health education to raise the consciousness of the masses. The difficult cases are referred to the clinics or hospitals. About 150,000 people were treated last year by the mobile teams.

The extremely backward state of medical care in our society can be summed up by one case. Over 1000 peasants were attending a lecture in medical education in a fairly typical locality. Except for 52 persons, none had either seen a doctor or received medical treatment in their entire lives. This is an indication of our people's appalling conditions of life under a continuous chain of colonial aggression and injustice.

Today, however, the Eritrean revolution has scored splendid achievements after 16 years of bitter and arduous struggle. Pursuing the revolutionary principle of self-reliance, the EPLF is making a supreme effort to overcome difficult shortages, provide medical care to every Eritrean and build a new healthy society on the ruins of the old sick society.

## D. IN THE MILITARY FIELD

As a national democratic organization, the EPLF conducts the armed struggle not only to destroy the forces of the enemy but also as a means to realize its political objectives of national independence and liberation and the establishment of people's power. It is precisely to attain these goals that all the military operations are being carried out with greater capability and more advanced means in accordance with a revolutionary strategy. These are being



carried out in three phases:

1. Positional warfare to defend the liberated areas from enemy encroachments and destroy his bases to expand the liberated areas step by step;
2. Mobile warfare in the semi-liberated areas to liquidate enemy agents, destroy his bases, block his mobility, inflict great loss on his forces and liberate the semi-liberated areas; and
3. Guerrilla warfare in the enemy controlled areas to wipe out his ammunition, fuel and supply storages, demolish his military and economic installations, terrorize his troops, eliminate his spy networks, defend the revolutionary mass organizations from his attacks, prevent the massacre and slaughter of the masses, and create favorable conditions for the general strategic war.

The correctness of this strategy has been proved in practice. It has brought our revolution from the defensive to the offensive while putting the enemy on the defensive. In the last 6 years and especially after the cessation of the civil war, this strategy has been implemented with the conscious heroism of the People's Army. It has vigorously carried out brilliant military operations in the strategic populated and economic areas, fulfilled the essential tasks of the stage, and brought about the decline of the enemy's relative strength and capability.

In the past few years, our People's Army has been able to put the strategic areas under its control and convert the suburbs of the major cities into battlefields. In 1976 it conducted hundreds of military campaigns to attain vital political, military and economic objectives. As a result, large numbers of the cowardly and mercenary Ethiopian colonial army have been wiped out, wounded and taken prisoner. This has spread a reign of terror among them and wrecked their morale. In the last three months of 1976 alone, our revolutionary army has won great and magnificent victories. Enemy soldiers were wiped out in their thousands, enormous quantities of weapons captured, and several fortified bases siezed, overrun or put under seige by our patriotic People's Army. The bases under our seige have no alternative but to surrender or be wiped out. All this has been performed to carry out the revolutionary responsibility that our People's Army has shouldered.

The great military prowess, determination and heroism demonstrated by our comrades in the continuing battle for Nacfa (the capital of Sahel Province) deserves special mention. The Ethiopian colonial army has been dealt crushing blows both in Nacfa and in all its repeated attempts to relieve its beseiged troops. Of an entire brigade airborne to Naro (near Nacfa), 90 soldiers managed to escape, 200 were captured alive, and the rest were entirely buried there.

A big enemy convoy escorted by tanks, planes and heavy artillery had set out from Keren to relieve Nacfa from our seige. It was blocked at the Anseba River (10 Km. from Keren) and subjected to the ferocious attacks of our heroic People's Army. After a month and a half of fierce battles the like of which have never been seen in the entire history of the armed struggle, the enemy was forced to beat its retreat in disarray leaving behind 600 dead, scores of burnt out trucks, tanks and armoured cars, and an F-86 fighter plane (the 15th plane downed in 1976).

Brilliant victories were also won on other fronts. In the month of December 1976, enemy bases at Quazien, Habregeka, Debarewa, Mai Atal and Karora were either captured or overrun by our patriotic armed forces. Furthermore, the repeated, strategically and economically significant military operations on the Asmara-Massawa road have achieved magnificent victories. They have inflicted enormous damage, particularly on the enemy's economic capability.

The following tables give a brief account of enemy losses in 1976.

**Table 5**  
**Enemy Bases Captured or Destroyed by the EPLF**  
**People's Army in 1976**

1. Halib Nentel	7. Sahatit
2. Debarewa	8. Agbet
3. Quazien	9. Sheka wedi Besrat
4. Habregeka	10. Sela Dairo
5. Adi Tekelezan	11. Balineki
6. Mai Atal	12. Karora

Besides, the EPLF People's Army wiped out the following strategically important forward enemy bases in Tigray close to the Eritrean border:

1. Zalambessa
2. Intitcho
3. Migehat
4. Bizet
5. Adi Grat (heavily damaged)

**Table 6**  
**Enemy weapons and property captured by the EPLF**  
**People's Army in 1976**

Item	Quantity
1. Arms (light and heavy)	2,565
2. Ammunition	2,150,011
3. Hand grenades	3,215
4. Land Mines (anti personnel)	3,227
5. Vehicles (freight)	90
6. Wireless (military)	61
3. Textiles	1,000 bales
8. Military Uniforms	1,430
9. Plastic Shoes	20,000
10. Sweaters	40,000
11. Medicines and instruments	\$600,000 worth
12. Sugar	300 quintals
13. Cereals	4,500 "
14. Typewriters	150
15. Calculating Machines	40
16. Wrist Watches	711

**Table 7**  
**Enemy Property Destroyed by the EPLF**  
**People's Army in 1976**

Item	Quantity
1. Planes	15
2. Tanks and armoured cars	20
3. Trucks (freight)	256
4. Arms (heavy & semi-auto.)	2,000
5. Fuel	48 million litres
6. Bridges	3
7. Installations	5
8. Soldiers killed	2,625
9. " wounded	4,115
10. " captured	327

Enemy casualties indicated excludes the so-called "peasant Volunteers"—ill-trained and ill-equipped peasants dispatched by the fascist Dergue to serve as cannon fodder in its war of colonial aggression.

Thus, 1976 was an unprecedented year of vigorous struggle, brilliant victories and great advances on all fronts of our revolutionary struggle. On the contrary, it was a year of enormous losses, ignominious defeats and worsening crisis for the enemy. This dialectical revolutionary process will inevitably progress at a faster speed and with greater momentum in the future. Certainly, the victories won in 1976 shall be the solid foundation and iron springboard for the greater and more extensive victories that we are prepared to win on all fronts of our revolutionary struggle in 1977. □

*Victory to the Masses!!*

## Testimony for History

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The First Organizational Congress of the EPLF was a great revolutionary political and organizational event hitherto without match in the Eritrean field. This is no exaggeration; it is a concrete fact lived through by the participants of the Congress and the international observers who attended it. The meticulous general preparations undertaken for the Congress have been amazing to anyone keenly familiar with the Eritrean field or closely following its developments from afar.

It is true that this Congress was organizational. However, it bears a great political and historic significance that springs from the fact that it was the Congress of a genuinely patriotic, democratic and revolutionary organization. On the one hand, this Congress is the revolutionary outcome of the prolonged struggle of an organization born under extremely difficult circumstances, passing through enormous problems, and overcoming complex difficulties and obstacles. On the other hand, it reiterates the victory, achieved through resolute and vigorous struggle, of the democratic force of the EPLF over the opportunists, reactionaries, their lackeys and backward politicking. It is precisely this special experience that clearly distinguishes the essence of the EPLF as a genuine democratic organization.

The Congress was held in a period of excellent revolutionary situation when great victories have been won throughout the corners of Eritrea, the Ethiopian colonial army has been smashed in many areas and camps, our liberated areas have been consolidated, and extensive new areas have been liberated. By triumphantly concluding the sharp and bitter struggles of the last six years waged with great determination and sacrifice, the Congress assured the hegemony of the revolutionary line in our patriotic movement. In short, our First Congress has been an important turning point in the forward march of our revolutionary struggle. It summed up our past experience, outlined our future tasks, and radicalized and crystallized the internal as well as external relations of our revolutionary organization.

It dealt crushing blows to all the reactionary forces and elements who constantly scheme to slander and destroy our organization. It demonstrated that they are incapable of even the faintest harm to our correct and strong revolutionary front. It also practically smashed the counter-revolutionary propaganda and threats of Ethiopian colonialism. Thus, the Congress imparted our organization with fresh fighting spirit and continuing revolutionary energy and created favorable conditions for the rapid advance of our struggle.

The excellent democratic atmosphere and spirit of serious deliberations that characterized the proceedings of the Congress signify the solid internal unity, cohesion and progress of our organization. The Congress was in session during the day while the nights were full of political and cultural seminars. Topics of timely importance were discussed in the political seminars; the EPLF Branch of Culture presented revolutionary cultural shows and patriotic songs from all the nationalities of Eritrea reflecting the rich and progressive content of our national culture.

The First Organizational Congress of the EPLF exuded with a democratic spirit and a sense of great historic responsibility. It analyzed, summed up and provided correct solutions to all the organizational, national and international questions facing it. The resolutions it passed attest to the unflinching revolutionary line of the EPLF. This Congress concludes the tortuous, complex and arduous struggles of the last six years and ushers in a bright new era in our patriotic democratic struggle. □

## Eleven-Point

### National Democratic Program of the EPLF

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#### 1. *To Establish a People's Democratic State*

Abolish the oppressive colonial system in Eritrea and establish on its ruins a genuinely independent and democratic state that represents the interests and safeguards the democratic rights of the masses.

#### 2. *To Build an Independent, Self-Reliant and Planned National Economy*

Build a truly independent, self-reliant and mass-owned national economy that serves national development and social progress and advances along with the civilization of progressive humanity so as to abolish all forms of exploitation and bring about prosperity for the masses of our people who have for centuries been denied humane existence.

#### 3. *To Develop Culture, Education, Technology and Public Health*

Destroy all imperialist, colonial and backward cultures and traditions and develop the progressive and democratic national culture of our toiling masses. Abolish illiteracy and ignorance and create a new educated generation trained in the sciences and technology and having high standards of ideology and culture. Build a healthy society by giving free medical services and developing public health.

#### 4. *To Protect Social Rights*

Protect the social rights of workers, peasants and women as well as provide the necessary assistance to the families of martyrs, handicapped fighters, orphans, victims of natural disasters, and needy citizens to assure the dignity of and human living conditions for every Eritrean.

#### 5. *To Ensure the Equality of Nationalities and Consolidate Their Unity*

Strengthen the equality, unity and fraternity of our nationalities to assure the unity, independence, liberation, prosperity and progress of our people. Firmly oppose the anti-national and counter-revolutionary attempts to destroy the unity of our nationalities and people.

#### 6. *To Build a Strong People's Army*

Build a steeled, strong and conscious People's Army that can, by implementing the strategy of protracted people's war, win and defend national independence, popular liberation and state sovereignty, protect the interests of the masses and participate in production. Establish a people's militia to defend the gains of the revolution and assist the People's Army in the liberated and semi-liberated areas.

#### 7. *To Protect Freedom of Religion and Belief*

Separate religion from the state, politics and education to protect every citizen's right of religion and belief. Firmly oppose the attempts of colonialists, reactionaries and opportunists to weaken and undermine the unity and progress of the Eritrean people by using religion as a tool.

#### 8. *To Humanely Treat Prisoners of War and Encourage Eritrean Soldiers Serving the Enemy to Desert*

Oppose the colonial policy of killing Eritreans by Eritreans. Call upon Eritreans serving in the Ethiopian aggressive army to side with their people's just cause and accept those who wish to join the revolution with full rights of equality. Provide humane treatment and care for war prisoners. Mercilessly punish the criminal and anti-people lackeys of Ethiopian colonialism.

#### 9. *To Protect the Rights of Eritreans Resident Abroad*

Struggle to defend the human and national rights of Eritrean refugees and alleviate their hardships. Encourage, support and defend them to return to their country and rebuild their livelihoods in the liberated areas.

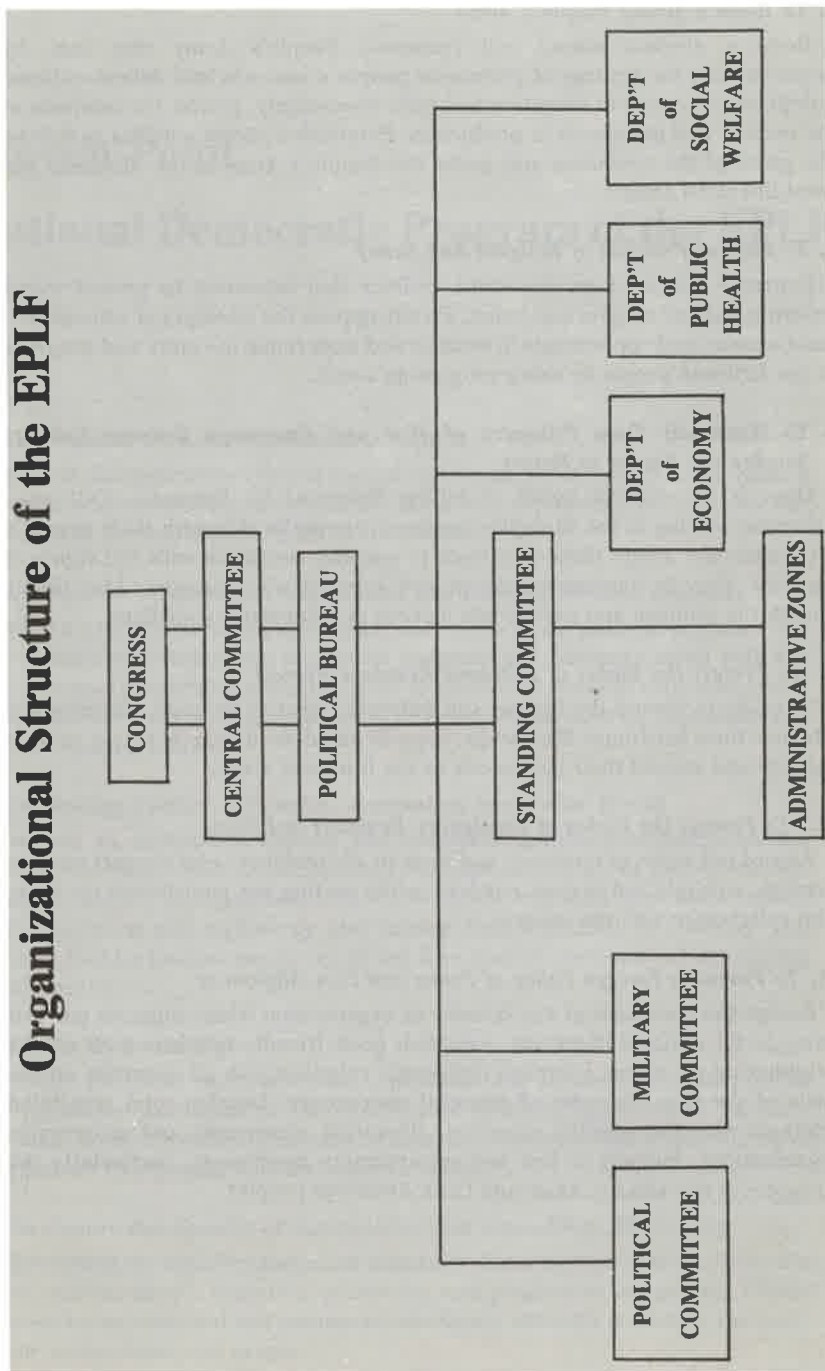
#### 10. *To Protect the Rights of Foreigners Resident in Eritrea*

Accord full rights of residence and work to all foreigners who support our just patriotic struggle and respect our laws while meting out punishment on those who collaborate with the enemy.

#### 11. *To Pursue a Foreign Policy of Peace and Non-Alignment*

Accept the assistance of any country or organization which supports our just struggle for national liberation. Establish good friendly relations with all the neighboring countries. Establish diplomatic relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. Develop solid principled relations with the socialist countries, liberation movements and progressive organizations. Support all just and revolutionary movements, particularly the struggles of the African, Asian and Latin American peoples. □

## Organizational Structure of the EPLF



## Resolutions and Recommendations of the First Organizational Congress of the EPLF

The First Organizational Congress of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces was held in the liberated areas on January 23-31, 1977. Besides dealing with various organizational, political, economic, military and social questions, the Congress deliberated on important matters concerning the Eritrean revolution in particular and the world situation in general. Delegations from six governments as well as several liberation movements and progressive parties from around our region and other parts of the world attended the Congress. The Congress passed the following resolutions:

### ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL FIELD

**a) Programme** — The Congress, after extensive discussion, unanimously approved the Draft National Democratic Programme drafted by the Preparatory Committee as the programme of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

**b) Constitution** — The Congress, after sufficient discussion, unanimously approved the Draft Constitution drafted by the Preparatory Committee to be the constitution of the Organization.

**c) Change of Organizational Name.** The Congress, after studying the past experience of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces and considering its present stage of development, unanimously resolved to change the name from the Eritrean People's Liberation Force (EPLF) to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

#### **d) Insignia and Flag of the Organization.**

1. The Congress, in order to symbolize the role of the peasantry in the revolution and the consolidation of the unity of the nine Eritrean nationalities in the armed struggle, unanimously resolved to change the insignia of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces, replacing the gun by a plough and making the number of bullets nine. This shall be the insignia of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front.

2. The Congress unanimously resolved for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front to have its own flag to be raised alongside the Eritrean flag in all EPLF bases. The flag consists of green, red and blue triangles from top down with a golden star on the red triangle.

**e) Organ of the Organization.** The Congress resolved that the monthly journal, *Merih* (Vanguard) be the official organ of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front.

**f) Leadership of the Organization.** The Congress elected a 43-member Central Committee (37 permanent and 6 alternate members) vested with the highest authority for the two years between the two Congresses. The Political Bureau, the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General of the organization were also elected from among the Central Committee.

### ON THE POLITICAL FIELD

**a) The Question of National Unity.** After studying the development of the political conditions of the two organizations in the Eritrean field as regards the question of national unity, discussing the campaign of slander and swindles conducted against the EPLF ever since the signing of the "Khartoum Agreement" by the Eritrean Liberation Front and the ex-Foreign Mission, and reviewing the resultant obstacles to democratic dialogue, the Congress, in order to correctly bring about genuine unity, unanimously resolved as follows:

— Since National Unity is the guarantee for our people's independence and liberation, it is one of the great objectives which our organization fights for. Thus, the Congress invites the Eritrean Liberation Front to begin democratic dialogue with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front.

— Convinced that the united front is the transitional stage which guarantees the attainment of the genuine unity of the two fronts and enables the realization of the EPLF's strategic objective of establishing one revolutionary, democratic organization, the Congress outlined the minimum program for a united front. It entrusted the Central Committee with the responsibility of dealing with the question of dialogue and unity.

**b) On ex-Foreign Mission.** Whereas the ex-Foreign Mission besides trying to divide the Eritrean People along tribal, provincial, nationality, religious, etc., lines in order to create a reactionary force that is antidemocratic, anti-liberation and anti-national unity has been squandering the material resources which friendly governments and organizations have given in support of the Eritrean revolution in general and our organization in particular, the Congress strongly condemns the reactionary and anti-national line of the ex-Foreign Mission, opposes its destructive activities, and reaffirms that the Eritrean revolution shall settle accounts with it.

**c) On "Peaceful Solution."** Whereas the Dergue's (Ethiopian military regime) proposed nine policy for "peaceful solution":

1. Rejects the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination and independence.
  2. Does not accept that the two fronts, the ELF and EPLF, are the legitimate representatives of the Eritrean people,
  3. Has been designed to create division within the Eritrean revolution, and
  4. Is a plot aimed at isolating the Eritrean revolution from its real friends,
- The EPLF rejects and opposes the Dergue's conspiratorial "peaceful solution." Our view on peaceful solution is that the EPLF is prepared to enter into discussion

for a peaceful solution when colonialist Ethiopia:

1. Recognizes the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination and independence.

2. Recognizes the two fronts, the EPLF and ELF, as the only legitimate representatives of the Eritrean people; and

3. Agrees that the dialogue be conducted on the international forum of the United Nations.

However, the EPLF shall not enter into any discussion without the participation of the ELF.

### **d) 'On Liberation Movements in Africa and the World.**

— The Congress reaffirms its support to the forces of liberation and progress throughout the world in general and Africa, Asia and Latin America in particular.

— Condemns and opposes the system of oppression and racial discrimination in southern Africa—Zimbabwe, Namibia, Azania—and fully supports the just popular struggles being waged against it.

— Reaffirms its support for the democratic and revolutionary movements in Ethiopia fighting against the Dergue's fascist regime.

— Supports the just struggle of the people of Djibouti and condemns the conspiracy being woven to deny them their right to self-determination.

— Expresses its solidarity with the revolutionary organizations which sent their delegations, messages or telegrams honoring the invitations extended to them.

— Supports the just struggle of the people of East Timor for national independence.

### **e) On the Struggle of the Arab Peoples.** The Congress extends:

— Its unlimited support for the Palestinian people to determine their own destiny and establish a democratic state.

— Supports the struggle of the Omani people led by the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) and condemns Iranian aggression against the land and people of Oman.

— Supports the struggle of the patriotic and progressive forces in Lebanon against the reactionary right.

— Supports the struggle of the people of Western Sahara for national independence.

**f) On Friendly Countries.** The Congress extends its appreciation to all friendly states which support the just struggle of the Eritrean people for national independence and liberation in general and the EPLF in particular. It also conveys its gratitude to the states which expressed their support for our just struggle by sending delegations to the Congress and urges them to increase their support in the future.

### ON THE SOCIAL FIELD

The Congress, after extensive study and discussion of social issues in general and the question of marriage in particular, passed the following resolutions concerning the marriage of fighters:

a) **Marriage shall be permissible** for EPLF fighters marrying civilians with the approval of the Political Bureau and the fulfillment of the necessary requirements.

b) **The Central Committee** shall set up a special committee to study the question of marriage among fighters, promulgate revolutionary laws and make an announcement through a declaration when the necessary conditions for its implementation are satisfied.

#### 4. ON THE MILITARY FIELD

After sufficiently studying the past military experiences of the Front in general and the strategy of liberating the land step by step in particular, the Congress confirmed the correctness of this strategy and resolved that its continuation is necessary for the victory of the people's war.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

In concluding, the Congress called upon the Central Committee to give importance to the active operations that must be carried out in the following fields:

**a) On the Political Field:**

1) To give priority to and exert greater effort on the organization, politicization and arming of the masses.

2) To give great importance to political work abroad and pursue it with the necessary energy.

3) To make the necessary effort to raise the consciousness and knowledge of the masses of combatants.

4) To provide for the greater organization and efficient functioning of the Information and Propaganda Department so that it may provide the services demanded of it.

**b) On the Economic Field.** Make all the necessary effort for the translation of self-reliance into practice in all fields in order to achieve the necessary results.

**c) On the Medical Field.** Carry out the necessary work and campaign to acquire medicine, medical equipment and other essentials to provide the required services.

**d) On the Social Welfare Field.** Make the necessary effort to create the conditions for the return and resettlement of immigrants as well as the provision of shelter and a self-reliant livelihood for the displaced; besides, conduct a campaign to procure them the necessary assistance.

**e) On the International Field.** The Congress recommended that the Central Committee make a great effort to consolidate our existing strategic relations with all liberation movements and progressive organizations as well as develop new relations with revolutionary organizations, democratic states and the socialist countries. □

## Concluding Declaration of the First Organizational Congress of the EPLF

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Our masses and combatants,

At this historic juncture of our revolutionary struggle, the First Organizational Congress of the EPLF was held on January 23-31, 1977, under the slogans:

- Struggle to build a National Democratic Front through the United Front!
- Struggle for the economic and social development of the liberated areas!
- Organize, politicize and arm the masses to fulfill the tasks of the national democratic revolution!

Representatives of combatants and mass organizations from home and abroad; delegates from the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, the Libyan Arab Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Somali Democratic Republic and the Republic of Iraq; delegates from the Italian Communist Party, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front attended this Congress. In addition, the French Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party sent telegrams of support and solidarity to the Congress.

Our Masses and Combatants,

The Organizational Congress of the EPLF, held at a time when imperialism and colonialism are hatching new conspiracies against the Eritrean revolution, has come to express the Eritrean people's revolutionary movement in its historic advance. Its coming after 15 years of arduous struggle ascertains one thing. That the Eritrean people are scoring great victories as they advance along the revolutionary path in the face of the fascist atrocities of Ethiopian colonialism and the tightening alliances of domestic reaction in its constant strivings to divide the Eritrean people, break up the Eritrean family and snatch away the people's victory.

The alliance of reactionaries has obstructed the programs that could have pushed our movement forward. The long struggle waged and the great price paid as well as the sacrifice made by the EPLF to disseminate revolutionary ideology and clarify the line of the national democratic revolution have made this congress possible.

Our Determined People,

The six months' preparations accompanied by military operations scoring brilliant victories have made it possible to hold the Organizational Congress which has studied the developments since the formation of the EPLF and, taking the political, economic, military and organizational report presented by the EPLF leadership as a basis, studied and discussed the Eritrean revolution in general and the EPLF in particular. Furthermore, it analyzed the present world and national political conditions, studied the internal (field) and external situation and, after extensive discussions, unanimously approved the Front's programme and constitution drafted by the Preparatory Committee.

Our masses and combatants,

A matter which took a long time and received the special attention of our Congress is the question of national unity. After hearing the comprehensive report of the Dialogue Committee concerning its meetings and endeavours with the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) conducted for various purposes, in many places and considering all reports pertaining to national unity, it passed appropriate resolutions. In order to bring about a correct resolution compatible with the interests of our people, the congress called upon the ELF to open its doors to democratic dialogue with the EPLF. Besides, the Congress called upon the Central Committee to incessantly strive to create favourable conditions for the dialogue and discussions to be conducted with the ELF.

Bearing in mind the present conditions created by the ex-Foreign Mission, it extensively discussed the experience of the EPLF with these reactionary elements from the very beginning. It analyzed in detail all the disruptive activities that the ex-Foreign Mission has been carrying out under the slogan of "National Unity" and the "Khartoum Agreement," and reiterated the correctness of the EPLF's stand pertaining to these reactionary and destructive elements.

The Congress discussed the position of the Ethiopian military regime (Dergue) concerning peaceful solution. It rejected the "peaceful solution" proposed to settle our people's case according to the dictates of Ethiopia and reaffirmed the correctness of our Organization's stand on this question. Furthermore, it outlined the basic preconditions for convening a meeting for dialogue. It also reiterated that the EPLF will not start any dialogue with Ethiopia without the participation of the ELF.

The Congress, having studied the economic, social and military report presented by the EPLF leadership, summed up our organization's revolutionary victories in these areas and attested to the correctness of the EPLF's revolutionary line.

Finally, after a detailed discussion of our organization's relations with liberation movements, governments and organizations, it reaffirmed its clear stand on the side of the forces of liberation and progress. Furthermore, it called upon the newly elected Central Committee to consolidate and expand the revolutionary relations that exist with the forces of liberation and progress as well as friendly governments that stand on the side of the just struggle of our people.

The Congress elected the 37-member Central Committee, the Political Bureau

and the General Secretary of the EPLF.

The Congress, while expressing its gratitude to all forces supporting the just struggle of the Eritrean people, conveys its happiness and pride to the combatants of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front who scored victory after victory in the battles waged before and during the procession of the organizational Congress. □

***Long Live Our People's Struggle for National Independence and Liberation!  
Down with Imperialism, Zionism and Colonialism!***

## **The First Regular Meeting of the Central Committee**

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### **STATEMENT NO. 1**

After seven years of long and tortuous struggles, the EPLF held its first Congress on January 23-31, 1977, concluded one historic chapter and opened a new one. In this Congress, it adopted a national democratic programme, drew a constitution, and deliberated on important political, economic and social issues. The Central Committee elected at the Congress held its first regular meeting on February 4-5, 1977, and formulated a program of work to translate the resolutions of the Congress into practice.

1. On the basis of an overall review, it drew the general line on the following matters:

### *In the Political Field*

Concerning political work among the masses of fighters and people; revolutionary culture; information and propaganda work at home and abroad; mass organizations at home and abroad; security; foreign relations;

### *In the Military Field*

Concerning the general line of implementing EPLF strategy, building distribution and tasks of the People's Army; training; logistics; communications and intelligence;

### *In the Economic Field*

Concerning finance, agriculture, transport, handicrafts, minerals and construction; trade; supplies and provisions; marine wealth;

### *Medical Services*

In different areas,

### *Social Welfare work*

2. It set up a committee to study and present to the Central Committee the draft for the internal rules of the Political Bureau, the objectives and guidelines of mass organizations, and military rules; it resolved that the drafts be operative until the second regular meeting of the Central Committee.

3. It delegated the Political Bureau to set up an appropriate body to study the question of marriage.

4. It set up a five member committee to conduct democratic dialogue with the ELF and delegated the Political Bureau with the power to increase the size or change the members of the committee whenever it deems it necessary.

After this, the Political Bureau set out to translate the general line drawn into practice.

The Central Committee calls upon every fighter of the EPLF to work without reserving an iota of his or her strength under the slogan of "Forward with the greatest energy and speed" for the next six months. □

**VICTORY TO THE MASSES!**  
**C.C., EPLF**

## **Military Communique**

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The EPLF People's Army, continuing its glorious tradition of heroic determination and self-sacrifice, has been dealing crushing blows to Ethiopian fascist colonialism and its mercenary army in the various cities of Eritrea.

1. Asmara, January 1, 1977: EPLF units entered Asmara and seized from the enemy six trucks (Fiat 82 N 3) fully loaded with carpentry tools, and brought them safely to the liberated areas to serve the revolution.
2. Asmara, February 5, 1977: People's Army units entered an office equipment store in the heart of the capital, seized \$180,000 worth of typewriters, calculators and duplicators, and triumphantly returned to their positions nearby.
3. Sekehlekha, February 8, 1977: EPLF units captured three vehicles (2 Fiat 82 N 3 and 1 Tigreto) after a fierce battle with enemy forces around Sekehlekha (Tigray) and have put them in the service of the revolution.
4. Massawa, February 9, 1977: Units of the Ethiopian Navy on guard opened fire on our comrades while they were carrying out their mission in the heart of Massawa. Our comrades returned the fire, killed one enemy soldier, captured an M-1 rifle with 44 bullets, and triumphantly returned to their positions. Afterwards, an enemy truck (Tigreto) with all its freight, was blown and turned to ashes in the middle of the street by a mine employed by our comrades.
5. Massawa, February 10, 1977: EPLF fighters seized a vehicle (Ford) inside Massawa and brought it to their home base.
6. Nacfa, February 12, 1977: Ethiopian supply planes came to parachute provisions for the Ethiopian occupation troops huddled in their rat-holes inside the camp, completely surrounded by units of our People's Army. Our units seized 5 parachutes whose main contents were 12 quintals of wheat flour and 60 quintals of a variety of canned foods.
7. Dekemhare, February 18, 1977: Our forces seized 2 vehicles (Tigreto) with their full loads of garage equipment and 8 tires and triumphantly returned to their base nearby.
8. Asmara, February 28, 1977: EPLF People's Army units seized 5 vehicles (Fiat 82 N 3) in the city and brought them triumphantly to their base in the vicinity.



9. Nacfa, March 1, 1977: Ethiopian planes came as usual to parachute supplies to the-beseiged Ethiopian colonial troops leading a wretched existence within the ever contracting confines of their dug-in positions. Our forces put ablaze 2 parachutes on their descent and 6 parachutes after landing in the middle of the camp, and two parachutes were captured. The main contents were: 10 quintals of taf flour, 2 cases of butter, 58 military trousers and other clothings, and 4 quintals of wheat flour.

10. Nacfa, March 3, 1977: Our forces penetrated the beseiged enemy camp and without firing a single shot seized 45 quintals of sorghum, 2 bicycles, 14 double beds, 10 chairs and innumerable other household items. □

## News and Views

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### EPLF Foreign Delegation Leaves the Field

A high level EPLF delegation has recently left the field for discussions with friendly states and organizations concerning the situation as well as new developments in Eritrea and the surrounding region.

With the rise of new developments in our organization, and especially after the successful conclusion of our First Organizational Congress, this step has been taken to implement the resolutions of the Congress pertaining to foreign relations. The delegation's primary aim is to strengthen the relations between our organization and friendly governments and organizations; clarify our organization's stand on various questions arising in our region, and consolidate as well as expand the relations between our organization and the socialist countries, progressive organizations and liberation movements.

### "Ray of Health"

The second issue of the "Ray of Health," the bi-monthly journal published by the EPLF Department of Public Health, has already come out. The main task of this journal is to give correct medical education to the masses, help eradicate the backward and harmful views and customs prevalent in our society, develop the good and scientific aspects and raise the general level of health consciousness of the masses so as to enable them to take care of themselves and solve their own problems.

*Vanguard* welcomes the *Ray of Health* with pleasure. Keenly appreciating the

great effort of our comrades in the Department of Public Health to provide revolutionary and scientific education, eradicate diseases and the backward non-scientific customs, and raise the consciousness of the masses, we wish them

success in their revolutionary and humane work.

### Cultural Shows Celebrating the Victory of the Organizational Congress

Ever since the successful conclusion of the First Organizational Congress, the Department of Political Education and Culture has been touring the liberated areas presenting the masses and fighters with revolutionary cultural shows and patriotic songs, a slide show explaining the general development of the EPLF and the highlights of the First Organizational Congress, and discussing the resolutions and recommendations of the First Organizational Congress.

To mention just one example: the celebrations at Karora (a town near the Sudanese border recently captured by our People's Army when the Ethiopian garrison was forced to flee to the Sudan leaving its casualties behind) were held in an atmosphere of great jubilation where the brotherly people of the Sudan—civilians, officials, officers, teachers, students—mingled happily with the Eritrean masses from the area as well as the fighters of the People's Army. The celebrations were also attended by comrade fighters of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) who came to express their support for and solidarity with the resolutions of the First Organizational Congress.

Celebrations like this have been held in several localities such as the central hospital, the refuge of the displaced, etc. The Cultural Branch is now busy touring all over the liberated areas bringing good tidings and educational performances to the masses and the People's Army.

### The Dergue's New Barbaric Atrocities Against Our People

On January 1, 1977, the brutal forces of Ethiopian aggression committed barbaric atrocities against the civilian population of Hirgigo (a suburb of Massawa). Troops of the fascist Dergue made a terrorist raid on the small fishing town, set it aflame, and with brutal cruelty murdered 64 old men, women and children who could not flee their homes. Those who were able to flee have taken refuge in the liberated areas with the assistance of the People's Army.

On February 16, 1977, the Dergue's colonial troops, escorted by tanks, carried out terrorist raids and burnt down the villages of Sela Dairo, Shiketi, Geza Lamza, and Debarewa—the site of the ex-Japanese Copper Mines—(all near Asmara); killed several peasants; and looted all the people's property they could put their hands on.

On February 19, 1977, Ethiopian aggressor troops escorted by tanks carried out terrorist raids, looting and burning six villages around Ila Beried (near Keren)—Adi Barbare, Adi Nedele, Adi Bascal, Agaema, Hutset, and Kuset Tronko. About 2000 workers were compelled to flee Ila Beried without collecting their two months' pay.

These savage atrocities are an integral part of the colonial war of aggression, of the deliberate policy of extermination of the Eritrean people and destruction

of their livelihood. They certainly attest to the Dergue's brutal fascism and its barbaric rule in Eritrea.

#### **An Ethiopian Gun-Boat Sank by an Ethiopian Plane!**

On January 26, 1977, U.S. made Ethiopian fighter planes, whose daily chore is to attack without let anything that moves in the Eritrean countryside, bombed and sank an Ethiopian gun-boat on patrol close to our north-eastern coasts of the Red Sea. The entire crew save three were killed and sunk with the boat. The three who escaped death were captured and taken prisoner by our marine defence units.

#### **Dergue's Chairman Killed**

There are several concrete instances that the internal rivalry and power struggle within the fascist Dergue occasionally explode into mutual killings. In one of the Dergue's regular meetings on February 3, 1977, the contentions within the Dergue were extremely heated up and they began shooting each other. Among the several Dergue members killed in the melee of the shootings was the chairman of the Dergue, General Teferi Benti himself.

In its official statements, the Dergue presents this melee as the attempt of General Benti and his rightist clique to stage a coup d'etat and seize power. The Dergue-owned Radio Addis Ababa explains this incident of mutual killings that occurred in the midst of a regular meeting of the Dergue as the victory of the Dergue's "left-wing over its right-wing."

Whom are they trying to deceive, who are they trying to fool by all this fairy tale? There has been no change of line or policy, especially on the central questions of Ethiopian society and the Eritrean case after the killings. Therefore, the replacement of General Teferi Benti by Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam is the truly reactionary fascist clique of the Dergue chanting pseudo-progressive slogans is a change of personalities and not of line or system since they both are the two sides of the same coin. Hence, the personal rivalries that led to the spontaneous killings among Dergue members using the "Western"-style of gangsters shows the basic essence of the Dergue. And this is its naked fascism and its anarchist, bandit-like methods.

#### **Chairman of "Ethiopian Workers' Union" Killed**

On February 27, 1977, the chairman of the sham "Ethiopian Workers' Union," Tedros Bekele, was killed in Addis Ababa. The Dergue stated that this was the work of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party and that it will avenge it.

Today in Ethiopia and especially in the city of Addis Ababa, countless people are being killed. Lying corpses have become a common sight in the streets and corners of the city. On the one hand, assassinations and attempts are made on Dergue members and their puppets. On the other hand, the Dergue, under the pretext of taking revenge, rounds up and indiscriminately murders many democrats, progressives and civilians. All this demonstrates that the Dergue cannot continue its savage rule in peace. Resorting to a cruel policy of

suppression, terror and liquidation against the masses and their democratic resistance, the Dergue is engaged in a life-and-death struggle to consolidate its fascist dictatorship over the Ethiopian masses and prolong its colonial aggression in Eritrea. However, its downfall is inevitable.

#### **A New U.S. Ambassador in Ethiopia**

Mr. G. McMurthie Godley, the notorious butcher of the people, has been appointed as the new U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia. This measure of rising U.S. concern in Ethiopia signifies the intimate ties between U.S. imperialism and the Dergue's fascist regime. It also indicates that U.S. imperialism and its puppet, the fascist Dergue, are plotting new conspiracies against the peoples of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea area in general and the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia in particular.

Mr. Godley is one of the biggest thugs of the CIA. He has been a notorious tool of imperialist aggression in Africa, South-East Asia, and the Middle East. In the past, in his capacity as U.S. Ambassador in several countries, he has committed enormous anti-people crimes. He has served as the major functionary and right hand man of imperialist aggression and injustices: in the Congo in the early 1960's to crush the patriotic movement led by Patrice Lumumba; in Laos (1969-73) to subvert the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea; in Lebanon (1974-76) to liquidate the revolutionary resistance of the Palestinian people and the Lebanese progressive and patriotic forces.

Mr. Godley is particularly notorious for his personal crusade in leading the so-called "secret war" against the Laotian people. As a U.S. newspaper, the *Washington Post*, states: "As ambassador in Vientiane, he personally directed air strikes and military operations against Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese positions," (September 29, 1976). He told a reporter in Laos in 1972, "Call me field marshal if it makes you feel better." All this clearly demonstrates that Mr. Godley is not a mere diplomat. He is a criminal imperialist agent responsible for spilling the innocent blood of the Congolese (Zaire), Laotian, Vietnamese, Kampuchean, Lebanese and Palestinian masses.

The appointment of this notorious anti-people scum, particularly at this time, as the U.S. Ambassador to the fascist Dergue's "Socialist Ethiopia" on the one hand, and the Dergue's ready acceptance of this criminal on the other, signify not only the puppet nature of the Ethiopian regime but also that new imperialist conspiracies are afoot against the Eritrean revolution and the struggle of the Ethiopian masses. Thus, it is the internationalist duty of all progressive and revolutionary forces to carefully observe and vigilantly follow the conspiratorial efforts of imperialism to strangulate genuine revolutionary movements by using puppets who chant pseudo-progressive slogans. □



Away With All Pests!