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of the ethiopian peoples' revolutionary party

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E D I T O R I A L

FAMINE: THE SITUATION WORSENS

The famine that is ravaging almost the whole of Ethiopia is getting worse despite the international mobilisation and assistance. Thousands of people still remain beyond the reaches of the relief agencies and the available food is just not enough. The death toll has risen to more than 300,000 already.

The response of the people and government in many western countries and the astounding efforts made to help the suffering people of Ethiopia is more than praiseworthy. The common people who took it upon themselves to share what they can with the famine victims do for sure deserve the special thanks of the Ethiopian people - their concern and generosity will not be forgotten. The vast mobilisation which followed the showing of the poignant BBC TV film by Mohamed Amin has highlighted in reverse the fatal and retracted indifference of the Ethiopian military regime. That the aid arrived belatedly for thousands is primarily the fault of the Mengistu regime.

An effective longterm solution for the famine problem is inconceivable with the continuation of the present regime. The existing political and economic policy lies at the root of the economic problem; the drought is merely a secondary catalyst. This is why we insist that the root cause of the problem facing the Ethiopian people is none other than the fascist junta aided and abetted by Russian imperialism. Hence, our call for the intensification of the popular struggle.

However, the people who are starving need immediate help. Lives have to be saved now. And this is why we condemn some so-called liberation fronts who disrupt the relief effort in order to gain propaganda coverage. This is as cruel and as callous as the acts of the regime. The definitive solution to the famine problem can be given only by the Ethiopian people through their struggle. The existing tragedy calls for an international effort. Ethiopians abroad who have positively started to mobilise themselves should intensify their efforts to call on the international public to render more assistance to the starving millions in Ethiopia. Our thanks for what has been done should be accompanied by a call for more help for the situation is still catastrophic and the death rate continues to rise. 1985 will be a year of famine in Ethiopia.

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TABLE 1: Resettlement sites which have been closed

NO	Name of Site	Region	Number of stations closed
1	Jowha	Shoa	2
2.	Golgota	Arssi	2
3.	Blatte	Gamo Goffa	1
4.	Anderacha	Keffa	1
5.	Abedir	Shoa	1
6.	Halidabye	Hararge	1

TABLE 2: Resettlement sites in which farming equipment have been totally destroyed

NO	NAME OF SITE	REGION	NO. of STATIONS
1	Jowha	Shoa	3
2.	Golgota	Arssi	2
3.	Angergotin	Wollega	1
4.	Tedelle	Shoa	22
5.	Mekki	Shoa	20
6.	Gojjeb	Keffa	2
7.	Wonji	Shoa	1

In the above places tractors, combiners, water pumping generators, poultry farms, fruit plantations, dams, etc...have been destroyed

resettlement project needs to be voluntary in
- 9 -
In the chosen settlement sites need to be

instance, is taken by the government which supplies the farmer with rationed sorghum. The attempt at setting-up cooperatives, and even the first stages of the welba (collective farms), has been evidenced in all the eight administrative regions and the 14 provinces in which resettlement has been tried. The situation has led to the frustration of the settlers and the persistent fall in production. This is why, for example, that the yearly produce of 160 settlers grouped in a cooperative near Metema (Gondar) is equal to the produce of a single rich peasant in Quara (Gondar), oxen being used in both instances.

A resettlement project requires that the sites chosen be fit for human habitation. The settlers also need to be given all-round assistance which can enable them to work and sustain themselves at least till the first harvest. And since the settlement sites are usually in the lowlands or on virgin lands/areas, adequate health care facilities are required to combat malaria and other such debilitating diseases. That the military government was not preoccupied by such essential considerations is proved by some of the settlement sites it had chosen. While there are even a few close to towns, many were situated far away from water sites. Health facilities were not set-up at all.

the resettlement project needs to be voluntary in order to assure its success. Furthermore, the local population in the chosen settlement sites need to be sensitized/educated to accept the newcomers. Such a process helps avoid hostilities which may arise between settlers and the local people, especially in cases where language and nationality differences exist. The military regime ignored the whole issue and thus helped cause immense damages in several places. Thus, robbery and murder were perpetrated upon settler peasants from the Wesenkorkur station (Negesso 1 & Negesso 2) - sefera tbiyas, as they are called) in the province of Yifat and Timuga (SHOA). The same was the fate of peasants who came from Hararghe region who were brought in to settle in Garadima (the province of Gode & Koreyu in Shoa).

The resettlement project needs adequate trained personnel, especially in the case of the Special Agricultural Settlement Schemes which rely on mechanized and modern farming methods. The military government did not take this question into consideration thereby causing chaos, anarchy and destruction of equipment in the mechanized farms and settlement sites. In connection with this, it is clear that the settlers themselves were not convinced and educated. An example illustrates the attitude of the regime in this respect.

While there is no doubt that the overall policy of the regime is to blame for the failure of the whole project in the last nine years, the following specific reasons can be mentioned:

1. the whole project was launched not with the primary consideration of helping the people but to solve the regime's own priorities and problems.
2. the project was based on deficit finance and the unfounded expectation of continuous foreign aid.
3. no feasibility studies were made beforehand, nor was enough preparations made to help the settlers.
4. the settlers were forced to join state-controlled cooperatives, they were denied the right to produce and sell as they saw fit.
5. farming equipment was either destroyed through negligence or was non-functional due to lack of spare parts.
6. neither the settlers nor the local people were briefed effectively on the usefulness of the projects; there was no trained manpower to run the whole program.

In short, the whole program was an ill-conceived, improvised, wasteful project launched for ulterior motives on the part of the regime. The fact that the armed settlers near Metema and Humera (Gondar) and Gode (in the Ogaden) are named Production Task Forces does not effectively cover up the fact that they are there for military purposes above all.

Will the situation be any different now? It is very unlikely judging from all indications. To begin with, the present move is as hasty as can be imagined, a fine example of an ill-conceived improvised project. Suffice it to mention that the regime's Ten Year Plan did not envisage such a large-scale project. Which also goes to show that the regime's present claim that it had always considered resettlement as a working solution for the food problem is nothing but an outright lie. Anyway, it is clear that the junta has made no preparations whatsoever for such a massive project that will affect 2½ million Ethiopians in the near future. The plan is shoddy and the expectation of massive foreign help from the West could very well be no more than the poor man's dream butter as Ethiopians say.

Definitely, only the very callous and perverse can let the starving die where they are so long as the move elsewhere cannot guarantee them a better life. The fact that the people on the verge of a sure death in the arid areas of Wollo, Tigray, etc... move to more fertile regions cannot be condemned by sane people. However, there is no doubt that the resettlement project cannot fulfill its longterm and basic aim of eliminating the poverty of the people, nor will it bring about increased agricultural production. The fact that the settlers near Metema, undernourished and in tatters, resemble the ones in the famine

SOUTH YEMENIS TAKEOVER
Fertile Resettlement Site

The Ethiopian military regime has handed over to the South Yemen government the TULU-Kondala resettlement site which was initiated with a help from FAO.

The Tulu-Kondala site (also known as Hudad 8) was set-up back in 1976 with the help of the UN organization FAO in order to function as an agro-mechanics training camp-cum-modern farm. The site consisted of 8 gashas (1,120 hectares) of fertile land which was flourishing as model modern farm. It so happened that Ali Nasser, president of South Yemen, saw the site while driving across to visit the Botter-Tolle military camp. He was impressed by the fertile land and the waterfall and consequently asked Mengistu to give the place to South Yemen. The dictator of Ethiopia agreed without hesitation.

The result? This "gesture of friendship" on the part of Mengistu led to the eviction of 680 Ethiopian peasants (settlers) who have been forced now to become daily labourers employed by the South Yemeni settlers. The government employees were duely and quietly transferred elsewhere. Scores of South Yemeni

EPRA OCCUPIES KUMER TOWN

On November 9, units of the EPRA launched a surprise attack on the town of Kumer, some 24 kms. from the Metema garrison (on the Ethio-Sudanese border), and occupied it after totally routing the enemy force. The soldiers and militia in Metema and Shedi were blocked effectively from rendering help and their panicky situation was highlighted by their blind and continuous shooting.

The junta was planning to strengthen Kumer as a military centre and a launching pad for anti-EPRA campaigns. The armed enemy force in Kumer suffered serious casualties (scores were captured) and the EPRA captured a good number of automatic and bolt rifles, ammunitions, medicine, other materiel and two vehicles. The EPRA victory has been hailed by the local populace.

In the meanwhile, EPRA units operating on the shores of Lake Tana have continued their multi-faceted tasks of consolidating the Alefa-Serako areas which have been freed from junta control sometime ago. A number of spies have been apprehended by the organized people and other anti-people elements have been also disarmed.

Famine: Focus on the South

With some 300,000 already dead and some 8½ million people affected, there is no doubt that the famine in Ethiopia is spreading. However, the concentrated relief effort in northern Ethiopia is covering up the fact that the famine in the southern regions is reaching very serious levels.

While Hararghe and Bale are the worst affected, some parts of Sidamo and Gamo Goffa are also suffering from the effects of drought. In Bale, cattle have died in great numbers and the reports about human death rates indicate an upward rise. It should be pointed out that the relief effort in these areas, though existing, is very little or inadequate.

In the meantime the junta mass media continues its campaign of covering up in an effort to deny that the regime bears any responsibility for the catastrophe. Hence, the blatant accusation directed against aid donors (they did not respond in time, says the junta) is being accompanied by repeated assertions that the Ethiopian people as a whole are responsible for the drought as they have carelessly cut down trees. (ref. Radio Addis Ababa, October 31).

The plight of refugees who returned from Djibouti is also getting worse as some have been settled in drought-stricken areas in the south.

be amended accordingly. The fact is quite known much to the chagrin of the junta - the party headquarter cost at least 120 million Birr and this is only a fraction of the total amount spent by the junta on similar buildings, monuments, the party congress itself and its september 12 celebrations.

Actually, it seems as if the dictator himself felt that his lie was not enough. For, it didn't take him long to add that "Ethiopia has enough glorious history to warrant the building of at least one party HQ"!! If this is not a classic case of non-sequitur it would have been a real puzzle.

Eritrean Fronts to Merge

The three Eritrean liberation fronts, which had earlier formed a united front, are going to hold the final meeting which will actualise their merger. The meeting is scheduled for Dec. 10 and it will bring together the ELF-PLF(RC), the ELF-PLF(UO) and the ELF(RC). Already the relief organizations of all three fronts have merged.

The merger of the three fronts comes after a long process of efforts aimed at removing the division which plagues the Eritrean organizations. The effort of these three fronts has the backing of important Arab countries in the region. It is hoped that the merger will further pave the way for the intensifi-

s of the party's rich experience. Consequently, undeniable achievements of the party were evaluated with the serious and not so-serious mistakes had contributed to the weakening of the organization.

The DEMOCRACIA special issue presents these assessments in a general and summary form so as to date the salient points dealt with by the press. The evaluation of the past experience, goes hand in hand with the persistent continuation of the armed struggle, has for sure contributed to the strengthening of the party in aspects. The affirmation of the rural armed struggle as the primary form of struggle, the effort to clandestine non-impetuous forms of an organization, the drive to strengthen the united front, the various measures to be taken to end the organization from obdurate enemies of sorts - all these and more are the fruits of the summing-up.

In this connection, the EPRA has also just completed a through summing-up of its armed actions and political work in the past years.

Military Service

2nd. Round to Begin

The second round of the so-called National Military Service is expected to begin shortly. The more than 50,000 youths rounded up for the first program have graduated from four camps and there are reports that some of them will be soon seen in action in the various war fronts.

Previous plans of the junta envisaged to train close to 200,000 youths in the second round. However, the spreading famine and the resultant resettlement is expected to foil this plan. Still, some junta sources insist that this second round will begin shortly with much more number than the previous one. Thousands of youths have already been registered and intensified control and repression has reduced the number of youths who avoid the draft by fleeing into exile.

The USSR, whose officers supervise the training camps, is said to be in favour of the immediate beginning of the second round of training.

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...tion of the armed struggle inside Eritrea. The other major front, the EPLF, is not party to the merger move and has, in fact, condemned the unity of the three organizations as "an Arab plot directed against the EPLF". This imprudent position on the part of the EPLF has for sure compounded the problem facing the Eritrean struggle which has been weakened more by the fronts interneccine fighting (civil war) rather than by the actions of the military regime.

EPRP Published
Summation Summary

A special issue of DEMOCRACIA, the organ of the EPRP, has presented a summary of the exhaustive summation made by the Second Congress of the EPRP, held in the liberated territories in March 1984.

The Second Congress of the EPRP had made a detailed evaluation of the past 12 years of EPRP's struggle against the enemies of the Ethiopian people. The Congress based itself on several documents outlining the various

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Mengistu Lies- Again!

Lt. colonel Mengistu, despite the eulogies heaped upon him by his admirers and hirelings, is quite well-known for his penchant for demagoguery and outright unabashed lies. This trait has again been confirmed in a press interview he gave in Addis Abeba in mid-november.

Countering charges that his regime spent millions on buildings and celebrations while millions starved, he declared that the new headquarter built for the junta party cost only ten million Birr. An ultra-modern building, with a meeting hall capable of holding 3000 people, a cafeteria catering for at least 2000 at a time, a cinema hall, various conference rooms, etc...etc...costs only ten million Birr!? When the building was opened a few months back the junta mass media itself was trying hard to convince all and sundry that this plush and modern building is a marvel to behold. No matter- since the indisputable dictator has said it cost only 10 million Birr the previous statements will

Gondar/Bahr Dar

Midnight House Searches Launched

The anti-EPRP moves of the junta have been intensified in Gondar and many towns of Gojjam region. (see ABYOT Nos. 1&2 for other details).

The gradually increasing repressive campaign is now characterised by sudden late-night (usually at midnight or after) house to house searches. Such searches have already occurred in Gondar city and in Bahr Dar (Gojjam). A number of people have been apprehended and jailed on a variety of vague charges. This campaign of creeping terror, accompanied by official verbal threats of massive terror, is aimed at assuring the docility of the people whose restiveness is plainly in evidence in support of the increasing activities of the EPRP.

The junta officials have tightened their ID control and are planning to initiate more travel restrictions. Judging from the frenzied moves of the junta it is apparent that it fears the EPRP has infiltrated or strengthened its structures in the various towns and villages of Gojjam.

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came over to settle in the area. The site is now under their full control and it is being used by them as a farm, to raise sheep and goats (to be taken to South Yemen) and as a recreational or vacation site.

Tulu-Kondala is in the province of Jibat & Metcha in the administrative region of Shoa.

It is to be remembered that South Yemeni troops served as Russian mercenaries helping the beleaguered regime of colonel Mengistu. Numerous South Yemeni military officers are still present in Ethiopia. In addition, Ethiopia and South Yemen have signed a military pact with Libya, a pact which serves the imperialist aims of Moscow in the region.

The military regime has tried to keep the whole affair a closely-guarded secret. The fact that FAO money is used for foreign settlers could be embarrassing since the regime does not bother itself so much as how Ethiopians view the whole affair.

camps of Tigrai and Wollo, indicates the futility and worthlessness of the whole endeavour so long as the fascist military junta handles it.

The military regime has tried to hide the true state of affairs concerning its failed project. As we have revealed in this exclusive report the record has been dismal, the cost has been great and the human suffering involved quite agonizing. In an appraisal of the whole issue, freed from untenable partisan cries of wholesale for or against, shows that the past experience is one of failure. And tragically, and characteristically, the junta will not change its ways. While it has tried to woo western aid donors by alleging that the settlers will be let alone to farm as they please, no less than Legese Asfaw, one of the top junta officials, went on record stating that the settlers will be organized in cooperatives depending on their level of consciousness". Obviously, it is the junta who will decide in accordance with its Ten Year Plan to collectivise and/or put the majority of the Ethiopian peasantry in state-run cooperatives.

It is all a case of wallowing in the mud after taking a bath. But in this case, the sad thing is that the bath tub didn't even have water!

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NO.	Site name	type	started in	province	region	No. of stations	No. of settlers	
							Initial	Present
1.	Harole-Tedelle	SSS	1978	chebo-gurage	Shoa	10	5000	1048
2.	Mekki	LCSS	1975	Haikoch-Butajira	Shoa	20	3680	557
3.	Golgotta	SSS	1976	Arbagugu	Arossi	1	1500	442
4.	Jowha	LCSS	1975	Yifat/tumuga	Shoa	4	1635	688
5.	Gedeb-Assasa	SSS	1981	Wabbe	Bale	1	350	80
6.	Metema	SSS	1977	Chilga	Gondar	1	500	160
7.	Botter-Tolle	LCSS	1978	Limu/Kosa	Keffa	3	864	435
8.	Wonji	LCSS	1983	Yerer-Kereyu	Shoa	1	310	159

LCSS= Low Cost Settlement Schemes; SSS= Special Settlement Schemes
 N.B. The Wonji Melkahoda site is for returning refugees while the one at Botter-Tolle was set-up for those dislocated by army camp building.

The military regime reversed the guiding motto- people are more important than projects- in its move to settle Afar and Kereyu nomads. Instead of educating the nomads through patient, gradual and exemplary means the benefits of settling and engaging in farming, the regime hastily rounded up the nomads and dumped them in modern mechanized farms at AVARA MELKA, ANIBARA, HALIDEBE, MILLE and DEHO. The nomads, as is to be expected, saw no benefit in the modern farms and the maize-cotton plantations. Hence, they grazed their cattle in the vegetable gardens and the maize plantations. To the angry officials of the regime they gave an apt reply : " our cattle are more important than the maize and vegetables!" Needless to say that the project has collapsed.

Needless to say that the whole program has been compounded by the fact that the settlers themselves were made up of peasants, rounded-up urban unemployed, retired soldiers and even small merchants. The motley collection has led to diversification of interests and priorities thereby aggravating the overall anarchy and disruption.

Examples abound to prove this. Three settlement stations were closed in GAWO GOFFA because the area was already drought-stricken. As a result, 438 peasants from Wollo who had been taken there were removed and transferred to Tedelle, in Shoa. Similarly, 180 peasants from Wollo who were taken to AND RACHA (Keffa) found out that the site was uninhabitable and they had to be taken to Tedelle in Shoa. The absence of health care has caused immense sufferings to the settlers even in relatively established areas like the Hurera state farm in Gondar. The absence of prior studies and preparations and the consequent dislocation of the settlers from one site to another has aggravated the misery of the peasant settler and contributed to the unpopularity and wastefulness of the whole program.

This is not all. As the case of some 30,000 settlers from Tigray, Wollo, and Kembata-Hadiya (taken to Wollega and Bale) shows, the ill-conceived resettlement program has led to the break-up of families. This is because the government, which had taken only the male heads of families, failed to bring over the wives and children to the settlement areas. The situation has increased the overall confusion and the fleeing of the settlers from the sites.

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Due to the fact that the settlers (in their majority urban unemployed) were neither given instructions nor supervised. The destruction of the farms and equipment (confiscated by the regime from private mechanized farm owners) has led to the fleeing of the settlers themselves.

The military government launched the whole project without adequate funding or prior studies. It was a program based on deficit finance and unrealistic expectations of foreign aid. Hence, the Special Settlement Schemes, which used mechanized means of farming and were expected to be productive within a short period, collapsed when the 42 Birr monthly wage paid to the workers got discontinued. The Low Cost Settlement Schemes did not fare any better. The main reason for the demoralization and dispersion of the settlers is undoubtedly the fact that the government imposed rigid controls vis a vis production and distribution.

The settlers were ordered to set-up the so-called producers' cooperatives. The government decided what the farmers must produce and it took over what got harvested. The farmers were given rations in accordance with the government stipulated quantity. Thus, the farmers teff, for

The resettlement project was launched some nine years ago without adequate funding or planning. The primary aim of the regime was political (to take the politically-dangerous unemployed youths away from the cities), military (to establish a border-guard force) and economic (to have cheap labour for the state farms such as the one in HUMERA). The project was also used many times as a means of getting foreign aid, especially from international agencies.

As a result, the whole project, that is both the Special Settlement Schemes and the Low Cost Settlement Schemes failed. Secret government reports assessing the whole project have tried to allege that the failure is due to the fact that "resettlement schemes have not worked well anywhere in the world". The reality is, however, different. The failure can justifiably be laid at the doorstep of the regime itself.

The tables in the next page clearly show that the project has failed in no uncertain terms.

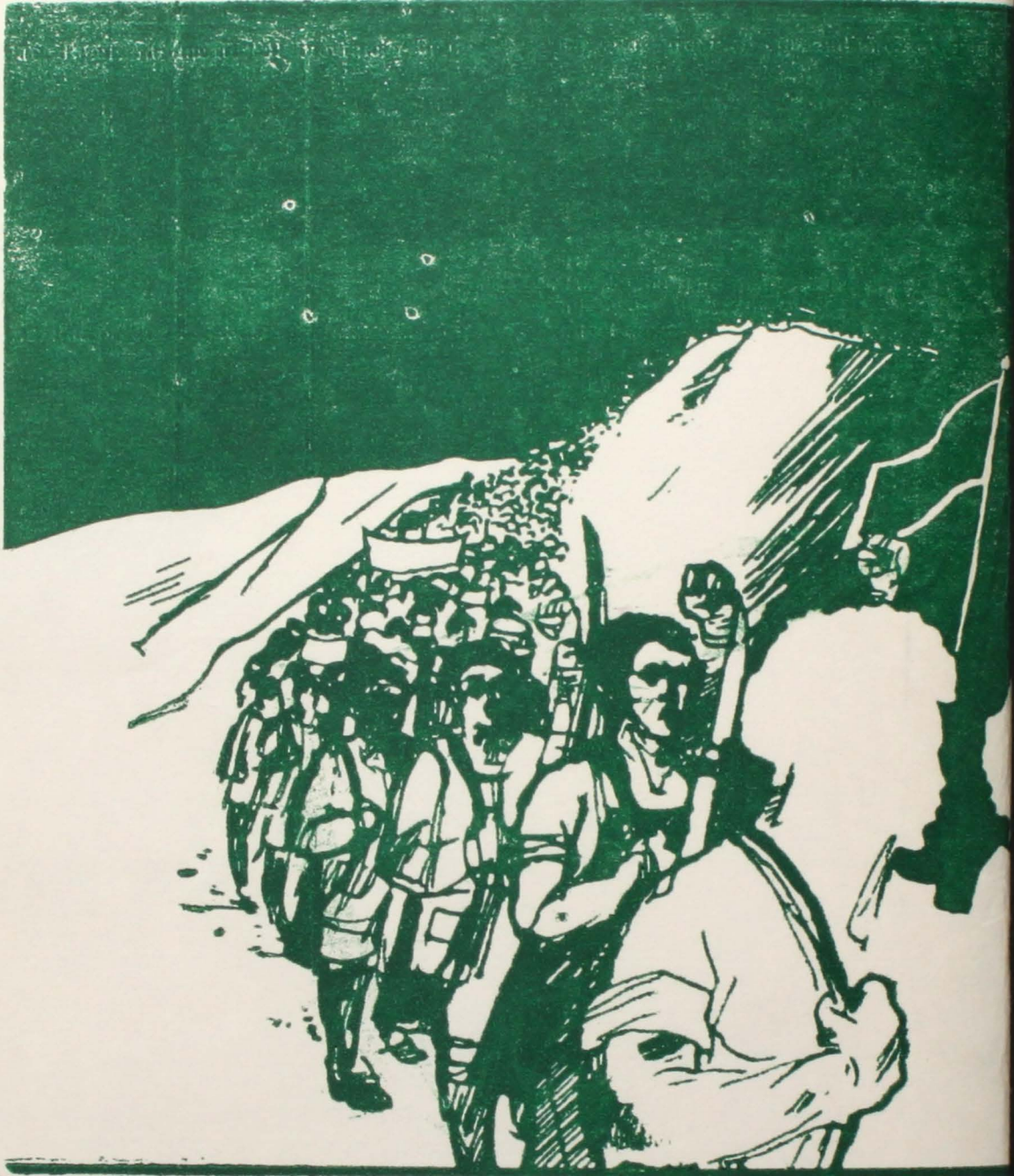
The Resettlement Project:
A Viable Solution?

The Ethiopian military government has, with the fanfare, launched a massive resettlement program. Half-a-million heads of families, some two and half million Ethiopians, will be moved from Wollo, Tigrai and Eritrea to be resettled in Southern Shoa, Kaffa, Wollega and Illubabor regions. The western lowlands of Gondar and the Metekel province of Gojjam are also expected to be resettlement sites.

Already, the government has started moving thousands by trucks and air to the south-western regions. Is this program going to be an effective solution to the famine and food shortage problem as the regime claims? The question inevitably calls for an answer even if one is inclined to treat as absurd the pathetic wailing by one northern liberation front which sees the whole project as a plot directed against it.

Despite the massive help given up to now, it is obvious that the situation remains critical. To begin with, there is a persistent shortage of food and the reports are that the food aid already in the pipeline and en route to Assab won't be enough. Moreover, this year's harvest has fallen by some 33% vis a vis that of the past three years. Hence, there is a need for a sustained and increased food aid in order to avoid more deaths.

The military regime is presently trying to prove itself the witchdoctor with the magic formula to solve the famine problem. In this vein, it is busy these days proclaiming one panacea after another and it is quite symptomatic that its best solution is to repeatedly advise Ethiopians to resort to backyard farming/gardens. This perverse absurdity serves to indicate the bankruptcy of the regime and its economy as a whole. As for the resettlement project, unmentioned during the junta party congress but now being presented as the solution per se for food shortages, the report we present in this issue of ABYOT illustrates the non-feasibility of the whole project so long as the junta handles it.



Main Points of the EPRP Program

- To overthrow the rule of the fascist junta & Soviet social-imperialism and to establish a popular democratic republic;
- To establish a broad and popular democratic system;
- To build a national economy free from foreign domination & to improve the livelihood of the people;
- To recognise the full right to self-determination of oppressed nations / nationalities;
- To safeguard the rights and interests of the working people;
- To build a popular and democratic culture, educational system and a health service catering to the working people;
- To build an army that will defend the rights and interests of the people;
- To assure the equal rights of women in all fields;
- To pursue a foreign policy based on non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and anti-imperialism.