FORWARD!

Newsletter of the World Wide Federation of Ethiopian Students

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March 1977

HAIL THE FORMATION OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES' REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH LEAGUE

The Ethiopian New Democratic Revolution continues to advance despite (and may we say because of) the all-out and all-round fascist reign of terror being unleashed by the Mengistu-led military dictatorship and the social-fascist guoons gathered around that ill-famous political swindler and agent of modern-day revisionism, Haile Fidaa.

And at the peak of the ever-escalated white terror comes the brilliant declaration of the formation of the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Youth League (EPRYL) which, after having been operating in clandestinity through its organ, The Revolutionary Youth, for the last two years, held its Congress last month right at the center of reaction, “Right on the enemy's nose,” as the Statement of declaration puts it. It came out declaring that the EPRYL is “the youth league of the EPRP, which has taken up the ideological, political and organizational lines of the EPRP as well as its minimum and maximum programs, that it will, by creatively applying revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory to the concrete conditions of the Ethiopian revolution and using it in its revolutionary practice, serve as a school for revolutionary struggle in order to enhance the full participation of the youth in the Ethiopian new democratic and socialist revolutions;” etc.

This is an excellent development! The spirit of warm love for the party of the Ethiopian proletariat, the EPRP, and the bitter hatred for the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples that has characterized over 90% of the Ethiopian youth for long has now taken an organizational form in the EPRYL. This also very well explains the frenzied propaganda of the state, which at times yelled that "the majority of the Ethiopian youth has turned to be fascist and anarchist," and the blind and indiscriminate repression unleashed on the youth since last September. But to be attacked by the enemy is, as Chairman Mao put it, not a bad thing. "It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black and without a single virtue; it demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves but achieved a great deal in our work." This is precisely the case with the Ethiopian youth.

WWFES hails the formation of EPRYL and takes revolutionary pride in this achievement of the Ethiopian revolutionary youth. It is our belief that the EPRYL will, under the guidance of the Marxist-Leninist bright red banner of the EPRP, firmly adhere to the integration of revolutionary education and revolutionary practice, mobilize the broad masses of youth to play an increasingly revolutionary role, combat all brands of revisionism, and succeed to be the revolutionary heirs of the new democratic and socialist revolutions. The future belongs to our ever revolutionary youth!

LONG LIVE THE EPRYL!
LONG LIVE THE EPRP AND ITS ARMED WING, THE EPRA!
MENGISTU'S FASCIST DICTATORSHIP ESCALATES BLOODBATH

In the past two months since Mengistu assumed the so-called "Peoples' Democratic Republic of Ethiopia" the dictatorship after chopping off a few of his once-trusted acolytes' heads in a carefully planned and executed mop-up operation against the EPRP. Ethiopia is experiencing a heretofore unknown wave of bloodbath, all directed against the EPRP and organizations and individuals that are directly or indirectly affiliated to it or sympathize with the revolutionary cause that it symbolizes -- i.e. organizations of and/or individual workers, peasants, students, teachers, and other oppressed strata of Ethiopian society. Both the usurpation of power by Mengistu and the immediate escalation of the reign of terror are, of course, a clear illustration of the desperation and frenzy of the fast developing revolutionary régime, inspired and engineered by the revolutionary leadership of the EPRP, that has created in the enemies of the Ethiopian people. And as such these acts of desperation, however fascist and bloody they may be in the short-run, are only killing kibes.

Below are a few examples of the nature of the white terror that has been escalating in the past month alone, all of which were reported in a March 16, 1977 press release by the EPRP. For further details as to the nature of terror being perpetrated by the Mengistu dictatorship, this month's report by the Amnesty International, excerpts of which appear in this issue, might be of some help.

1. 44 suspected members or sympathizers of the EPRP secretly executed

On February 26, 44 of the 47 political prisoners held at the Special Security Police Station were secretly executed in the most inhuman manner that probably has ever been perpetrated in the history of Ethiopia. After having been driven out of the city, in the process of which the prisoners made last-minute attempts to save their lives by jumping from windows, all except the 45th who managed to escape and tell the story, were massacred. A tractor, which has been found near the area selected for the execution, ploughed the area and buried the bodies in such a way that the bodies could not be discovered. A listing of the names of these martyrs is given in the report and a list is sent to the ILO.

2. 25 workers of the Addis Ababa Cement Factory executed

On the pretext of the assassination of the Union leader of the Addis Ababa Cement Factory, which in fact was carried out by Mengistu's assassin squads themselves, 25 workers were rounded up on February 25 and secretly executed on the same day. This fascist tactic of accusing mass people for acts that they themselves carried out to find pretext for carrying even greater fascist deeds is increasingly being made use of by Mengistu and his close associates, principally the fascist clique led by Haile Fidada.

3. Campaign against the youth intensified

It is not unusual these days to find well-trained and armed agent provocateurs in schools who have been empowered to open fire and execute any one at will. After having failed to gain the slightest support within the historically oppressed and exploited student population, Mengistu and the social fascist clique have turned the schools into hellish places where the students and institutions of higher learning are on strike and where they are repressed around the clock by the imperialist sponsored "flame brigades" invariably backed by suspected sympathizers which, of course, account to over 90% of the youth and student population.

1000 WORKERS DEMONSTRATE!

A demonstration by over 1000 workers in Addis Ababa on March 25 angrily demanded the release of the jail terms of four agents of Mengistu and the social fascists who massacred 2 printing workers for the government. The four were members of the so-called "Kebelle committee".

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED

March 8 is International Working Women's Day. It is on this day that revolutionary and democratic forces all around the world commemorate the long and heroic struggle for the liberation of oppressed and exploited women that has been waged heretofore. It is a day for expressing militant solidarity with the struggle for women's emancipation. It is also, at one and the same time, a day for continuing the struggle in all its aspects -- ideologically, politically, and organizationally; a day for asserting and reasserting the scientific truth that the emancipation of women is a question of the emancipation of society as a whole; that it is a question closely connected with the new democratic and socialist revolutions in each and every country of the world.

Imperialists of all hues and colours, revisionists, and other forces of reaction either suppress the recognition of this day as a day of commemoration of the genuine and militant history of women's revolutionary struggle for liberation or try to obliterate its revolutionary direction by ceaselessly distorting the origin of women's oppression and by prescribing bourgeois and revisionist solutions to all other questions of revolutionary women. In this context, there are two basic class viewpoints, two political lines, and thus two strategies: one -- the bourgeoisie: one socialist, hence revolutionary; another bourgeois (and revisionist) and hence reactionary.

The statement reprinted below was issued by the World-Wide Ethiopian Women Study Group to commemorate the occasion this year. It briefly summarizes the historic origin and significance of the International Working Women's Day as well as the history, role and current status of the revolutionary struggle of Ethiopian women. Subheads are ours.

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Historical Origin

March 8th is at one and the same time a working class holiday as well as a day of struggle to all those compatriots, trade unionists, workers and farmers for the genuine emancipation of women. It is a day of the women working class which by 1857 to 1910, a historical period, the March 8, 1857 that American working women of the needle trades protested the imposition of the two hundred hour work week. These angry women marched from the factories of Manhattan on what is now known as the "White Dispatches" toward the wealthy neighborhood courageously taking up the struggle of their class. Ever since, March 8 has become a day of struggle for double-oppressed working women against their class exploiters and for equal rights. On March 8, 1968, garment workers in the U.S. marched for an eight-hour day, the end to child labour and the right to vote. In 1910, to mark the active initiation of the German communist leader Clara Zetkin, the struggle for women's day of this March 8, 1977 celebration of this day in Russia, which was spearheaded by the strike of more than 90,000 women textile workers, played a key role in the Russian Revolution. Thus, historically, March 8th has been a day of wielding world-wide working class unity against imperialism.

Two Dimetrically Opposite Lines

But in recent years, when it has become fashionable for the bourgeoisie to talk of women's rights, "the woman's issue," "Woman's Day," "woman's year," etc., we find that the significance of International Women's Day varies from one perspective to another. As one has been witness ed at the United Nations World Conferences on the Status of Women. In Mexico only two years ago, we can see that the movement for women's emancipation has long been split into two conflicting philosophies, two class viewpoints and hence two strategies.
Therefore, international working women's day is a day for waging fierce struggle against bourgeois feminists whose main aim lies not in overall societal transformation and development, but in increasing participation for women, thin the existing exploitative capitalsim.

Semi-feudal, semi-colonial framework.

This does not surprise us. Bourgeois feminism stems from the class position of its leaders and is hence opposed to the raising of social problems aside from the women question. We vehemently oppose such an isolating perspective.

To merely delocate the existence of a contradiction between male and female and the need to fight it is an illusionary, absurd and false prescription. It is most crucial to examine the way this contradiction operates within any given specific society and the historical conditions surrounding it. Nothing but a clear analysis tracing the inter-relationships of the main contradictions of that society and the development of the class society and a revolutionary action based upon this analysis could guarantee a meaningful change in the conditions of oppressed women.

The emancipation of women is a question of the emancipation of society as a whole. This simple truth is today as clear as it was in the days of the heroic women of China, Albania, Vietnam, etc., who have stood up side by side with their male class comrades for independence and freedom not only from foreign aggression and internal class enemies, but also from centuries-old traditional structures based on male supremacy. Their victory has set shining examples to women all over the world in that they reveal that women's fight is invariably linked to that of the whole nation and people.

Revolutionary Struggle of Ethiopian Women

It is in this spirit and in the best of revolutionary traditions that double-consciousness helps us to distort and obliterate their struggle, have risen up against the foundations of semi-feudal and semi-colonial Ethiopia. Their present armed struggle against the fascist junta clearly shows that they have yielded unbreakable unity with the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-bureaucrat capitalist leadership of the masses which is being waged under the brilliant leadership of the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party.

The struggle of the broad masses has now reached the stage of organized armed struggle. Under the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Army, armed agrarian revolution is being carried out in the countryside. For each drop of blood shed by the revolutionary forces, the protracted struggle is dealing a double blow to the blood-thirsty fascists in the cities. In an all-out campaign against the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, the junta has, especially in the past two months, heightened its two and half-year-old reign of terror. But, like all decaying forces, it has only succeeded in isolating itself completely, while the EPPR is winning wide support amongst the masses.

It was exactly a year ago on March 8, 1976 that oppressed Ethiopian women celebrated this international holiday by storming through the streets of Addis Ababa carrying the slogans "Only EPPR can bring the struggle of oppressed women to a conclusion leadership." "Provisional Popular Government now!". Before an audience of 50,000, the representative of the Ethiopian Women Coordinating Committee in a fiery speech denounced the junta's fascism, as a consequence of which she was led to prison.

MARTHA KEBEBA

A militant member of the University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUWA) assassinated by the Walle Salsam Feido-bourgeoisie regime on December 8, 1972.
ASSIMBA: SYMBOL OF THE PATH AND VICTORY OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION

Marxist-Leninist theory teaches and revolutionary practice in the new
democratic revolution confirms that in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries
the main form of organization for revolution is the peoples army and the
main form of struggle is protracted armed struggle, led and controlled by a
Marxist-Leninist party. All other forms of struggle and organization are
subordinate to and serve the armed struggle.

In Ethiopia, too, owing to its semi-feudal and semi-colonial character,
the main form of struggle can only be the armed struggle. The armed struggle
which is currently being waged by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Army
(EPRA), the armed-wing of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP)
is, accordingly, a brilliant illustration of this inevitable road to the
Ethiopian revolution.

Since its formation, the EPRA has been conducting armed propaganda in
various provinces of Ethiopia, particularly in Tigre province while at
the same time scoring decisive victories over the fascist regime's army as well as over roving bandits of the EDO which have repeatedly
attempted to destroy it. Recently, the
EPRA began putting out its own organ, "Assimba", which is published in Amharic, Tigrigna, Oromigna, and Wolaita. The
name "Assimba" is derived from a place
in Tigre called Assimba where the EPRA
has established its first base.

The formation of the EPRA and the
launching of "Assimba" is a major
breakthrough in the struggle of the
Ethiopian masses against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism;
and can definitely be said that the new
democratic revolution in Ethiopia has
now entered its decisive and
correct path. For, as Chairman Mao
equally emphasizes, "without a
peoples army the people have
nothing," and "without armed struggle
neither the proletariat nor the
communist party would have any
standing at all... and it would be
impossible for the revolution to
tryumph."

In semi-colonial countries
like Ethiopia such an armed struggle
should, if it were to be successful,
take the form of a protracted peasant
war under proletarian leadership and
this is, in essence, an agrarian
revolution of the peasantry. This
has been proved both in theory and
in practice through the correct and
revolutionary application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete
conditions of the Chinese new
democratic and socialst revolutions
which in turn has laid down the
general law for revolutions in semi-
feudal, semi-colonial countries.
This revolutionary road, which of
course must be creatively applied
to the concrete requirements and
conditions of revolution in semi-
feudal, semi-colonial countries, is
the road of seizure of power by armed
masses of the toiling masses, achieved by
relying on the broad masses of the
peasantry, by establishing rural
base areas, encircling the cities
from the countryside and finally
seizing the cities.

This is the only road because,
in such countries like Ethiopia, the
key cities have long been occupied
by the powerful imperialists and their
reactionary local allies.
It is imperative, therefore, for revolutionaries to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas. Into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution. The building of revolutionary base areas is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist strategic concept developed by Chairman Mao for guiding the revolution in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries and the only correct path to win victory. This is true even if such base areas would have to be only several small pieces of territory at the beginning, for and as long as this is persistently done, they will gradually spread like a spark starting a prairie fire! As Chairman Mao pointed out, "Only thus can we create tremendous difficulties for the exploiting classes, shake their foundations, and precipitate their internal disintegration."

This is the only revolutionary road, further, not only to be able to seize political power but also to be able to maintain it in a revolutionary manner as would guarantee the revolution's development through to the end -- the transition to socialism and communism.

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It is the significance and importance of building up revolutionary base areas. Such is the significance of military base areas. The revolution, which works the founding of its first base on Assabha has sent the enemy camp shivering and into frenzy while creating the greatest of joy and revolutionary optimism in all friends of the Ethiopian revolution. For the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political lines determines every thing else. For the fascist junta's foundations can be shaken and smothered only by extending, expanding, and consolidating such revolutionary base areas, by getting up political powers, by deepening the agrarian revolution in a revolutionary way, and by spreading political power in a series of waves all over the rural areas.

And this precisely is the revolutionary road, and the inevitable victory, that Assabha symbolises!

VICTORY TO THE EPRP!
VICTORY TO THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY.
THE EPRP!

VICTORY TO THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES!

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... (cont'd from page 6) HANDS OFF DJIBOUTI!

Djibouti must be given the full right to determine their own destiny by themselves; colonialism and its puppets must be expelled from the town. This is something that can be decided only by the masses themselves free from outside interference. As such, the EPRP stands opposed to all outside interference in the affairs of the Dionbou people.

The WWP has also made its position clear long ago. In its Fourth Congress held in West Germany last year, it expressed its determination to resist all foreign interference in the affairs of the Dionbou people. The junta's "aggressive designs over the territory," called upon the Afar and Tigrayan masses further in a revolutionary and fraternal manner to organise themselves and resist all domination from outside.

All revolutionary and democratic forces in the region must unite to firmly frustrate all reactionary designs. As the EPRP points out "the combined efforts of the revolutionary forces in the region must struggle to frustrate the imperialist-reactionary plan that will create hostilities of war and lead to the further enslavement of the masses in the region. Such localised wars serve only the merchants of arms and death -- the imperialist puppet leaders. They help them to destroy revolutionary movements in the region and to divert the class struggle. The only war that the masses in the region must fight must be one against the local reactionaries and imperialists."

STOP ALL INTERFERENCE IN DJIBOUTI!
ALL OUTSIDE HANDS OFF DJIBOUTI!

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PERUSING THROUGH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REPORT ON "HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA"

Forwarded on request a copy of the March, 1977 report by Amnesty International which, according to its statutes "is a world-wide voluntary human rights organisation. It has in the past reported on "human rights violations" in Chile, Uruguay, Iran, Argentina, Philippines, etc. We reprint below excerpts from the report of concern to Ethiopia. It reveals information that the EPRP and its supporters abroad have not reported already but as just one other confirmation of what has already been known to all close followers of developments in Ethiopia.

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"Amnesty International is very concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Ethiopia. During the presidency of Emperor Haile Selassie, Amnesty International campaigned actively against arbitrary and long-term detention without trial, the use of torture, and the conditions under which political prisoners were held. Having since the young people, particularly students, are regularly subjected to ill-treatment, inhuman and degrading treatment carried out in ordinary prisons and in special 'correction camps'. Other methods of torture range from beatings with `sophisticated' methods of torture and degradation. They include: 1) severe beatings with rifle butts, truncheons, sticks and clubs, the use of electric shocks; 2) various degrading punishments and sexual abuse; 4) the pulling out of toe and finger nails.

"...persons have been killed by the armed forces in certain political centres, arrested and sentenced to death by extra-judicial execution. For example, there is often shooting by soldiers during house-to-house searches for arms and illegal publications, which are carried out violently, and many persons are reported to be shot without ever being identified. In this way, the EPRP is kept in a state of continuous fear with no assurance that they can return home safely, that they will not be arrested or tortured. In reprisal for the absence of the persons being detained, there are those reports of some hundreds of students and..."
FROM THE PAGES OF REVOLUTIONARY CLANDESTINE PAPERS IN ETHIOPIA

The total suspension of all democratic rights characterized by the reign of fascist terror unleashed on the Ethiopian masses has forced all political mass organizations into the underground. Propaganda and literature distributed by the organisations in this way are always written in different languages spoken in Ethiopia. All of them unmistakably illustrate a singularity of purpose... one of revolutionary iron-opposition to the fascist regime. In order to introduce a few of these mass-based nature of the revolutionary struggle in Ethiopia, we present below a partial list together with randomly selected quotations from each. All the translations are ours and take full responsibility in any misinterpretations that may be caused in the process.

1. The Revolutionary Youth (Abyotawe Wotat) -- Organ of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Youth League, the youth league of the EPRP.

"The EPRP, rallying under the banner of the EPRED, considers the meaning of the revolutionary violence of the fascists with regard to the principles of the revolution. To work to alleviate the economic problems of the masses is another priority. To accomplish this, the youth must be mobilized and well prepared."

2. Voice of the Revolutionary Workers Union of Ethiopia (Ye-leema Dinta) -- Organ of the clandestine workers' organization established to pursue the work of CEUL (Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions) after the latter was closed down by the fascist Junta.

"The BRM calls all workers to (1) oppose and consistently expose the fascist dictatorship of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and the social fascists; (2) to put the electoral revolutionary measures against anti-people control; (3) to organize and expose fascist puppets and agents; (4) to deepen the struggle for the reinstatement of CEUL and to root out the bourgeois to oppose and expose fascists and social fascists. Let us get organized and expose fascists and social fascists in every corner of the revolutionary forces and frustrate fascist attempts."

3. Double Fighter (Dirib Tagaywa) -- Organ of the Ethiopian Women Organization...

"...our conscious participation in the struggle will double the strength of the revolutionary forces. Let us get organized and expose fascists and social fascists. Let us get organized and expose fascists and social fascists in every corner of the revolutionary forces and frustrate fascist attempts."

4. The Oppressed Soldier -- organ of a clandestine organization of rank and file members of the EPRP...

"...long before it won't be too late for them to change their ways and come back to the right path."

Voice of Teachers, organ of the Ethiopian Teachers Association, Victory through Struggle and the Revolutionary Student (Zaqaye Tenari), publications by the student organizations, Forward (wedefit), a community organization by the organisations, will be introduced in subsequent issues of Forward.
The Struggle--in Poems

The EPRP at the Helm

The serfs labor
but
the lords exploit
The slaves plough
but
the tyrants reap
The workers produce
but
the capitalists profit
The humble folks sacrifice
but
the patricians benefit

In revolt against this injustice
In February 1974 the people stood up
and took their fate in their own hands
United to a man they rose up
To storm heaven and earth
with cries of justice
To do away with all pests!

And with the EPRP at the helm
-- with the EPRA as the arm
Indeed the finest hour has come
for the people to be proud and proclaim
-- away with the system of oppression
and exploitation
Away with feudalism, imperialism and
fascism!!

In the Rise and Fall
of the High Seas

In the rise and fall of the high seas
Torrential storms shake the waves
Turbulence erupts in the universe
Ethiopia shall rise on new foundations!

In the heavens the radiant stars glow
A new high looms on the horizon
The people sing for protracted armed
revolution
To defeat fascistic counter-revolution.

Ethiopian shores dazzle with red
flowers
Green with human forests,
red with the EPRP
The masses are aroused and moved
to action
With the EPRP, the people at one,
victory is certain!

With the EPRP at the head
the people united
Victory is certain!!

ABOUT THOSE

LITTLE FACTS:

The handful of social-fascist clique
which, after having been ignominiously
expelled from ESUE in August, 1975, managed
to put its members in the payrolls of the
junta's embassies in certain European
countries has recently been located in
Sweden carrying out its usual dirty agent
provocateur work. Led by a certain maggot
called Makonnen Getu, whose skills in
feudal intrigues and ability to compose
lies and fascist propaganda (as a good
disciple of his ill-famous teacher, Haile
Fidda) has earned him a handful of follow-
ers, this clique tried to stage a pro-
 junta demonstration in Sweden on March 26
in open cooperation with the junta's
embassy there.

The long-planned and organized show-
down ended in fiasco: not only that not
a single organization or group showed up
but its own paid members and sympathizers
boycotted it! All counted 13 people turned
out! Well, the junta and the Haile Fidda
clique better have this many paid agents!