

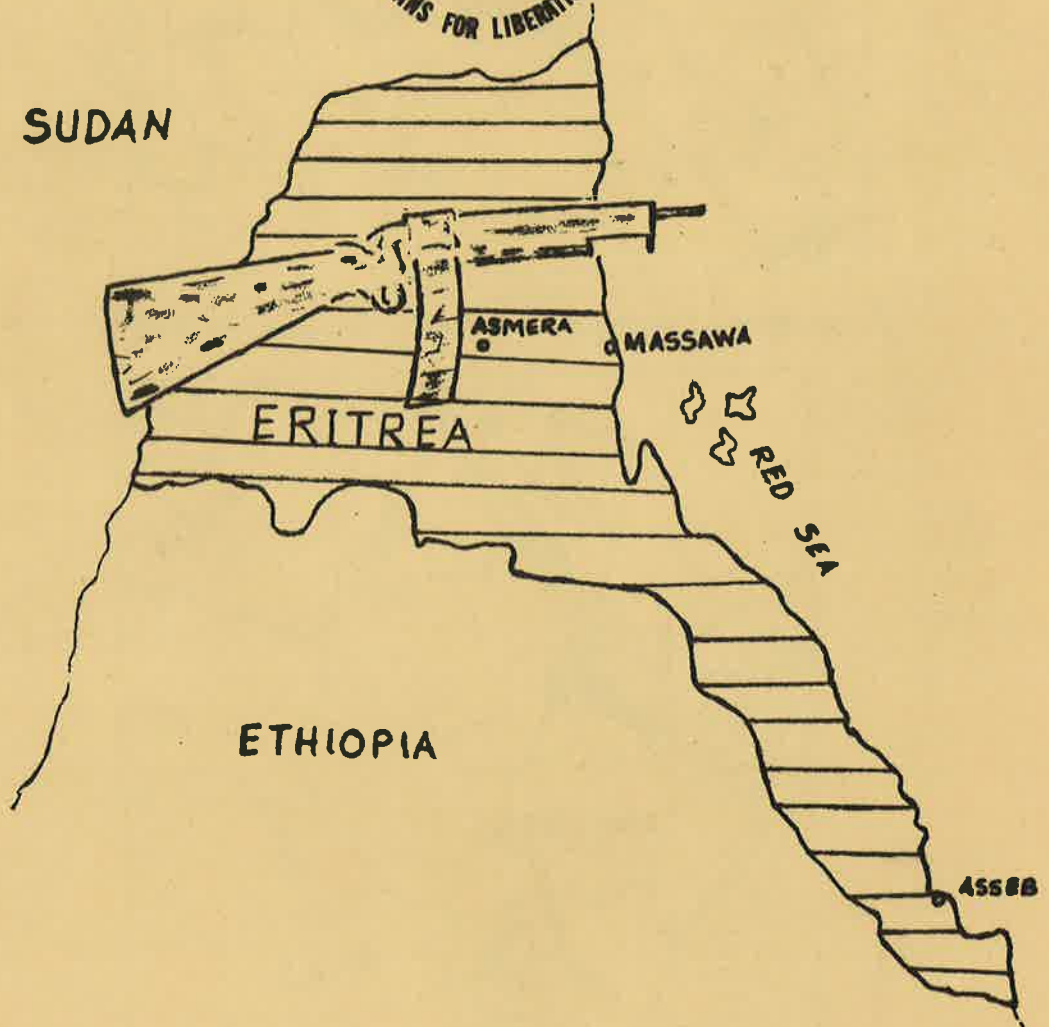
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LIBERATION

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY ERITREANS FOR LIBERATION IN NORTH AMERICA



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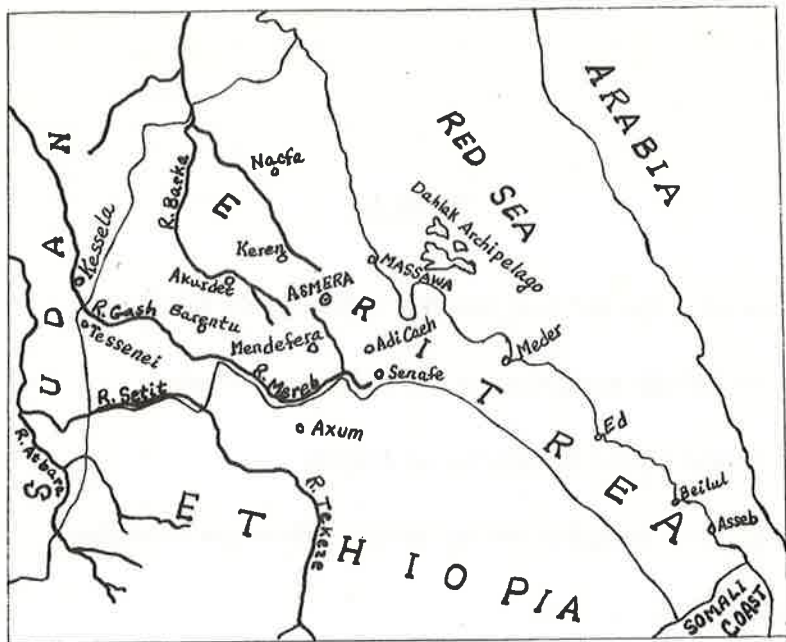
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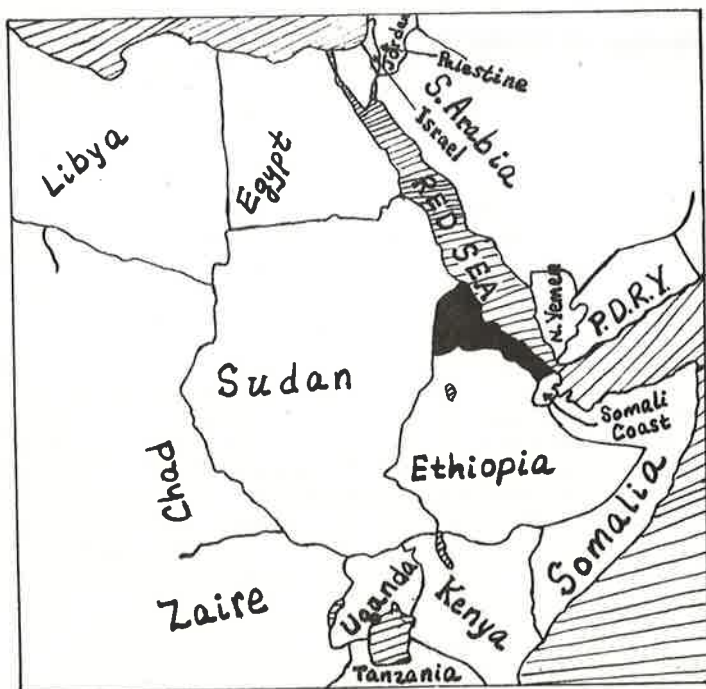
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No. 4

April-May 1973



Eritrea and its Strategic Geographic Location



For comments, criticisms, or more information, please contact E. F. L. at Box 1247, N. Y., N.Y. 10027 or Box 163, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

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EDITORIAL

The National Democratic Revolution in Eritrea

Our present struggle against Ethiopian oppressors is nothing more than an extension of our militant Eritrean struggle against foreign oppression. We are sacrificing our lives to free our people from the shackles of Haile Selassie and his masters, to attain independence for our country and to realize the self-reliant progress of the Eritrean people. (Eritrean People's Liberation Forces)

The immediate objective of the ongoing struggle of the Eritrean people is the destruction of Ethiopian colonial oppression and the attainment of national liberation for Eritrea. The people of Eritrea are therefore fighting for national independence, that is, for the right of the Eritrean people to a separate political existence in the concrete realization of an independent Eritrean state. However, the struggle for liberation does not end with the winning of national independence; independence will only signify the beginning of the great task ahead for the economic and social transformation of Eritrea. It will usher in a new era in the history of our country, a difficult but glorious era of planned national building and reconstruction aimed at the creation of a free, democratic and socialist Eritrean state. In short, the Eritrean struggle for national liberation is a struggle to establish the right of the Eritrean people to control and determine their own destiny, to set up their own popular government, to liberate and develop their productive forces, and to build a new and prosperous Eritrean society in which there will be no place for the exploitation or the oppression of man by man.

The immediate objective of Eritrean national independence is attainable only by waging a national democratic revolution. That is, the aim of the present struggle is national independence and its essential character must necessarily be national democratic. The overriding task of the national democratic revolution is to mobilize all the nationalist and democratic masses of Eritrea into a solid force for liberation in order to defeat and totally obliterate colonialism, zionism and imperialism from our country. This calls for the establishment of a solid worker-peasant alliance and the formation of a broad National United Front under the firm leadership of a proletarian party that can successfully rally all patriotic elements against the common enemy of colonial aggression.

The Eritrean working class, even though relatively small, represents social progress. As the sector engaged in the most advanced form of social production, it is strategically placed in that it is the only true and possible agent for the material and cultural transformation of Eritrean society. The peasantry, along with the nomads, makes up the vast majority (perhaps 90 to 95%) of the Eritrean population. This represents a great force whose tremendous revolutionary potential can be realized only in close alliance with and under the leadership of the working class. Because the Eritrean working class originates from and continues to maintain organic links with the peasantry, there already exist favorable conditions for the effective forging of a solid worker-peasant alliance in waging the national liberation struggle. The tiny Eritrean compradore and petty bourgeoisie is closely allied with the ruling circles of the Ethiopian aristocracy and heavily committed to imperialism and, therefore, is hopelessly compromised into a position of open hostility toward the Revolution. Only those elements of this class who, in the words of Amilcar Cabral, are willing to commit political suicide are capable of complete and total identification with the fundamental interests of the toiling masses of workers, peasants and nomads of our country. These elements make up the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie and, once they have accepted the leadership of the party of the working class, can play an important role in waging the national democratic revolution whose motive force is the worker-peasant alliance within the framework of a National United Front against colonialism, zionism and imperialism.

It is thus obvious that the chief enemy of the Eritrean people is Ethiopian colonialism, sustained and supported by Israeli zionism, United States imperialism and the Eritrean mercenary, collaborating classes. In other words, the basic enemies of the Eritrean people are colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation. The main instrument perpetrating the colonial oppression and imperialist subjugation of the Eritrean people is the presence on Eritrean soil of a foreign army of occupation, the army of feudalist Ethiopia, which is trained, armed, supplied and financed by both the United States and Israel. Thus, the primary task of the national democratic revolution in Eritrea is the defeat and destruction of this colonial army of occupation in order to win national independence. The National United Front must win over all the patriotic and progressive popular forces, all the regional groupings, nationalities and religious communities, and all other forces opposed to the common national enemy, and mobilize them to wage a unified national democratic struggle for independence.

It is of course important here to bear in mind that "the Front is a unity of opposites which includes various classes cooperating with each other on the basis of a definite common program of struggle." The Front incorporates classes whose interests are similar and classes whose interests converge only to a certain extent, and the common interest and program are necessarily seen by each class from its own standpoint. Thus, the drive to maintain and strengthen unity must be coupled with a persistent struggle among the different class viewpoints within the National United Front. In this internal struggle for principled unity, the revolutionary vanguard, that is, the proletarian party, has the historic obligation to always ensure the leading role of the party of the working class and the primacy of the worker-peasant alliance. It is also absolutely imperative to always keep in mind that the primary contradiction characteristic of the Eritrean Revolution is the one between our people's forces of national liberation on the one hand, and the perpetrators of colonial aggression and oppression on the other. All internal and, therefore, secondary contradictions within the Front must be resolved democratically and peacefully. All the guns, fire power and revolutionary violence of the Front must be used only against the common enemy. The unified effort of the national resistance must be directed at the resolution of the primary contradiction between our people and the enemy which is possible only through the latter's total annihilation.

Totally ignorant or negligent of these fundamental principles of the national democratic revolution, the reactionary and opportunistic leaders of the self-styled Revolutionary Council have unleashed the fratricidal civil war among the Eritrean freedom fighters and people. Their decision to liquidate the People's Liberation Forces by means of armed combat and, therefore, their unilateral initiation of the Eritrean civil war was unquestionably fascist and counter-revolutionary and must be totally condemned by all progressive and democratic forces the world over. The reactionary clique is fully responsible for the consequences of the civil war and its continuing refusal to officially end it must be met with the determined opposition of all freedom-loving Eritreans and the genuine friends of the Eritrean people. We appeal to those governments, peoples and organizations who continue to support the Revolutionary Council, on the uninformed or mistaken presumption that they are supporting the just cause of the Eritrean people, to earnestly reassess their respective positions with a view to shifting whatever support they are capable of to the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces. They must also be fully aware that their continued support of the Revolutionary Council as presently constituted can only be injurious of the fundamental interests of the Eritrean people and detrimental to their just struggle for national liberation. The civil war has been a terrible burden on our people, has taken a tragic toll from the ranks of our courageous freedom fighters, and has given the enemy badly needed breathing space. However, the dialectical outcome of the yet unsettled but by now long quiet civil war has definitely been in favor of the progressive, patriotic and democratic forces of the Eritrean Revolution. Out of it has emerged a new revolutionary vanguard, the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces. The program of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces calls for a broad-based National

United Front and seeks to rally and lead the Eritrean masses in the national democratic task of destroying the oppressive forces of reaction -- colonialism, collaborationism, zionism and imperialism. The insistence on the peaceful resolution of secondary contradictions, the realization of national unity against colonial aggression, and the emphasis on mass mobilization are the most persistent national democratic demands and principal features of its overall strategy. Such a correct strategy will inevitably bring the Eritrean national democratic revolution into its final and decisive victory.

It is true that there are religious, regional, linguistic, ethnic and class differences among the Eritrean people. But these differences define, for the present moment, only the minor or secondary contradictions existing among them and, hence, cannot negate or in any way undermine the essential unity of our country and its people. For the experience of a common national resistance against a history of common colonial oppression binds the Eritrean people together, and this commonly shared national consciousness has inspired them to rise up in arms in the pursuit of their national liberation. Now, the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces vanguard faces the great historic task of successfully rallying around it all the patriotic and progressive segments of Eritrean society and building a strong and invincible revolutionary army that will victoriously fight for the liberation of our country and its people.

The Eritrean revolutionary vanguard must not only correctly recognize and fully assert the leading role of the working class, but it must also work untiringly to forge and strengthen a national worker-peasant alliance as the firm foundation upon which a broad-based National United Front can be established in order to successfully wage the struggle for national liberation. It must progressively and vigilantly arm itself with the revolutionary ideology of the working class and put it to work in carrying out the just struggle of our people for national liberation. For, only by embracing and creatively practicing the revolutionary ideology of scientific socialism can the Eritrean working class, in close alliance with the peasantry and the patriotic and revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, wage a fierce and relentless struggle that will inevitably culminate in the national independence of Eritrea and the eventual total liberation of the Eritrean people.

The Eritrean people have never submitted to colonial servitude in silence. Colonial aggression and its local collaborators have always been met with stiff popular resistance. It is the high level of national consciousness and the committed patriotism of the Eritrean people that has compelled them to embark upon the revolutionary path of armed struggle. No doubt, this path is going to be arduous and difficult, but it can only end in triumph, in the total victory of the Eritrean people. The organized revolutionary force of the Eritrean masses is, in the final analysis, invincible.

It is also important to recognize that the Eritrean people are not struggling alone. The national democratic revolution of the Eritrean people is a component part of the fierce struggle being waged by the toiling peoples, oppressed nations and colonized countries of the world for national independence, democracy, socialism and peace. The Eritrean revolutionaries are, after all, part of a planetary force of resistance and liberation. Thus, the great task ahead for the heroic combatants and the revolutionary vanguard of our people is to consolidate the organic link of the Eritrean Revolution with the worldwide proletarian movement and to lead the Eritrean people from nationalism to scientific socialism. This represents the only path to the complete liberation of our people from colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation.

The "post independence" African experience has clearly indicated that the struggle for national independence, liberation and democracy waged by the colonial and dependent peoples can end in total victory only if it becomes an integral part of the international proletarian revolution. As the worker-peasant alliance is the correct strategic basis for the National United Front against colonial aggression, the alliance of the proletariat in all countries with the colonial and dependent

peoples the world over is also the correct strategic basis for the common struggle against the world imperialist system.

This makes it absolutely imperative for us here to guard against, to forthrightly confront and to fearlessly combat the petty bourgeois manifestations of elitism and narrow nationalism. We must prepare ourselves to join our people in waging the just struggle for national liberation. We must work and study hard and with discipline, strengthen our political unity, develop and nurture a deep sense of patriotism, and imbue ourselves with an abiding spirit of internationalism. We must be organized, disciplined and vigilant. We must heed Chairman Mao and fully understand, thoroughly digest and carefully follow the "mass line" in our organizational work.

We should grasp that national liberation is the irresistible movement, the motive force of the history of our time. Imperialism has already been dealt a decisive blow in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The massive peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America are becoming increasingly conscious of the fact of their imperialist oppression and exploitation and militantly organizing for the great task of their liberation. The revolutionary movements in the Middle East are catching fire and scoring great victories against colonialism, feudalism, zionism and imperialism. In imperialism's own industrial heartlands and ghetto-slums, the struggle of the workers and colonized communities is gaining momentum every day. In short, the world imperialist system is engaged in a desperate survival struggle; capitalism is, in fact, on the verge of a grave economic crisis and imperialism is fast crumbling while socialism is consolidating its great achievements and the national liberation movements are becoming progressively stronger, confidently advancing upon the path of inevitable and certain victory.

Yet, the victory of the national liberation movements can become complete only by embarking upon the most advanced path of social development in our era and embracing the international proletarian socialist revolution. This means that the Eritrean struggle for national liberation must, upon independence, make the decisive transition from the national democratic revolution directly to the socialist revolution, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, as in China, Vietnam and Korea. This is the only correct strategic line of the party of the working class and the only sure and tried road to the complete independence of our country and the total liberation of our people. In the immortal words of President Ho Chi Minh, the great internationalist and Vietnamese leader, "Only socialism, only communism, can free the oppressed nations and the toiling peoples of the world from servitude." Accordingly, the scientific socialist slogan, "Workers and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" must be our battle cry.

VICTORY TO THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION!
LONG LIVE THE ERITREAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FORCES VANGUARD!
VICTORY TO THE WORLD DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS!
WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ERITREAN CIVIL WAR

Prepared and issued by the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces, December 14, 1972

Revolutionaries have always been persecuted in their homelands; and this has been true for the most part of the Eritrean Revolution; not in the sense that the Revolution has not been accepted by the Eritrean masses (it had its normal share of problems there, of course) but in the sense that walls of either outright lies, misinformed misrepresentation, or deliberate silence have been erected between it and the world masses of its planetary homeland.

Even though the armed struggle alone has commemorated its eleventh anniversary last September 1st, this state of conditions forces us to give you anew a brief profile of Eritrea and its Revolution before anything else.

Eritrea is an African country situated in the northern end of the Horn of Africa, bordered by the Red Sea on the east, Ethiopia and Somalia on the south and the Sudan on the north. It has an area of about 119,000 km.², and a population of over three million. Its strategic position as a cross-roads between the Middle East, Africa, and Asia has, from time immemorial, made it a tempting victim of Pharaonic Egyptians, Alexandrite Greeks, Sabeen Arabs and Asian traders; and modern Eritrea still carries traces of their sojourns. After the rise of modern imperialism, Eritrea has suffered under the hands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and the Italian and British Empires. Today it is under the clutches of U.S. imperialism through the hands of its client-state, the neo-colonialist, monarchic regime of Haile Selassie's Ethiopia.

The Eritrean people have never bowed to foreign attempts of domination low-headed. Before the advent of West European imperialism in the form of Italy's offensive against Eritrean independence in 1886, Eritrea had always succeeded in ousting any foreign intruders, even the relatively sophisticated Ottoman colonialists.

Eritrea's historical independent entity is attested by its rich wealth of material and written history; its own very developed phonetic alphabet; and three written languages, (Ge'ez, Tigrinya and Tigre), excluding Arabic which was introduced as part of the Federal Act in 1952. Ge'ez is today a dead language used only for ecclesiastical literature and church rites, but the latter two are prospering languages of the people, Tigrinya being the more developed and more widely spoken of the two and was the national language along with Arabic during the days of the free Eritrean government.

The modern history of the Eritrean Revolution goes back to the British occupation in 1941 after the defeat of the Italian Fascists in World War II. After the end of the war, the imperialist-dominated, nascent United Nations extended the occupation for ten years under the "Trusteeship" cloak, in order to prepare the groundwork for the then not-so-sophisticated but already powerful U.S. imperialism's eventual use of the country as a base against the World Revolution in general and that of the surrounding region in particular.

Britain's first step in fulfilling its part in the imperialists' division of labor was in allowing the then juvenile head of world reaction, the U.S., to set up a medium military communications center, the Radio Marina. Before its "Trusteeship" time was up, Britain in addition attempted to kill the nationalist movement for independence through all sorts of maneuvers: by playing on religious differences (the Eritrean people are roughly 50%-50% adherents of Islam and the Christian faith), by terrorizing the trade unions and nationalist intellectuals, by trying to create a neo-colonialist bourgeoisie, etc. It is necessary to remember that, because of their peculiar history, the Eritrean people had at that time most probably the most advanced mass organizations in the African continent if not in the colonized Third World as a whole. As a result, imperialism knew that an independent Eritrea would never become one of its willing neo-colonialist tools.

Therefore, when the Eritrean case went back to the United Nations in 1952, world imperialism saw its only sure way of killing the Eritrean progressive movement was by wiping out Eritrea itself. It did not drop a nuclear bomb; imperialists, especially

modern neo-colonialists, always try to accomplish their crimes cleanly, if possible. They saw their power in the U.N. and they mercilessly used it to accomplish their political genocide. First they tried a sure way: partition of the country and amalgamation of its parts into two huge, backward colonialist and neo-colonialist entities. Britain tabled a resolution to the General Assembly advising that the then about two million Eritreans be divided, on religious lines, between the then British colony of the Sudan and the backward neo-colonialist regime of Haile Selassie's Ethiopia. Ethiopia, true to its client nature, tacitly agreed to this arrangement by abstaining, even though this medicine was too hard to swallow by the then few and new third world nations and socialist countries in the assembly and as a result could not get the necessary votes. The Eritrean people, as one man, opposed this suicidal operation and all the political parties either sent delegations to oppose or messages to condemn this proposal.

When they saw the complete rebuff of this idea by the Eritrean people and the cold reception of it even by the pseudo-world body, the imperialists brought another milder alternative: a federal union with Ethiopia, a landlocked country eager to grab the sea outlets Eritrea could afford her; and backward and crude enough to smash the mass movements in any manner to guarantee its access to the world, and to prevent its slumbering masses from learning "bad lessons" of progress from their Eritrean brothers.

Against the opposition of the progressive forces and the great majority of the masses, the U.N. imposed this solution on Eritrea, but in order not to push the people into an extreme position of defiance, it drafted an autonomous Eritrean democratic constitution and gave Eritreans a choice to change this arrangement after a ten-year trial period.

In exchange for the occupation of Eritrea, Ethiopia automatically signed a secret "Mutual Defense Pact" with the U.S. (now made public by the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee); and the right to set up any number of bases in Eritrea. Right after the Federal Act, the U.S. went on to upgrade the Radio Marina to the biggest military communications base outside the U.S. (by its own admission): the Kagnew Station in Asmara, the Eritrean capital. At the end of the '60s, the North American imperialist power extended its acquisition by adding a naval and an army base near Dekemhare (40 kms. south of Asmara).

It was not in vain that the American imperialists entrusted the liquidation of the Eritrean mass movements to monarchic Ethiopia. With Machiavellian cunning and Gengis-Khanese barbarity, Haile Selassie left aside all legal niceties and started to accomplish America's dirty work while it kept watching laughing gleefully.

To terrorize the masses, Haile filled the country with a huge occupation army and then proceeded to act as though the Federal Act and the Eritrean Constitution did not exist: he forced the popularly elected Eritrean Chief Executive to resign, banished the president of the Confederation of Trade Unions (after hired terrorists failed to assassinate him), and the Chairman of the National Assembly had no choice but to flee. Tedla Bairu, Wolde Ab Wolde Mariam, and Idris Mohammed Adem, the three persons respectively, are now all abroad associated with the national movement in various capacities. All political parties were declared illegal, even the Unionist party Haile himself created when he saw it developing into a nationalist party. The trade unions were in for a special treatment: an industrial pacification program, Ethiopian style - no fish without water, ergo, no workers without factories. When the Haile Selassie regime's imprisonment, torturing and banishment were to no avail in killing the trade unions, it closed down all major factories, dismantled them and because of its backwardness and feudalist spite left them to rust.

The then trade movement in particular, and the mass consciousness in general, cannot be understood without comprehending the special status of Eritrea in Italy's colonialist blueprints. Most of Eritrea, especially the highlands, have a cool-Mediterranean-like climate, i.e., conducive to Caucasian habitation. Italian fascism, whose rank-and-file was made up of the handicraft petty-bourgeoisie and the backward, poor, chauvinist peasantry decided to create for them a "heaven-on-earth" in Eritrea. In addition, this was seen as godsend solution to the perennial southern problem, which

is still aching the heads of modern post-fascism Italian political leaders. A third factor was the role of Eritrea as a spring-board for Fascist designs on the neighboring African countries, especially Ethiopia. Consequently, Fascism poured millions and millions of lire into Eritrea to set up medium factories, commercial plantations, towns, communications, facilities, and other infrastructure in a very short span of time. Eritrea being a small country with a small population (which because of the relative cheapness of labor, to accelerate the rate of Italian settlement and to hasten the war effort was made actively to participate in the work) was forced artificially to become a very developed country, both human and material capital-wise, at a tremendous speed at least by Third World standards.

Even today most of the technicians, quite a big proportion of the middle level and advisory civil service and a great fraction of the intermediate commercial entrepreneurs in Ethiopia are Eritreans. The relative abundance of Eritrean skilled labor is benefitting neighboring African and Arab countries like the Sudan, Somalia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya.

The strength of the Eritrean trade unions in the 40s and 50s and the actions taken against them could be appreciated only from this light. By closing down the factories and business establishments, Haile Selassie killed two birds with one stone: he incapacitated the progressive national movement in Eritrea and executed forced migration of Eritrean skilled labor to Ethiopia, so that the monarchy could have a thin surface of modernity to masquerade in African politics. The fate of the Eritrean intellectual, skilled worker, or even entrepreneur in Ethiopia is similar to that of a Greek of similar capacity in the Roman Empire: a skilled slave, a slave sought after for his abilities, but one who cannot be trusted for executive positions and who has to be discarded anytime there is a native replacement. Because of the political limitations of the Ethiopian economy, this meant a direct call for no jobs for Eritreans in the end of the sixties. Worse still, unlike the Greek, the Eritrean has been subjected to a crude cultural aggression in an attempt to dehumanize and assimilate him. When Haile Selassie unilaterally abrogated the Federal Act and declared Eritrea one of the 14 provinces of Ethiopia in 1962, he abolished Tigrinya and Arabic as national languages and ordered all Tigrinya school books and other literary works burnt. Eritrean school children were forced to learn in an underdeveloped alien language and adults were legally forced to handle their official relations with agencies of the government in a tongue they scarcely knew. In addition, Ethiopia started to curb the development of Eritrean music, theatrical works and all other facets of its modern culture. In its extreme manifestation, cultural aggression came in the form of exhibiting all Eritrean material and cultural heritage to buttress Ethiopia's flimsy legend of a three-thousand year independent existence. Even though Haile Selassie has failed in his attempts to kill modern Eritrean culture, his systematic use of Eritrea's history against its independence has forced many Eritreans to look with share, if not utterly hate their own past glories; and the fact that this was done by a neighboring African country has pushed them to see any mention of African unity with cynicism. The latter has been especially true after the apparent acceptance, by even relatively progressive African states, of Haile Selassie's hypocritical championing of African unity as witnessed in the resolutions of the Rabat Summit.

Along with their oppressed and progressive brothers throughout the continent, the Eritrean people have come to realize that talk of African unity under prevailing conditions is a complete farce and that the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) is an imperialist machination. Consequently, it has been reduced, if it was not so intended to begin with, into an "elite club" of the heads of so-called "independent" African states whose primary concern and activity are focused upon mutual self preservation. This is not to say that there are no progressive African governments at the present moment, but to underscore the essential point that the O.A.U. is still numerically and, therefore, politically dominated by the reactionary, feudal and neocolonial regimes which are supported and indeed, in many cases, directly sustained by imperialism.

The Eritrean people have shared the oppression and the sufferings of the African peoples under colonial and imperialist domination. They have now risen in arms to totally wipe out from their country these historical enemies of the African peoples; for only the complete national liberation of all the African peoples, the complete liberation of the continent, and the active pursuit of scientific socialism can constitute the bases for genuine African unity and freedom.

Nobody can understand the Eritrean Revolution, how it started, its present contradictions, its relations with the African progressive vanguard, its relations with the Arab World and its connection with the World Revolution without understanding these facts.

The Eritrean armed struggle started in September 1st, 1961, just a year before Haile Selassie declared the Federal Act null and void. That was the time when the Eritrean progressive movement was in disarray. Most of its leaders were in Ethiopian dungeons; its labor vanguard in migration to Ethiopia; most of its intellectuals were confused, as is characteristic of that sub-class (some still harbored a continuation of the unrealistic peaceful struggle; others stayed in the sphere of pure hesitation, and a minority openly opted for Ethiopia seeing the temporary personal advantages of collaboration with backward Ethiopia, where their services were in demand). So when the first bullet was fired against Ethiopia, it was not the underground Eritrean Liberation Movement which grouped these elements, which shot it, but a new organization in the Eritrean political horizon: the Eritrean Liberation Front (E.L.F.).

E.L.F. was basically a peasant organization, an organization based on the backward part of the Eritrean peasantry (the Western region of Eritrea, E.L.F.'s first base, is still in the transition stage from nomadism to settled agriculture). The armed struggle took the town progressives completely unaware and it took them quite a long time to digest the fact and join it, especially as the Eritrean Liberation Movement fought with lies, intrigues and all sorts of other mechanisms to prevent its overdue death.

So when the progressive youth (workers, students) started to join the E.L.F. in force in '64-'65, it was met by a backward peasant movement with its peculiar laws of development and elaborate self-defense mechanisms: falsely over-confident, suspicious of any outsiders (see Guevara's Bolivia diary), and limited in its nationalist and revolutionary perspectives; it had even created a closely-knit basically regionalistic, backward, opportunist "intellectual" clique, which coordinated the over-all domestic military and the political line of the E.L.F.; that was the Revolutionary Command, stationed in the Sudanese border town of Kessela.

The majority of the in-coming progressive youth, which came driven by idealism, was automatically turned off and either was eliminated because of its lack of discretion, or went back to the enemy or abroad for studies or work. The remaining minority either incorporated itself into the "intellectual" clique or lay low to abide an appropriate time to strike. The latter, the determined revolutionary group, started mobilizing the masses and the rank and file fighters against the corrupt chieftainship, which was then the E.L.F.

Its incessant work and the objective facts of the Revolution bore fruit on September 10, 1968, when it succeeded in breaking the power of the chieftainship in the three military regions nearest to the enemy out of the five of the Front into a unitary General Command under the name of "Unity of the Three". Before September 1968, the E.L.F. was divided into five regions, with regional chiefs vying for power and ready to do in any of their rivals even to the point of creating excuses for not helping another regional command attacked by the enemy. When it knew these conditions, Ethiopia launched a military offensive and "pacification program" (meaning murdering civilians, killing cattle and burning crops) on a divide and rule basis in 1967. That year saw the greatest massacre of the Eritrean peasantry, and destruction of its property, and its exodus en masse to the Sudan for refuge, in the entire history of the armed struggle. When the refugee masses in the Sudan started exchanging experiences they clearly saw what was at fault and started agitating for the abolishment of the regions, which were in addition a hot bed of tribalism and

and clan sentiments, and asked for the formation of a unified General Command. The underground revolutionary vanguard, through mass work, accelerated this movement and on September 10, 1968, it succeeded in uniting the third, fourth and fifth regional Commands under one entity. The remaining two, those in western Eritrea and which were first formed by the E.L.F. and were the real bases of the backward peasant chieftainship, aided and abetted by the "intellectual" group as unity meant the end of the Revolutionary Command. They refused this unity and started actively to sabotage it. As these two regions were the farthest from the enemy and were shielded by the "Unity of the Three," their intransigence was reinforced as there was no imminent military expediency for unity on their side. In addition, unity spelled their downfall as it meant new elections of leaders, and even if elected, having a basically hostile majority of fighters from other regions under one's command. But unity was an expression of the wishes of the masses and as the "Unity of the Three" clearly showed the peasantry that only a united front can guarantee its livelihood in the fight against Ethiopia, the faction failed in all its attempts to sow dissension. On the contrary, it found progressive elements in its own ranks and the masses under its jurisdiction agitating for solidarity with the united group. After almost a year of unsuccessful intrigues, it saw its power declining daily and the might of the new group accelerating tremendously, be it in the arena of recruitment of progressive elements or in general mass support. It was no use standing against the mighty current of the masses; and finally in August, 1969, at the military conference of Adobha, it agreed to form a united front with the new group. But its "intellectual" advisers brought conditions. They said they wanted a two-man majority in the new General Command (20 for the two regions and 18 for the "Unity of the Three" even though the latter was much bigger); in addition it refused to send elected representatives and sent appointed ones because it was afraid of its own rank and file fighters. The revolutionary vanguard, drunk with over confidence, over eager for national unity and afraid its refusal of the conditions might be misconstrued by the masses, accepted these proposals; but to show its reservations, it also tabled conditions of its own: that the General Command should be provisional and should step down after a year, that a National Congress of all Eritrean mass organizations should be held in a year's time to adopt a program of work for the Revolution (the backward E.L.F. had no comprehensive written program at that time) and to form a new administrative set-up for the Revolution. As an additional guarantee, the revolutionary vanguard also forced the adoption of a resolution calling for non-persecution of members before the National Congress. An Investigation Committee was set up to document such crimes and crimes committed from the start of the armed struggle to be dealt with by the National Congress. This committee was to work closely with the Preparatory Committee formed to arrange the National Congress, and the General Command was to give any aid at its disposal to facilitate their work. The Revolutionary Command, the center of the "intellectual" group, was thenceforth legally disbanded as its work was taken over by the General Command. The Supreme Council, the highest organ of the E.L.F., made up of relatively famous Eritreans and whose members all lived abroad, was to await its fate in the National Congress and up to then was to stay in power and to continue its work of getting financial and military aid from sympathetic countries and organizations.

The revolutionary vanguard, after taking these measures and considering the mass and fighter support it had, felt at ease and planned to undertake further mobilization of the masses in general and the fighters in particular so that its revolutionary line would be adopted by the National Congress. But it was in for a deadly surprise. Just two months after Adobha, the reactionary faction once it adjusted itself to the new conditions, with a solid majority in the General Command and a trusted sanctuary in western Eritrea and neighboring Sudan, with super-Machiavellian tactics put six of the 18 members from the "unity of the three" under arrest; two were abroad on missions and could not be engulfed by its net; one slipped through its fingers and with a small band of guerrillas retreated to the farthest corner of Eritrea (the southern part) and waited for reinforcements. The rest of the 18 were either bribed with high-sounding names or seeing the apparent

fait-accomplis were intimidated to silence. As for revolutionary cadres, using its leadership position and its above mentioned sanctuary, it called all "suspicious" elements ostensibly for missions and murdered them cold-bloodedly. Some were even kidnapped from the Sudan and murdered or imprisoned. More than 300 revolutionary fighters were annihilated in this manner. The rest of the fighters and the populace were under a continuous atmosphere of terror and to frustrate any hope of aid from abroad, it went ahead to kick out the Supreme Council -- a step, though not completely successful, was greatly facilitated by the reactionary reputation the Council had both in Eritrea and foreign progressive minds. The Council, being the most visible organ of the Front, had to carry all the blames of the mistakes of the Revolution, sometimes unfairly, and the General Command maximized this reputation properly. As far as the Preparatory and Investigation Committees were concerned, their revolutionary members were either murdered or were forced to flee for safety, and the Committees politely forgotten. To crown its reactionary step, it declared itself permanent and dropped the adjective provisional from its name. To repeat, all these steps were against the Spirit of Adobha.

Once the reactionary coup d'etat was apparently successful, the real engineers of these maneuvers started to come to the surface. The General Command was actually none other than that reactionary coalition of the backward peasant chieftains and its allies in the Supreme Council with the "intellectual" clique at their head. The ex-Revolutionary Command which was more of an apologist to the reactionaries in the past, now started to show itself in force. As these relatively sophisticated maneuvers were beyond the mental capacities of the peasant chieftains, for proper execution the "intellectual" clique was given strategic positions both in the field and to replace the Supreme Council abroad. But if the ex-Revolutionary Command thought all was quiet, it was mistaken. Its undue praise of the "only and for the first time revolutionary organization in the Eritrean battlefield" was a bit too hasty. The straggling band in southern Eritrea was slowly and quietly growing and progressive elements in the General Command were regrouping in the same fashion in the Sudan (they came through on excuses of sickness, leave, mission, etc.). When the group in the Sudan opened a new front in Eastern Eritrea and joined the southern Eritrean group, a new non-compromising revolutionary movement was created in the Eritrean battlefield in April, 1970. This organization is the People's Liberation Forces. The presence of a strong rival organization, with a declared and written progressive program, struck terror into the hearts of the General Command and its sponsors, the ex-Revolutionary Command clique. The framework it flimsily created on intimidation, and tribal coalitions started to break up. Fighters en masse started to defect to the new organization; the masses started to regain their confidence and started to grumble against the old organization and to welcome the new one. The General Command's hysterical call for arms against the new front was openly rejected by its fighters. On the contrary, its own organization broke up into two groups on tribal lines and the rebel group released the prisoners under its custody and presented them to the PLF.

The ex-Revolutionary Command clique saw its brain child crumbling fast and with it, its own existence. That is how the change of tactics on the part of the "intellectual" clique came into being. The clique which was praising the General Command to the skies unashamedly started to curse it as a reactionary organization and paradoxically while serving as its official spokesman. The almost forgotten National Congress was resurrected in order to be held also two years overdue. The Preparatory Committee was hastily reassembled, revamped and expanded to satisfy the ego of new tribal coalition prospects, and even its chairman was a person who was not an original member of the committee. The old absent members of the committee were called, but they wisely refused to join a committee where their voting power was systematically reduced (by its studied expansion) and where they would serve only as paper figures. The Investigation Committee was half-heartedly called into re-existence but its functions were radically changed; it was not to investigate crimes (because that would be suicidal) but to compile general ideological and administrative deficiencies of the Front and recommend remedies.

The new Preparatory Committee, alias Revolutionary Command, went on a grand propaganda trip to hoodwink world public opinion and heretofore uncommitted Eritrean emigre intellectuals. At the same time, it saw to it that the PLF, whose destruction was the real aim of the "Congress", would not participate in the sham Congress as a political force. It refused to recognize the PLF and its mass organizations (peasants, workers, students and women) as mass organizations and invited some individuals from the Forces in order to say afterwards that the PLF was invited and refused and thereby cheat the masses and the backward elements of its fighters, which because of its reactionary set up, make up the majority. The PLF vanguard and fighters rejected attendance under these conditions, which were literally an attempt to repeat Operation Adobha.

Thanks to the great help offered by the reactionary Nymery Government (visas and residence facilities, and partial footing of hotel and other bills), the so-called "Great First National Congress of the Eritrean People" was held in the Sudan country side bordering Eritrea in December, 1971. (Nymery's murdering and imprisonment of Sudanese progressives and his deal with Ethiopia on the question of Southern Sudan never affected his relationship with the so-called "Revolutionary Council Progressives".)

The "National Congress" was attended by either conniving or unsuspecting Eritrean refugees, little-informed foreigners, mercenary "progressive" journalists and imperialist spies. (A French journalist who came to the "Congress" as one of "the progressive opinion leaders and friends of the Eritrean people" was arrested by Egyptian authorities on his return from the Congress for being an Israeli spy.)

The celebrated Congress "replaced" the General Command by the "Revolutionary Council" counting in its organs all the members of the so much condemned Supreme Council, the ex-Revolutionary Command and the ex-General Command except those few who refused to attend the "Congress" in the first place. If you dare ask why so many reactionaries, our "smart progressives" will tell you for tactical reasons. This reminds us of the American officer who, commenting on the terrible devastation of Hue by the U.S. bombing during the Tet offensive, said, "We had to destroy Hue in order to save it." It is needless to say that U.S. imperialism, by its very nature, can neither save Vietnam nor Hue, but it is important to tell the confused world progressive public opinion that the neo-Marxist monsters in the "Revolutionary Council" by their short-term opportunistic nature, will neither be able to save their "Revolutionary Council" from shameful downfall, let alone the Eritrean Revolution.

In its greatest effort to swindle uninformed progressive world opinion, the Revolutionary Council stole, almost word for word, the PLF program issued over a year before it, and giving it an out-and-out Marxist color and with great fanfare, started to masquerade in the world progressive arena to sell its wares to innocent victims who are easily taken by names, slogans and words, rather than by practical activities: the standard mechanism of petty-bourgeois cafe-intellectuals which practically every Third World Revolution is suffering from.

Armed with the small lease of life, the Congress afforded it, and afraid that its rapidly dwindling numerical superiority would be gone if it did not hasten, the Revolutionary Council, three months after it was set up, declared war on the PLF. The Revolutionary Council, like all reactionary forces before it in world history, resorted to the gun when it felt sure that it could not prevent politically the masses from totally lining behind their revolutionary vanguard, the PLF. But even though some new emigre faces in the Revolutionary Council and its extraordinary progressive talk abroad made the PLF reluctant to believe that a civil war was in the offing, the moment it began the PLF fought with determination against all strategic and tactical odds. (The PLF forces were in a thin guerrilla formation in order to counteract enemy strategy while the Revolutionary Council, forgetting the real enemy, attached them in concentrated formation.) As the war progressed, the eternal laws of all civil wars started to operate: frustration, factionalism, betrayal, treachery and defection on the reactionary coalition side, and higher political consciousness, greater recruitment and increased mass support on the PLF side.

The civil war is now nine months old and the PLF once again has proved that old revolutionary maxim that it is neither numbers nor arms that win the day in the long-run, but the revolutionary consciousness. The PLF has been able to convince the "Revolutionary Council" to stop the war militarily with steel and blood. The last battle is now over five months old even though the war can restart anytime because the Civil War is not yet technically over. The PLF, sure of its long-run capacity to swing all the masses to its side, has always opposed the civil war. The "Revolutionary Council" started the war, persevered in it when it saw its first apparent successes in the first phase of the war (it even told the world the PLF was finished), but when it saw its counter-revolutionary offensive resisted and stopped by revolutionary violence, it is now, if not whole-heartedly, clearly starting to speak of peace. Reactionaries, especially of the petty-bourgeois, opportunistic, "intellectual" type, do not die easily. The Popular Forces want peace because peace would allow them to release and mobilize the fighters and masses now held by the "Revolutionary Council" through political work; and more important because it would allow them to resist and trounce Ethiopian colonialists, their sponsor, world imperialism, and their Eritrean stooges. But they will never accept counter-revolutionary peace; they will never allow the Revolutionary Council to win in peace what it could not do by war: the annihilation of the true revolutionary vanguard of the Eritrean people.

These are the facts of Eritrea and its revolution; anybody who tries to ignore the basic class struggle between the leadership of the backward peasantry on one side, and workers and Revolutionary intellectuals on the other within the revolution and sees the internal contradiction of the armed struggle only through the existence of this or that individual in the two camps, will fail to understand the Revolution. The contradiction between the backward peasantry and workers and revolutionary intellectuals is difficult to see, as rarely in world revolutionary history has this contradiction been antagonistic enough to reach a level of armed conflict. In the Eritrean case, the particular history of the armed struggle and the presence of a naively opportunistic pseudo-intellectual group has pushed the normal allies, parts of the peasantry and the workers, to this sad event.

There is one other fact that everybody has to know, not only to understand the future perspectives of the Eritrean Revolution, but even to understand its present contradictions.

Eritrea is an African country with close ties with the Arab world, as it is strategically situated on the south-western flank of the Middle East. Without politically digesting this fact thoroughly, one cannot understand the Eritrean Revolution's position in the fight against world imperialism. It is the nature of post-imperialism's world history for a particular region to be the center of a deadly struggle between the world Revolution and world Reaction in any specific time. During the last decade, such a center was Southeast Asia in general and the Vietnamese Revolution in particular.

Today it is the Middle East in general and its southern flank in particular. World Reaction knows it and is already working according to that plan. It is mandatory that the World Revolution be aware of this, lest it be caught unaware tomorrow or worse still, lest it become imperialism's tool.

Imperialism is playing its last rear-guard tactics in Southeast Asia. The World Revolution should clear itself of its Southeast Asian hangovers, more so as they are extremely glorious and bright. It should look forward -- forward to the Revolution in the Southern flank of the Middle East. The recent events in this region are not isolated, coincidental facts; they are parts of one intricate imperialist jigsaw. Anybody who understands the civil war in Eritrea, the civil war in Yemen, the event in the Sudan, and the concerted imperialist movements in the Arabian Gulf otherwise will simply fail in fully comprehending them. These events should clearly be seen for what they are: an orchestrated preliminary phase of a long drawn-out war between Progress and Reaction.

The revolutions in this region should gird their loins and be ready for the oncoming imperialist onslaught. The Eritrean Revolution, through its PLF vanguard is ready for this historic mission; ready to persistently carry its own revolution forward; ready to share what is at its disposal with the revolutions in the region: to strengthen the already and partially successful revolutions and ready to help in the launching of new ones. The Eritrean masses are fiercely independent, and the PLF, true to this revolutionary sentiment, rejects any foreign coercion and to guarantee this primarily depends on its own resources, the resources of the Eritrean people. But the masses are also for true human brotherhood, brotherhood based on mutual self-respect, and prepared to sacrifice anything toward that end.

It is not too much to ask: but we ask the same of the other components of the world progressive anti-imperialist front.

THE UNITED STATES PENETRATION OF ERITREA

This article was written by an American free-lance journalist and we are, with his permission, reproducing it here for its informative content.

Elsewhere I have attempted to describe something of the history and nature of the Eritrean struggle for national liberation. In this article the prime concern is the role of American imperialism which stands behind the feudal regime of Haile Selassie. The magnitude of the American involvement cannot be over-stressed as it is the economic and military aid from the United States which permits, not only the war in Eritrea to continue, but for Haile Selassie himself, to retain his status as Emperor and "Conquering Lion of Judah".

The Kagnew Radiomarina

Top on the list of American priorities in Ethiopia is the Kagnew Communications Center or Radiomarina located near Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea. This base was formerly a British military communications center until the end of the Second World War. In 1953 American military aid began to flow to Ethiopia but this was only considered as "rent" for the Kagnew station. The twenty-five year lease for the grounds of the facility is due to expire in 1978 and the Symington Committee of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee has concluded that Kagnew has become technologically obsolete and that the British island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean may be a better location for subsequent communications facilities. Currently the U.S. budget for Kagnew approaches 13 million dollars annually; this hefty expenditure attests to the importance of this relatively small U.S. military base.

Strict security at Kagnew prevents PLF attacks on the base which "...relays military and diplomatic messages and does space research among other functions, details of which are secret." (N.Y. Times, 27 Sept. 1968) It is now known that among the many tasks of the station one assignment is to keep tabs on several African liberation movements, such as FRELIMO in Mozambique. By certain complicated techniques in radio triangulation, the locations of guerrilla forces in Mozambique and elsewhere are monitored. The seventy million dollar complex is the largest high-frequency station for the United States outside of American domestic facilities. The location features high altitude (7,600 feet) near the equator; both of these are desirable qualities for radio transmission. Specialists in cryptography are kept busy deciphering messages relayed from socialist and Arab countries; even messages from the White House sometimes pass through Kagnew. In 1967 there were approximately 3,200 Americans and their dependents based in and around Kagnew. Official estimates for 1970 indicate that this level has been maintained. Some on-the-scene reporters have said that the true figure is actually much closer to 4,500. Thus, it should be clear that this is no ordinary base, but a vital link in the Americans' intelligence system.

An American major and two non-commissioned officers are stationed at Kagnev and, presumably, were on hand for the February 1971 visit to the base by General Westmoreland of Vietnam infamy. A month later, Brigadier General Robert Meyer, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Communications Command also visited the base with the view of strengthening the security system. Portions of the 200-man "military advisory group" to Ethiopia are also based at Kagnev. While the State Department has generated a smoke screen of denials that these men were Green Berets involved in counter-insurgency training, there can be little doubt that this is a function of the group. The U.S. Army's "Strike Command" Commander also manages to make an annual visit to Ethiopia and Eritrea to stay abreast of events which may require him to move his mobile force into this "danger spot" if need be.

American Military Involvement

Since the start of American military aid in 1953, the flow of American dollars has passed the 150 million dollar mark. This large figure does not include additional millions of hidden funds about which the average taxpayer will forever remain ignorant. More relevant is that more than half of all of the American military aid to Black Africa has been going to Ethiopia, which also has the longest standing aid program. Projected spending only shows a maintenance of these amounts at this high level.

Three Ethiopian Army battalions fighting the Eritrean Liberation Front guerrillas have been trained and armed by American military personnel; in fact, the entire 40,000-man Imperial Army has been created with American money. Here again, this is one of Black Africa's largest standing armies. From 1953 to 1963, American military aid was of relatively modest proportions but in 1964 the first acceleration in spending began. It was at this time when a squadron of F-5 fighter jets and a 55-man counter-insurgency team were first officially acknowledged by Washington. That this team has increased almost four-fold in the subsequent eight years suggests that the American advisors have fared no better in Eritrea than in the jungles of Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam.

The Ethiopian Air Force is equipped with both jet fighters and fighter-bombers from American sources. These weapons are particularly well suited to counter-insurgency warfare and have seen action in the Congo (Zaire) in crushing the Simba resistance. The Air Force gained international attention in its punitive strikes against Keren in the Eritrean highlands in which hundreds were killed by explosive devices and napalm. At present the American government has given at least two squadrons of military aircraft to the Ethiopian government including the following models: T-28, F-86 and C-119. In June of 1972, one of the T-28s was hijacked to Aden in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The Ethiopian Navy, based at Massawa in Eritrea, consists of American-built ships. These ships figure in coastal sweeps and coast guard activities designed to prevent the transshipment of arms from Yemen to Eritrea just across the mouth of the Red Sea. Iskender Desta, grandson of the Emperor, and Commodore of the Navy, is formally in charge of the blockade, but his reputation as international playboy contributes to the relative ineffectuality of the blockade.

The Second Army Division of the Ethiopian Army is in charge of the security and defense of Eritrea. Their brutal search and destroy missions have forced thousands out of their homes into the neighboring Sudan where they live a life of exile. The 10,000 soldiers of the Second Division are fighting the same battle along side of the 5,000 Israeli-trained police commandos. The scorched earth campaign of Brigadier General Merid Beyene of the Second Army Division has devastated many hamlets such as Garabeet, Ashur, Adfaki, Sanheet, Tukumbia, Sawa, and Falkat. This is all part of a deliberate policy to drive popular support away from the E.L.F. Attempts at arming villagers against the E.L.F. were also halted when the authorities found that most of the guns were getting into E.L.F. hands. In desperation, the Second Division, then under General Debebe Haile Mariam, withdrew and decided to concentrate on fortified hamlets and military outposts. These abandoned zones form the bulk

of the hard fought liberated territory of the E.L.F.

In the frustration of their defeat, the Ethiopian military tore a page from the Green Beret terror manuals and held public executions of E.L.F. armed combatants and presumed sympathizers. Their frenzy was only increased when E.L.F. combatants carried out a daring daylight attack on the Keren-Asmara highway on 21 November 1970 and killed General Teshome Irgetu, the Commander of the Second Army Division.

The Ethiopian Marine Commando Forces are the only military group which is not trained by Americans. This force is trained by the Israelis and is concentrated on stopping the arms smuggling across the Red Sea.

American Political Involvement

In 1941 "Italian East Africa" was "liberated" by the British forces. After years of debate a Resolution of the United Nations was finally initiated in September 1952 with the provision that "Eritrea shall constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia." This agreement was reached only after numerous secret talks between British and American administrators. A formal, but then secret, pact was signed between the United States and Haile Selassie in 1960, but this represented only a direct continuation of the early American commitments. This agreement provided for additional arms buildup for Ethiopia to counter guerrillas in Eritrea and to contain the border problems with Somalia to the South. In this secret agreement the United States "...reaffirmed its continuing interest in the security of Ethiopia and its opposition to any activities threatening the territorial integrity of Ethiopia."

Central Intelligence Agency agents were active during the years following the American promise of support to feudalism. Some of the more notable personages were the following: Samuel Drakulich, Army and Navy Intelligence, AID official and security officer in Addis Ababa; Ray Foreaker, ex-police inspector, Army Security, U.S. Information Agency officer, was also a security officer in Addis Ababa. Joined with them was William Uanna, Army Weapons Designer, CIA agent, and Department of State-Office of Security.

More specifically, Thomas Mulvehill, ex-military intelligence specialist, and expert on Libya and Nigeria was the Consul General at Asmara. George Kinter from the Army and the CIA was an officer at Asmara and was fluent in Italian. Wynant Hubbard, also of Army Intelligence and an ex-mining corporation director was also stationed in Asmara. Warren Hawley, a former Pentagon analyst also spent time in Asmara as Vice-Consul. Of course, such information as this is difficult to come by and must be considered both dated and fragmentary.

American Economic Penetration

The level of America's commitment to Ethiopia can be measured by the more than 240 million dollars of economic aid given to the feudal regime in the last twenty years. This is above the 150 million dollars of military aid already mentioned. Thus, this brings the known American financial involvement in Ethiopia to approximately 400 million dollars. The do-called "development aid" does virtually nothing to develop Ethiopia which has remained one of Africa's least prosperous nations, despite being the recipient of America's greatest aid to Black Africa. This pathetic situation is explained by the American preoccupation with Ethiopia's natural resources and cheap labor as well as the strategic location of this country in the Horn of Africa.

Estimates of the unmined iron ore deposits in Eritrea total more than 225 billion tons. The Ralph Pearson Mining Company, an American firm, has been granted tax exempt mining rights to many of Eritrea's natural resources. Kaiser Industries is prospecting for potash in the eastern coastal lowlands of Eritrea. More than 200 other American companies also have a presence in either Ethiopia or Eritrea. Currently Gulf Oil and a Mobil-Esso consortium are undertaking oil exploration off the coast at Massawa where they have had oil rights since 1963. Gold has been mined in Eritrea since the end of last century with annual production set at about 20 million dollars. Another major resource of Ethiopia is the cash crop-coffee. Just as elsewhere in the Third World a single cash crop dominates the traditional agricultural society.

Large agricultural holdings under an absentee landlord system are devoted to this crop which is Ethiopia's major foreign currency earner. While Ethiopian lands are potentially rich, the dominance of coffee distorts the economy to the degree that widespread starvation is not uncommon on some of the rural areas. In this regard Ethiopia is similar to Angola or Brazil which are other major coffee producers propped up by American imperialist interests. It is significant that coffee is produced in these countries since the harvest of the coffee bean is extremely labor intensive and requires massive cheap labor to permit harvest at great profit. The reactionary rulers of these countries help keep down the price of coffee at the expense of their working people. The booming population of Ethiopia creates a cheap, ever-ready pool of labor which is forced to compete for positions involving super-exploitation or face starvation. This picture of total economic stagnation is only worsened by the alliance of American imperialism and the Ethiopian ruling nobility. Peasants have been driven from their lands because they could not compete with the encroachment of coffee plantations or pay the extortionate rents exacted by the unscrupulous landlords. The crisis is reaching the Ethiopian, as well as the Eritrean, masses but the only response has been greater military and police repression. In the three year period between 1964 and 1967 there was a 68.2% increase in military expenditure which outstripped the 57.9% increase in the gross national product. In this same period the American military aid increased 1.7 times. Clearly the American economic and military aid is, at best, a patch-up job designed to stave off not only the Eritrean revolution but a total collapse of the entire Ethiopian ruling class.

Americans Under Attack in Eritrea

While few have heard of the Eritrean national liberation movement even fewer are aware that there have been American casualties. Many of the American casualties in Eritrea have been kept secret in order to avoid attracting attention to the struggle that the American ruling class would rather forget. Yet some events have gained international publicity.

In July 1965 two United States airmen, CPL. Ronald Dolecki and Chief Warrant Officer Jack Kalbach were captured by the E.L.F. while the two servicemen were on, what they termed, "an aerial mapping survey." Two weeks of searching by 10,000 troops failed to produce the men who were subsequently released by the E.L.F. Also in 1965 the United States was forced to evacuate its former wartime bases on Mt. Hammid and Mt. Korahabab on the Sudanese border because supply convoys had come under severe attack by E.L.F. guerrillas. In March of 1967 a special U.S. State Department task force was set up to watch over the area's "problems." Also in 1967 two waiters at the Kagnew base officer's club were arrested as E.L.F. agents.

Heavy fighting between the Eritrean Liberation fighters and Ethiopian forces broke out between 23 April and 7 May 1969 in hopes of crushing the E.L.F. Stiff resistance was met and six American "advisors" were reported killed. Later in 1969 four Americans on a "National Geographic" study team were held by the E.L.F. for 16 days before being released. It is said that other incidents between the E.L.F. and American servicemen have occurred but they are publicly dismissed as being the work of "shiftas" (bandits).

On 13 February 1970 the American Secretary of State, William P. Rogers reported that the American Consul General, Murray Jackson, had been kidnapped by the E.L.F. near Asmara. After this, security tightened considerably and Americans were told to travel only in two car convoys and not to drive far from the Asmara area. By the end of 1970 the Emperor declared a State of Emergency to invoke martial law in all of Eritrea.

In January 1971 the E.L.F. struck at the Americans again, and ambushed and killed a G.I. from Brooklyn, Richard Echeandia, who was reportedly "delivering U.S. Army mail." Shortly afterward more M-16 automatic rifles were requested by Ethiopia and this request has been transmitted to the United States Congress. Some have said that the ambush was actually planned by the Ethiopians to pressure the U.S. into granting the request for additional arms.

These cases can only point to one thing: American involvement is increasing

as the E.L.F. grows stronger and bolder and as the Ethiopian Imperial Government is less able to defend itself from its own people, let alone to continue its colonial hold over Eritrea without aid from the United States.

THE ERITREAN STRUGGLE AND THE AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLES

This is a position paper prepared by the African Liberation Day Support Committee (Raleigh, N.C. Branch) for the African Liberation Day National Committee.

As the month of May 1973 is drawing near, we feel it is imperative to re-evaluate our activities of A.L.D. 1972; and to focus on areas which have arrested only minute attention thus far. Indeed, the fact cannot be gainsaid that ALD 1972 was overwhelmingly successful not only in terms of mass attendance but provided much needed solidarity with our revolutionary African brothers and sisters as attested to by the late Amilcar Cabral; notwithstanding our token monetary contribution.

Being avowed Pan-Africanists, our struggle is against racism, colonial and neo-colonial regimes in whatever form and shape. Above all, to fight for a genuinely free and united Africa. In this regard, the ALD National Committee deserves our heartfelt congratulations as well as unflinching support in exposing the criminal acts of oppression and plunder under racist and colonial regimes; and also, for bringing the national liberation struggles in Azania, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe into the international arena.

However, either by default or oversight, the National Committee had thus far failed to tackle the issue of neo-colonialism efficaciously. This new phenomenon which provides for the most subtle and sophisticated exploitation of the masses is now the order of the day in Africa. Our late brother, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, had this to say about it: "Neo-colonialism is the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress." The forces of neo-colonialism perpetuate exploitation of the masses and further the cause of rape and plunder of the continent. As such, neo-colonialism shares a commonality of interest with imperialism, racist, colonial governments; hence, the active military and financial support by the Western powers to reactionary and neo-colonial governments in Africa.

Bro. Nkrumah further stated: "Neo-colonialism has created a situation in Africa which can only be fought and eradicated by armed revolution and armed struggle." It is within this framework and context that the just struggles of the people of Eritrea should be viewed.

Eritrea is unique in the variety of colonizers which had oppressed her people, namely Turkish, Egyptian, Italian, British and finally Ethiopian. We shall concentrate on the last three to facilitate a quick grasp of the issue. In 1885, the Italians, with the active encouragement of Great Britain took possession of the Eritrean coast. The Eritrean people put up gallant resistance against the invading Italians and inflicted heavy losses on the fascists. However, with the active support of Great Britain and the collaboration of Emperor Menelik of Showa who signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Italy in 1889, the Eritrean resistance finally collapsed in 1890, and came under Italian colonial yoke until 1941.

Having projected a false image of granting liberation to the Eritrean people, British occupation as administering power, was welcomed with excitement and great joy. True to their hypocritical and dubious nature, the eleven years of British occupation provided Eritrea with multifarious maneuvers and political deceptions. Britain went further in trying to balkanize Eritrea between her allies, Ethiopia and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, under the shameful guise of non-existent religious incompatibility between the Moslem and Christian communities.

Eritrea and the U.N.

The Eritrean question was referred to U.N. and U.N. Commission on Eritrea comprising delegates from Guatemala, Pakistan, Burma, South Africa and Norway was

appointed. In their report submitted to the Secretary General on June 8, 1950, three different views emerged. However, with the exception of the Norwegian delegate who favored the Anglo-American plan for the annexation of the eastern part of Eritrea to Ethiopia and the British retention of the western part, all delegates voted for non-annexation of Eritrea. In spite of the unanimous rejection of annexation and the unequivocal demand by Eritreans for self-determination, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a U.S. draft resolution calling for the creation of Ethiopian-Eritrean Federal Union in 1952. The main argument for the U.S. position is that Ethiopia needed an outlet to the sea; and justified it by false historical, geographical and ethnical ties. The resolution called for an autonomous Eritrea federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown, with the federal government exercising jurisdiction over the following matters: defense, foreign affairs, currency and finance, foreign and interstate commerce and external and interstate communications including ports.

Unfortunately, the U.N. Commissioner for Eritrea, Mr. Anze Matienzo of Bolivia who was charged with responsibility for the carrying out of the resolution and supervising the framing of Eritrean and federal constitutions miserably failed mankind. He not only overlooked the most important question of Eritrea's autonomy, but also delegated the responsibility for establishing federal institutions to the hands of Emperor Haile Selassie. With the ratification of the Federal Act in 1952, the Emperor, whose expansionist tendencies are insatiable, systematically began to dismantle the very act. Conforming to the imperialist imperatives of the West, and especially of the U.S., the Eritrean constitution was abrogated and Eritrea was annexed to Ethiopia as the 14th province of the Ethiopian empire in 1962. As a client and neo-colonial state, the Emperor of Ethiopia rewarded his U.S. benefactors with the establishment of a military base in Asmara, Eritrea's capital.

Ethiopia and the African Liberation Struggles

One of the salient characteristics of a neo-colonial state is to build a strong military organization to stifle and obstruct the legitimate aspirations of the people. Furthermore, terrorist tactics of the military are aimed at injecting fears into the population and ensuring the continued domination of the local bourgeois ruling class. Ethiopia alone enjoys 40% of all military aid to Africa, and its total receipt of U.S. aid has now reached 1 billion dollars.

At the moment, the U.S. communication base in Asmara, the Kagnew Station, is the largest and most sophisticated base in the whole world. It is used for monitoring the activities of all the liberation movements in the continent and the information gathered, directly transmitted to fascist Portugal, racist South Africa and Rhodesia. Furthermore, Ethiopia is furthering the interests of Zionist expansionism by granting Israel military bases on the Eritrean islands of Haleb and Fatmah. And above all, at a time when our hard working national committee chairman, Brother Owusu Sadaukai, is calling on all African people to boycott the products of major corporations whose investments are supporting the war efforts of the racist and colonial governments; Selassie has granted concessions on the oil-rich Dahlak Islands of Eritrea to the Gulf Oil Corporation.

Committee members should also be aware that at the founding of the Organization of African Unity, May, 1963, in Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, a resolution was passed demanding the removal of all foreign bases from Africa. Our late brother Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah explicitly stated that Africa would know no true freedom until the continent is also free of the last foreign military base.

The Symbol of African Unity - A Myth

The western press has been actively trying to project a false image for Emperor Haile Selassie as a symbol of African unity. The press maintains that he had helped to settle many border conflicts among various African states, but, however, fails to underscore the fact that the Emperor himself started more border disputes than any other African head of state. Furthermore, President Pompidou of France was reported to have said that France's refusal to grant independence to the Somali Coast (currently

called the Territory of the Affars and Issas by the colonialists and their neocolonial stooges).

The situation in Eritrea should not be viewed as an isolated phenomenon from the African liberation struggles. The people of Eritrea are in the forefront of a fight against a neo-colonial regime in Africa. Eritreans are not fighting to balkanize Africa but to bring forth a real and genuine African unity. If anything at all, Haile Selassie is a symbol of African Disunity and a lackey of U.S. imperialism.

We, therefore, demand the ALD national committee to take a position on this crucial issue.

FORWARD WITH THE REVOLUTION

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

A translation of the news items published in Tigrigna in the monthly political journal "Vanguard" of the ELF-PLF, January 1973.

- July 14, 1972, in a place called "Adi Nefas" during a festival day, the Eritrean Liberation Front had an operation to eliminate Ethiopian spies; one spy was killed. During the confrontation five innocent persons were killed.
- July 15, 1972, at a place called "Gerat Segum" the enemy soldiers ambushed the freedom fighters. Five patriots died heroically and two others were wounded. During early September, an hour's armed confrontation between Eritrean freedom fighters and the enemy soldiers took place at a village called "Emba Dorho."
- 26/10/72, in the morning at a place called "Deda" there was a battle that lasted for 1 1/2 hours between the Eritrean freedom fighters and the enemy.
- 5/11/72, Asmara, at 10:45 p.m., in the so-called Haile Selassie Street, a hand grenade was thrown by the Eritrean Liberation Front. As a result two police men were wounded.
- 20/11/72, Asmara, at 1:30 a.m., by 'Villaggio Giugnio' in a bar called "Mera-doro" the Eritrean Liberation Front shot a colonel to death. This colonel was one of Haile Selassie's running dogs who are exploiting and torturing the people of Eritrea.
- 21/11/72, Asmara, at 8:30 p.m. in Haile Selassie Street, the commandos of the Eritrean Liberation Force threw a handgrenade at the Commercial Bank. As a result, the electric wires, the windows of the bank, and two cars were damaged.
- 9/12/72, Addis Ababa, there was an attempt to hijack an Ethiopian Airlines jet by a fighter from the Eritrean Liberation Force and six other Ethiopians and Eritreans. Two of them were determined and resolute women. This mission was undertaken by the cooperation of the Ethiopian and Eritrean progressives. Their demand was the release of political prisoners held by the enemy. A special issue will be published on this.
- 16/12/72, Asmara at 6 p.m. in "Edaga Hamus" near Y.M.C.A., Habtom Asgedom, a running dog of the enemy, was shot dead by the Eritrean Liberation Front. Habtom was a long standing member of the Unionist Party. (Translator's note: a party that opted union with Ethiopia.) He was also the one who had participated in the ambush against our Force when we lost five of our comrades:
- This month (December) the agents of the enemy have been found and caught spying within the Eritrean Liberation Front. Further information will be released to clarify this matter.
- Progressive Ethiopians with the spirit of Internationalism have joined the Eritrean Liberation Front to struggle for the liberation of Eritrea.
- Fighting illiteracy: On top of the regular political education that is given to all the fighters, there has been for the last three months an all out effort to conquer illiteracy within our Force. 75% of our Force were illiterate. Now, under the slogan of "Literacy Campaign", illiteracy within our Force has been totally wiped out.

Student Movement in Eritrea

Since the beginning of this year (September) all high schools in Eritrea have been closed. The students complaints are the following:

1. The regime has asked the students to pay fees for ESLC (Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate examinations). Students refuse to pay.
2. The present high schools in Eritrea are twenty years old. Since then no new high schools have been opened. Why?
3. The students demand the right to establish a student union.
4. Lack of school facilities and good teachers as compared to some of the provinces in Ethiopia.
5. The fees for the 6th, 8th and 12th grades' examinations have been increasing yearly. What happens to the 2% educational tax that the parents pay?
6. What is the use of completing the 12th grade? (Translator's note: This is explained in terms of unemployment and the fact that the university enrolls a very small percent of the whole 12th grade student population.)
7. Why is government taxation increasing every year?
8. In general the rights of the students are not respected.

To the above listed grievances of the students, the regime replied that it would answer their questions when the students resumed classes. The students on their part refused to go back to classes until and unless their grievances were met. The parents' committee told the parents to force their children to start classes. The order of the parents' committee was accepted by only a few families. But those students forced by their families stood to their belief and joined the general student body.

The parents' committee desperate of its first attempt called for the parents' general assembly at the Queen of Sheba Stadium. The assembly was adjourned without any final decision. It was a failure. The regime then began to arrest students. Tear gas, beating, and flogging became the lot of the students. Yet the regime couldn't succeed. None of the students gave up their cause despite the beating and imprisonment. On the contrary, their moral force has been heightened.

Here is an example that shows how the Ethiopian army exercises its suppression. All students in Eritrea were present during the funeral ceremony of Yohanes Fekadu. (Translator's note: one of the participants in the recent attempted hijacking). During the ceremony the Ethiopian army had surrounded the cemetery at "Tsetserat" in Asmara. When the students were returning in line to the house of the deceased to show their condolence, the soldiers opened fire and the crowd was dispersed. A few students, disregarding the shooting, continued to march in line. The Ethiopian army surrounded and arrested them.

At present the high schools are still closed. The Ethiopian regime in radio broadcast warned that it would close down the schools unless the students resumed classes. The deadline was also specified. However, none of the students has started classes.

At such moments the student movement has declared its unity with the Eritrean Liberation Front.

In an attempt to isolate the student movement from the workers and the peasants, the feudalist Ethiopia and their running dogs will definitely label it as an upheaval caused by a foreign hand. Nonetheless, this movement has its root cause in the economic and political oppression in Eritrea. It is also true that this movement transcends from the towns to the countryside.

Plot Against Somalia

Sophisticated French spy planes have intensified their flights over Somali territory under the pretext of trying to photograph "the recently installed Sam-3 missile bases." Reporting this the French newspaper Le Monde wrote that the French airbase in Djibouti has been reinforced with F-100 Super Sabre jets while the United States has consolidated its military potential in Saudi Arabia. This report of Sam-3 bases in Somalia and the subsequent military buildups in the area are to be viewed with the January visit of French president to Ethiopia and his agreement with Haile

on the Djibouti question, with the increased U.S. military buildup in the area and the Mediterranean Sea, with the U.S. sponsored plots and moves of reactionary regimes of the area (Ethiopia, Sudan, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, etc.) to destroy progressive regimes like that of Somalia and South Yemen and to annihilate revolutionary movements like that of Eritrea, Dhofar, Ethiopia, Djibouti, etc. It is a safe prediction to state that the so-called Sam-3 bases in Somalia will serve as a justification (if there is a need for one!) for the shipment of more sophisticated arms to Haile Selassie by the U.S. imperialists.

- The Israeli Zionists have (in an effort to control the Babel-Mandeb strait, impede the E.L.F. from using the Red Sea as a supply line, and to encircle the Democratic Republic of Yemen) occupied five islands on the Red Sea (Big Hanache, Little Hanache, Zuqar, Abou-Ali and Jabal-Al Taysr Islands). The feudal regime of North Yemen has denied that the islands have been occupied and has declared that the island of Abou-Ali is an island that belongs to the Ethiopian regime which got it from the British "in accordance with a secret agreement whose existence and clauses have stayed secret." Which makes Haile Selassie one of the busiest land-sellers in this part of the world.

E.F.L. CHAPTERS HOLD FUND RAISING EVENTS

E.F.L. chapters in New York, Washington and Boston held successful fund raising events which were attended by many brothers and sisters here and from the continent. The following are the introductory remarks and the political message of the Boston Chapter of E.F.L. given on the evening of April 29, 1973:

Brothers and Sisters:

On behalf of Eritreans for Liberation in Boston and along with the Brothers and Sisters in the Boston African Liberation Support Committee and Malcolm X Liberation University, the other co-sponsors of tonight's benefit program, I cordially welcome you.

Our program for this hour is mainly a cultural show of the Eritrean people found east of the Sudan, west of the Red Sea and north of Ethiopia.

Africa being a vast continent has a variety of cultures and traditions; and despite colonization, neo-colonization and apartheid, the African Culture is still surviving in the villages, forests, and in the spirit of the oppressed people. Today a new African culture begins to expand all over the continent in the form of struggle for National Liberation.

Tonight we present some African songs and dances from Eritrea:

1. A wedding ceremony in the highlands of Eritrea,
2. Songs and dances which symbolize Youth Solidarity,
3. Songs and dances from the Lowlands of Eritrea,
4. A song which praises the Freedom Fighters.

The main purpose of this show is to raise material support for the Eritrean National Liberation Struggle and to inform Brothers and Sisters of the nature, conditions, objectives and development of our people's armed struggle for National Liberation.

Again, on behalf of the Boston chapter of Eritreans for Liberation, I appreciate the contributions and donations you made for the African Liberation Struggle of which the Eritrean National Liberation Struggle is a part.

I would like also to express our special thanks to the many Brothers and Sisters who have helped us in selling the benefit tickets.

At the end of our cultural show, a Brother from E.F.L. will give us a brief description of the Eritrean Liberation Struggle and its relationship to the African Revolution.

Selam, Brothers and Sisters,

Selam is a term which signifies peace and is commonly used in our country, Eritrea, to greet friends. Literally, it means "peace be unto you." But, we know that, wishful thinking aside, we have known no peace as a people; and, as long as we remain colonized, exploited and oppressed, we cannot have and we will not accept an illusion of peace which imposes on us a burden of misery and suffering.

You have just seen us, the members of the Boston Chapter of Eritreans for Liberation in North America, performing some aspects of Eritrean traditional culture, whose communal vitality and strength has not only ensured its continued survival but also helped our people to preserve their essential humanity in the face of continuing colonial oppression, attended by a sequence of ruthless and crude cultural aggression. Before proceeding further, however, on behalf of the Boston Chapter of E.F.L., I would like to express our collective thanks and appreciation for your presence here in support of and solidarity with the African Liberation Movements in general and the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces in particular.

Eritrea, as many of you may know, is a country in northeast Africa, occupying an area of 120,000 sq. km. and inhabited by over 3 million people. It extends for about 1,100 km. along the African coast of the Red or Erythraean Sea from which it derives its name. It is bounded by Ethiopia on the south, the Sudan on the west and the Red Sea and the Somali Coast (or French Somaliland) on the north and the east. The southeastern tip of Eritrea forms the African flank of the Strait of Bab el Mandeb and, therefore, controls the southern entrance to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean and the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf. Eritrea is, thus, not only geographically linked to the world's major oil producing region, but also, its territorial waters command the major route for the shipment of this oil to the industrial capitalist countries of Europe, Japan and the United States, which consume it. This commanding position of Eritrea is also true for any cargo which passes through the Suez Canal. On top of this, the presence of enormous reserves of petroleum and natural gas have been recently established in Eritrea, and concessions given to a number of American oil companies, including the infamous Gulf and Mobil Oil corporations. In addition, the Eritrean port of Massawa has historically been the main trading center connecting the entire northeast African hinterland with the outside world. Until very recently, it remained the most important and largest natural harbor from Port Said in Egypt to Mombassa in Kenya, that is, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. Today, the Eritrean sister ports of Massawa and Asseb represent the main inlets through which capitalist surplus commodities are dumped on the Eritrean, and large segments of the Ethiopian and Sudanese markets for the enjoyment and luxury of the parasitic local bourgeoisies in these three countries. At the same time, they are the chief outlets via which the plundered produce and natural wealth of the African peoples in this region are transferred into the industrial capitalist nations or the imperialist camp.

Thus, its strategic location at the cross-roads of Africa, Asia, Europe (linked through the Suez Canal) and the Middle East has historically made Eritrea vulnerable to the greedy aggression of all kinds of imperialist expansionists. Suffice it to mention that, only in the modern era, Eritrea was a colony of the Turkish Ottoman Empire (1557-1875), the Italian Empire (1882-1941), and the British Empire (1941-52). In 1952, Eritrea became an autonomous state federated with the Ethiopian Empire by a decision of the U.N. General Assembly, which, for a long time, remained an arm of United States foreign policy. In 1962, Eritrea was annexed by Haile Selassie with the support of U.S. imperialism and declared a colony of the Ethiopian Empire, in violation of the Federal Act, in defiance of international law, and in opposition to the wishes of the Eritrean people. All the peaceful attempts of the Eritrean people to win and preserve their right to self-determination proved in vain. Inevitably, the Eritrean people were forced to take up arms, not merely to restore the state autonomy under the federal arrangement, but to gain complete national independence and liberation.

In 1961, the Eritrean Liberation Front started the armed struggle for national liberation. In spite of this twelve-year history of militant resistance against

colonial oppression and neocolonial exploitation, however, the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people has not, as yet, been as well known or as widely supported by the Black Community in this country as the other African national liberation movements. This has, to a large extent, been due to our own weakness and failure in our efforts to publicize the just struggle of the Eritrean people for national liberation. But, our own weakness has been compounded by certain apparent peculiarities in the specific Eritrean setting that are, after all, really common to the workings of the worldwide colonial and neocolonial system.

In order to understand the basic character of the Eritrean national liberation struggle and to grasp its tremendous significance to the victory of the just struggle for freedom of all the African peoples throughout the world, it is first necessary to take a sober look at ourselves and examine our worldwide conditions of existence: As a people, we Africans have historically been and continue to be exploited and oppressed on the basis of both our class and race. However, even though the class and race issues appear to be enmeshed with each other, we must distinguish between them and clearly recognize the primacy of the class over the race question.

To begin with, over 100 million of our ancestors were forcibly uprooted from their African homeland and traded as slaves by the early European imperialist powers, mainly the British, the French, the Spaniards, the Dutch and the Portuguese. Untold millions perished on the way and those who survived the hideous journey were condemned to the hellish life of slave labor in the plantations of the Western Hemisphere. Those who remained behind were colonized and subjugated. Africa was pitilessly raped, its wealth ruthlessly plundered, and its people brutally enslaved. The enormous economic wealth extracted from this rape, plunder and slave labor gave rise to and consolidated the system of industrial capitalism as we know it today. Loyal to its basis, capitalism continues to thrive upon the robbery of the material and human resources of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is simply that neocolonialism has replaced colonialism, and wage labor has superseded slave labor in most cases. This condition explains, in the words of Brother Walter Rodney, "why so much of its present wealth goes to non-Africans who reside for the most part outside of the continent."

Thus, most of the African continent remains under either the direct colonial control or the total neocolonial grip of the western imperialist powers and their puppet regimes. But, the African peoples are also intensifying their struggles for freedom by resolving to destroy the enemy with his own weapons. They are snatching his instruments of repression and turning them into weapons for their liberation. In Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia, and Azania (South Africa), the African people are fighting settler colonialism and enslavement. In Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau, our people are destroying Portuguese colonialism and oppression. In Eritrea, our people are struggling against Ethiopian colonialism and oppression. South Africa, Rhodesia, Portugal and Ethiopia are supported, supplied and armed by the U.S., its European junior imperialist partners, and its Zionist agent state of Israel. Namibia (South-west Africa) was handed to the apartheid regime of South Africa by the "League of Nations" after the First World War. Eritrea was handed to the feudal, neocolonial regime of Haile Selassie by the "United Nations" after the Second World War. In both cases, colonial rule by a European power was replaced by that of an "African power" -- South Africa and Ethiopia -- supposedly under the final jurisdiction of the international body. Vorester, Haile Selassie and Caetano claim their colonies as provinces of their respective empires. South Africa tries to impose its crude apartheid system on the people of Namibia. Portugal pursues a policy of assimilation - the total negation of everything African and its replacement by anything Portuguese. Ethiopian feudal colonialism enforces Amharization - the total destruction of Eritrean culture, languages and institutions and their substitution by those of the minority feudal Amhara lords of the Empire. All books written in Tigrigna (one of the formerly official languages of Eritrea) have been burned by imperial order. All Eritrean cultural activities have been suppressed and banned. The entire high school system of Eritrea has been closed since June 1972.

More criminally, over 120 Eritrean villages have been bombed out of existence, more than 70 thousands defenseless civilians napalmed, their crops burnt, their fields defoliated and their cattle slaughtered. The rural population in the contested zones has been herded into concentration camps that are euphemistically called "strategic hamlets" -- the imperialist legacy from Vietnam to Africa. As in South Africa, all Eritreans must always carry compulsory identification cards, and anyone caught without them is immediately thrown into jail and tortured indefinitely without trial. At this very moment, there are more than 150,000 Eritrean refugees languishing in deplorable and miserable camps scattered throughout northeastern Sudan.

Despite these barbaric atrocities, however, the valiant Eritrean people are persevering in a people's war to liberate their country from the clutches of U.S. imperialism and Israeli zionism, working through the agency of Ethiopian feudal colonialism. Israel wishes to make not only Eritrea but also Ethiopia an extension of its own economy and satellites in order to control vital foodstuff and raw material supplies. The feudal regime of Haileselassie has ceded two entire Eritrean islands off the coast of Asseb-Haleb and Fatmah at the gate of the Strait of Bab el Mandeb-as Israeli naval bases. It owns and operates the "Incode" meat packing monopoly in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. And, two years ago, a secret agreement between Haileselassie and Israel provided for the forced abduction of Eritrean youth under the guise of "scholarships and promises for employment" to be used as slave laborers in Israeli industry and as fodder in the front lines against the Arabs. This scheme is intended to serve a double purpose: to try to weaken the national liberation struggle of the Eritrean people by an effort to deprive it of its vital youth support and to provide cheap African labor for Israeli factories. In return for all this, Israel trains and equips the Ethiopian navy, police and so-called "commando units" whose main task is to engage in "counter-insurgency and anti-guerrilla" activities against Eritrean freedom fighters. Israel also controls the neocolonial government of the "Lion of Judah" through its cadre of advisors in all the key ministries of Haileselassie's government.

Of course, Israel is not doing all this on its own. It is common knowledge that Israel would be hard pressed to survive by itself, let alone to engage in these subversive activities against the African Revolution. It is doing it as an agent of the United States. Hence, the real enemy is invariably U.S. imperialism, with its agents and lackeys.

As mentioned earlier, the United States owns and operates the Kagnev Station in Asmara, the Eritrean capital. The Kagnev Station is the largest and most sophisticated U.S. military and communications base outside its domestic facilities. It is accessible to the NATO allies of the U.S. and extensively used notably by Portugal, South Africa and Israel in their colonial wars of aggression. This base is used, among other things, to locate guerrilla movements in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Namibia and elsewhere in Africa and to monitor vital information leading to bombing missions against African freedom fighters and the civilian population centers in the liberated zones.

Therefore, the complete liberation of Eritrea is of paramount strategic significance to the whole of Africa. The struggle for Eritrea is, on the one hand, the struggle for the imperialist control of one of the most vital and strategic regions of the world, with its rich natural resources, the Red Sea waterway and the Middle Eastern oil that flows through it. On the other hand, it is the struggle of an African people for national liberation against the forces of colonial aggression represented by an African puppet of imperialism and zionism. The inevitable victory of the Eritrean national liberation struggle will deprive the enemies of Africa of their most strategic African base of sabotage and suppression against the African people.

Most of Africa is, at the present moment, colonized or neocolonized, and impoverished. The O.A.U., largely made up of the Francophones, Anglophiles, or U.S. puppets, is nothing but a front for serving the economic and political interests of the imperialist powers. While the fascist regime in South Africa refuses to

recognize the humanity, let alone to open a dialogue with, our brothers and sisters over there, what purpose is served when the OAU is turned into a form in which African leaders discuss, among other things, whether or not they should have a dialogue with South Africa?

It is clear that African liberation, not mere political independence, is a precondition for African unity. Africa must be completely and totally free before it can genuinely unite. A liberated and united Africa will be the only basis for regaining the freedom and dignity of all Africans everywhere. It is, therefore, important for all of us -- Africans here in this country, in the Caribbean and in the continent, to fully support the African national liberation struggles, both morally and materially.

Some of us were brought over here as slaves and became niggers; many others perished on the way and have been conveniently forgotten; most of us remained in the continent and became colonial subjects -- Black Frenchmen or Black Anglosaxons and even Black Portuguese. Now, all of us must not only find and assert our African-ness, our African identity, but also fight to regain our African freedom, to win our liberation, to take our destiny into our own hands, to control and rationally plan for our future.

Our situation is the same everywhere, and it is one of subjugation, exploitation and oppression by the same enemies -- imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racism. All of these are only different forms or stage-variants of capitalism. Capitalism is the basis for all of them, and therefore, the real source of our miseries and sufferings. We must also realize that we are not a minority in this planet. We are only one part of a large majority of oppressed and struggling peoples in Asia, Latin America and the Third World communities within the imperialist camp itself. Our collective freedom demands the total destruction of the exploitative capitalist economic system and its replacement by a rationally planned, science-based communal economy.

In the final analysis, we should recognize that we, Africans, are a colonized people. We want our freedom. We demand our liberation. And we are determined to win them, with the understanding that no Black Man can be free until every African is free.

Victory to the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces!
Victory to the Struggle of all the African people!
Long Live the African Revolution!



"Schools in the Jungle" -- armed cadres of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces in one of their political and military study sessions. Through an intensive literacy campaign, the E.P.L.F. has successfully wiped out illiteracy from among the rank and file fighters.

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ERITREANS FOR LIBERATION
IN NORTH AMERICA

P. O. BOX 163
Cambridge, Mass. 02138, U.S.A.

PHONE _____

DATE April 15, 1973

E.F.L. MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO W.U.E.S.

Eritreans for Liberation in North America (E.F.L.) extends the Worldwide Union of Ethiopian Students (W.U.E.S.) its comradely greetings and best wishes for the complete success of its First Congress in Berlin. We sincerely hope that your serious deliberations at this historic Congress will serve as a vehicle for the further development and consolidation of the revolutionary endeavours of the Ethiopian Student Movement. We have, in the past few years, witnessed with great satisfaction, the successful combatting, on the part of the various member chapters of W.U.E.S., of the vacillating and social-chauvinist elements within the Ethiopian Student Movement. Indeed, we are very encouraged by the trend of your growing understanding of the colonial question in Eritrea and, therefore, your unconditional support for the right of the Eritrean people to national independence and liberation. We congratulate you for this truly internationalist position. We also congratulate you for your record of firm opposition against the fascist, neocolonial regime of Haile-selassie, and hail your persistent efforts to bring about a permanent end to the exploitation and oppression of the Ethiopian peoples. The Eritrean people are, through their People's Liberation Forces vanguard (P.L.F.), daily expressing their militant solidarity with the whole Ethiopian peoples by confronting feudal colonialism, petty bourgeois reaction, imperialism and zionism - all at once - with the invincible revolutionary force of the masses.

The peoples of Ethiopia have long suffered under the continuing state of political oppression and economic exploitation, perpetrated on them by the collaboration of feudo-capitalism, imperialism and zionism. The Ethiopian peoples are, however, increasingly awakening to the historic task of their liberation. This is concretely expressed in the growing forces of resistance to feudo-capitalist subjugation throughout the country. In this respect, it is essential to always bear in mind that it is inherent in the laws of social development that the forces of freedom and progress shall triumph over those of oppression and reaction. Within the Ethiopian Empire itself, the forces of progress and democracy are becoming stronger everyday while those of reaction and autocracy are heading toward their inevitable demise. Viewed in this dialectical context, the growing desperation of the feudal, neocolonial regime is manifested in the crude physical elimination of its opponents, the barbaric massacres of defenseless civilians in Eritrea, and the savage suppression of the Student Movement within Ethiopia. A more recent sign of this desperation is the criminal murder, aboard the Ethiopian Air Lines plane, of our beloved Eritrean and Ethiopian comrades who sacrificed their lives in a heroic attempt to secure the release of political prisoners languishing in squalid dungeons and undergoing horrifying tortures. By their exemplary solidarity with the People's Liberation Forces (P.L.F.) and their truly internationalist initiative, these comrades have taken their rightful place among the martyrs of the on-going Eritrean and forthcoming Ethiopian Revolutions.

The Eritrean Revolution is, despite the extremely difficult circumstances facing it, gloriously advancing toward inevitable victory. It is true that the Eritrean people have immensely suffered from Haile-selassie's policy of terrorization, mass murder and scorched-earth campaign. At the same time, the fratricidal Civil War unleashed on the armed combatants by the reactionary, fascist and bankrupt leadership of the self-styled "Revolutionary Council" has inflicted enormous damage upon the struggle of the Eritrean people for national liberation. The Civil War could and should have been definitely avoided through the working out of a democratic solution to the internal contradictions within the Eritrean Liberation Front. (We are enclosing you an official P.L.F. document dealing with its historical analysis.) It is now abundantly clear that the Civil War had a definite class basis, that its instigators consciously subordinated the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggle to the sectarian interests of the petty bourgeois and peasant-chiefancy alliance that dominates the "Revolutionary Council".

In any relatively polarized collision between progress and reaction, fascism and democracy, revolution and counter-revolution, it is always incumbent upon all progressive forces to support the partisans of progress, democracy and revolution and to denounce those of reaction, fascism and counter-revolution. In the spirit of this historical internationalist task, E.F.L. urges the First Congress of the W.U.E.S. to take a firm position in support of the Eritrean Revolutionary Vanguard - the People's Liberation Forces. Such an expression of support will help to strengthen the militant comradeship and revolutionary solidarity of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples. It also renders service to the memory of the late comrades who, under the revolutionary banner of the P.L.F., were martyred in a heroic struggle to free those of their compatriots who have been condemned to a life of chains behind prison bars.

To its glory, the Ethiopian Student Movement has been at the forefront of the popular opposition and resistance to the tyranny of Haile-selassie's neocolonial, feudal regime and to the plunder of the country by its imperialist and zionist retainers. The W.U.E.S., as the collective organ of the Ethiopian Student Movement, can and should definitely play a vanguard role in the process of accelerating the tempo of the political consciousness and, therefore, the revolutionary mobilization of the Ethiopian masses. We urge you to seriously consider the objective and subjective conditions in your country, especially those of the oppressed nationalities, with a view to taking more concrete initiatives of resistance and struggle, whose culmination would signify the total elimination of the feudo-compradore rule and, along with it, the imperialist and zionist control of the country. E.F.L. assures you of its firm comradeship support and complete solidarity with your revolutionary efforts to fulfill this historic task.

LONG LIVE THE ETHIOPIAN STUDENT MOVEMENT!
VICTORY TO THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES!
VICTORY TO THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION!
LONG LIVE THE P.L.F. REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD!
VICTORY TO THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION!
VICTORY TO THE WORLD REVOLUTION!

The Executive Committee