

# **Representative of the Association of Eritrean Women in North America Addresses the Internationalist Rally on Behalf of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front**

Speech delivered at the Internationalist Rally of Marxist-Leninist Parties held in Montreal, Canada, April 30th, 1978.

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At 10:50 pm, after reading the Messages of Greetings to the Internationalist Rally from the various Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations which were unable to attend the Rally for one reason or another, Comrade Bains invited the representatives of the national liberation movements to address the Internationalist Rally. The first to speak was a representative of the Association of Eritrean Women in North America who read a message from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front to the Internationalist Rally. Sustained applause and cheers greeted the comrade. The speech of the representative of the Association of Eritrean Women in North America on behalf of the EPLF follows:

## **Representative of the Association of Eritrean Women in North America Addresses the Internationalist Rally on Behalf of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front**

Comrades,

It is a pleasure for us to receive an invitation from the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) to participate in the Internationalist Rally in Montreal on April 30, 1978. We deeply regret however that we are unable to attend the Rally. But comrades, we are with you on this important occasion. We forward our heartfelt solidarity to the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and all the participants and through the Rally to the international proletariat and all the struggling peoples throughout the world. The EPLF and our heroic fighting

masses are with you in struggle. Through the reverberations of our gun blasts, through the daily heroic battles we are waging against our enemies, we express our solidarity with you.

We wish the Rally every success. We are optimistic that this revolutionary Rally will bring together a great number of revolutionary peoples from all over the world in the spirit of a common struggle against imperialism and reaction of all colours and shades.

The Eritrean people and the EPLF identify ourselves and our struggle with the revolutionary proletariat and with the fighting masses of all countries. We consider our struggle as an integral part of the world wide revolutionary struggle against imperialism and all reaction. We believe that the revolutionary forces should forge strong solidarity with each other and support each other's struggle through every possible means. Comrades, it is our intent and desire to establish strong relationships with all revolutionary forces the world over.

We value highly the support of the revolutionary forces for the struggle we are waging. CPC(M-L)'s support for our revolutionary struggle and in particular its efforts to publicize our struggle are of great encouragement to us. We were also very pleased to have a CPC(M-L) delegation visit our liberated areas. The visit by the CPC(M-L) delegation to our liberated areas definitely deepened the Canadian and Eritrean people's knowledge about each other's struggles and strengthened the revolutionary solidarity that exists between the two fraternal peoples. May the revolutionary solidarity that binds the Canadian and Eritrean peoples and the national liberation movement with the revolutionary proletariat be as solid as a rock!

Comrades,

Allow us now to say a few words about the struggle we are waging. Today, our seventeen-year-old armed national liberation war has grown into a full fledged people's war engulfing our entire three and a half million people. Our struggle has reached the stage where the initiative is ours, the balance of forces favours us -- a stage where we are dealing the enemy decisive blows. Under the correct leadership of our vanguard

organization, our heroic people's army, the Eritrean People's Liberation Army, our people's militia and our fighting masses are mercilessly razing Ethiopian colonial aggression in our country to the ground.

We have now liberated our entire country except for a very few cities. Even the few remaining enemy-occupied cities are under the guns of our heroic people's army. In the vast areas we have liberated we have embarked upon the building of a new society. We have created the necessary material conditions for our people to take political power. On the basis of the principle of self-reliance we are mobilizing the material and human resources of our country to satisfy the needs of our revolution and our masses. We are assisting and providing leadership to our peasant masses in their effort to own their land and dismantle the oppressive feudal system. Hundreds of schools have been opened for the sons and daughters of our country's workers and peasants. Extensive medical service is being made available to our masses in their millions.

The meaning of the struggle we are waging is such that our masses are the benefactors. Our struggle is a national democratic revolution to free our country from Ethiopian occupation and imperialist exploitation and to establish a people's democratic state in order to safeguard our people's basic interests. By politicizing, organizing and arming them we have involved our masses in the revolution so that they become its masters. Hence, the true meaning of our heroic struggle is for the realization of our people's age old aspirations -- national independence and people's democracy.

The people's war being waged by the entire people of Eritrea under the correct leadership of the EPLF today is the direct continuation of our people's militant history and the highest form of our centuries old struggle against foreign invasion. It is a continuation of our people's heroic resistance to Turkish and Egyptian expansionism and Italian and British imperialist colonialism. Since 1952 when imperialism conspired through the use of the United Nations in forcibly annexing our country to feudal Ethiopia our people have been waging a life and death struggle against the Ethiopian occupationists and their imperialist and Zionist sustainers.

In 1961 gun blasts reverberated in the western lowlands of our country heralding the beginning of the armed struggle. The beginning of the armed struggle was an expression of our people's true sentiments for freedom and liberation. Needless to say, it lacked a clear political orientation. A clear programme was not charted, the strategy and tactics of the revolution were not formulated. The clique that was leading the struggle which was composed of bourgeois, right-wing petty-bourgeois and feudalist elements only pursued the struggle for its narrow class interests and! brought an incalculable amount of damage to our people's cause. Since the birth of the EPLF in 1970 however, the reactionary line that dominated the Eritrean liberation movement has been rectified.

The birth of EPLF was a new chapter in the history of our people's militant struggle. It meant the rebirth of the Eritrean struggle on a new revolutionary basis, on the basis of the national democratic line. The EPLF became the rallying force of the revolutionary and democratic forces of our people's liberation struggle. It aroused the deepest sentiments of the workers, peasants, the revolutionary intellectuals and other democratic forces of all the nationalities of our country. The EPLF's correct line and leadership has become the prime condition for the tremendous growth of our revolution. The Eritrean struggle has gone through many twists and turns and has traversed a difficult and arduous road of bitter struggle. We have paid thousands of lives for freedom and true liberation. Many hurdles were placed in front of our revolutionary organization by the internal reactionaries and the Ethiopian aggressors. The internal reactionaries launched a counter-revolutionary civil war to nip the EPLF in the bud. There was no attempt that the Ethiopian aggressors have not made to liquidate our organization.

But the EPLF has and does represent the historical trend in our country. It is a revolutionary force born in struggle. It has been able to surmount the difficulties placed in front of it by its enemies. The EPLF has successfully shattered the obstacles created by the internal reactionaries. In the last eight years the EPLF has led our people's struggle from victory to victory.

Today, our people's revolutionary struggle led by our vanguard organization has become an ever advancing irresistible

powerful force capable of smashing any machination regardless of its tenacity: The proof of this is the concrete revolutionary work we are undertaking in the Eritrean field; our uninterrupted brilliant victories over the Ethiopian aggressors, the profound social transformation that is taking place in our liberated areas, our efforts in organizing, politicizing and arming the masses of our people, and our efforts to reach self-sufficiency in food and other necessities through the implementation of our motto of self-reliance.

The line we have developed in our national democratic programme which was adopted by our historic First Congress is the basis for our victories. Our correct line has deeply touched the hearts and minds of our people. It is for the objectives laid down in our national democratic programme that our fighting masses are prepared to pay any price.

The spirit of self-sacrifice prevails in Eritrea. Our people have acquired a wealth of revolutionary experience which has enabled them to make any sacrifice and withstand any hardship. In every battle fought against the Ethiopian occupation troops our masses -- men, women and children -- selflessly participate in support of the heroic EPLA defying the enemy's artillery barrages.

It is this spirit of sacrifice and determination of our people that makes our struggle irresistible. The spirit of heroism that has been imprinted in the minds of our people is the factor for our decisive victories.

Comrades, you are aware of the situation that has developed in our country today. The Soviet Union and Cuba have intervened on the side of the fascist Dergue against us. They have armed the junta with enormous quantities of sophisticated weapons. Most of these weapons are being used against us, against the just struggle of our people. Cuba has dispatched thousands of troops to our country's soil. The Soviet Union and Cuba are partners in the junta's big offensive being directed against our people. The U.S. Imperialists are also plotting a conspiracy against our revolution. Thus, we are witnessing concerted efforts from many corners to bring our struggle to its knees. Many people may wonder as to what will be the fate of the Eritrean struggle.

In light of this we declare that we are not a bit disturbed by what is being aimed against us. We are fully confident that our just struggle will triumph. We are ready to battle anyone who wants to deny us our sacred rights. We have our entire people fully mobilized behind us. Our conscious and armed masses are our asset. With this asset we will undoubtedly win. We are prepared to defend the revolutionary gains we have won through seventeen years of heroic armed struggle. The EPLF is resolved to carry the struggle forward until every inch of Eritrean soil is liberated and the aspirations of our masses are realized.

Comrades,

We have risen up in arms to settle accounts with our enemies. From our long experience we are convinced that self-reliant protracted people's war is the only way to victory. Relying mainly on our forces, and with the support of all revolutionary forces the world over we are confident that our protracted people's war will take us to victory. We firmly reiterate that no matter what the odds, the EPLF will continue to carry high the banner of national liberation and of protracted people's war. At the same time we urge all our friends to follow what is in the making in our country and render us every possible support.

**LONG LIVE THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE FRATERNAL PEOPLES OF CANADA AND ERITREA!**

**LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY BOND STRUGGLING PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!**

This speech was greeted with prolonged and tumultuous applause, and shouts of **Long Live the EPLF!**