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Statement on Soviet aggression in Eritrea

For quite some time now and in a bitter ironic reversal of history, the Soviet Union — once an ardent advocate of Eritrea's independence — has been vehemently pursuing a politico-military strategic objective of weakening and changing the superiority of the EPLF in the military and political fields. It has thus been slandering the Eritrean revolution and the EPLF as "secessionist"... "instigated by imperialism"... etc. in order to politically isolate it while, simultaneously, it has been supplying massive highly sophisticated weapons as well as other technical support to the Ethiopian fascist junta. This double-faceted policy had as its central theme the isolation and military weakening of the EPLF and thereby pressurizing it into accepting a bogus "peaceful solution" expounded by both the Soviet Union and the Dergue. The EPLF had however both contained the various military offensives unleashed by the Dergue and also theoretically refuted and exposed the banal content of the so-called "peaceful solution".

In the wake of these unfavourable situation, the fascist Dergue and its backers opted for an "exclusive" military solution. The fascist Dergue mobilized all the man-power and war material it can muster and launched — towards the end of last July — an all-out multi-pronged strategic offensive in order to annihilate the Eritrean people and crush their just struggle.

The first phase of the offensive, however, utterly failed to achieve its strategic objective. It is at this juncture and under these circumstances that the Soviet Union decided — realizing that albeit all the highly sophisticated destructive weapons and military advice it was providing the Dergue, the Dergue would never defeat the Eritrean people's struggle nor weaken the EPLF — to intervene directly and assume a frontal role in the second phase of the offensive launched on November 18, 1978.

The present all-out predatory offensive is planned and

Continue on page 2

The revolutionary content of the Eritrean question

"The Eritrean question is the cause of the independence of a people who refuse and reject any form of annexation, dismemberment or a return to the hated colonialism no matter what type it would be, whatever form it takes, or from which direction it comes".

These historic words were spoken in the U.N. nearly three decades ago by the representative of the then Eritrean Independence Bloc. They were the message of the Eritrean people to the highest International Organization invested with the power of deciding their future and correctly summed up, indeed as they do remain unfulfilled to this day, the nature of the Eritrean question and clearly express the age-old aspirations of the Eritrean people for national independence and freedom.

Eritrea was not, however, granted independence in 1950 by the U.N. Its strategic importance, the contention and selfish interests of other big powers once more relegated and pushed to oblivion the interests and expressed wishes of the indigenous people. Their legitimate national right was, once more, stifled and suppressed by other much bigger, much stronger powers. Through concerted U.S. imperialist and feudal Ethiopian expansionist machinations, Eritrea was concatenated with Ethiopia in a sham federation which was subsequently and unilaterally abrogated by Ethiopia. Eritrea was totally annexed by Ethiopia in 1962.

For more than 17 years now, the people of Eritrea have been waging a resolute and heroic revolutionary armed struggle for national independence and scoring ever-increasing brilliant victories against overwhelming odds. After years of arduous struggle and enormous sacrifices, they have today liberated virtually the entire countryside and several cities and thrust their revolutionary struggle into the arena of world-wide attention.

At this juncture, when through much sacrifice they are on the verge of final victory over Ethiopian colonialism and moreover at a time when the armed struggle, led by the EPLF, has attained a high level of political/ideological, and organizational maturity, at a time when revolutionary social-transformations are being effected and extended in the liberated areas, at a time when — arms in one hand — the EPLF is combatting age-old illiteracy, poverty and disease through reliance, guidance and mobilization of the latent potentialities of the downtrodden and exploited Eritrean masses... Other new, much bigger, much stronger forces are emerging to buttress the senile and fast-dissipating Ethiopian colonialism.

The Soviet Union has armed the Ethiopian fascist junta with more than 1 billion (U.S. dollars) worth of highly sophisticated, highly destructive (Mig 23 included) weapons. The

Continue on page 3

STATEMENT...

Continued from page 1

executed by Soviet war experts and generals. Soviet Generals and other high ranking officers are leading this deplorable offensive. Hundreds of Soviet troops, pilots and marine are involved. The heavy guns and artilleries shelling our positions are fired and manned by Soviet troops. The Migs which are starfing our liberated areas and civilian centers are flown by Soviet pilots.

The Soviets are so-much involved that:

- their warships are shelling our positions,
- they have used land crafts to land enemy troops and tanks to reinforce the Eastern Front.

The direct involvement of the Soviet Union is not, further, limited to battlefields only. Soviet jets are mercilessly destroying economic and social set-ups of the Eritrean people.

- it is bombing schools and hospitals.
- Soviet manned Mig 21 and Mig 23 jets are indiscriminately bombing and destroying entire villages, killing thousands of civilians and dispersing thousands more and burning crops.
- Soviet reconnaissance planes are spying behind our defence lines using infra-red lights and other sophisticated equipment.

Although the Soviets would undoubtedly deny their unjust intervention and aggression, we have amassed sufficient evidence which conclusively establish the Soviet intervention at the indicated level.

- we have intercepted their messages,
- the Ethiopian prisoners have confirmed it. These prisoners of war can be interviewed by anybody concerned.
- a helicopter shot down by our forces on December 1, 1978, while spying and taking pictures was piloted by a Soviet officer. The helicopter fell on enemy occupied territory but — the identity of its occupant was confirmed from many reliable internal sources.
- our people have seen them on several occasions.

The barbaric offensive launched by the Soviet Union has resulted in the death and destitution of thousands of innocent Eritreans.

- 154 villages have been partially or totally damaged,
- 100,000 people made homeless,
- 4,700 dead or seriously injured,
- 8,000 people are undergoing medical treatment from wounds incurred in these fascistic raids.

The EPLF is furthermore overburdened by the heavy task of saving around 100,000 additional people from hunger and disease.

As regards the military situation at present, the EPLF has shifted its tactics from positional warfare to mobile

active defence and made strategic retreats from the towns in the Asmara-Massawa road as well as from the city of Keren. However, fighting is still raging fiercely on all three fronts and the EPLA and the Eritrean masses are scoring brilliant victories — under these extremely difficult circumstances — over the aggressor troops.

Following is a summary of the military victories achieved in the numerous encounters from November 18 (the start of the offensive) to December 4, 1978:

EASTERN FRONT:

- Thousands of enemy troops killed
- 37 tanks destroyed,
- 10 tanks captured,
- 102military trucks with their full loads turned into ashes,
- 11 military trucks with their full loads captured,
- 200 enemy troops taken prisoners,
- Huge quantitties of light and heavy weapons captured.

WESTERN FRONT:

- Over 4000 enemy troops killed,
- 26 tanks destroyed,
- 5 tanks captured,
- 30 armoured cars destroyed,
- 60 military trucks with their full loads destroyed,
- 7 trucks with their full loads captured,
- 120 enemy troops taken prisoners.

NORTHERN FRONT:

- 30 tanks destroyed,
- 30 tanks captured, however, as twenty of them had various technical defects unamendable in the prevailing situation, the EPLA had to destroy them,
- Huge quanttties of weapons of various kinds captured.

The aggression of the Soviet Union, the herendous crimes being committed against the just struggle of the Eritrean people, is an affront to all peace-loving peoples and countries. To stay aloof, to remain neutral, and not to condemn Soviet aggression is to counterpose, to negate, international justice —international responsibility. Not to condemn Soviet aggression is to forget opposing all injustices and crimes against innocent women, children and the aged, and humanity at large.

The EPLF calls all peace, justice and freedom loving peoples, governments and organizations to condem Soviet intervention and Soviet crimes in Eritrea.

In view of the obtaining tragic and acute human problem the EPLF calls all peace-loving peoples and humanitarian organizations to channel much needed humanitarian aid to the destitue war-victims. The Eritrean people need such help more than ever before.

VICTORY TO THE MASSES!!



A soviet bomb.

The Eritrean people will win

The Eritrean people have risen with unswerving determination and waged a relentless struggle — peaceful in its undeveloped first phase and armed afterwards — ever since U.S. imperialism colluded with the expansionist feudal Ethiopian regime and imposed a sham federation (1952) in flagrant abuse of their expressed wishes to national independence. Further in the process of the last two decades of bitter struggle, they have gleaned valuable revolutionary experience, deepened their political/ideological perspective, and perfected their revolutionary methodology of struggle.

To-day, after 17 years of bitter armed struggle, almost the entire Eritrean people have been politicized and organized, the dialectical unity and struggle of the patriotic and revolutionary classes and forces concretized; the hegemony of the proletariat ensured and harmonized with the revolutionary alliance of the peasantry and other patriotic forces. The people's war has developed and evolved into its last phase, the entire countryside — and prior to this new offensive — most of the strategic and important towns have been liberated and the EPLF has effected profound social transformations in the liberated areas. Landlord and foreign capitalist land holdings have been confiscated and distributed to the landless; People's Assemblies ensuring the hegemony and defending the interests of the exploited and downtrodden classes formed; illiteracy, sanitary, educational campaigns launched on an extensive scale; backward feudal and colonial culture combated and supplanted by revolutionary culture.

Still more and of paramount significance too, all-rounded self reliance has zealously been pursued. Prior to the current fresh aggression by the Soviet Union and the fascist Ethiopian junta, the EPLF was almost self — sufficient in food, weaponry — captured and repaired in the extensive network of small workshops. The extensive network of workshops consisting, among other things, of iron welding, sowing, watch and electronic equipment repair, ...etc. met, in the main, the demands of the struggle. In a nutshell, the political preconditions and the embryonic material forms of an independent, revolutionary and self-reliant People's Eritrea had materialized and were dynamically surging forward.

The all-out fresh offensive of aggression was, at this juncture, launched, in order to counterpose and stall this revolutionary current. The enemy was haunted by the spectre of the approaching victory of the forces of progress and revolution, by the spectre of its final and total demise. Historically, all reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct a last desperate struggle against the revolutionary forces. Accordingly, the forces of aggression have to-day mustered all their might and unleashed an all-out offensive in a frenzied attempt to decisively halt the advancing momentum of the revolutionary force, to reverse the military balance in their favour, and purportedly to crush the Eritrean revolution. The fascist Ethiopian junta has not only quadrupled its occupationist troops but also secured the direct collaboration of the Soviet Union, and, unleashed the annihilationist offensive with the frontal combat role of Soviet aggressor troops manning Soviet tanks, Soviet pilots savagely bombing village and civilian centres in the liberated areas with Mig 23 jets, etc. To-day, the biggest and most ruthless of unjust counter-revolutionary offensive is hanging over the Eritrean People.

Under these particularly unfavourable circumstances, in the face of a new and more dangerous aggression, the EPLF had to make strategic retreats from position in the Asmara-Massawa road and also from the city of Keren, and shift its tactics from positional defence into active defence — i.e. defence through decisive engagements for the purpose of counter

— attacking and taking the offensive at the opportune and weakest points of the enemy.

This is in line with the general principles of our invincible weapon, with science of people's war. Our primary problem, at this juncture, is how to conserve our strength and await an opportunity to defeat the enemy. We are at the crucial stage of the enemy's concentrated offensive, the highest tide of its "encirclement and suppression campaign". Our warfare consists of the alternate use of the defensive and the offensive. The defensive continues until the offensive campaign of the enemy is broken, whereupon our offensive begins, these being but two stages of the same thing. Although a revolutionary war such as ours is essentially an offensive, it also involves defence and retreat. Retreat is necessary because not to retreat a step before the onset of a strong enemy — at the highest tide of the enemy's offensives — inevitably means to jeopardize the long term preservation of one's own forces. The object of a strategic retreat is to conserve our military strength and prepare for the counter — offensive. To defend in order to attack, to retreat in order to advance, to move against the flanks in order to move against the front, and to take a roundabout route in order to get on the direct route — this is inevitable in the process of a people's war. This pattern does not, however, have an endless oscillatory character. The repetition will cease when in the final analysis, a fundamental

Continue on page 6

THE REVOLUTIONARY...

Continued from page 1

material and weaponry superiority of Ethiopian occupation, however, proved matchless to the firm determination, the indomitable fighting spirit of the Eritrean people and the EPLF. In spite of recurrent and large-scale offensives, Ethiopian colonialism failed to stall the ever-advancing victory of the Eritrean revolution. The all-out multi-pronged offensive unleashed by the fascist junta last June utterly failed.

It is at this juncture, when the overall situation was extremely unfavourable to moribund Ethiopian colonialism, that the Soviet Union has directly intervened on the side of the enemy and unleashed a new offensive on November 18, 1978.

To-day, in one of history's bitter ironies, the Soviet Union is committing aggression on the Eritrean people. Some deluded progressive forces have slandered and accused the Eritrean revolution as "secessionist"... as "...an instrument of imperialism and the forces of reaction" ...etc. and have condoned its forcible counter-revolutionary liquidation.

What principled reason can there be to downgrade the role of the Eritrean revolution or to oppose it or to shift one's stand from one of support to that of opposition?

— Is it because the Eritrean people's struggle is "unjust" and has no historico-economic cause?

— Is it because the Eritrean struggle is against the "unity and territorial integrity" of African State?

— Is it because the Eritrean struggle is now "unjust" since there is a "progressive regime" in Ethiopia or a "democratic" trend within the Dergue?

— Is it out of consideration of the international or strategic interest of the struggles of the world people?... — for fear that the Eritrean struggle might become an instrument of imperialism and reaction?

— Is it because the potential of Eritrea and its people is weak and limited?

Continue on page 4

THE REVOLUTIONARY...

Continued from page 3

We have raised this oft repeated conjectures by apologists, of all hues and colours, of Ethiopian colonialism with a view of refuting them and clarifying, oncemore, the justness as well as the revolutionary content of our struggle.

Eritrea is a small country located at the cross-roads of the Horn of Africa and the Middle-East which contains over two thirds of the world's proven oil reserves. It is an African country with close ties with the Arab World. With over 1000Kms of coastal line along the south-western flank of the Red-Sea, Eritrea occupies one of the most important strategic areas in the world at the entrance to the Red-Sea from the Indian Ocean. The re-opening of the Suez-Canal has further enhanced this strategic significance. Eritrea also possesses abundant marine wealth, oil, natural gas, copper, potash, gold, iron-ore and other minerals. It is precisely this economic and strategic significance of Eritrea that has long made it the victim of colonial aggression and imperialist plunder.

For centuries on end, colonialists and expansionists have invaded Eritrea, oppressed its people and plundered its resources. They have tried to falsify its history, arrest its socio-economic development, and suppress the languages and cultural life of its people. In short, colonialism has been robbing the Eritrean people of the fruits of their labour and soil, their national and democratic rights, and their human dignity.

Wherever there is oppression there is resistance. The Eritrean people have never accepted foreign domination and oppression low headed. They have consistently risen up in defiance of all aggressors, at first through peaceful means and when all peaceful means proved to no avail, they launched the armed struggle in 1961. Thus, the present war of national liberation waged against Ethiopian colonialism, world imperialism and zionism is the continuation and further advance of our people's long and glorious history of anti-colonial struggle for national independence, freedom and democracy. This patriotic struggle is not only just and progressive but it is also a struggle that reflects the fundamental wishes profound aspirations as well as enjoys the whole-hearted support and full participation of the Eritrean people.

To cover-up this basic truth, there is hardly any conspiracy or lie that Ethiopian colonialism has not hatched or perpetrated ever since the inception of our armed struggle. It is no secret that our just patriotic struggle has, at various times, been slandered as a "bandit", "secessionist", "religious", etc., movement aiming to sell "Eritrea to the Arabs". It has been vilified as "Arab aggression" and "collaborator of imperialism".

Of course, which national liberation movement in history has not been maliciously slandered, falsely accused and viciously maligned by the colonial power in question? For colonialism is invariably an oppressive and exploitative system based on brutal violence and mendacious propaganda. Moreover, when the colonial power, like the Ethiopian regime, is extremely backward and barbarous, its injustices and lies know no bounds. Hence, what we would like to reiterate here is that, all these colonialist slanders and lies notwithstanding, the Eritrean people are waging a just struggle to regain their legitimate national rights.

History shows that every revolution grows as the people's cumulative response to the objective conditions of social oppression and exploitation. No genuine revolutionary movement can be imported from abroad like a commodity. Thus, our patriotic movement is an indigenous social process that has its root cause in the concrete conditions of our people's age-old colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation. Our struggle is a popular struggle waged and wholeheartedly supported by the entire Eritrean people irrespect-

ive of religion, nationality, tribe, region, age or sex. After all, what greater and nobler expression of a people's supreme desire for self-determination is possible than the reality of the heroic struggle of an entire people risen up in arms, the spectacle of men, women and children, young and old, resolutely fighting with simple weapons against the most sophisticated modern tanks, artillery, mortar launchers, missiles, an fighter bombers. Indeed, the Eritrean people have spoken and are speaking out through blood and sacrifices.

The argument is often made that since Ethiopia has not invaded Eritrea as a capitalist state and, moreover, since Eritrea is more developed than Ethiopia, the Eritrean question is not a colonial question.

Of course, it is obvious that backward and neo-colonial Ethiopia is predominantly feudal and not capitalist. However, the view that a feudal country cannot at all colonize another country or people is both philistine and erroneous. After all, colonialism is not a phenomenon that just emerged with the rise of capitalism. Colonialism and imperialism existed in history long before the emergence of capitalist mode of production. Roman imperialism was based on slavery. Pre-capitalist Spanish, Portuguese, Tsarist Russian and 12th century English colonialism was based on feudalism. Ireland, occupied in the second half of the 12th century, was England's first colony. Predominantly feudal Spain and Portugal were the first to establish colonies in Africa and South-America.

True, colonialism as a world-historic system is bound up with the history of capitalism. Starting in the period of the primary accumulation of capital and developing during the era of pre-monopoly capitalism, it reached its peak and decline in the epoch of imperialism. Hence, when feudal England invaded and occupied the relatively more advanced Ireland in the second half of the 12th century, the resulting relationship between England and Ireland was colonial. The colonial nature of the Irish question was never in doubt and Irish people's just struggle for national independence enjoyed wide-spread support. Likewise, it is an undeniable fact that the relationship that obtained between the extremely backward Tsarist Russia and the then more advanced Poland was a colonial one.

When feudal Portugal invaded and occupied Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea Bissau long before the development of capitalism, the relationship that obtained between Portugal and these African countries for hundreds of years was colonial. This is an indisputable truth. The colonial condition of the subject nations was always clear when feudal England annexed Ireland, Tsarist Russia subjugated Poland, and Portugal occupied Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. However, there are no distortions or lies that the colonial states have not perpetrated in the attempt to present the colonized countries as their provinces rather than their colonies.

It is thus in line with this defunct colonial logic that the Ethiopian colonial regimes in general and the present military junta in particular have never refrained from striving hard to confuse the colonial question in Eritrea and present the Eritrean people's just patriotic struggle as an internal Ethiopian matter.

The point that needs further elaboration here is that in the era of rapidly declining imperialism, Ethiopia did not occupy Eritrea alone. The so-called federation, imposed in flagrant abuse of the expressed wishes of the Eritrean, was sponsored by U.S. imperialism. It is to be recalled that the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies had supported the just cause of the Eritrean people when the Eritrean question was brought to the U.N. General Assembly and demanded that independence be granted to Eritrea immediately. They opposed the draft resolution to federate Eritrea and

Continue on page 6

Declaration of the Fourth Regular Meeting of the Central Committee of the EPLF

Our heroic fighters, broad masses and friends!

The Central Committee of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front held its fourth regular meeting from October 20-22, 1978 in the liberated city of Afabet and issued the following declaration.

The fourth regular meeting of the Central Committee of the EPLF undoubtedly had a great importance and heavy responsibility, because it was held at a time when fascist Ethiopian colonialism, fielding en masse its duped, forcibly recruited and mercenary soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weapons, has intensified its military aggression and committed unparalleled barbaric atrocities on our civilian population in its attempt to liquidate the Eritrean revolution and perpetuate its exploitative and oppressive interests; at a time when imperialism and internal reaction are concocting various schemes to weaken our struggle, when our heroic people and their shield, the Eritrean People's Liberation Army, are persisting in their struggle against the large scale war of aggression with resolute determination and phenomenal heroism; and when the friends of the Eritrean revolution and the peoples of the world, having condemned the enemy's aggression and taken a stand on the side of the Eritrean people and their just struggle, are rendering moral, political and material support.

Realizing its responsibility in the present situation and in order to correctly assess and map out the measures that have to be taken in various fields, the fourth regular meeting of the Central Committee analyzed the reports not only of the past seven months — the period since the third regular meeting — but the complete reports of the past year and half, charted extremely important plans for future work and passed important resolutions.

After thorough analysis and summation of recent military developments and the present military situation, the meeting formulated future tactics, prepared comprehensive military studies and developed plans for the further growth of the EPLA, so as to enable it to fulfill its forthcoming tasks. After summing up the long experience of the various departments and branches of the EPLF and analyzing the role they have to play and the tasks they have to fulfill in the coming period, it delineated a working program for them.

In regard to the struggle for unity with the Eritrean Liberation Front, the meeting analyzed and summed up the experience of the past six months and the obstacles that faced the implementation of the correct unity agreement. Conscious of the great importance of the struggle for the unity of the two fronts and of our great responsibility to develop this struggle, the Central Committee reaffirmed its conviction of the necessity of waging a united struggle with the ELF and passed a number of practical resolutions.

Concerning the slogan of "peaceful solution", which has been popular for the past few months and the attempts that had been made to start negotiations, the meeting analyzed the EPLF's clear stand and struggle and affirmed its correctness. It expressed support for the efforts of friendly and neighbouring countries which are struggling to bring about a peaceful solution of the just struggle of the Eritrean people. It reaffirmed that its stand on negotiation is the one that was expressed in the joint statement (of June 21, 1978) put out by the Joint Supreme Political Leadership of the EPLF and ELF.

After making a detailed analysis of the mistakes that the Soviet Union and Cuba are committing by giving military support to the fascist Dergue, painting the Eritrean revolution in general as an instrument of imperialism and reaction, directly participating and still continuing to participate in Ethiopian colonialism's current offensive in Eritrea — eventhough they had been asserting in various ways that they will not participate in this offensive — the fourth regular meeting of the Central Committee, consistent with the resolution it had passed in its third regular meeting and the different requests it had made, reminds them once again to correct their erroneous stand, stop their military participation and take a stand on the side of the just cause of the Eritrean people.

The fourth regular meeting of the Central Committee passed practical resolutions and recommendations to consolidate the EPLF's solidarity and develop its co-operation with the democratic movements in Ethiopia and the liberation movements and democratic forces in the region and throughout the world.

On the basis of the Constitution of the EPLF, the meeting analyzed the question of the Second (EPLF) Congress and decided that it will be convened within six months after the two year term (of the first congress) expires and set up a seven man preparatory committee from the members of the Central Committee.

Our heroic fighters, broad masses and friends!

The fascist Dergue has deliberate plans to crush the just struggle of the Eritrean people and their revolutionary force militarily. Eventhough it has been able to seize some areas in its current military offensive, it has become obvious that the Dergue did not realize its objective because of the relentless blows that it recieved in the hands of our heroic people's army and our broad masses. Colonialist logic asserts that instant victory can be won by amassing thousands of mercenaries and large quantities of modern weapons, while revolutionary logic affirms that victory can be achieved by having faith in and relying on the capability of the masses and after a protracted process of struggle, which is full of twists and turns, advance and retreat. On the occasion of its fourth regular meeting, the Central Committee calls on our heroic fighters and broad masses to adhere to their revolutionary logic, strengthen their determination and intensify their struggle. It expresses its revolutionary gratitude to the countries and forces which have stood on the side of our people's just struggle and provided the necessary support. It reminds them to raise their support to the Eritrean people in their struggle to foil the conspiracy of imperialism, colonialism and the Dergue's fascist offensive.

DOWN WITH THE DERGUE'S FASCIST AND
COLONIAL AGGRESSION!

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM AND
REACTION!

* VICTORY TO THE MASSES! !

C.C. EPLF

OCTOBER 22, 1978

THE ERITREAN...*Continued from page 3*

and irreversible change takes place in the balance of forces and in favour of the revolutionary forces. Historical experience conclusively attests to this truth. Strategic retreats of the Red Army in China in the early 1930's was later crowned by final and total victory of the forces of progress and revolution over Japanese aggression as well as internal reaction. In Vietnam, setbacks and retreats of the Liberation Front in the wake of intensive U.S. imperialist aggression in the immediate aftermath of the brilliant victory at Dien Ben Phu over French imperialism was later invariably crowned victory and U.S. imperialism was defeated. In our specific experience, genuine revolutionaries and democratic forces had to virtually start from scratch to build a genuine liberation front in 1970 (EPLF) in the face of a liquidationist line of the ELF leadership.

Although the current retreats, the momentary setbacks, entail serious problems to our revolution — in particular since the enemy is savagely and intensively bombarding our liberated areas — Soviet and Ethiopian aggression will soon pass to the defensive.

Still more, even if we do not succeed to stall the offensive, launch our counter-offensive and recuperate our recaptured territories in a matter of months, this would only constitute a temporary setback. Only the total destruction of our liberation army, the total annihilation of the Eritrean patriotic forces and the extermination of almost the entire Eritrean people would constitute complete defeat in the patriotic war. But this has never happened and will never happen. Hitlerite holocaust did not exterminate the Jews as a people, Zionist aggression and mass terror has not decimated the Palestinians.

True, Soviet and Ethiopian aggression enjoy material superiority, (modern weaponry etc.) over our incomparably

weak and small people's army. But we have long and correctly determined the relations between man and weapons, politics and technique, regarding the human factor, the political factor as the decisive factor. We have risen to defeat the material force with morale force, defeat what is strong with what is weak, defeat what is modern with what is primitive, defeat the armies of aggression with our people's patriotism and determination.

No matter how modern its equipment, the expeditionary force cannot fully exhaust its latent potential and escape, in the final analysis, a defeat inevitable for all aggressive armies facing a whole nation resolutely resisting them. The aggression army is a conglomerate of mercenary troops and forcibly recruited Ethiopian peasants and owing to the unjust character of the war, since it has no ideal to fight for, its morale is low.

By contrast, our fighting people have an invincible potential force, an immense political power that the enemy can never fathom. They are encouraged and animated by the strength of a just cause and closely sealed into a very strong and firm bloc by lofty revolutionary goals. Our enemy has to deal with a people with an extremely high revolutionary spirit and absolute political superiority, an indomitable people with long standing traditions of struggle against foreign aggressors, a people who would die as free men rather than live as second class citizens in their own land. They had raised high the banner of resistance and launched the armed struggle in 1961. Through a long revolutionary struggle, they have attained a high level of political consciousness and have gained rich experience in political and armed struggle and enjoy unbreachable political superiority over the enemy.

This political superiority of our fighting masses, derived essentially from the justness of our cause, will, in the final analysis, be translated into a superior material force capable of incurring final and total defeat over the enemy. The Eritrean people will win!

THE REVOLUTIONARY...*Continued from page 4*

Ethiopia because it deprived the Eritrean people of their fundamental right to self-determination and because it was imposed on the Eritrean people by the colonial powers. The following are excerpts from the speeches of the representatives of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies at the Fifth Session Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly.

"...The U.S.S.R. has consistently supported the proposal that Eritrea should be granted independence and has continued to do so at the current session. We base our argument on the fact that all peoples have a right to self-determination and national independence... In considering the fate of Eritrea — one of the former Italian colonies — the U.N. must take a decision which will satisfy the longing of the Eritrean people for independence and freedom from national oppression. The General Assembly cannot tolerate a deal by the colonial powers at the expense of the population of Eritrea... The only just solution to the problem of the future of Eritrea is to grant independence..."

Poland:

"... This draft resolution decides the future of a people without considering its aspirations, although they have voiced and brought it to the notice of the U.N. It disposes of this people as if they were so much inanimate matter. Under the name of federation, it provides for nothing less than annexation... It could not satisfy the requirements of peace and security in East Africa... For these reasons, my delegation will vote against that draft resolution..."

Czechoslovakia:

"... The federal form of government which would thus be imposed on Eritrea is not based on the free, spontaneous

and democratic expression of the will of two sovereign states. It is merely a mask for the annexation of little Eritrea by a larger and more populous state... The Czechoslovak delegation will never be a party to intrigues against the freedom of peoples..."

Delegates of other people's democracies also voiced essentially similar oppositions.

The Ethiopian colonial regime has not, either, fought the Eritrean national liberation movement alone. With out the full diplomatic, military, economic and political support of U.S. led world imperialism, Haile-Sellassie's decant feudal regime would have been unable to annex Eritrea and oppress its people. It would have been unable to wage its colonial war of aggression in Eritrea for so long with out this vital imperialist and Zionist support. This is an incontrovertible truth that no lies of the Ethiopian colonial regime can conceal.

The foregoing analysis makes it abundantly clear that the Eritrean struggle is not against the "unity and territorial integrity" of an African State, but against the forcible annexation and continued occupation of a small African country by an oppressive, colonial African State. It must be clear that the Eritrean people's struggle for national independence and democracy is not a "secessionist war" seeking to establish a new political entity at the expense of the territorial integrity of another state by altering the national boundaries inherited from the colonial era. As explained above, Eritrea was forcibly annexed into the backward feudal Ethiopian empire in 1962, just one year after the launching of the armed struggle.

And Ethiopia's forcible annexation of Eritrea in flagrant

Continue on page 8

International solidarity

Italy

SOLIDARITY WITH THE ERITREAN PEOPLE

In the wake of the Ethio-Soviet aggression unleashed in Eritrea on November 18, 1978, the federation CGIL-CISL-UIL (General Confederation of Italian Labour; Confederation of Italian Labour; and Union of Italian Labour, respectively) has issued a communique restating its position on the Eritrean question.

In this connection, and in order to put historical records straight, we point out that the Eritrean question does not negate the principle of the "non-revision of colonial boundaries". For detailed analysis, see Vanguard Vol. 3, n. 3.

We reprint below the Communique of the Federation CGIL-CISL-UIL.

The Federation of CGIL-CISL-UIL strongly condemns the offensive unleashed in Eritrea by the Ethiopian army with the support — according to the information available — of Soviet military personell and reiterates its conviction, expressed several times in the past, that the national question of the Eritrean people can not be solved with military force.

The unitary Federation recognizes the principle of the non-revision of the colonial boundaries enunciated by the O.A.U. and particularly endorsed by the Organization for the Unity of African Sindicalists, but underlines the specificity of the Eritrean problem as demonstrated by the struggle waged for many years by the liberation movements with the whole-hearted support of the people, animated by a fervent national spirit consolidated, among other things, during the colonial period. On the other side, whereas the forceful destruction of the feudal and reactionary regime of Haileselassie in Ethiopia is legitimate, the Addis Abeba government continues to prefer resorting to military methods instead of seeking negotiated political solution with the genuine representatives of the Eritrean people.

The Federation CGIL-CISL-UIL deplores this methodology and calls for a political solution of the conflict based on the recognition of the right of self-determination of the Eritrean people.

In this context the unitary federation considers indispensable the immediate withdrawal of the external military

forces — in particular Soviet and Cuban forces — from the region and the cessation of any other intervention aimed at destabilizing and hampering the free choice of the peoples concerned.

The Federation CGIL-CISL-UIL calls on the Italian government to adopt promptly in all forums for a peaceful negotiated solution of the problem.

Belgium

C.N.A.AP.D. EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY

The National (Belgium) Committee of Peace and Development (C.N.A.P.D.) recently issued a declaration supporting the just cause and struggle of the Eritrean people.

Extracts of the Declaration read:

"...The C.N.A.P.D. considers that the Eritrean question can only be solved on the basis of the non-voilation of colonial boundaries, a principle adopted by the O.A.U. Eritrea, an Italian colony since the end of the 19th century, then British Protectorate from 1941 to 1952, cannot be considered as part of Ethiopia. The right of self-determination and independence of the Eritrean people, a right which legitimately led to a struggle of so long duration, should be respected. It is in violation of this right, and also of the U.N. resolution that Emperor Haileselassie annexed Eritrea and unleashed the war against the Eritrean people.

...The C.N.A.P.D. calls on the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and Cuba not to support directly or indirectly the Ethiopian regime in the war it is waging on the Eritrean people.

...The C.N.A.P.D. appeals to all the progressive forces in Belgium to support the struggle of the Eritrean people".

A.S.B.L. FINISHES THE PROJECT IN NACFA

The Comité Belge de Secoure a l'Erythré (A.S.B.L.), a long standing supporter of the just cause of the Eritrean people and the EPLF recently finished a project undertaken several months ago. This consisted of raising funds to furnish a complete set of equipments for a Hospital in liberated Nackfa.

The EPLF's emphasis and zealous pursuance of the principle of allrounded self-reliance has met with considerable success in the medical field too. The EPLF has developed an extensive network of medical facilities which now comprise of seven hospitals, thirty two stationary clinics and fifteen mobile teams. These hospitals are equiped with the necessary operational equipments, a substancial part of which was liberated from the enemy.

The EPLF has launched an extensive programme to train medics, providing them with basic medical knowledge. More than 30 of these medics have received further advanced training in the field which enables them to do surgery, obstetrics and to deal with many problems of internal medicine and pediatrics. The EPLF also trains nurses, anesthetists, laboratory technicians, X-ray technicians, pharmacists and other medical personnell.

As a result, the EPLF is to-day in a position and giving medical treatment to the vast majority of the downtrodden Eritrean masses. Figures available for the year 1977 show that the EPLF gave medical treatment, free of charge, and as in — patients and out — patients to over one-million and a half Eritrean masses.

As regards EPLF wounded combatants, only 2% are to-day sent abroad while the rest get treatment at home.



Project items being loaded.

THE REVOLUTIONARY...

Continued from page 6

violation of the U.N. federal resolution cannot make the Eritraean people's national question an internal Ethiopian matter anymore than South Africa's forcible occupation of Namibia in flagrant violation of the "trusteeship" of the League of Nations can make Namibia an internal South African matter. Surely, the colour of the oppressor's skin cannot be used as a criterion for giving or denying active support to the just and legitimate struggle of a colonized or oppressed people. Thus, whoever, denies the justness of the Eritrean cause or refrains from extending it active support under the guise of "Ethiopian unity", "African unity", or otherwise, is a witting or unwitting apologist for annexation, colonialism, and imperialism.

It is also advanced that the people of Eritrea should cease fighting for independence from "socialist Ethiopia". It is also to be recalled that the Ethiopian military junta has in May 1976 come out with the much-orchestrated so-called "9 point peace policy for regional autonomy" for Eritrea. The Ethiopian military regime has advanced the views that the Eritrean struggle was just when it was directed against Haile Sellassie's feudal regime but to continue to seek "secession" from "socialist" Ethiopia is to sabotage the Ethiopian revolution and serves imperialism. The right to self-determination is a universal principle applicable to all people and nation. No country, however big or powerful, has any right to deny another country, however small or weak, the right to freely determine its own destiny. All socialist and democratic governments recognize the right of oppressed nations and colonies to self-determination. After all, no nation can be free so long as it oppresses another and, if this is true under capitalism, it is even more so under socialism. This is precisely why one of the first acts of the Soviet State was the granting of independence for the oppressed border countries like Finland. For national distinctions and relatively divergent national interests that militate for the independent existence of fraternal socialist states continue through the era of socialist revolution and construction. Thus, it is inconceivable that a socialist regime can continue to forcibly occupy a country whose people have made their desire for independence absolutely clear. It is also inconceivable that a genuine socialist state would deliberately commit barbarous atrocities on an armed men, women and children in the pursuit of annexationist aims.

It is also wrong to interpret the principle of self-determination as "regional autonomy". In general, the concept of "regional autonomy" for a colonized or oppressed people is an instrument of annexation and colonial expansion which formally allows the colonized country or oppressed nation the right of "internal administration" while leaving all political power in the hands of the colonial country or oppressor nation. Any people, nation or nationality have the right to self-administration that no one can deny. The right to self-determination of nations or nationalities is the principle which guarantees the oppressed people, nation or nationality the right to separate from the alien power that oppresses them and establish their own independent national state. It is neither a legal nor an abstract derived from text books or woven out of expansionist dreams, but a correct scientific solution that comes from a careful study of the concrete historico-economic conditions of the national movement. This solution has, and can have, no meaning other than political self-determination, i.e., the right of the oppressed people to separate and form a completely independent national state.

Thus, to interpret self-determination as "regional autonomy" by distorting its correct meaning is to use the correct principle of self-determination to justify colonial aggression

and expansionist annexation instead of employing it in the fight for independence and liberation. In this way, the principle of self-determination, in the hands of the national and social chauvinists, is abandoned as a means of combatting aggression and annexation and reduced, instead, into a tool of justifying and appeasing them. And this is why we completely reject the Ethiopian colonial regime's proposal for "regional autonomy".

As to the question of peaceful solution, we would like to reiterate here that the Eritrean people have always been peace loving. They have never been opposed to a just and democratic peaceful solution that recognized their legitimate national right to independence and safeguards their freedom. The Eritrean revolution has clearly spelled out its correct and principled stand on peaceful solution. The Eritrean revolution, represented by the EPLF and the ELF, has stated its readiness to solve the Eritrean question peacefully and democratically provided that the Ethiopian military regime:

1. Withdraws its 9 point policy declaration of "regional autonomy" and accepts the principle of the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination,
2. Recognizes the EPLF and the ELF as the sole legitimate representatives of the Eritrean people, and
3. Affirms its readiness to solve the Eritrean question peacefully and begin negotiations without pre-conditions.

As regards the issue of the international or strategic interest of the struggles of the world's people, the victory of the Eritrean struggle — by virtue of its justness — is objectively the victory of the world revolutionary forces. Likewise, a defeat of the Eritrean just struggle is, in substance and content, a defeat of the forces of revolution and progress. Moreover, the balance of forces in Eritrea is at the moment unequivocally in favour of the progressive and revolutionary classes. The revolutionary forces enjoy undisputable superiority and hegemony over the other patriotic forces. It is beyond doubt that the system the EPLF — in collaboration with other democratic forces — has and is striving to establish shall serve the interests of the struggles of the Eritrean masses, the Ethiopian masses, the interests of the struggles of the peoples of the region and the interests of the struggles of the world's people against imperialism, colonialism and the forces of reaction. To raise such doubts is then to seek to justify annexation and provide a breathing space to the forces of internal and external reaction.

Finally, as regards the smallness of Eritrea, its limited potential... etc., the question involved is not a numbers game. The issue involved is the legitimate and expressed wishes of an indomitable people to independence. We reject, in principle, such reactionary numerical calculations which subordinate and denigrate the inviolable sovereignty rights of a people, and, refrain from citing independent countries with fewer populations and less natural endowment.

It is clear from the foregoing brief exposition that there is no justification whatsoever, no "revolutionary" or other "rational" to the blatant intervention and aggression of the Soviet Union. The unjust Soviet intervention negates the fundamental Leninist revolutionary principles on the sovereignty of a people — the rights of nations and peoples, however weak, however small — to freely determine their own affairs. It is an affront to all peace loving peoples, but more particularly to world revolutionary forces since this crime is being committed on a just and genuine revolution in the name of "defence against ...imperialism", "proletarian internationalism", etc... The blatant distortion of correct revolutionary ideals to employ them in acts of unjust intervention, acts of aggression, is bound to have far reaching long term negative repercussions on the international revolutionary movement. The Eritrean people and the EPLF call all the revolutionary forces, all the peace loving peoples and countries to condemn Soviet aggression in Eritrea.