

NATION-WIDE RADIO AND TELEVISION  
ADDRESS DELIVERED ON DECEMBER  
17, 1979 BY COMRADE CHAIRMAN  
MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM, CHAIRMAN  
OF THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY  
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL AND THE  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, ANNOUNCING  
THE FORMATION OF THE COMMISSION  
TO ORGANIZE THE PARTY OF THE  
WORKING PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA  
(COPWE) AND TEXT OF  
PROCLAMATION ESTABLISHING COPWE

# TOWARDS PARTY FORMATION

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
December, 1979

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The Chairman of Workers Struggle from the time to establish the  
Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam.

# Chairman Announces Formation of COPWE

**Nation-wide radio and television address delivered on December 17, 1979 by Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army, announcing the formation of the Commission to Organise the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE).**

- Workers, peasants, members of the Revolutionary Army and revolutionary intelligentsia who have arrayed yourselves as a sacrifice for the Unity of our Revolutionary Motherland and the intensification of our Revolution,
- The entire people of Ethiopia:

There has, throughout history, been a successive replacement of one social system by another. Countless regimes have risen and fallen. The process goes on uninterrupted to this very day. History does not, however, vouch the eternal nature of this process. Quite to the contrary, it reminds us, in fact, of the inevitability of a universal era — one for which many millions have fought and struggled and still do so — in which absolute equality, peace and prosperity will prevail and that the ray of that era has indeed been heralded by the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The ushering in of the era of Socialism with the victory of the working people of Russia was no accidental occurrence at all; it was an inevitable and timely outcome of the inexorable march of history.

The countries of Western Europe were the first to abolish age-old feudalism and thereby build a capitalist society based on indu-

strial growth. The accelerated and dialectical upsurge of that system has enabled it to establish an international order of supremacy and colonialism over peoples of the different continents found at varying levels of social development.

Even though the capitalist system was in its inception and origin far advanced than the feudal order, and had opened the path for an accelerated growth of productive forces at the initial stage, it did not demolish exploiter-exploited relations based on private property. It, in fact, worsened them. Accordingly, the system was rent apart by the several contradictions existing between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Even if the bourgeoisie had temporarily succeeded in marshalling workers for its own goals under the slogan of "freedom", it could not continue to do so indefinitely. In fact it became all the more evident and clear that the irreconcilable contradictions between this class and the proletariat in turn led to struggle. The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution is the fruit of this protracted struggle of these same workers.

This is the historical process which the wishful thinking and frenzied activity of the bourgeoisie could neither retard nor alter. Since the forward march of history is an objective law, just as in past ages so also today there can be no force that can thwart this trend.

The various ideological outlooks that have come into vogue in various places at varying periods of time have either distorted this truth or correctly reflected it. At no time have the exploiting classes slackened in their efforts to derail the course of history as much as they can. Conversely, history itself bears out the fact that the ideology of the proletariat is the sole testimony and pointed to the correct path and development of human society.

A correct understanding of history springs from the firm grasp and realization of how the bare necessities for human existence are

produced and distributed. Whatever is said about various societies cannot be termed as history so long as it is devoid of this basis.

As leading scholars of the proletariat rightly point out, all social upheavals spring from this basic truth and are by no means a product of the human brain. Furthermore, as Karl Marx has repeatedly and forcefully pointed out, while the masses are makers of their own history they do so not in a haphazard manner and wilfully but in accordance with what objective conditions allow them. This is further confirmation of the truth in question.

Ever since the division of society along class lines, uninterrupted struggle has been in progress between exploiters and the exploited. Slaves have fought bitterly against their masters, serfs against their feudal-lords and workers against the bourgeoisie.

In this struggle, the historical mission of abolishing exploitation by doing away with private property once and for all rests with the working class. It is the beholden duty and obligation of this class to snatch power from the oppressors and thereby endow production with a social character that operates and functions according to plan and, by so doing, enable all workers to be the full and equal beneficiaries of the fruits of their labour.

While this unique mission has been translated into practical deeds in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries, the number of people waging a struggle following this exemplary accomplishment has from time to time been showing manifold increase. To arrive at this stage, the working class had, however, to pass through numerous obstacles and overcome difficult hurdles.

The level of consciousness of the working class did not allow it to wage a co-ordinated and purposeful struggle from the very start. The struggle was, therefore, of a spontaneous character that focused on the expression of grievances. Apart from wrecking production machinery and engaging in fierce battles with individual bourgeois proprietors, it could not launch a struggle based on its class unity and identity.

However, after a long period of time involving a protracted struggle, the pioneering educators of the working class, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, comprehensively drew up the manifesto of the Communist Party after strengthening the ideology. This programme for practical action enabled the struggle of workers to advance from mere spontaneity to one with a definite goal and objective.

Even if its ideology was spreading and its movement was taking deep roots, the working class could not register easy victory. Those quarters, which did not believe in political struggle and consequently appeared to stand for the interests of the working class in form while they were in actual fact fully arrayed alongside the bourgeoisie, had acted as obstacles at varying times. The ensuing long struggle between the genuine allies of workers and pseudo-supporters had centred especially around the issue of either evolving a vanguard organization to ensure the victory of the proletariat or ranging workers along a path that will not furnish lasting and fundamental solutions to their problems. After a long struggle, this question for the first time got its practical answer in Russia.

The great Lenin, who having clearly grasped the contradictions inherent in imperialism — a historic phenomenon which emerged towards the close of the last century and the beginning of the present — and having fully realized that the period was the eve of Socialism, mapped out the correct and practical strategy for struggle. And, it was to the question of organization that he had attached the highest consideration. The fact that the working class of Russia has been led and guided by the historic Bolshevik Party and that, having passed through a far-reaching and drastic change, it has been able to march along the path of Socialist growth is indeed a living testimony to the decisiveness of organization.

It was because the Party of the New Type, which Lenin and his comrades had built on a firm foundation, had merged theory and practice, was closely allied with and linked to the people and, had strong trust in the people by whom it was staunchly supported that

it has succeeded in enabling the working masses of Russia to score victory. The strength of the Party emanated mainly from the bond of firm unity which it had with the people. Had it been alienated from the people, it would have had neither the strength nor could its leadership have scored success.

The broad masses of Ethiopia !

Comrades !

That the struggle of the broad masses of Ethiopia is part and parcel of the movement of the working people of the world is no debatable. Even so, scanning back for a brief moment the epochal period which we have traversed as well as the intensification of the mass upsurge would be essential for an assessment, with the path ahead in mind, of the stage which we have presently attained.

Feudal Ethiopia was a land where princely barons and kings were struggling on the one hand against one another to establish their own domain while on the other hand to subjugate everyone and maintain unity of the country.

Since the period was one during which capitalism in Europe had been transformed into its highest stage — imperialism — it was also one during which Ethiopia became the target of colonialists. However, by safeguarding their freedom and independence and ensuring respect for their unity through the struggle against imperialism and forces of the neighbouring region, the Ethiopian people have bequeathed to us through supreme sacrifice a proud legacy of history.

Even though the broad masses of Ethiopia had, by repulsing with great courage the repeated acts of enmity directed against them by imperialists and invading forces of the neighbourhood, secured respect for the country's frontiers, they had, nonetheless, through the intermediary of feudal rulers, been exposed to neo-colonialism. The people were compelled to be a subservient appendage of imperialism, the result of which was a life of untold suffering under an extremely backward economic and social system.

The utterly gruesome injustice, which the absolute and autocratic monarchy that had for long kept the broad masses of Ethiopia under its yoke by laying claim even to divinity had perpetrated against the country, is one that has been recounted time and again and is, as such, one that has not as yet been totally erased from the memory of the masses.

As the peoples of Africa under colonialism looked up to Ethiopia as an example in the whole of Africa in her anti-colonialist stand, and liberated themselves from such rule to set out on a modest development path this country had not even slightly moved from absolute monarchy.

In fact, like those countries termed independent while actually being mere appendages of imperialism, Ethiopia had been subjected to the yoke of neo-colonialism — especially American neo-colonialism. As to the broad masses, far from marching on the path of progress, their human rights were made all the more dim.

As the exploitative desire of the feudo-bourgeois ruling class heightened during this period, the oppression and exploitation of the working people commensurately worsened. In the rural areas, flogging, imprisonment and death became the fate of the peasant for being unable to meet the insatiably limitless demands of pampered aristocrats.

By forging a stronger alliance with imperialists with a view to amassing enormous profits, the princely barons and aristocrats evicted and harassed the peasant to convert the land into modern farms, thereby denying him even his daily bread.

Owing to this frightful state, the humble abodes of thousands of poor peasants were trampled upon. Families were destroyed. One had to flee from localities where one's grand parents and great-grand-parents had lived and their remains had been made to rest.

Part of those rendered jobless were for ever made forlorn, while those who could sell their labour to keep themselves alive were employed in the few factories which were the means by which the feudal

rulers and the imperialists amassed private wealth. Some others from among the destitute compatriots became soldiers.

Females who had been made homeless in the rural area had the choice of either being employed as household maids or becoming prostitutes. Children had no better fate other than becoming servants or hopeless lumpen.

The injustices inflicted upon the working class was staggering to tell. Until the sham proclamation of 1955 E.C., which was brought about after so much sacrifice, even its very existence had not been legally recognized.

The promulgation of the proclamation, so framed to suit exploitation by the ruling classes, meant that in the name of law the chain of oppression was made tighter. Otherwise, the working class got hardly anything out of it.

Although the situation was extremely severe, at no time had the Ethiopian people refrained from struggling for their rights if and when the opportunity arose.

Even though there was no inhuman act which had not at various times been committed by the ruling classes with a view to muzzling and oppressing the people for ever, it was quite obvious that this people will one day, as a historical imperative, inevitably rise in revolutionary upsurge and wield its might.

It was indeed inevitable for the Ethiopian people, who had been suffering with their very existence shrouded in a mist and almost nearly totally obscured, to raise their heads as a result of being propelled by the intensity of feeling created by the severity of their grievances and emerge with determination on the political forum.

The contradictions which had for long been simmering between the old production relations based on exploitation and the productive forces which always inherently strive for change and growth having been finally brought to the open some six years ago, a clear-cut class struggle erupted nation-wide.

During that highly turbulent storm of upheaval, on the one hand members of the ruling class had frantically set out to save from collapse the old production relations and the social and economic institutions based on them, and on the other workers, farmers, the men-in-uniform, the intelligentsia and such other groups as were in favour of change at the time had risen with absolute determination in order to uproot and overthrow the then existing system of government authority and replace it with a new order.

1966 E.C. was a time when members of the ruling class of the feudo-bourgeois system were no longer able to do whatever they liked with the oppressed while the broad masses were unable to bear any longer exploitation and oppression and had thus risen along the length and breadth of the country under the clarion call of "Forward for my Rights".

This upsurge shook to its very foundation the monarchical rule which had been gripped by a nation-wide political and economic crisis. The broad masses began publicly voicing in military camps, factories, schools and in rural Ethiopia the injustices perpetrated against them by the king and his cohorts. Even so, beyond airing grievances individually, there was no political organization that could co-ordinate the struggle and point out to the broad masses the root causes and final goal and objectives of the revolution.

There had at no time in the many years past been a political institution operating either openly or in a clandestine manner through which the broad masses could make heard their aspirations and take part in the administration of affairs of state. Such being the case, even though the revolutionary objective conditions for change were there, a political body that could map out the direction and provide the leadership was non-existent and so the perpetrators of the old system had hectically attempted to change the course of the struggle.

The king and his followers had tried to entice back to the barracks, through an offer of pay increase, the men-in-uniform who were the only organized and armed group at the time. Even if only

for a brief moment, it had appeared that the struggle had been altogether suppressed and that its revolutionary process had been interrupted.

Despite the placating reformist measures taken by the operatives of the old order with a view to prolonging the autocratic rule of the king, the revolutionary flame which had been ignited throughout Ethiopia could not be easily extinguished.

The oppressed man-in-uniform — off-spring of the poor peasant and the down-trodden urban dweller — began proclaiming not only his own demands but that of the people as a whole. Although it did not have a political organization that could chart out a goal and co-ordinate its efforts, this group made use of military communication facilities to exchange views on the state of affairs at the time and thereby took a common stand particularly as regards the life of the man-in-uniform. As the struggle more and more assumed a political character, the Negelle-Borana rebellion was repeated in Debre Zeit, Asmara, Hararghe, Addis Ababa and throughout the rest of Ethiopia.

Noting the king's advanced age and assessing the general conditions of Ethiopia, many people had been asking the question: "What will Ethiopia be after Haile Selassie?" and had been giving their own answers and evaluations.

Owing to the fact that the broad masses of Ethiopia had for long been suffering under an autocratic monarch whose dignity supposedly was inviolable, was free from blame and was unaccountable to anyone, and that the masses had no experience and participation in political affairs either openly or in secret, it was extremely difficult to assess accurately what could happen after Haile Selassie. For this reason, several guesses were made.

No one had, however, imagined that a body — that could rally together the men-in-uniform who had been made to view one another as enemies in order to prolong the life of the absolute monarchy, that could strengthen unity by raising the political and

economic demands of the broad masses, co-ordinate their efforts, make use of peaceful as well as armed means of struggle as the situation demanded with caution and great skill and, one that could obliterate the old order and open the door for a new and progressive society — would emerge from the Armed Forces, the Police and Territorial Army.

Having fully well realized the confusion created within their ranks during the February-June 1966 E.C. part of the struggle by those officers of the Armed Forces and Police closely connected in their interests with the ruling class, the men-in-uniform elected in a democratic manner officers, men of other ranks and soldiers whom they regarded as being representatives of the people capable of guiding and leading the movement.

On Sene 21, 1966, E.C., the historic Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army was established. As the establishment of this co-ordinating committee was made publicly known to the people, the focus of attention of the worker, the poor peasant, the intelligentsia and the man-in-uniform hitherto swaying for lack of leadership turned to the Fourth Division.

Varying views were being expressed and evaluations made at the time as regards Ethiopia's history of struggle as well as the popular movement that was in the process in a spontaneous manner. The feudal barons and aristocrats and their underlings in the various sections of society in particular who, closely knit as they were in their class interests, have for many years been exploiting the broad masses had, by taking advantage of the situation and the low level of political consciousness of the society, attempted to divide the masses along tribal, linguistic, religious and institutional lines and thereby divert them to different directions.

That was also the time when the broad masses, who had not then fully grasped that the root cause of their plight was class antagonism and that the struggle was a class struggle, were by and large being seen falling into the trap of awakened and mischievous reactionaries and that traitorous separatists and anti-Ethiopian forces

of the neighbourhood were eager and ready to launch an invasion in the belief that their long-cherished dreams and prophecy had at last come true.

Since it was imperative, for the reasons cited above, to chart out a goal that could bring together all those yearning for change and rally the broad masses, and since there was a strong belief and aspiration to place the interests of Ethiopia and her people before everything else, it was decided that "Ethiopia Tikdem" be the motto of the struggle. It was, as such, possible to mobilise the masses under this clarion call along the length and breadth of the land.

Aware of the fact that because of the brain-washing, preaching and deafening agitation to make the Ethiopian broad masses worship the monarchical rule, there was a widespread feeling — among the vast majority of the men-in-uniform themselves — that if a hasty and drastic step is taken against the king and the system, the country will be plunged into an ugly disorder and chaos and that if the crown, believed to be the "symbol of unity" is overthrown, that will spell the end of Ethiopia. Considering this, in order to uproot the 50-year-old tree that had been deeply entrenched and fortified owing to myth and superstition, the co-ordinating committee chose to clear first with caution and tact the shrubs that had grown under it.

As it was of decisive importance to forge and strengthen the unity of the armed men-in-uniform in order to bring under control those spearheading the feudal system and then take successive democratic measures, members of the committee from time to time went back to the Armed Forces and Police Units that had elected them and explained the aims and objectives of "Ethiopia Tikdem".

Patriotic and progressive Ethiopians then found a political centre that had made the objectives manifest under the motto of "Ethiopia Tikdem" — a body that could co-ordinate their struggle. That body adopted as its final goal a 13-point directive that outlined the problems being confronted by the country and pointed out the measures to be undertaken in order to solve them. Among the issues touched upon by the directive, the following were to be found.

The directive pointed out that the objective to establish democracy, remove oppressors and exploiters who thrive on the toil and sweat of others, take steps to transform the life of the worker and the peasant, make the economic and social system of the new Ethiopia serve the broad masses and eradicate poverty, disease and illiteracy.

Apart from explaining to the public the objectives of the change through the mass media which it had brought under its control, the Co-ordinating Committee made duly known to the people the measures that it was from time to time taking in the interest of the broad masses. It exposed that the king and his followers had robbed the property of the masses. On Maskaram 1, 1967 E.C., the Dergue conveyed the following message to the people:

"It is by no means our intention to present to the Ethiopian people a false hope on this New Year's Day. The gift which we today present to the Ethiopian people is one that is designed to make you realize the plight of your compatriots and the inhumanity of oppressive rulers and engage in a self-awakening process, prepare for change, thus opening the way whereby the masses could rise armed and in unison, we announce that on the occasion of the New Year Day today, we have invited the king too, to watch the film which shows the decimation of the people of Wollo."

After viewing the film which depicted the hidden famine on the one hand and the lavish extravagance of the ruling class on the other the people of Addis Ababa and its environs intensified their hatred for the king and members of the ruling class.

When people heard on the morrow the deposition of the king who was the pinnacle of the feudal structure, the people received it with very high relief and jubilation. People encouraged further the men-in-uniform who had overthrown the feudal head by co-ordinating the broad masses.

After assuming power provisionally in order to duly safeguard the political and economic interests of the broad masses, the Pro-

visional Military Administrative Council speeded up the democratic measures which it had earlier started.

It placed on the alert some 60,000 students, educators and men-in-uniform for the Development Through Co-operation, Work and Enlightenment Campaign so that they could make known to the peasant the general economic and political directives that had been charted out in accordance with the "Ethiopia Tikdem" goal, spread basic education and knowledge among the broad masses in the rural areas and thereby prepare them for the drastic change to follow.

The broad masses came to realize the cause and objective of the change through PMAC members, the men-in-uniform and sections of the society who stood for the interests of the masses. Accordingly, socialism was officially declared to be the political guideline of the Ethiopian Revolution.

The guideline was received with great jubilation by that section of the society which had already prepared itself for a change in system. Those who constitute this section of the society went on a campaign to rural Ethiopia with joy and enthusiasm to herald the good news and to organise the first beneficiaries of the guideline — the poor peasants.

To translate socialism into action, the major means of production and distribution, banks and financial institutions were placed under government control so as to serve the interests of the broad masses.

The proclamation which turned rural land into public ownership and which was incomparable in its radical content was issued. To defend the victories of the revolution and to ensure guaranteed use of the land attained through struggle, the peasants organised themselves under associations with the help of campaigners and other supporters of the broad masses.

The oppressed peasants thus found an organisation that safeguards their economic interests, upholds justice in favour of their

class allies and enables them determine their own destiny. Peasants' associations flourished in rural Ethiopia. The men-in-uniform, campaigners and oppressed peasants pursued and punished feudal elements who took up arms and fled to the bush in opposition to the rural land proclamation. The class struggle was intensified in rural Ethiopia.

When their vested interests were affected, many among the multitude who had earlier chanted wholesale: "Ethiopia Tikdem", "Let Socialism Thrive" abandoned their stand. It was against these and the well-established class enemies that workers, peasants, men-in-uniform and intellectuals were engaged in a hand-to-hand combat.

The poor peasants and their comrades-in-arms in unison tightened their control over the feudal elements to make them bow before the revolution. However, these elements thronged to the rural towns and Addis Ababa and began weaving their counter-revolutionary plots. The revolutionary process has the tactic and strategy of administering blows at its enemies in turn. When therefore, urban land and extra houses came under government control, the class struggle also gathered momentum in the towns as well.

Kebele associations were organised to defend the economic and political interests of urban dwellers. Reinforcing proclamations were issued subsequently taking full account of the revolutionary process. These proclamations strengthened the organizational set-up of the peasants' and urban dwellers' associations.

Created with sacrifice and bitter struggle waged by many comrades, overall urban dwellers' associations in the towns became reliable rear-guard for regular and militia forces who mobilised themselves for the Revolution and the Motherland under the motto of "Revolutionary Motherland or Death". They cleansed the towns from anti-people elements and fifth columnists.

In rural Ethiopia, peasants' associations formed at the different levels recruited and prepared for struggle members of the militia who had stood for the revolution and the country. Staunch enemies of the revolution who were entrenched in their localities were uprooted. Protecting their young revolution and their country with the

gun and building the economy with the plough, peasants established the All-Ethiopia Peasants' Association at the national level.

Although Ethiopian workers are small in number, they had carried out a bitter struggle to defend their economic interests. They have gathered revolutionary experience from trade unions established on the basis of the labour proclamation which was issued by the feudo-bourgeois system as a lip-service. In the 1974 mass uprising, Ethiopian workers went on a nation-wide strike and contributed immensely to the downfall of that system.

Within the revolutionary process itself, restless petty-bourgeois organisations, masquerading on behalf of workers, attempted to use the Ethiopian workers for their anti-popular aims. The Ethiopian worker, however, withstood their plot, paid considerable sacrifice and succeeded in setting up the All-Ethiopia Trade Union.

In accordance with the new labour proclamation which he won through bitter struggle, the Ethiopian worker has exerted efforts to make the workers' union a school of communism. Moreover, when the Revolution and the Motherland were threatened, the worker realised his role and paid the necessary sacrifices.

I have mentioned briefly the timely decisive and democratic measures taken by the revolutionary government to destroy the feudo-bourgeois production relations and to replace them with new production relations by co-ordinating the struggle of the broad masses. I have mentioned in brief also that, with the aim of defending and guaranteeing the fruits of the revolution, immense efforts have been made so that the men-in-uniform, workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and all those who stand for the revolution will understand its objective and make it known to others.

It had been reiterated that a shortcoming of the Ethiopian Revolution is that it had no political organization which, either in secret or openly, has been tested in struggle and which, equipped with the working class ideology, would give it directive. By taking radical and democratic measures and by creating favourable condi-

tions for a proper revolutionary directive, the revolutionary government has struggled and has enabled others to struggle.

It issued the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution which consolidates the victories of the revolution, rallies genuine progressives closer together and points the direction of the struggle.

A revolutionary call was made to revolutionaries who stand for the interest of the broad masses of Ethiopia and who have risen up with determination for the establishment of a strong socialist country to rally behind this correct and scientific programme.

I will quote briefly from the revolutionary call made at that time:

...“The February 1974 mass uprising, leaderless as it was, was exposed to danger. It was subject to the conspiracies of the supporters of the feudo-bourgeois order. From the time of its establishment, the Provisional Military Administrative Council studied the objective reality of the country at that time, paid heed to the heart-beat of the broad masses, co-ordinated progressives and worked day and night to the best of its ability with a genuine spirit, good-will and unflinching patriotism. As a result, it has enabled the revolution attain its present stage of development.

“The uniformed men of Ethiopia have sprung from the oppressed masses and have lived through oppression themselves. The enemies prophesied their wishful thinking that the men-in-uniform would be divided and would play into the hands of anti-people elements. This has, however, been admirably disproved and foiled in a manner novel and exemplary in revolutionary history. The Ethiopian serviceman has demonstrated in deeds, that is by shedding his blood and making sacrifices in life, that he is a bulwark of the revolution.

“Genuine progressives of Ethiopia must learn how fruitful a united and co-ordinated struggle is from the determination and unity of the oppressed men-in-uniform.

“Genuine progressives fully accept the fact that if the Ethiopian armed forces had not taken rapid and decisive steps at a time

when these were necessary for the sake of their long-term revolutionary goal and their unity, the Ethiopian Revolution would not have reached its present state of progress in the shape we see it today.

"We make a call for revolutionary unity to all genuine progressives bringing to their attention the fact that the burning question of the day is to put up a co-ordinated struggle by rallying under the Marxist-Leninist principle to ensure victory for the workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals."

Genuine progressives received the call of the revolutionary government and, having rallied together around the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs and the Political School, spread the science of Marxism-Leninism to the broad masses as much as possible.

They waged a bitter ideological and armed struggle so that those who side with the revolution, equipped with the proletarian ideology, will tell friends from foes with the help of their discussion forums, trade unions and mass organizations. They paid considerable sacrifices so that the broad masses would emerge triumphantly and achieve the working class party.

A continuous education in socialist philosophy was given to the Ethiopian men-in-uniform through the Military Political Affairs Directorate to enable them maintain and ensure the safety of the masses, defend the territorial integrity of the country and reliably guard the revolution. They embarked on the task of struggling while producing and producing while struggling. The revolutionary army proved in deeds that it is a force that agitates, organises, struggles and produces.

When the broad masses of Ethiopia being cognisant of the fact that their arch enemies were imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, held aloft the banner of scientific socialism as their guiding principle, they were confronted with the co-ordinated attacks of internal and external enemies.

Aided by imperialism, the ruling class of Somalia, secessionists and fifth columnists launched an aggression against the broad masses of Ethiopia and undermined the revolution.

Jealous of their independence, loyal to the revolution, and prepared to make any sacrifice for the country, workers, poor peasants, intellectuals and the men-in-uniform instantaneously accepted the call of the Motherland made under the motto "Revolutionary Motherland or Death". Equipped with the correct ideology and raising their arms, they mobilised themselves against their enemies.

By paying in blood and lives the appropriate sacrifice for freedom and revolution, the worker, the poor peasant, the intellectual and the man-in-uniform rescued his country from being dismembered and saved the revolution from being reversed.

When messengers of destruction, addicts of war and forces of international reaction attacked us by siding with our enemies, we found arrayed on our side socialists and progressives of the world who stand for peace, freedom, justice, equality, democracy and socialism. To translate into deeds their obligation in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, they not only extended moral, material and political assistance but they also made sacrifices in lives.

It was at this time that reactionaries alarmed by the growing strength of the Ethiopian Revolution committed acts of encirclement and sabotage against the revolution. At this difficult time, it became possible to tell genuine friends of the revolution from enemies.

Within a brief span of time, the broad masses trained and armed, mobilised themselves and massively thronged to the fronts to save the Revolution and the Motherland. Meanwhile, pretentious elements who with sheer words promised to die before the broad masses and their goals, either joined and aided the enemy camp or simply fled from the scene.

The Revolutionary Government has made a ceaseless effort to rally Ethiopian progressives either individually or in groups so that

the pivotal centre that guarantees the success of the revolution — the working class party — would be formed.

Although Marxist-Leninist organizations and individual communists who stand genuinely for the revolution have struggled for ideological and organizational unity, many were those who focussed their attention on the form rather than on the lasting union of progressives. Struggle made it evident, therefore, that the working class party cannot come into being through the merger of organizations.

This, it is to be recalled, has previously been noted in the organ of "Emaledih," that is in Vol. II Numbers 5 of "Hibret Dimtse".

Today at this stage of the progress of our revolution, the working class party can be formed only with the unity of genuine communists who stand for the ideological and organizational unity of progressives and who are tested in struggle.

Accordingly, the timely slogan of genuine Ethiopian revolutionaries is: "The Working Class Party will be Established Through Our Struggle with the Unity of Communists."

The production and cultural development campaign which was undertaken to lay the material and technical foundation for the popular victories obtained on the political and military fronts and to build and administer a socialist economy, is showing encouraging results.

The Production and Cultural Development Campaign is a class struggle which is being waged for collective prosperity and for the construction of a socialist society on the basis of public ownership of resources achieved through the political victory.

The time will not be far when we will also score victory in the founding of the party of the working people as we go on strengthening and consolidating the popular gains attained through political, military, economic and cultural development.

The broad masses of Ethiopia !

Comrades !

We have emerged from the low level of development which is an outcome of the age-old exploitation and oppression by feudalism and imperialism. To by-pass capitalist development and straight away effect a transition towards socialism, we have begun to strengthen and pool together the revolutionary and democratic victories which we have scored by demolishing the reactionary order.

We have begun to march ahead to build new social and economic relations. In general, although we cannot say that we have totally destroyed the old, we are engaged in the long struggle to create favourable conditions for the material and technical foundation of socialism.

When we say that we will establish the party of the working people through struggle, we mean that our party will embrace, stand for and rely on the class of all those who earn their livelihood not from the sweat of others but by their own labour and toil and all those who shedding their blood for Ethiopia's unity and for the well-being, process and victory of the revolution — the revolutionary army, the worker, the peasant and the revolutionary intellectual.

Our effort, during the transitional stage, is focussed on this same working class. While pursuing aims directed towards the promotion of the equality of nationalities, it is also founded on the basis of firmly struggling against chauvinism and narrow-nationalism.

It is our momentous duty to intensify our struggle for eliminating individualism while promoting socialism for removing the pursuit of selfish interests which are remnants of the old order, and, for strengthening development efforts based on planning because the characteristic features of the transitional stage are such that the old has not been entirely done away with and the new not yet completely established.

There is no alternative to this transitional stage for the socialist society that we are endeavouring to build. It is encouraging to observe

that the working people are clearly bracing themselves up for demonstrating this in deed.

Even if the existence of a popular movement is fundamental to this endeavour, this, by itself, is not enough for the achievement of the final goal. In view of this, a special Commission possessing a legal personality will be set up in order to organise the Party of the working people of Ethiopia.

Today, when the establishment of the Commission to organize the Party of the working people of Ethiopia is being disclosed, many revolutionaries and supporters of the Revolution are bound to wonder why the Party itself should not be set up once and for all.

This is a legitimate question. In particular, since a Party plays a decisive role in the victory of a revolution, it would have been desirable if it had manifested its existence in the pre-February 1974 period. The heavy sacrifices that we have been incurring would have been minimal if, instead of counting a few isolated victories in the course of the Revolution, the Party of the working people of Ethiopia had from the very beginning, been a vanguard force leading the struggle to victories.

This is a general view and wish. But because objective conditions are not governed by mere wish, the Ethiopian Workers' Party did not achieve its existence easily either before or in the course of the Revolution.

Even now the very fact that we have braced ourselves up to realize not the Party but the Commission to organize the Party is a clear-reflection of the objective conditions in which we find ourselves.

Even if the revolutionaries, organized piecemeal by force of circumstances, were working together for a specified period of time, because their unity had no profundity and permanence, it was only recently that they showed a united stand for the creation of a centre embracing them all by doing away with internal friction and conflict.

Unless this is merely for name's sake, during such a time it would not be easy to establish a Party which in its contents embraces the whole country and in practice does some justice to its name.

Right from the beginning when we declared that socialism is our guiding principle, we would have announced the establishment of "Socialist Party" if our fundamental aim was the pursuit of mere name and form.

That is why the establishment of an organizing Commission possessing the confidence of the broad masses which creates the desirable conditions for the Party to be created on a sound foundation is, in itself, something which should not only be given high consideration but is also a measure that marks a historic step forward for the long journey lying ahead of us.

Whenever issues are raised with regard to the establishment of the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia the question does not come only from those who are wondering why it should not be set up immediately.

There were also those who, merely by taking stock of the course of the Revolution and the victories it has achieved, were wondering of the circumstances necessitating the establishment of such a Party.

The questions assume two forms. On the one hand, by making the starting point from certain needs, they propagate the view that it is neither possible nor prudent to embark upon any moves before the establishment of the Party.

On the other hand, they are given to under-estimating the historic role of the Party by viewing only conditions of the immediate moment. However, both sides are lacking in the tactics of viewing things in their proper perspectives.

Both tendencies are incapable of enabling people to get hold of the walking-stick leading to the correct goal. When the establishment of the Workers' Party capable of leading to victory is de-

manded, the most important thing worth considering is not one that is placed in an advantageous position to play its role adequately, but one whose structure and nature is limited by the maturity of the social consciousness of those who are on the side of the Revolution.

Likewise, a party is established not merely for the sake of pretension but to undertake its historic mission. It is essential to review the achievements of our Revolution to be sure of this.

When one considers the share of a Party for the ultimate success of a Revolution, the role of the masses is not something that should be ignored and by-passed. In history in particular, it is the people who constitute the decisive force.

However, for this decisive force to be translated into practical reality, it is vital for the people to be provided with correct leadership. We have seen this manifested in the great self-sacrifice of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, the trustee of the Revolution, and it is something for whose high quality of leadership we can vouch our words.

There is no grain of doubt that so long as they are provided with correct leadership, the broad masses are bound to achieve victory by making all the necessary sacrifices. The historic responsibility of providing leadership with certainty for the final victory belongs solely to the Party of the Working People. And the Party, far from creating this lasting leadership which is without substitute, draws its inspiration from the experiences and history of the broad masses in charting its path.

**Broad Masses of Ethiopia!**

**Comrades!**

Acrimonious debates and disputes and considerable life-and-death struggles have been going on concerning the nature and structure of the Party that the Ethiopian Revolution needs. A few who hurriedly named themselves a Party and who gave the impression

of championing the cause of the people in words but were in practice undermining the Revolution have had their wings clipped through the sacrifices incurred by genuine revolutionaries and the broad masses.

And a few others, by adopting the clever tactic of scrambling for power after mobilizing their forces by approaching the Revolution as its friends, took to their heels during difficult days. Plans drawn up by a few to get hold of the reins of power have been foiled.

After paying stubborn and considerable sacrifices, we have now reached the stage where we are finding ourselves. Even if, in this respect, there is no doubt whatsoever that we have taken decisive steps, we dare not say that the struggle is now over.

We know that the enemies of the broad masses and pseudo-revolutionaries would continue to plot against us. In fact, we are aware of the fact that they would never relent in their struggles against us, and, that every time we take a step forward their deafening lamentations and disturbances will continue to follow us. Just as the solution to the conflict with them in the past was resolved through a class struggle, we shall continue to struggle against them without relaxing our efforts.

In particular, it is a foregone conclusion that they will be constantly scheming to denigrate the line adopted to establish our Party. It is a universal law applicable to any revolution that a Party leadership is needed so that a popular struggle would succeed in attaining the decisive goal. However, the establishment of a Party is determined by time and place and has no pre-determined rules and formula. Here, perhaps, they might be desirous of engaging us in an argument by quoting Marxism-Leninism.

Even if they are so bold as to be argumentative, we wish them more understanding by reminding them of the words pronounced by Engels to the effect that "Our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action"

The course of our Revolution itself provides sufficient evidence that, in the journey we have so far made, our stand was right and theirs wrong.

We say that it is good for them to know that the ultimate judges for the rightness or wrongness of the journey lying ahead of us are not them but existing objective conditions and historical circumstances.

What we also want to reiterate is that the strategy of struggle that is guiding us springs not from our genuine desire or from the gossip of our enemies but from objective conditions.

Suffice it so say that even if the aim of workers of the world is to destroy capitalism and to build socialism, it is an incontrovertible fact that the workers of different countries have their own particular tactics for attaining this universal goal.

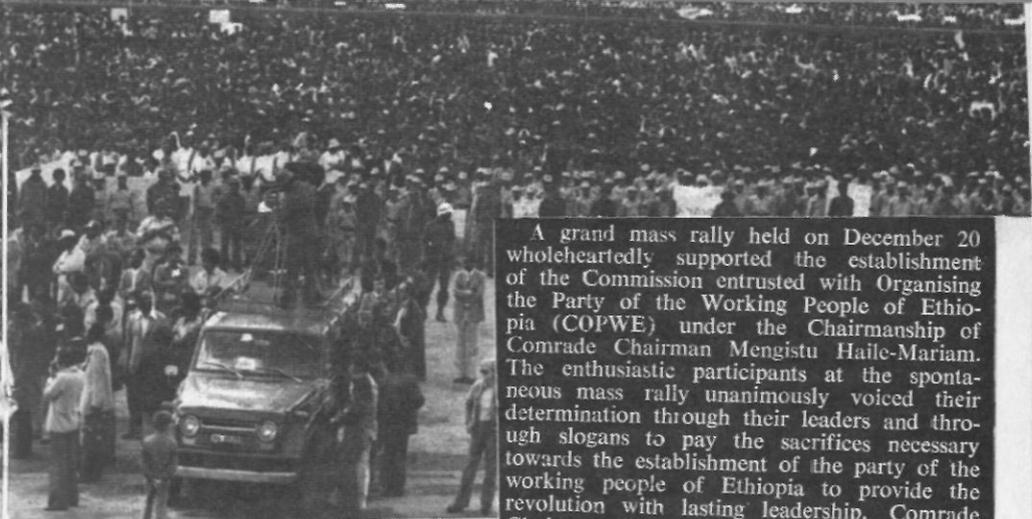
Therefore, the strategy for struggle is not something that we adopt blindly from other revolutions but one which we draw up by taking stock of objective realities and historical circumstances prevailing in our own country.

This does not mean that there is nothing that we can learn from other revolutions. We have learned; and there is a lot yet to be learned. We shall put into practice what we have learned from other revolutions to the extent that conditions in our country permit. We shall also enrich our knowledge with the experiences we have gained from practice.

I have pointed out that the tactics we are employing to establish our Party or to realise our aims are outlined in accordance with the conditions prevailing in our country. At the same time, however, we are struggling to make assurances double sure that our endeavours are in conformity with our long-term guidelines, with the socialist path of development, and with the principles of proletarian internationalism.

Far from being the goodwill of a few people or the fruit of struggle of a few revolutionaries, socialism is the product of the





A grand mass rally held on December 20 wholeheartedly supported the establishment of the Commission entrusted with Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) under the Chairmanship of Comrade Chairman Mengistu Haile-Mariam. The enthusiastic participants at the spontaneous mass rally unanimously voiced their determination through their leaders and through slogans to pay the sacrifices necessary towards the establishment of the party of the working people of Ethiopia to provide the revolution with lasting leadership. Comrade Chairman Mengistu told the rally that the Ethiopian people are in the process of creating a proletarian order on the ruins of a feudal and fascist order.



sacrifices of millions of workers. It is vital for proletarian internationalism to be reflected in these sacrifices which should not be confined within narrow national frontiers.

Although the love we exhibit for our Motherland is dearer than life itself and is our heritage of pride, our aim is to witness the strengthening of unity within the socialist camp and to enable those who are presently suffering under the strangle-hold of imperialism to join eventually the socialist family.

This is why at all times and on all occasions we are saying that our struggle is an integral part of the world socialist revolution.

Broad Masses of Ethiopia !

Comrades !

Even if the road of struggle that we have so far traversed to keep apace with the correct march of history cannot be underestimated, the path still lying ahead of us is not smooth and free from obstacles.

We have incurred extremely bitter and many sacrifices during the struggles we have been waging. The period in which we today find ourselves is neither a time when advantages are with our enemies nor an occasion of uncertainty when the victor is not known because we are now falling and now rising.

Gone is that period of uncertainty. We have adequately ensured our superiority because the winner and the loser have been clearly differentiated. At the same time, however, the time is not ripe to say that our enemies have been completely vanquished.

Even though they are weak, today, our enemies are still there. So long as imperialism is a universal phenomenon, they would still be around.

We are, therefore, finding ourselves today at a time when, on the one hand, we are closing all holes, through which our enemies can come back to life, by fostering a spirit of vigilance, and when,

on the other hand, we are charting a correct path of development for our economy by rescuing it from its present predicament and when we are building a people's democracy on a secure foundation.

Even if the endeavours we are currently undertaking and are engaged in appear to be, relatively speaking, peace-time ventures, we should never lose sight of the fact that they are extremely complex. The task of co-ordinating various branches of development and that of drawing up a unified plan of progress must be more and not less challenging than our past struggles.

That is why our future path of development is making the question of organization more decisive than ever before. It has shed more light on the historical mission of the Workers' Party. The nature, structure, and membership of the Commission for organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE), which is paving the way to lay a secure foundation for the existence of the Party capable of shouldering its historic responsibilities, are matters which deserve special attention.

The principal mission of COPWE is the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism among the broad masses and the organization of the party, while it is also a school where its members could verse themselves in party procedures. Through government and mass organizations, COPWE would participate actively in exemplary manner in development activities being undertaken by the people in order to demonstrate in practice the extent of the need for party leadership; and in this endeavour, its members have wide opportunities to prove their worth.

Since the mission of the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia about to be founded is extremely difficult, the emphasis we place upon COPWE is great. We have good cause for this. When capitalism was in its adult phase, Marx and Engels set up the first working class party and named it the "Communist League" and while capitalism was aging, meaning in the era of imperialism, the Bolshevik Party was established and its responsibilities were onerous.

Although we are privileged to learn from the experience of others, the mission of COPWE to transform our extremely backward society to the very advanced stage of socialist and communist society is very difficult and complicated. The objective of COPWE, which is given the primary responsibility of laying down the foundation of this party, cannot be viewed separately.

The basis for the triumph of a revolutionary party is first and foremost its heightened class consciousness, readiness for making sacrifices, its defiant attitude and the support it obtains from the working people due to its correct political leadership, which the people believe in and uphold.

Without this complete and firm characteristic, its objective will not go beyond slogans and be translated into practice. Although it is difficult to say that a revolutionary party can possess this characteristic at once and in full, there is no doubt that the basis laid at the beginning will have tremendous impact on its future political contents. The question: "Who are those who can meet this supreme responsibility?" is one that the broad masses are likely to pose. Particularly, starting from the conditions that confronted us in the course of the struggle we had gone through, I feel that any genuine citizen would carefully ask this question. It is an appropriate and burning question.

Six years of efforts to establish a party have been rendered complicated and the realization of the party has been delayed because of the difficulty in answering that question correctly.

Even today, we cannot dare to answer the question in full or claim that it is complete. None has done this because qualitative transformation is itself a process, the growth and outcome of a long period of struggle.

However, when the entire world declared that there was no Ethiopia, and truly when it was thought that our Revolutionary Motherland was on the edge of a precipice, about to disintegrate and fall, it was not by miracle that it was pulled out of the abyss

but by its sons who under the banner "Revolutionary Motherland or Death, the Revolution Above Everything Else" underwent all trials and tribulations and are still struggling and making sacrifices.

Our nascent revolution which erupted spontaneously has achieved so many victories, which were not attained by radical socialist revolutions under the leadership of famous communist parties. This was done within five years not through miracle but through the resolute struggle of its gallant sons in the armed, economic, ideological and political fields and the struggle for social justice.

All this victory was achieved not by chance, not through guesswork but through planning, revolutionary stratagem, patience and sacrifice.

Although the sacrifice demanded by victory has cost us the lives of numerous genuine revolutionaries and heroes, we are not bereft of fighters. We have them today and they will be born out of the struggle in the future.

Genuine fighters are selected, brought together and organized by none other than common aims and objectives.

In the past years of bitter struggle, the contribution made by vanguard revolutionaries publicly or secretly, by bracing themselves on the fronts and paying sacrifices to ensure that the struggle of the broad masses gained momentum, will live on as a proud chapter in the history of our struggle.

Particularly, cadres of the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs and the Military Political Affairs Directorate and those chosen from different sections of the society to attend political schools have, after training, been enlisted in the fields of struggle, thus making notable exemplary contributions. This is one of the cornerstones for the high stage we had attained, and we are proud of it.

In the revolutionary process we had passed through, although the broad masses generally speak favourably about cadres, the shame-

less practices carried out by some in the name of the revolution and cadres also come to mind.

While genuine revolutionaries and cadres fought in the front ranks for the welfare of the broad masses and sacrificially faced adversities, those who were pseudo-revolutionary cadres did just the opposite.

These groups, knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly, have been serving the enemy. In this ugly behaviour, they have contributed in sowing differences, instead of unity, among the broad masses.

Demonstrating chauvinism and arrogance and violating the code of conduct of revolutionaries they had won the contempt, instead of the respect, of the masses, and instead of preparing to serve the people they had attempted to pretend to be their masters.

Instead of mobilizing those who espouse the cause of the broad masses behind the objective of the revolution by teaching them with patience and thereby winning them over, they tried compulsion, thus fomenting wrath. In general, it may be remembered that these groups, with a feudalistic outlook, created an unforeseen situation by executing what they felt was their responsibility, devoid of a sense of public service in a condition marked by an absence of strong democratic centralism.

However, the good things accomplished during the revolution by far outweighed the negative side. We will not say why these ugly sides existed; because they are unavoidable consequences of the objective condition.

Henceforth, in its efforts to organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia the strategy of COPWE to discharge its responsibility will be made clear to both its members and the broad masses.

In accordance with its special mission, COPWE will not mobilise individuals who claim to be revolutionaries based on an outwardly false character, but will mobilize only citizens who reflect

in deeds its objective, who stand to make genuine sacrifices and unflinching struggle for the ideology of the working class.

As some may imagine, becoming a member of COPWE today and that of the workers' party tomorrow is not a special ticket for further promotion of the attainment of special privileges. Rather, it is a forum where readiness to make sacrifices for the supremacy of the broad masses will be tested. And this test will not be accepted as satisfactory just because an individual member testifies for himself. On the contrary, he is to be judged by the broad masses on the basis of his practical deeds and on the criterion of his contribution to the organization which he accepts as his own.

Any member of COPWE, in whatever field he is assigned, should show in the performance of his duty a sense of sacrifice, strict adherence to discipline, diligence, courteousness, loyalty and exemplary behaviour and reflect correctly the political line of COPWE through co-operation with mass and government organizations.

Members of COPWE cannot have any aim other than the realization of the aspirations of the people. The members, in cognizance of the path to be traversed and our ultimate goal, are required to be more advanced than the working people, but are not under any circumstances to employ their front-rank role for promoting their personal interests.

**The broad masses of Ethiopia !**

**Comrades !**

Our short-term objective is to complete the struggle we have embarked upon and under the vanguard leadership of the workers' party to further strengthen the consciousness and organization of the broad masses and on an unshakable foundation to establish a people's democracy; our long-term objective is also to build an advanced socialist and then communist society where there is absolutely no exploitation, where equality, peace and prosperity prevail.

Although the start made to extricate ourselves from the state

of backwardness where we find ourselves today and to build socialism is encouraging, our journey is long and tiring. This is because building socialism means establishing prevalence of socialisation in all fields of the economy.

To construct socialism means that the working people will have collective ownership control over the country's resources and the means of production and also means the abolition of the exploitation of man by man.

In other words, to build socialism means stopping the means of production from being instruments of exploitation, and putting a halt to regarding labour as a disposable commodity and enabling every citizen, in a planned way, to work according to his abilities for the common aim.

Accordingly, the production forces and socialised production relations will be strengthened and the transition towards socialism marked with complete equality will be accomplished.

...All of you who stand on the side of the broad masses and aspire for the liberation of this potentially bountiful but now poor country from its present state of backwardness...!

Although any society may appear stabilized at a certain period, according to the law of history it is inevitable to cross over from one stage to the other. That the goal of this objective law is socialism and communism has been proved by Marxism-Leninism, which we also witness with our own eyes.

And our society, being governed by this general historical law and because the condition has permitted, has since 1974 been sailing in the wave of change. In this revolutionary tide, reactionaries who thought they could stem the process of history have strongly put our determination to test. They have wrought harm which cannot be regarded lightly.

But they cannot retard our march. Having been victorious over them, we have reached this stage. Comparing the difficulties we

passed through, the sacrifices we paid and the victories we achieved, many of our compatriots today feel a sense of relief.

Truly, today's condition in contrast to yesterday's is cause for relief. However, it is not the time when we can drop our anchor and relax. Although our revolutionary forces still fighting against infiltrators and traitorous secessionists are scoring victories, the sacrifices being made are greater and not less than at the beginning.

Rather, it is a propitious moment when we should intensify our struggle in order to feel a people's democratic Ethiopia, laden with socialist blessings like the rays of the rising sun visible to us from beyond the horizon.

The lighting of the torch of our struggle is not the wise work of a few, but is due to the united uprising of the broad masses, who in refusing to come to terms with their enemies have waged heroic struggle and paid sacrifices.

Because a revolution cannot succeed without revolutionary leadership and since there was lack of organizational leadership when the class struggle got off the ground, many have shown eagerness to lead us to where they wanted. However, the men-in-uniform, drawn from the broad masses, having first set up the Co-ordinating Committee and then the Provisional Military Administrative Council, took the leadership role and, as a result of the democratic measures soon instituted, won popular support, thus placing the struggle on a firm course.

If the Provisional Military Administrative Council had not won the massive support of the broad masses, perhaps as the reactionaries say the struggle would not have been a revolution but a *coup d'état*.

Contrary to the misleading attempts of those who do not dare to deny the existence of a revolution in this country and bourgeois spokesmen and left-wing extremists who publicize the history-making role of the few, the Ethiopian Revolution is one for which the broad masses have bled, suffered and sacrificed numerous dear sons.

So the worker, the peasant, member of the revolutionary forces, revolutionary intellectuals, all working people who raised your united fist and won numerous victories, and who, starting from the stage which our revolution has attained, strive for the realization of our distant objective, so also you should raise your united fist in efforts to establish COPWE and provide the revolution with lasting leadership.

Our belief is firm that in this historic struggle, which has an internationalist character, the socialist forces who stood alongside you in difficult times will now also mobilize themselves on your side.

— *COPWE's mission will be successful!*

— *The Party of the Working People of Ethiopia will be established!*

— *Ethiopia will belong to socialist heroes and its working sons and daughters who shed their blood for her!*

— *The world will belong to the working class!*

**WE SHALL, ONCE MORE, TRIUMPH!**



# Proclamation Setting Up COPWE

PROCLAMATION No. 174 OF 1979

A PROCLAMATION TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION FOR ORGANIZING  
THE PARTY OF THE WORKING PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA

WHEREAS, a Revolution aiming to build Socialism and subsequently Communism can achieve its objective only where it is led by a solid party of the working people armed with Marxism-Leninism for which the Ethiopian broad masses and their dedicated revolutionaries have been struggling with unswerving determination;

WHEREAS, the structural firmness, the organizational and ideological unity of such a party of the working people, destined to shoulder the supreme task of co-ordinating the struggle of the broad masses and of leading them towards a secure and ultimate victory, can be assured by a cautious process of organizing and by ascertaining that its members are proved communists;

AND WHEREAS, the objective conditions require that there be established a special commission with the responsibility of organizing around a centre the heretofore unorganized communists and with a mandate of creating appropriate conditions whereby many more communists can, through struggle, flourish;

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Article 5(6) of the Redefinition of Powers and Responsibilities of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers' Proclamation No. 110/1977, it is hereby proclaimed as follows:

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL

#### 1. *Short Title*

This Proclamation may be cited as the "Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia Establishment Proclamation No. 174/1979."

#### 2. *Definitions*

In this Proclamation, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 1) COPWE means the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia established hereunder.
- 2) "Public Organization" includes urban dwellers' associations, peasant associations, trade unions, women's associations, youth associations established at every level, and the like;
- 3) "Co-operatives" includes peasants' producers' co-operatives, artisans' producers' co-operatives, consumers' co-operatives service co-operatives, and the like.

#### 3. *Repeal and Amendment*

- 1) The Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs Organization and Operations Improvement Proclamation No. 119/1977 is hereby repealed.
- 2) The powers of the Standing Committee and of the Secretary General of the Provisional Military Administrative Council specified in the Political School Establishment Proclamation No. 120/1977 and those of the Provisional Military Administration Council described in sub-article 1(b) of Article 4 of the said Proclamation shall be exercised by COPWE.

#### 4. *Establishment*

- 1) There is hereby established a special commission, herein-

after referred to as "COPWE" which shall have the purposes, powers and duties as contained herein;

- 2) COPWE shall be accountable to the Provisional Military Administrative Council.

#### 5. *Purposes of COPWE*

COPWE shall have the following purposes:

- 1) To cause the dissemination and propagation of the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism among government and mass organizations, co-operatives and the broad masses generally.
- 2) To organize a sole, strong Party of the working people based on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, whose historical mission shall be to liquidate from the land of Ethiopia feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism, and to establish the new People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and to guide the people to achieve Socialism and consequently Communism.

#### 6. *Powers and Duties of COPWE*

- 1) COPWE shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) organize the Party of the working people to be firmly and purely based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism;
- b) disseminate among the broad masses the Marxist-Leninist ideology free from revisionism, through study circles, discussion forums, government and mass organizations and the mass media;
- c) agitate, politicize and organize the various sections of the population by disseminating Marxism-Leninism;
- d) establish political schools, prepare their curriculae, train and assign qualified teachers and organize other necessary facilities therefor;

- e) prescribe the criteria according to which students shall be admitted to political schools; ensure that students properly follow up their courses and, upon completion of their education, assign them to places where they can best serve the revolution and the people;
- f) issue directives in accordance with which the curriculae of regular and vocational education shall be based on the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism and ensure that its directives are carried out;
- g) strengthen existing Marxist-Leninist study circles and discussion forums in government and mass organizations, establish new ones, issue directives to them, co-ordinate their activities and extend to them material assistance;
- h) in co-operation with the appropriate government and mass organizations establish, politicize, assist and consolidate professional associations and mass organizations to be effective executors of the directives of the Party of the working people;
- i) produce, translate, import and distribute books, periodicals, newspapers, films necessary for the building of a socialist society and other written materials useful for education, political consciousness, and research;
- j) prohibit and control, through the appropriate offices and organizations, written materials, films, tapes, records and the like that come into the country by direct or indirect channels from imperialist countries for purposes of cultural adulteration or for counter-revolutionary activities, provided that such prohibition and control shall not apply to materials dealing with science, technology or subjects contributing to the building of a socialist society;
- k) find ways to develop and enrich the useful traditional

cultures, customs and practices of the society in a manner conducive to the building of a socialist society; and, in co-operation with the appropriate offices and organizations, liberate the people from backward cultures, customs and practices;

- l) prepare the criteria in accordance with which prospective members of COPWE may be admitted and co-opted in accordance with such criteria;
  - m) establish, direct and supervise such committees and divisions of operation as are necessary for its work; employ the necessary staff and issue special regulations in accordance with which they shall be administered;
  - n) co-operate with the appropriate offices and organizations in making the necessary efforts and agitations with a view to enforcing laws, regulations, government directives, orders, decisions and the implementation of economic and cultural campaign plans, their class and ideological content being strictly adhered to;
  - o) establish fraternal relationships with Marxist-Leninist parties, liberation movements and other democratic organizations with a view to enabling the Party of the working people that will be established to discharge its internationalist call: "Workers Of All Countries, Unite."
- 2) The Chairman of COPWE who shall have all the powers and duties of COPWE as enumerated in sub-article 1 of this Article, shall implement or cause the implementation of same.
  - 3) The organs and divisions of COPWE shall carry out their functions by giving directives and advice, by persuading and illustrating, by following-up and by supervising, in co-operation with the appropriate government offices and

organizations, mass organizations and co-operatives; and not by replacing these or by interfering with their normal course of work or their day-to-day operations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONDITIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP OF COPWE

#### 7. *Membership of COPWE*

- 1) Any vanguard worker, any peasant who stands for peasants' producers' co-operatives, any revolutionary intelligentsia or member of the Revolutionary Army or Militia or any other Ethiopian worker fit for membership who:
  - a) has accepted the National Democratic Revolution Programme of Ethiopia and the internal regulations of COPWE, and applies for or accepts membership in the latter;
  - b) has made substantial contribution to the Revolution at its critical moment of class struggle in the ideological or armed conflict, or in the economic, cultural or administrative reconstruction, or has otherwise actively participated in the decisive struggles that led to the victories of the Revolution;
  - c) takes active part in the work of COPWE;
  - d) is of the highest moral character;
  - e) pays the prescribed membership contribution;
  - f) has attained the age of 18 years;
  - g) accepts the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism;may be admitted to membership of COPWE.
- 2) any person wishing to become a member of COPWE shall pass as a candidate member, through a probationary period, as may be prescribed;

- 3) the probationary period referred to in sub-article of this Article shall be fixed in the directives approved by the Chairman and may vary from person to person having regard to his class origin and political consciousness.
- 4) the amount of membership contributions of candidate members and members shall be the same.

#### 8. *Duties of Members*

Any member of COPWE shall:

- 1) study and resolutely implement the National Democratic Revolution Programme and the internal regulations of COPWE;
- 2) study the theory of Scientific Socialism;
- 3) explain to the broad masses the purposes and directives of COPWE, and implement the same;
- 4) strengthen the influence of COPWE among the broad masses, identify the basic needs of the working people and endeavour to satisfy same;
- 5) be absolutely loyal to the causes of COPWE;
- 6) be hard working, humble, truthful and righteous in his private and social life and properly discharge his responsibilities towards his work-mates and family and to the upbringing of children;
- 7) maintain the unity of COPWE in any field; strictly observe discipline and keep the secrets of the government and COPWE;
- 8) be vigilant against the enemy in all areas; resolutely expose and fight against anti-revolution and anti-unity;
- 9) endeavour to establish mutual co-operation, peace, friendship and fraternity among peoples;

- 10) resolutely fight against narrow nationalism, national chauvinism, racism and similar activities and tendencies;
- 11) combat factionalism, liberalism, adventurism, sabotage and opportunism.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ORGANIZATION OF COPWE

#### 9. *Organization*

COPWE shall have the following organs :

1. The Chairman
2. General Assembly
3. Central Committee
4. Executive Committee
5. Regional Committees
6. Awraja Committees
7. Wereda Committees, and
8. Committees of Basic Organizations.

#### 10. *The Chairman of COPWE*

- 1) The Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council shall be the Chairman of COPWE.
- 2) The Chairman shall direct, follow up and supervise COPWE to ensure that it properly discharges its purposes, powers and duties. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Chairman shall :
  - a) determine the relationship and co-operation between the Provisional Military Administrative Council and COPWE;
  - b) preside over the meetings of the general assembly, the central committee and the executive committee, and determine their agendas;

- c) select, assign, transfer, suspend or dismiss the members of the central committee; and of the executive committee;
- d) select, assign, transfer, suspend or dismiss the heads and members of the leading organs of COPWE;
- e) issue the recruitment rules of COPWE members and candidate members;
- f) supervise the implementation of the internal regulations, programmes of work, decisions and directives of COPWE;
- g) issue and ensure the implementation of directives relating to the establishment of the organizational structure of COPWE in production centres, offices and administrative units;
- h) ensure and supervise the organization of facilities necessary for the proper carrying out of the activities of COPWE;
- i) take all necessary measures to avert any situation which threatens the revolution, the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, or the dignity and welfare of the people in the course of the endeavours to establish the Party of the working people;

#### 11. *The General Assembly*

- 1) members of COPWE shall be represented in the general assembly by quotas of representation as shall be determined by the Chairman.
- 2) the general assembly shall meet as often as is prescribed in the internal regulations of COPWE or at the call of the Chairman.
- 3) the general assembly shall have the following powers:
  - a) make recommendations relating to the domestic or foreign policy of the country;
  - b) approve the internal regulations and programmes of work of COPWE;

- c) comment on, and approve, the reports of the Chairman on the accomplishments of COPWE;
- d) comment and make recommendations on important matters concerning COPWE when referred to it by the Chairman.

## 12. *The Central Committee*

- 1) The central committee shall have such members selected by the Chairman from among the members of the general assembly.
- 2) The central committee shall meet in accordance with the rules to be prescribed or at the call of the Chairman.
- 3) The central committee shall, during the period that the general assembly is not meeting and subject to the directives of the Chairman, be responsible for the direction and coordination of the operations of COPWE. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the central committee shall:
  - a) implement the directives issued by the general assembly;
  - b) make all necessary preparations for the establishment of the Party of the working people of Ethiopia;
  - c) prepare drafts of the programme and of the internal regulations of the Party of the working people of Ethiopia;
  - d) prepare directives, regulations and forms to be used by COPWE and ensure their implementation;
  - e) organize communists around COPWE and cause the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism among the broad masses;
  - f) prepare detailed directives on the establishment of the organizational structures of COPWE in all places as shall be deemed necessary, and supervise their implementation;

- g) establish its various departments; issue rules by which they shall be guided, and supervise their implementation;
- h) prepare its own directives of work;
- i) establish and supervise the activities of the editorial board of the central organ of COPWE;
- j) in co-operation with the appropriate authorities cause that necessary and proper action is taken against persons who attempt to obstruct the establishment of the Party of the working people;
- k) prepare and implement detailed directives on the establishment of provincial, *awraja*, *wereda* and basic organizations, committees of COPWE;
- l) prepare and implement directives on the establishment of the Basic Organizations of COPWE in production centres, offices, and administrative units;
- m) prepare guidelines in accordance with which Basic Organizations shall operate, and supervise their implementation;
- n) supervise the recruitment of members;
- o) prepare the internal regulations of COPWE;
- p) perform such other functions as the Chairman may, from time to time, direct;

### 13. *The Executive Committee*

- 1) The executive committee shall have such members as may be selected by the Chairman from among the members of the central committee.
- 2) The executive committee shall carry out the day-to-day activities of COPWE during the period that the central committee does not meet. In particular, the executive committee shall:

- a) follow up the implementation of the directives and decisions issued by the central committee;
- b) in accordance with directives issued to it by the Chairman, train and assign the heads and members of the leading organs and cadres of COPWE and ensure that they carry out their duties properly;
- c) decide on matters which require urgent decisions and submit same to the next regular meeting of the central committee for approval;
- d) prepare the agenda of the central committee in accordance with the directives of the Chairman;
- e) perform such other functions as the Chairman may from time to time direct.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL COMMITTEES

#### 14. *Regional Committees of COPWE*

- 1) There shall be COPWE committees in every level as follows:
  - a) in Provinces
  - b) in *Awrajas*
  - c) in *Weredas*, and
  - d) in Basic Organizations
  - e) for the purposes of this Proclamation:
    - i) the city of Addis Ababa shall be considered as a Province and shall be directly accountable to the central committee;
    - ii) other big cities to be determined by the central committee, shall be considered as *Awrajas*.

- 2) The chain of command, the procedure of submitting reports and similar activities of Provincial, *Awraja* and *Wereda* committees shall be as prescribed in the directives issued by the central committee.
- 3) The activities of Provincial, *Awraja* and *Wereda* committees shall be conducted by executive bodies assigned to them in accordance with directives.
- 4) Each Provincial, *Awraja* and *Wereda* committee shall, in accordance with the internal regulations of COPWE, the directives and decisions issued by the Chairman, the central committee or the executive committee:
  - a) agitate and politicise the broad masses with a view to implementing the social, economic and political programmes of COPWE;
  - b) carry-out the necessary agitational and educational work with a view to raising the political consciousness of the broad masses;
  - c) submit to the central committee, through its superior organs, persons whom it thinks fit to be recruited as members and candidate members of COPWE and to be assigned to appropriate places;
  - d) convene from time to time meetings of COPWE members to discuss basic questions of domestic policy and submit recommendations to its superior organs;
  - e) implement correctly and without delay the decisions and directives transmitted to it from superior organs;
  - f) ensure that subordinate organs carry out their activities properly and observe discipline;
  - g) resolutely struggle against any factionalist and other anti-people tendencies which may arise within itself or in subordinate organs, and notify superior organs of same.

## 15. *Basic Organization of COPWE*

- 1) Basic Organization shall be established in government offices, mass organizations, co-operatives, industries, factories, educational institutions, state farms, and the like where there are at least three members of COPWE.
- 2) The appropriate committee of COPWE alone may, in accordance with directives issued to it by the central committee, establish any basic organization.
- 3) The rules for meetings of each basic organization shall be in accordance with directives issued by the central committee.
- 4) Each basic organization shall, in accordance with the internal regulations of COPWE and directives issued by the Chairman, the central committee and the executive committee:
  - a) disseminate the Marxist-Leninist philosophy among the broad masses in general, and in the area of its establishment in particular;
  - b) agitate and politicize the broad masses with a view to implementing the social, economic and political programmes of COPWE;
  - c) agitate, politicize and educate the broad masses to observe discipline at work and the rules of society;
  - d) agitate, politicize and educate the working people with a view to raising their political consciousness and to instilling in them socialist morality;
  - e) educate every citizen to condemn and eradicate violation of law, negligence at work, sabotage, fraud, and similar misconduct and to acquire the virtues and good conduct of a responsible administrator;
  - f) prepare struggling vanguards among the ranks of the broad masses to be members of COPWE;

- g) impart political education to members of COPWE who are under its supervision;
- h) assist every member of COPWE under its supervision to play the vanguard and exemplary role in carrying out all his duties;
- i) implement correctly and without delay the decisions and directives transmitted to it from superior organs;
- j) ensure that members under its supervision properly perform their duties and observe discipline;
- k) resolutely struggle against factionalist and other anti-people tendencies which may arise within itself or in subordinate organs, and notify superior organs of same;
- l) report to its superior organs on its activities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

#### 16. *Prohibition*

Any political organization or group other than COPWE is hereby prohibited.

#### 17. *Duty to Co-operate*

Any natural or juridical person, government office, government or mass organizations shall have the duty to co-operate with COPWE in all its activities to implement the purposes of this Proclamation.

#### 18. *Sources of Income of COPWE*

Funds needed for the activities of COPWE shall be derived from the following sources:

- 1) funds collected from monthly contributions of members;
- 2) funds obtained from other sources.

## 19. Penalty

- 1) a) Whosoever attempts to abolish or destroy the institution of COPWE by violence, threats, conspiracy or by any other similar means is punishable with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding ten years;
- b) Where the offence is committed against a person with violence, the penalty shall be rigorous imprisonment from fifteen years to life;
- c) The punishment shall be death where the commission of the offence has resulted in death.
- 2) a) Whosoever in any way makes or attempts to make an attack on the liberty or security or the person or health of the members or candidate members of COPWE in connection with the execution of the activities of COPWE is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from fifteen years to life;
- b) Where the offence is committed against any member of the leading organs of COPWE referred to in Article 9 of this Proclamation or where the commission of the offence has resulted in death, the penalty shall be death.
- 3) a) Whosoever by violence, threats or conspiracy or by any other means obstructs or attempts to obstruct any of the activities of COPWE shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding ten years;
- b) Whosoever violates or obstructs the implementation of this Proclamation of regulations, directives, decisions or orders issued hereunder is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from three to ten years or with fine not exceeding Birr 20,000 or with both such fine and imprisonment.

20. *Power to Issue Regulations*

The Chairman of COPWE may issue regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Proclamation.

21. *Effective Date*

This Proclamation shall enter into force as of the 18th day of December, 1979.

Addis Ababa, this 18th day of December, 1979.

*THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY  
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL*

