

The Eritrean Struggle: Just, Popular, Revolutionary

The following is the first in a series written for UNITE! by the Association of Eritrean Students in North America.

Sixteen and a half years have elapsed since the Eritrean people embarked upon the road of armed struggle to achieve their goal of national independence from Ethiopian occupation, and to build a people's democratic Eritrea. The past sixteen and a half years have been years of many twists and turns, but also years of heroic struggle and multiple victories. Today, the Eritrean people's struggle is on the eve of its complete victory. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front is leading the Eritrean national democratic revolution, uniting the revolutionary and patriotic forces under its leadership. Except for a few traitors, the entire people of Eritrea have stood up as one man in the demand for "nothing short of total independence".

The history of Eritrea is an integral part of the history of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Due to its strategic location, Eritrea has been a victim of colonial aggression and imperialist plunder for centuries. The Eritrean people have been in constant struggle against cruel social oppression and foreign aggression. They have vigorously and heroically fought the Ottoman Turks (1557-1865), the Egyptian expansionists (1865-1876), and the Italian (1896-1941) and British (1941-1952) colonialists respectively.

In 1952, while the Eritrean people were demanding their national independence, the then U.S. dominated United Nations passed a U.S. sponsored resolution (390 A/V) to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia.

Ten years later, the Haile Selassie regime with the full backing of U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism, unilaterally and illegally abrogated the federal resolution and totally annexed Eritrea, declaring it the "14th Province of the Ethiopian Empire".

The armed resistance of the Eritrean people started in 1961, under the leadership of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). The launching of the armed struggle represented the deepest aspiration of the Eritrean people and gained their whole-hearted support. However, the ELF leadership followed an opportunist and reactionary political line which hindered the advance of the revolution. In opposition, there arose a progressive voice demanding an end to the reactionary and divisive tactics of the ELF leadership and calling for the adoption of a correct revolutionary line and program.

From 1965-1970, a protracted and bitter struggle was waged within the ELF which culminated in the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

The EPLF set out to unify all the progressive and democratic forces who opposed the opportunist line and rejected the reactionary leadership of the ELF. It established a democratic front and correctly defined the objectives of the Eritrean revolution: to wage a national democratic revolution by uniting all patriotic classes and social groups, under the leadership of the working class, and to establish a genuinely independent and democratic Eritrea, as a first step towards building a society free from all exploitation.

On the other hand, the ELF leadership, unable to distinguish between the primary and secondary contradictions of the revolution, launched the criminal civil war to liquidate the EPLF, characterizing it as "counter-revolutionary". The civil war lasted for two and a half years, and caused grave harm to the struggle. It came to an end as a result of the active intervention of the masses, the opposition of the democratic forces within the ELF and the principled struggle of the EPLF.

In 1974 historical events took place in Ethiopia. Haile Selassie was deposed as a result of a mass upsurge of the Ethiopian people and the war of national liberation in Eritrea. The right wing of the petty bourgeoisie in the military usurped state power declaring itself a Provisional Military Government. The junta's seizure of power has not brought about fundamental change in Ethiopian society. Ethiopia's subservience to U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism remains intact. With the all round military, economic, political and diplomatic support it began receiving more recently from the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba, the fascist junta is desperately trying to crush the Eritrean revolution and the struggle of the Eritrean masses. The Ethiopian people are still deprived of all their democratic rights while the war of colonial aggression in Eritrea has increasingly become more barbaric.

In the meantime, the Eritrean struggle has continued to advance rapidly. Under the leadership of the EPLF, the revolution has won unprecedented victories in all fronts. Ninety-five percent of Eritrea is now liberated. Big cities of economic and strategic importance such as Keren and Decamere have been libera-

ted. Only a few cities remain under the nominal occupation of the Ethiopian aggressor troops. The remaining occupied cities are tightly encircled and under continuous forceful attack by the liberation forces. The Eritrean people's struggle is on the verge of complete victory.

In January 1977, the EPLF held its historic First Congress in the liberated areas, heralding a new chapter in the history of the Eritrean struggle. The EPLF adopted a revolutionary national democratic program and passed important resolutions on the national as well as international situation.

The EPLF has set up mass organizations of workers, peasants, women, youth and students to mobilize, organize and draw into the revolutionary struggle the masses in the urban as well as rural areas. The EPLF has extensively enlarged and consolidated the liberated areas and it is leading the masses in establishing democratic people's power. The EPLF is leading the masses in carrying out land reform, uprooting exploitative relations of production and combating backward and harmful customs. Following the principle of self-reliance, the EPLF is developing agriculture and handicrafts; setting up clinics and people's shops, and building roads.

The solid foundation of the new People's Democratic Republic of Eritrea has already been laid. The birth of a democratic and independent Eritrea is within sight. ★



Following the revolutionary principle of people's armed struggle, led by revolutionary theory, the Eritrean people have their independence in sight.

Eritrean Resistance Frees New Territories

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front continues to score victories in the struggle to completely liberate their country. Adikeih, south of the Eritrean capital of Asmara was liberated December 13th, 1977. Earlier, a brilliant victory was scored at Dogali.

Currently, the EPLF continues to win victories in the crucial port city of Massawa. The EPLF controls all of the city except

an island called "Inside Massawa" and the peninsula of Girar where the remaining Ethiopian troops and their Cuban "advisors" are holed up.

With the liberation of Massawa, the occupation troops will be isolated in Asmara and Assab, the other port. In Asmara the enemy is cut off and completely encircled, and can be supplied only from the air. ★

On Welcoming the Publication of All For One, One For All!

UNITE! is happy to announce a new publication, **All For One, One For All!**—Socialism in Albania, a 48 page pamphlet with photographs from the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which tells the story of the Albanian peoples' struggle for independence, national liberation and socialism.

Today the People's Socialist Republic of Albania is the only genuine socialist state in Europe. Though small geographically, with a population under three million, surrounded by capitalist and revisionist states, Albania in the last 30 years has become a mighty political, ideological and moral force in the world.

This pamphlet tells the story of the centuries long struggle against foreign occupation, against feudalism and backward ideas, against the fascist occupation during World War 2. It tells about the founding of the Party of Labor of Albania in 1941, the victory of the National Liberation War and the founding of Socialist Albania in 1946.

It tells of the on-going struggle to raise the well-being of the masses of working people, and the great victories of socialist construction in health care, housing,

and the equality of women, culture, industry, agriculture and the trade unions. The pamphlet explains how these victories have been scored by placing Marxism-Leninism in command, and by developing and defending the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat.

Many people in the U.S. know little about the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. The Central Committee of the MLOC has written **All For One, One For All!** with that very fact in mind. The pamphlet was written to educate people in the U.S. about socialist Albania, and to build support for the Albanian people and their Party. As the pamphlet says:



"In the development of the class struggle there are stars that shine with such brilliance that they light up the entire sky and the road ahead for all mankind."

By telling the story of the struggle of the Albanian people, the people of the U.S. will learn powerful lessons. They will see the living proof of the superiority of the socialist system and the inevitable victory of socialism worldwide.

All For One, One For All!
Order through UNITE!,
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\$1.00

Support the Eritrean Peoples' Struggle!

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- The National Democratic Programme of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. \$1.50
- Vanguard!, monthly newspaper of the EPLF. \$1.50
- Eritrea in Struggle, monthly newsletter of the Association of Eritrean Students in North America. \$1.10

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