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NEW ETHIOPIA

NEWSLETTER

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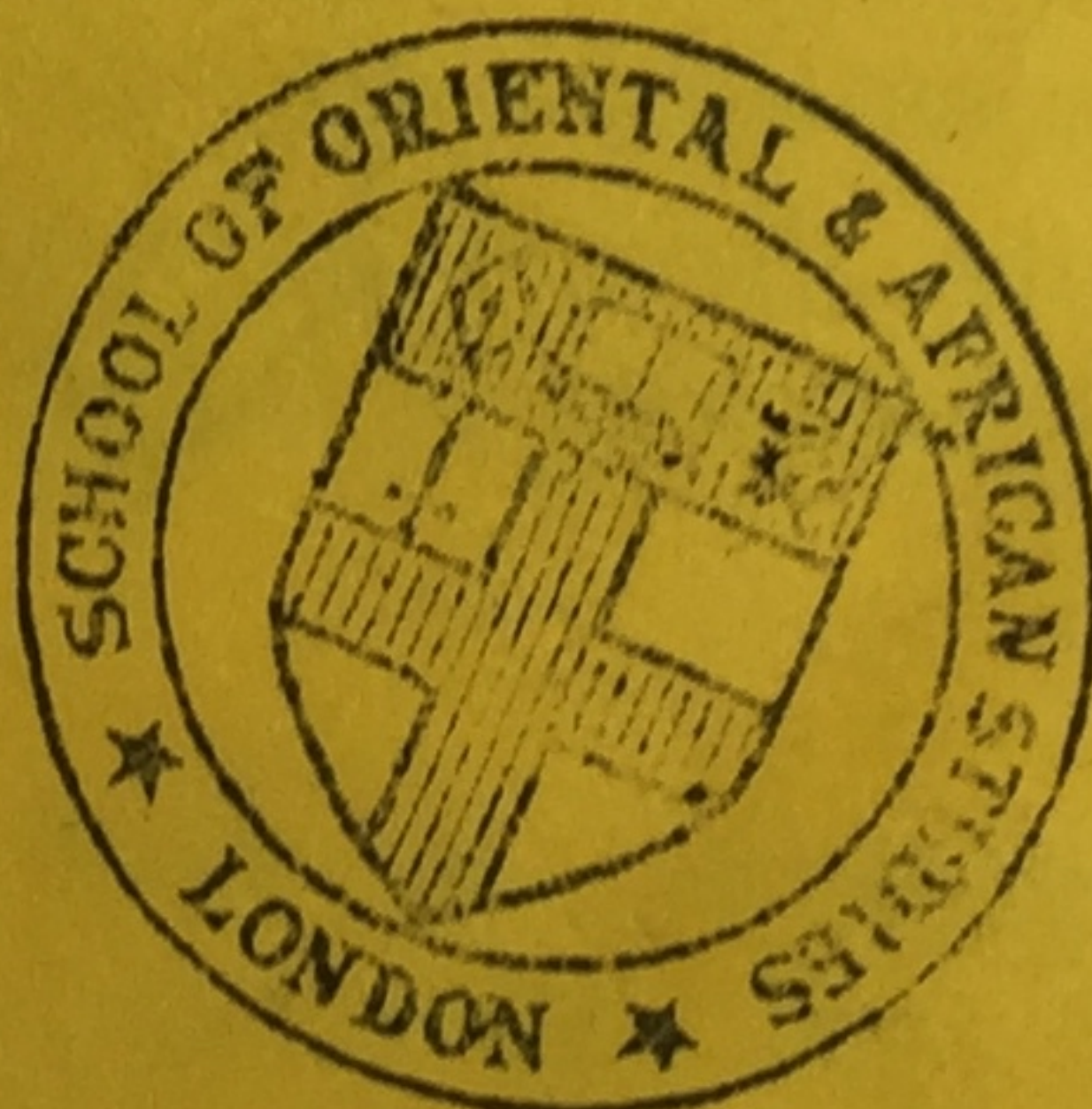
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13 APR 1981

ME'ISONNE (all ethiopia socialist movement)

FOREIGN SECTION _ P.O.BOX 5077 SPANGA SWEDEN _____

ANOTHER FEBRUARY IS INEVITABLE

In our issue of September 1979 we wrote "a bright future is awaiting the Ethiopian people and their revolution. A new rise in the tide of the revolution is inevitable and the day of another February is not very far. That is what the objective conditions of today will be leading to. We are sure that however complex and protracted the coming struggle may be irrespective of the great sacrifices that our heroic people have yet to bear, they will certainly defeat all internal and external reactionary forces and build a democratic, free and non-aligned Ethiopia".

Six years have now elapsed since the unprecedented revolutionary mass movement that led to the three-year uninterrupted transformation of the Ethiopian society broke out in February 1974. Those eventful years will always hold an indispensable place in the history of the Ethiopian peoples' revolution.

The situation in Ethiopia today, and, in fact, since 1977 is radically different from that of 1974. At that time and until the first quarter of 1977 the Ethiopian society was undergoing an overall revolutionary convulsion. Today, Ethiopia is creeping in a state of terror, repression, national oppression and humiliation of its national independence.

It is now a well known fact that, as a consequence of the military regime's anti-democratic rule, more than 30.000 democrats, patriots and national liberation militants are languishing in the overcrowded prisons of the Derg. Hundreds have lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands (over a million

according to figures of the UNHCR) have fled the country. Others have been forced to live under ground in order to escape persecution. The different democratic mass organizations have been arbitrarily liquidated and reduced to mere bureaucratic organs. This continuous repression and anti-democratic rule of the Derg has recently been officially legalized by the proclamation issued to establish the so-called Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia. According to the proclamation each and every political organization in the country is declared illegal and any individual with a different view than the President's is doomed to a penalty that varies from a ten year imprisonment to death.

The national oppression unleashed particularly against the Somalis, the Oromos, Tigres and in Eritrea is continuously intensifying. Reports of indiscriminate bombings of villages and innocent people in the Ogaden and Eritrea regions continue to reach the outside world. Hundreds of intellectuals and government officials belonging to the Oromo nationality have been recently arrested by the Derg and others are being persecuted.

Following the increasing dependence of the Derg on the Soviet bloc countries in general and the 20-year "Friendship Treaty" with the Soviet Union in particular, the non-aligned foreign policy and thereby the national independence and sovereignty of the country is capriciously and continuously humiliated. The intervention of the Soviet bloc countries has no doubt temporarily succeeded in helping the counter-revolutionary Derg perform an effective repression. It has also become so deep and total that the local and foreign policies and therefore with the destiny of the country at present do not lie in the hands of its own citizens but in those of foreigners who are operating as "experts" in the different government agencies and regions of the country. These "experts" of various professions are today fully engaged in not only consolidating

the rule of the counter-revolutionary Derg (an already-converted puppet regime) but also in gearing the political, economic and social lives of the country to the interest of the Soviet bloc countries.

In view of the growing mass opposition against the Derg and its foreign allies and the vital place Ethiopia holds in the Soviet global military and economic strategy it is very possible that the Soviet bloc countries will one day resort to an open military control of the country. The disgraceful aggression against Afghanistan by the USSR, which ME'ISONE strongly condemns, should be taken as a good lesson as well as a warning. The presence of about 20,000 Cuban fighting troops and other Soviet and East German high-ranking military experts on Ethiopian soil should be viewed from this angle. The risk that Ethiopia will be another Afghanistan should not be overlooked.

The economic and social reforms that were paid in blood and souls and started giving fruit during the first years of the revolution have been redirected by the military bureaucracy not to remedy the peoples' problems but to maintain the lavish living styles of the ruling Derg and its allies. Consequently food, housing and health conditions are continuously deteriorating. Famine is striking the people all over the country; the main victims this time being the people living in the southern provinces. Faced with these colossal social and economic problems the Derg and its foreign allies are continuing to rob money from the people by different coercive measures and directing the country's wealth to build an oppressive apparatus to suppress any democratic and patriotic movement.

Reactionaries resort to repressive means because they vainly believe that they can annihilate a peoples' struggle. But what happens in actual fact is just the opposite. Reactionaries might be capable of temporarily weakening of peoples'

struggle but they can never have a lasting victory. On the contrary, the revolutionary forces go more and more under ground, become more and more inaccessible to their enemies, learn from their experience, adopt and develop new methods of struggle, improve their organizational strength, become tempered in the struggle and take offensive under favourable conditions. They never surrender. This is what we observe in contemporary Ethiopia.

The repression perpetrated by the Soviet backed Derg, notwithstanding its intensity, has not been successful in fulfilling its plan of crushing the Ethiopian peoples' democratic movement. It is undeniable that it has incurred the revolution a high cost and temporarily weakened it. But it has at no time totally silenced it.

Having survived the intensive Soviet backed repression, the revolutionary mass resistance is continuously gaining momentum under the leadership of ME'ISONE. The national liberation struggle in Eritrea, Tigre, Afar, Ogaden and by the Oromo people are intensifying more than ever before. In the urban areas, the strongholds of the Derg's repression, progressive intellectuals, students, soldiers and workers are giving the Derg a hard time.

The struggle for democracy, equality of nationalities, national independence and social progress waged by the Ethiopian masses is growing constantly and gaining strength with every passing day. And the Derg as well as its foreign backers are becoming helpless and desperate. At the same time the contradiction, and thereby the crisis within the Derg, between the Derg and the bureaucracy, between the bureaucracy and the foreign "experts" is growing sharper and clearer. This is confirmed by the recent developments marked within the ruling circles.

Viewed from the objective conditions of the revolution, there-

fore, one may say that Ethiopia is pregnant of another February whose birth is inevitable in the near future.

ME'ISONE, upon which the historical responsibility of leadership is succumbed is consistently struggling both within and outside the country in order to prepare the conditions necessary to defend and advance the revolution to its completion. We are sure that the Ethiopian people will get the support of all progressive and freedom loving forces in the common struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism.

AN INTERVIEW TO THE B.B.C.

The following is the text of an interview given to the B.B.C by comrade Negede Gobezie, foreign affairs spokesman of the ME'ISONE. It was played on the programme of "Focus on Africa" on the 31 December 1979, and on "This week and Africa" on Saturday 5-1-80 in the morning and afternoon programmes.

B.B.C's INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERVIEW

ME'ISONE, one of the left wing groups in Ethiopia that has found itself in opposition to the ruling Council, the Derg, is claiming that its supporters are still being arrested and that thousands are being held in jail. In the early days, after the military coup five years ago, ME'ISONE cooperated with the Derg. But in 1977, ME'ISONE fell out with the Derg accusing it of abandoning the principles of the National Democratic Revolution Programme and went under ground. ME'ISONE was then badly hit by the Derg's Red Terror campaign and many of its leaders and supporters were rounded up and detained. One ME'ISONE leader who escaped the "Red Terror" was Dr. Negede Gobezie who is now ME'ISONE's foreign affairs spokesman. Patrick Gilks asked him why ME'ISONE had broken with the Derg in 1977 and how many ME'ISONE supporters were lost during the Red Terror campaign.

P.G. What in fact are your differences with the PMAC ?

N.G. We did not ally ourselves with the Derg for opportunist reasons. It was a principled alliance based on the acceptance by the military government of the National Democratic Revolution Programme. This Programme, which we still consider as the comprehensive guide line for the Ethiopian revolution provides among other things, full exercise of democratic rights for the Ethiopian people including the right to organize in many political parties. It provides the right for all Ethiopian nationalities to self-determination and national regional autonomy. It provides for a foreign policy based on strict non-alignment as understood to mean a policy independent from all foreign powers.

During the time of our alliance the Derg more or less

respected all these. But starting from April 1977 it became clear that the Derg was betraying all these commitments. And given this fact the choice we had at that time was either to accept this betrayal and maintain our alliance or break this alliance and go underground.

P.G. Not too many of your people were arrested in August 77 but subsequently the next year there was a red terror organized by the government and the other organizations against ME'ISONE or against people thought to belong to ME'ISONE. Did you lose a lot of people in this red terror?

N.G. I think it would be fair to say first that the red terror was not organized against ME'ISONE alone. It was organized against all opposition to the military. It was organized to terrorize the whole Ethiopian people into submission. Hundreds and specially from among the youth and the workers have perished during this period and many others were forced into exile. Thousands, among whom we have 20.000 comrades were thrown into the Derg's jails.

Some people tend to think that with the red terror period over in March 1978, the Derg has grown less repressive and that things have developed for the better in Ethiopia. In fact a new and more subtle repression, specially and mainly directed against ME'ISONE and patriotic and democratic forces has developed in the country. I think it is important to note this point because out of the 20.000 prisoners that we have in the Derg's jails, more than half were arrested after the end of the "red terror" period.

P.G. So in a sense arrests are still going on ?

N.G. Yes they are still going on.

P.G. And killings ?

N.G. Killings, not as they used to be during the "red terror" period.

P.G. Given the number of people whom you say have been arrested and killed during the "red terror" period and subsequently do you still have a functional organization inside Ethiopia ? I mean how strong would you say ME'ISONE actually is now ?

N.G. We can't deny that the organization has been weakened, but we have now a completely secret leadership which works smoothly and we continue, even under this repression to put out our paper "The Voice of the Masses". We are reorganizing the cells in the factories, in the kebelles, in government offices, in schools. We are very carefully working within the army and the militia. We are now, you know, really engaged in organizational and political tasks. Honestly, I should say that a lot remains to be done.

P.G. Given all this do you think that there is any chance now of reconciliation between you and the Derg, the military council ?

N.G. Will you see, we are fighting for the realization of clear objectives. We allied ourselves with the Derg when we thought that this would advance the cause of the Ethiopian revolution. We broke this alliance when we considered that it was self defeating. The Derg taken as a whole is no more considered by Ethiopian progressives as a democratic and patriotic force and no reconciliation is possible with it.

P.G. Now, you yourself returned some months after ME'ISONE had in fact gone underground and you returned in secret and spent a little time in the Cuban embassy in Addis Abeba, was this in fact an attempt at reconciliation and were you going back to try and see if there can be any agreement between you and the Derg.

N.G. The Cubans at that time took the initiative to help in negotiations between the progressive elements within the Derg and ME'ISONE. We were not opposed to negotiations. But we had our principled positions for this negotiations. We demanded the release of all progressive prisoners including those democrats and patriots who were not members of our organization. We wanted a return to unity on the basis of the National Democratic Revolution Programme. But the rightists within the Derg opposed this attempt at reconciliation.

P.G. You could'nt find enough support for reconciliation within the Derg ?

N.G. No we did'nt.

P.G. There were reports at that time that you had received help in going back to Addis Abeba from both Cuba and USSR, from Russia. What in fact are ME'ISONE's relationships with Cuba and Russia ? Do you have close relations with these two countries ?

N.G. The Soviet Union had nothing to do with this. As an organization we never had relations with the Soviet Union. As clearly indicated in our programme and the National Democratic Revolution Programme, we stand for a foreign policy based on strict non-alignment, we did not fight american imperialism to fall into the sphere of Soviet influence. This patriotic and revolutionary stand of strict non-alignment has always been an obstacle to good relations with the Soviet Union. You should not forget that counter-revolution and repression against our organization and other democratic and patriotic forces have grown hand in hand with growing Soviet involvement in Ethiopia.

P.G. Do you in fact cooperate with other organizations who are opposed to the Derg ?

N.G. You see, there are two kinds of opposition to the military. As a matter of principle cooperation with the rightist opposition, the Ethiopian Democratic Union and other forces that we consider as reactionaries is out of question for us. But we have made a call to all progressive and democratic forces to unite on the basis of the National Democratic Revolution Programme of April 1976, and to coordinate their struggle for democracy and the national independence of Ethiopia. At this early stage, all we can say is that the response we have received from these democratic and patriotic forces is really encouraging.

P.G. Do you actually see any possibility of a successful broad based opposition movement taking over from the military regime ?

N.G. Will you see, there is actually a broad based opposition to the military regime. It exists. There is no region in Ethiopia where the people are not rising in defense of their revolutionary victories gained during the years 1974-77. The problem, I think, is not one of the inexistence of this broad based opposition but of its unity. We are trying to bring all these forces, all this democrats, all these patriots into a truly national revolutionary front on the bases of the National Democratic Revolution Programme of 1976.

P.G. Who would be organizing, who would run this front, is it a vehicle for ME'ISONE to try to take power itself ?

N.G. No. It will be a national front in which all democratic and patriotic forces could participate equally.

P.G. Negede Gobezie of the Ethiopian opposition movement :
ME'ISONE.

HAVE YOU READ OUR LAST ISSUE ?

The March 1980 issue of "New Ethiopia" contains the full text of the interview given to two foreign journalists by FREWE ABAYNEH, a representative of the underground leadership of ME'ISONE at a meeting in Addis Ababa in September 1979. It gives a brief outline on ME'ISONE, an analysis of the present situation in Ethiopia, our perspectives for the struggle, ME'ISONE's stand on Soviet bloc intervention in Ethiopia, its position on the Eritrean question, etc. If you have not read this historical document, please write to us. We shall send you a copy.

STATEMENTS - PRESS RELEASE - STATEMENTS - PRESS RELEASE

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF ME'ISONE ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE SO-CALLED "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia".

In a statement issued in Addis Ababa on the 20th of december 1979, the "Voice of the Masses" the central organ of ME'isone, denounced the newly created "Commission to organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" and dismissed it as an instrument of oppression of the Ethiopian people in the hands of the reactionary civil and military bureaucracy and the soviet bloc countries.

In this statement issued by the central committee of the organization; ME'ISONE asserted that it will not recognize this commission and the so-called working class party that is supposed to come out of it as a genuine party representing the working class of Ethiopia. Instead it pledged to continue the struggle for the recognition of full democratic rights for the Ethiopian people including the right to organize political parties.

The statement went on to say that the establishment of a single party system which is the declared aim of the Commission is absolutely opposed to the sprit and the letter of the National Democratic Revolution Programme which recognizes the right to organize political parties and which the Derge still pretends to uphold. The statement therefore stressed that the fight against the so-called workers party should not be considered as a task of genuine marxist-leninists alone but as one concerning the millions of Ethiopia's democrats and patriots still loyal to the Programme of April 1976, the revolution and to the cause of the national independence of the motherland.

Pointing to the negative role and the serious responsibility of the soviet bloc countries in this counter revolutionary developpement, the statement went on to assert that this would only help to open the eyes of more and more Ethiopians to the designs of these countries and would surely result in further exposure of these forces as enemies of the Ethiopian people.

The 6 -page statement concluded by calling upon all the patriotic and democratic opposition to the military dictatorship to unite on the basis of the National Democratic Revolution Programme and to continue the struggle for a democratic Ethiopia free from domination by any foreign power.

PRESS RELEASE - ON THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGANISTAN
(January 21, 1980)

On the 27th of december 1979 the Soviet armed forces invaded the sovereign state of Afganistan and imposed upon the people of this country a puppet governement led by Mr. Babrak Karmal.

This brutal and arrogant invasion, which clearly exposes the hegemonistic designes of the soviet authorities, has been rightly and unanimously condemned by the International community and particularly by the vast majority of the non-aligned countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It has been denounced by all peace-loving forces as a naked violation of the sovereignty of an independant state and as an act contrary to all standards and rules of international relations.

Among the very few governments that approved this act of aggression we find the Ethiopian Derg which already has proved itself to be a puppet of the soviet bloc countries. This act of submission of the Ethiopian government, serious and dangerous as it is to the national independance of our country, proves beyond any shadow of doubt that today's Ethiopia is fast turning into a satellite of the Soviet Union.

One finds this situation all the more serious and dangerous for the Ethiopian people when one considers the fact that the Derg has signed in November 1978 a so-called Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union similar to that invoked by the Kremlin to justify its invasion of Afganistan.

This "Treaty of Friendship"; the thousands of Cuban and Soviet troops already stationed on Ethiopian soil; the existance of some traitors within and outside the Derg that are completely won over by the soviet authorities and now the isolation from the international community as a result of the stand taken by the military government all add up to put the Ethiopian people in a very dangerous situation and expose our c ountry to an act similar to that perpetrated against the people of Afganistan.

That is why ME'ISONE is calling upon the Ethiopian people to redouble their vigilance and to intensify their struggle to defend the honour and sovereignty of the motherland. In these dark hours for the brotherly people of Afganistan ME'ISONE takes it upon itself to denounce the shameful and inimical stand taken by the military government and to express full solidarity of the Ethiopian people in their fight for democracy and national independance.

ME'ISONE categorically condemnes this act of aggression committed by the Soviet authorities and together with the non-alig ned countries and all other peace loving forces demands the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afganista.

STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN SECTION OF ME'ISONE ON THE NEW
WAVE OF REPRESSION IN ETHIOPIA (15/2/80)

A new wave of repression and arrests, particularly directed against personalities and the youth belonging to the OROMO nationality is raging over Ethiopia since the beginning of February 1980.

Those arrested include prominent figures like Mr. ZEGEYE ASFAWE who as minister of land reform from 1974 to 1979 played a crucial role in the initiation and implementation of the land reform proclamation of March 1975. At the time of his arrest he was the minister of justice and a prominent member of the newly established "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" others arrested include Mr. ABYOU GELETTA and Mr. ABABIYA ABAJOBIR who were governors of the WOLLEGA and KAFFA regions respectively. Mr. IBSSA GUTEMA the permanent secretary of the ministry of communications and dozens of students of the Addis Abeba University have also been victim of this latest wave of arrests in the country.

This manifestation of crude chauvinism is the logical result of the growing counter-revolution in Ethiopia and follows the long series of arrests, summary executions and persecution that has developed in the country after 1977. It is part and parcel of the general policy of repression directed against all democratic and patriotic forces on the Ethiopian political scene. It is yet another manifestation of the inherent incapacity of the counter-revolutionary and chauvinist Derg, to appease or contain the democratic opposition that is developing in practically all the regions of the country.

The fact that some of those arrested include prominent members of the newly established "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" goes to show that the creation of this counter-revolutionary body did not bring the stability desired by the Derg.

It goes without saying that ME'ISONE which has always stood on the side of the Ethiopian people and the oppressed nationalities in their fight for democracy, equality and national independence condemns this new wave of repression which it considers to be detrimental to the revolution and the democratic unity of the peoples of Ethiopia. Convinced that only a united struggle would create the necessary conditions to solve the problem of nationalities in a democratic way, it calls upon all progressives and patriotic forces in the country to stand united in this common struggle for a democratic and independent Ethiopia.

EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA

WHEN "SOCIALISM" MEANS UNEMPLOYEMENT, INFLATION AND FAMINE

News reaching from Ethiopia are more and more confirming the fact that under the Derg's "socialism" the country is drifting into an ever deepening economic crisis. Even if we look at figures given by the government's Central Statistical Office we get the following grim picture which is of course a far cry from the country's bitter realities.

- The overall price index for 1979 as compared to that of 1978 shows that prices have gone up by 30% during the year. Income taxes and indirect taxes have gone up by 24.9% and 31.5% respectively : the deficit in the country's balance of payments has increased to 432.1 million Birr etc.

- the primary victims of this rise in the cost of living are workers and other low income groups as wage freezes have been ordered by the Derg and strictly enforced in all the factories since early 1979.

- The overall economic crisis in the country has also resulted in mass layoffs which have affected almost all the strata of the urban population. In February 1980, the take over by the newly created "Ministry of Coffee and Tea development" of 12 private coffee exporting firms and the "reorganization" that followed have resulted in the dismissal of 4.000 workers. In March, another 400 employees have been laid off from Ethiopian Airlines on the pretext of "rationalizing" the activities of the Company which has incurred a loss of 37 million BIRR in 1979. One of the victims of these measures of "rationalization" has been publicly executed in Addis Abeba for having killed an official of the company. Other firms that have closed during the past months include a shoe factory near Addis Abeba, the Wollega Fana Transport Co. etc...

- In the rural areas the spectre of a Wollo-type famine is haunting whole regions, this time in the southern parts of Ethiopia. In three provinces (Jemjem, Arero, Borena) of the Sidamo administrative region, severe famine has already claimed the lives of thousands of poor peasants and cattle. In spite of the fact that the neighbouring countries of Kenya and Uganda offer no reliable relief, the peasants in the region have been crossing the frontiers en mass in the hope of escaping not only this severe famine but also to flee the blind repression by the Derg which in recent months has stepped up arrests and summary executions of peasants which it accuses of being ME'ISONE supporters ■

RESISTANCE - REPRESSION - RESISTANCE

The Ethiopian people, angered by these unbearable economic conditions, the Derg's anti-democratic and chauvinist rule and the sale out of the country's independence, are rising everywhere to defend their revolution and the motherland. Unable to appease or contain the rising tide of popular resistance the military government is increasingly resorting to blind repression and chauvinist terror which unfortunately for the Derg, do but only increase the hatred of the people and stiffen their spirit of resistance.

- In the wake of the anti-Oromo campaign launched in February by the chauvinistic Derg, the notorious fascist Lt. Colonel Zeleke Beyene, governor general of the Hararge administrative region has ordered the summary execution of more than 90 Oromo militants held in the prisons of the region.

- In the proximity of Dembi Dollo, a town in the administrative region of Wollrga, more than 200 peasants have been rounded up and arrested during the first week of March 1980. The pretext invoked by the Derg is the wide circulation of pamphlets supporting ME'ISONE and denouncing the anti-democratic and chauvinist policies of the military regime. The peasants were arrested on charges of "rightist activities" which in the vocabulary of the rightist Derg designates any act of sympathy to ME'ISONE and the cause of democracy and national independence.

- Hundreds of peasants, this time in the proximity of Hagere Hiwote in the Sidamo administrative region have been arrested during the same period. The arrests followed armed clashes between peasant guerrilla forces and government troops 50kms south of Awasa, chief town of the administrative region. The peasants were again arrested on charges of sympathizing with ME'ISONE and giving food and shelter to the freedom fighters in the region.

- Another clash in which 28 government soldiers were killed occurred in Bulga in the Shoa administrative region. Unable to deal with the armed opposition in the region the Derg has again resorted to arrests and summary executions of dozens of innocent peasants.

- Many peasants in the proximity of Assela, chief town of the Arssi administrative region have joined the guerilla forces in the region. This followed the arbitrary expulsion of 800 peasants' families from their land in order to make way for the creation of a large scale farm... for cubans.

- In the north, the TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) which in late February marked the fifth anniversary of its creation is giving a hard time to government troops stationed in the region. In spite of the futile efforts to cancel

the defeat suffered by the Derg in the hands of the TPLF fighters it has now become clear that whole provinces are out of the control of the military government.

- To face the rising tide of popular and specially peasant armed resistance the Derg has found no other "workable" solution than to forcibly recrute... peasants to fight in the "peoples' militia". But here we find the Derg caught in one more vicious circle. Rather than accept forced recrutement and go to fight against their brothers in the other regions of the country, peasant youth, encouraged by their parents preferre to escape from the Derg controlled areas... and join the guerrilla forces in their own region.

- This peasant resistance to forced recrutement has obliged the Derg to look to the urban centers and to recrute youth there. In March, all 291 Kebelles in Addis Abeba have been ordered to recrute 20 youth "volonteers" each for the peoples militia and in Fetche, a town north west of Addis Abeba, young people between 16 - 21 years have been rounded up and forcibly brought to the Tatek military camp for training ■

SCENES FROM ADDIS ABEBA

SPECIAL CURFEW AT THE UNIVERSITY

The Derg which is set on establishing a full scale military dictatorship in Ethiopia has continued its drive to militarize the country's administration. Already half of the ministries, all the 14 administrative regions and well over half of the country's provinces have officers as administrators. The latest institution to fall victim to this campaign is the national University where a certain sub-lieutenant has been recently imposed as the Dean of students. The first measures taken by this "acadamicean" include the imposition of a special crfew (10 P.M. to dawn) and the removal of all suggestion boxes in the campus. The reason put forward is the proliferation of ME'ISONE pamphlets and other agitational leaflets which according to the students dean are distributed during the night, some of them thrown into the suggestion boxes ■

CELEBRATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CANCELED

During the revolutionary years, March 8, the international women's day was marked by Ethiopia's women through colourful and militant demonstrations staged all over the country. It was on this occasion that in 1977, Ethiopian women, under the leadership of ISEANE (the Ethiopians Women's Revolutionary Movement) staged the most impressive mass demonstration in the country's history. On that day more than half a million women from all walks of life took to the streets of Addis Abeba and at a gathering held at the city's Revolution Square showed their determination to fight on for their total emancipation. Today, with more 3,000 women political prisoners in the Derg's jails and the mounting discontent among women the Derg cannot risk the holding of any such gatherings. But then, the Derg has developed its own bizarre ways of marking such popular events. This year March 8 was "celebrated" by fashionable dancing nights at the Addis Abeba Hilton and Wabishebele hotels for upper class women... and by a supplementary and obligatory two hours' work without pay for working class women ■

WHEN THE DERG "FORGETS" TO CELEBRATE VICTORY DAY

For the first time in 39 years the Victory Day celebrations to mark the liberation of Ethiopia from Moussolini's forces on the 6th April 1941 have been canceled by the country's military rulers. Up to now, the Ethiopian people seized this occasion to pay tribute to the heroic patriots that liberated the country and to renew their allegiance to the cause of Ethiopia's honneur and its age old history history of independence. Today, with the complete sale out of Ethiopia to the Soviet bloc countries any talk of "national independence" on the part of the Derg would have been perceived by Ethiopia's progressives and patriots as a macabre joke. The Deg and its foreign masters have not only understood this but are also desperatly trying to avoid any invocation of the heroic Ethiopian heritage lest it raises nationalist memories detrimental to their "Internationalism". But all this is to no avail. The Ethiopian people do not need official spechs made by traitors to cherish the memories of their glorious patriots. They will always remeber their matyrs and are determined to follow their example an d struggle to creat a new democratic and free Ethiopia worthy of the heroic past of the country ■

COPWPE CRIPPLED BY INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

The creation of the counter revolutionary "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" (COPWPE) in December 1979 did not bring the so desired stability within the ruling circles. Its membership, covering a wide spectrum of counter revolutionary elements ranging from out and out fascists and notorious anti-communists to traitors and opportunist scums parading as "marxists" is so heterogeneous that up to now no unity of purpose and action has been obtained. No sooner has the central committee been partially formed than arrests and dismissals have started to take a heavy toll of its members, who are by the way all handpicked and "appointed" to membership by the chief of state.

In addition to the arrest of Mr. Zegeye Asfaw who was one of the most prominent members of the Commission, a number of other leading members and activists have been victims of the latest round of the bitter power struggle within the ruling cliques. The latest names in the Derg's jails include such figures as Lt. Colonel Demessie Deressa and Colonel Abate Merasha both prominent members of the Derg arrested in connection with charges of "corruption". Others include Lieutenant Desta Tadesse and Mr. Mekonnen Fikre former activists of "Seded" and arrested on charges of relations with the C.I.A. What we are witnessing in Ethiopia today is something that comrade Frewe Abaynehe, a representative of the underground leadership of ME'ISONE in Addis Abeba said in an interview to two journalists as early as September 1979 "In the coming months this difficulties will provoke within the ranks of the military government itself very vicious internal struggles that would ultimately weaken the counter revolutionary camp as a whole" ■

ERITREA : EMPTY TALK ABOUT PEACE - PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

It is to be remembered that on the wake of the defeat of the Somali invasion in March 1978, the Derg was pompously declaring that the Eritrean question could only be solved by military means. Ever since, it is true that the Derg, assisted by its foreign masters has been pursuing a policy of war and devastation that has brought untold sufferings to the heroic people of Eritrea. We have always been opposed to this policy of blind force and have said that no military "solution" can succeed in crushing the legitimate struggle of the Eritrean masses for self-determination.

After a short lived offensive followed by repeated failures to capture the stronghold of Nakfa which is in the hands of the liberation forces the Derg is now talking of "peace" and "negotiations" while at the same time stepping up its preparations for war. It has even enlisted the support of

COPWPE CRIPPLED BY INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

The creation of the counter revolutionary "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" (COPWPE) in December 1979 did not bring the so desired stability within the ruling circles. Its membership, covering a wide spectrum of counter revolutionary elements ranging from out and out fascists and notorious anti-communists to traitors and opportunist scums parading as "marxists" is so heterogeneous that up to now no unity of purpose and action has been obtained. No sooner has the central committee been partially formed than arrests and dismissals have started to take a heavy toll of its members, who are by the way all handpicked and "appointed" to membership by the chief of state.

In addition to the arrest of Mr. Zegeye Asfaw who was one of the most prominent members of the Commission, a number of other leading members and activists have been victims of the latest round of the bitter power struggle within the ruling cliques. The latest names in the Derg's jails include such figures as Lt. Colonel Demessie Deressa and Colonel Abate Mersha both prominent members of the Derg arrested in connection with charges of "corruption". Others include Lieutenant Desta Tadesse and Mr. Mekonnen Fikre former activists of "Seded" and arrested on charges of relations with the C.I.A. What we are witnessing in Ethiopia today is something that comrade Frewe Abaynehe, a representative of the underground leadership of ME'ISONE in Addis Abeba said in an interview to two journalists as early as September 1979 "In the coming months this difficulties will provoke within the ranks of the military government itself very vicious internal struggles that would ultimately weaken the counter revolutionary camp as a whole" ■

ERITREA : EMPTY TALK ABOUT PEACE - PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

It is to be remembered that on the wake of the defeat of the Somali invasion in March 1978, the Derg was pompously declaring that the Eritrean question could only be solved by military means. Ever since, it is true that the Derg, assisted by its foreign masters has been pursuing a policy of war and devastation that has brought untold sufferings to the heroic people of Eritrea. We have always been opposed to this policy of blind force and have said that no military "solution" can succeed in crushing the legitimate struggle of the Eritrean masses for self-determination.

After a short lived offensive followed by repeated failures to capture the stronghold of Nakfa which is in the hands of the liberation forces the Derg is now talking of "peace" and "negociations" while at the same time stepping up its preparations for war. It has even enlisted the support of

President Numeiry of the Sudan who has accepted to offer his good offices to solve the problems on the basis of broad national regional autonomy for Eritrea.

But we say and repeat that no democratic solution to the Eritrean problem can be worked out with the anti-democratic and chauvinist Derg. The solution of the problem lies ultimately in the hands of the Ethiopian and the Eritrean masses themselves and as such is intimately linked to the fate of democracy and revolution in the country. Only a victorious democratic revolution will create the necessary conditions for the genuine exercise of the right to self determination and solve the Eritrean problem in a peaceful and just manner in the interest of the broad masses.

FROM THE UNDERGROUND PRESS IN ETHIOPIA

"TARKAANFI" CALLS FOR UNITY OF OROMO DEMOCRATS

"Tarkaanfi" the central organ of the "Oromo Nationality Democratic Movement" (OBDINE) in its issue of March 1980 strongly denounced the new wave of repression that is being perpetrated against the Oromo youth, intellectuals and other democrats both in Addis Abeba and the other regions of Ethiopia, and called upon all Oromos to unite and struggle for their national rights. In this strongly worded statement "Tarkaanfi" gave a detailed account of the chauvinist and counter-revolutionary developments in the country during the last three years and of the blind repression that has been unleashed against Ethiopia's oppressed nationalities in general and the Oromo people in particular. It also denounced the Soviet Union for the role it played in helping the Derg to strengthen its counter-revolutionary hold on the country.

After giving a detailed account of the heroic vanguard role played by the Oromo masses and the great sacrifices that they payed and are still paying for the liberation of Ethiopia, it reaffirmed the determination of the Oromo people to continue the struggle until a free and democratic Ethiopia in which the unity of all nationalities would be built on the basis of equality and militant solidarity.

"ABYOTE FANA" HAILS THE VANGUARD ROLE OF ME'ISONI

In its issue of December 1979 devoted to the role played by ME'ISONI in the revolutionary struggle "Abyote Fana" the central organ of the "Ethiopian Revolutionary Youth Movement"

(ERYM) hailed the contribution made by the organization to the cause of Ethiopia's liberation. It gave an account of the 12 years' struggle waged not only against feudalism and imperialism but also against all "left" and right opportunist trends that appeared at different stages of the revolutionary process.

After exposing and denouncing the negative role played by the now defunct "EPRP" and the rightist organizations like "SEDED" which once paraded as "marxists" and pointing to the untold sacrifices consented by the militants of MEISON to expose these counter-revolutionary forces, ABYOT FANA vowed to follow the revolutionary path and to continue to mobilize Ethiopia's youth for the liberation struggle.

OTHER NEWS

ETHIOPIAN YOUTH COMMEMORATES "YOUTH MARTYRS' DAY"

It was on the 29th of December 1969 that troops of the fascist regime of Haile Sellassie opened fire on peaceful students gathered to pay a last tribute to their leader Tilahun Gizaw assassinated by the regime's henchmen on the 28th of December. On that day 25 students were killed and more than 200 were wounded.

Eversince, Ethiopian students both at home and abroad commemorate this day as "Youth Martyrs' Day". In a statement issued on the occasion of the 10 anniversary of this massacre, the foreign section of the "Ethiopia, Revolutionary Youth Movement" (ERYM) recalled the circumstances that led to the massacre which it said was a criminal act that showed to the whole world the barbaric and fascistic nature of the defunct regime.

The statement pointed out that this massacre however atrocious and fascistic that it might have been did not stop the heroic Ethiopian youth from continuing the struggle for democracy, self-determination and national independence. After affirming that "today's youth is struggling for those same objectives for which young people were martyred ten years ago" ERYM gave an account of the enormous sacrifices consented by the present youthful generation for the triumph of these objectives. It condemned the counter-revolutionary Derg for the even more atrocious crimes that it has committed and is still committing against the youth of the country. The ERYM statement concluded by reaffirming the determination of the Ethiopian youth to continue the struggle on the path traced by the heroic martyrs both of the Haile Sellassie days and those of the post February period.

ESUE DENOUNCES PERSECUTION OF THE ETHIOPIAN YOUTH IN EASTERN
EUROPE.

The Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE) is a mass democratic organization with branch unions in 14 countries both in the west and in eastern Europe. Ever since its creation in 1960, it has played an important vanguard role within the Ethiopian students democratic movement.

Because of its firm democratic stand and its opposition to the Soviet hold on Ethiopia, its members are increasingly harrassed and persecuted in Eastern European countries. In a statement issued recently by the executive committee of the organization, ESUE denounced this persecutions and drew the attention of progressive world opinion to the danger faced by its members and other patriotic students in Eastern Europe. According to the ESUE statement, the following are some of the repressive practices perpetrated against Ethiopian youth in Eastern Europe.

1. In collaboration with the military regime, the governments of certain eastern European countries have declared the democratically constituted Ethiopian Students Unions illegal and have ordered their dissolution.

2. Students are forcefully taken to Ethiopia for either imprisonment or execution. In November 1978, six students were taken from the USSR. Out of this two succeeded to escape on the way to Ethiopia. The fate of the others is unknown. In Hungary, only a last minute intervention by humanitarian and other international organizations saved the lives of eleven students who where on the point of being deported to Ethiopia.

3. Ethiopian students are no more able to obtain their degrees once their corresponding studies are completed. According to a new arrangement these degrees are sent directly to Ethiopia and students would only get them if they return.

4. No student can leave the Soviet bloc countries without the permission of the Ethiopian embassy. Those who go back to Ethiopia should only fly direct from Moscow and are not allowed to stop over at any west Europe airport, etc.

After expressing the fear that these harrasements would continue and intensify, the statement concluded by calling upon all humanitarian and peace loving forces to protest against such practices and to assist Ethiopian students that want to escape these persecutions.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT REPRESSION IN ETHIOPIA ?



■ Do you know that with over 30,000 political prisoners, the present Ethiopian government is the most repressive regime in independent Africa?

■ That this staggering figure of political prisoners has never been attained even during the dark days of the feudal tyranny?

■ That political prisoners are subjected to the most inhuman torture, starvation and humiliation and many are executed secretly without any form of trial?

■ That more than 20,000 of these prisoners are members or sympathisers of ME'ISONE and elected representatives of the mass organizations created prior to 1977?

■ That repression against progressives has started with Soviet bloc involvement in the country's internal affairs and has intensified with the increasing Soviet influence?

■ That over a million Ethiopians have been forced into the world is an Ethiopian?

That starting from 1974, various counter-revolutionary groups and

■ That all the national independence has been the Ethiopian people's country's regional

■ That ME'ISONE the military the Ethiopian People

No. *WM/1101* Form No. 420B

Signature of witness(es)

[Handwritten signature]

Lab. Ref. *P. Samuel*

PPV No. *[blank]*

M.P.-81

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP ?

Send telegrammes and/or letters of protest to the Ethiopian Government at the following address :

PMAC
P.O.Box 5707
Addis Abeba, ETHIOPIA

For any further contacts please write :

New Ethiopia
P.O.Box 5077, 16305 SPANGA - SWEDEN