

E D I T O R I A L

THE WAR IN THE OGADEN

One of, if not the most, the burning problems the Ethiopian revolution is facing now is the war in the Ogaden. In order to comprehend the Ogaden problem vis a vis the forces which are engaged in the conflict, one has to look into the general question of nationalities in Ethiopia, the national oppression perpetuated against the oppressed nationalities, the subsequent national movement by the oppressed nationalities, the hegemonist role of imperialism and Soviet revisionism, the role of reactionary Arab states and the intervention by the Somali republic.

Like Tsarist Russia, present day semi-feudal and neo-colonial Ethiopia is a prison of nations. A crude policy of national oppression is still being followed by the fascist regime which stepped in the shoes of Haile Selassie. The right to self-determination of nations, as one of the general democratic demands of the national democratic revolution, could not be fulfilled by a regime that is an undertaker of democracy. As long as the principle of equality of nations is violated, and as long as annexations are not renounced through a general democratic programme the demand to self-determination remains historically legitimate. But a general democratic programme is, at this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, is inconceivable without the consummation

of the national democratic revolution, which should be led by the proletariat.

The reality in Ethiopia confirms this basic Marxist-Leninist principle. The regime in Ethiopia is anti-people, anti-democratic, consciously anti-proletarian, chauvinist of the Black Hundred type. It continues to follow Haile Selassie's policy of national oppression. Despite its talk of "regional autonomy," it is bombing Eritrea, carries and out a large scale of massacres on oppressed nationalities. It has become crystal clear that so long as the anti-people counter-revolutionary regime stays in power the policy of national oppression will continue thus breeding national movements.

In as far as national movements are directed against national oppression, they are historically legitimate and their nationalism has a general democratic content. And "it is this democratic content that we unconditionally support." Thus true to its internationalist commitments, the EPRP has, in its programme, offered the solution to the national question in general and that of the Eritrean and Ogaden questions in particular. Point 4 of EPRP's programme made public in August 1975 reads, "To give full rights to the peoples of the various Ethiopian nationalities to determine their own destiny, and at the same time carry out a peaceful political struggle for a voluntary union of the type they choose on the basis of equality and feeling of brotherhood, similarly to bring about

a peaceful and democratic solution to the question of the Somali nationality residing within Ethiopia;"

No doubt that the present regime has intensified the policy of national oppression ever since it usurped power from the revolution. Similarly, the Somali nationality in the Ogaden has been subjected to extremely barbarous national oppression. For this reason, the oppressed people of the Ogaden have revolted against this oppression. To that extent it is legitimate, just and democratic. The political support rendered to the revolt of the Somali people of the Ogaden by the world democratic and revolutionary forces is correct.

However, among those forces in the regime who support the cause of the Somali People in the Ogaden, the Somali republic is the principal figure to be directly involved in the conflict. To the extent that the Somali republic supports the just struggle of the Ogaden people, it is fine. But, the involvement of the Somali republic did not stop there. Its regular soldiers and officers are actually present and taking part in the war along with the "Western Somalia Liberation Front." This intervention by the Somali republic has worsened the situation in which case the oppressed masses of the two brotherly peoples are slaughtering each other.