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In this booklet:

- **Meet members of the peasants' and urban dwellers' associations (kebeles) who are bringing the Revolution into every corner of Ethiopia.**
- **Visit the war front in the Ogaden where refugees and military commanders explain the international significance of the Somali invasion.**
- **Hear Chairman Mengistu describe the achievements and tasks of the revolution.**

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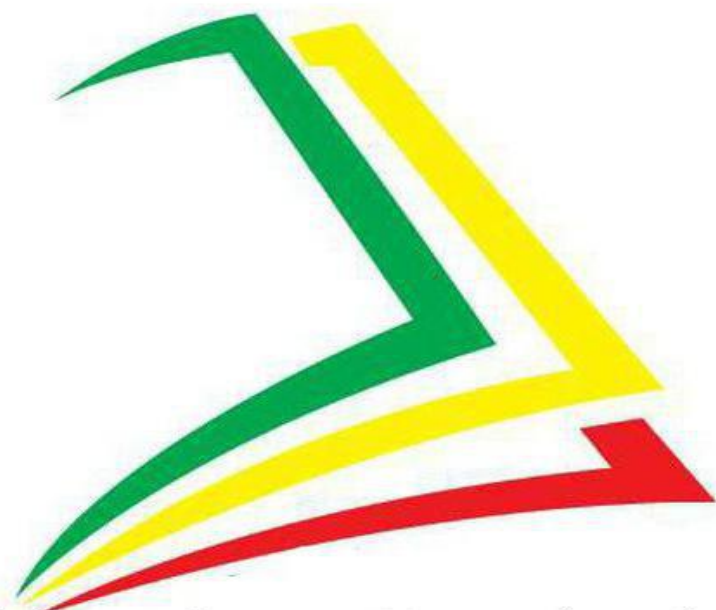
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EYEWITNESS ETHIOPIA

THE CONTINUING REVOLUTION

Deirdre Griswold





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EYEWITNESS ETHIOPIA:

The Continuing Revolution

by Deirdre Griswold

World View Publishers
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Foreword

Some 125 journalists were invited to Ethiopia in February 1978 for a week packed with interviews and field trips so they could see for themselves the revolutionary transformations that have been taking place in that ancient African country. The Ethiopian Revolution Information Center organized a Press Week from February 7 through 14 with visits to factories and trade unions, peasants' associations, urban dwellers' associations (kebeles), and to what was then the forward position of the Ethiopian Army south of the city of Harar where Ethiopia was battling the invading troops of Somalia.

In addition there were briefings with a number of government ministers and with spokesmen for the Provisional Office for Mass Organizing Affairs. The week ended with a press conference given by the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Committee that governs Ethiopia, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The editor of Workers World newspaper, Deirdre Griswold, attended the Press Week and then stayed on in Addis Ababa for two more weeks of meetings with representatives of the revolutionary organizations that are changing Ethiopia. This

pamphlet contains the articles she sent back to Workers World in this three-week period.

Despite many pleas from their Ethiopian hosts to write the truth about what they actually saw on this trip, the hostile capitalist news media largely focused on the many rumors circulating in the Western diplomatic circles exaggerating the revolutionary violence inside Addis Ababa. Few reported in any detail on the tremendous changes in morale, organization, and outlook for the future that had swept through the oppressed masses of Ethiopia and were evident in so many direct and subtle ways.

The Workers World articles focus, for the most part, on the life of the masses. They give both an overall historical and statistical picture of what the revolution has accomplished so far and a personal view of the human beings who make up this profound process—a picture of some of the men and women whose lives have been propelled out of the feudal past by the revolution and who, in turn, have through their own actions helped to determine the character of that revolution.

The Press Week coincided with a decisive turning point in the war against Somalia. Within a month after these articles were written, the Ethiopian counter-offensive in the Ogaden resulted in a total rout of the Somali forces, which had been receiving covert Western backing. They were forced to withdraw from the large segment of Ethiopian territory they had been occupying for almost eight months and the refugees described in these pages were soon on their way home.





Belaynesh—once a beggar, now a needed member of the kebele.

**Addis Ababa
February 10, 1978**

A visit to the kebeles

Her name is Belaynesh. Though not more than 50, her strong face reflects the cares of a hard, hard life.

"I came to the city five years ago, after my husband died and the landlord took our land. Four of my five children have died of illness; my last son disappeared seven years ago and I don't know what became of him.

"When I came to Addis I was alone so I begged for a living. But the kebele helps me now."

She was tending a little vegetable stall at one of the neighborhood markets run by Higher 11, Kebele 14. Barefoot, wearing drab homespun cotton material draped in the traditional Ethiopian way, women like Belaynesh can be seen everywhere here in the capital city.

Some carry huge bundles on their backs, competing with the little donkeys that clip-clop through the modern traffic. Many stand in the doorways of shacks plastered with mud and grass and roofed with corrugated tin.

People from richer countries will be struck by Belaynesh's poverty. But it is no novelty to her. What is new are the changes brought by the revolution.

Belaynesh is not downcast or shy. She looks you straight in the



Abebeck volunteers to defend her kebele because "It is my revolutionary task."

eye, a warm smile wrinkling her cheeks. She grasps your hands firmly. And she is at ease with the younger comrades, men and women, who have brought the foreign journalists to her kebele.

What was she like when she had to beg just to eat? Did she keep her eyes on the ground? Did she use terms like master and mistress to the rich who expected such deference in exchange for their pennies?

She is still poor. So is almost everyone in Ethiopia. But she is no longer humiliated, for at long last the revolution has come. And it is a revolution of the oppressed masses.

The kebeles are the neighborhood organizations of the urban poor. They carry out many tasks: running the markets, like the one where Belaynsh sits, and cooperative stores where goods can be bought at about half or a third the price in private shops; building houses, schools, and better roads; putting up neighborhood libraries (25 are projected for Addis) and extending postal services; helping the many unemployed, both men and women, to develop cottage industries until the time when more modern production facilities can be built; and organizing sports and weekly cleanups of the streets.

But the most important and immediate task is the defense of the revolution. A civil war has been raging here, and the enemies of the revolution have killed many hundreds of organizers, especially from the kebeles and the trade unions.

"It was very terrible," said a young woman from the Provisional Office for Mass Organizing Affairs (POMOA). "A few months ago the killings were at their worst. Many of our comrades were taken to the graveyards. When I left home in the morning, I really didn't know if I would come back to my husband and daughter at night.

"But we answered the white terror with the red terror, and now it is much better."

The "red terror" is not some faceless, clandestine force of repression, as the capitalist press is making out. It is the armed people.

In the first light of dawn, the sound of voices shouting in unison mingles with the crowing of roosters and the barking of dogs. The tourists, journalists, and diplomats staying at the luxurious Addis Ababa Hilton can, if they are awake that early, look out over the broad avenue in front of the hotel and see a tight formation of people drilling together. They are a detachment of the Committees in Defense of the Revolution, volunteers from the surrounding kebeles.

They drill without weapons, but they are very much in earnest. If and when they are called upon to take up arms, they will be ready.

This people's militia that has been formed is very much in evidence here in Addis. Outside every kebele center, every important factory, every office of the mass organizations, are the militia men and women, their rifles slung over their shoulders.

THE ADDIS TIRE WORKERS MILITIA

But they are not an aloof, forbidding force like the police and army such as in the U.S., which function to protect the property of the rich. At the Addis Tire Factory it is the workers of the factory itself who volunteer to put on the red caps and bright blue coveralls of the militia and patrol the gates during their off hours. They are known and respected by their fellow workers, who have draped the walls of the plant with revolutionary slogans.

There is no boss at the Addis Tire Factory. It was nationalized along with most of the other industries in Ethiopia. The man to greet us and to explain how the workers feel about the revolution was the president of the union.

"Since 1974 we have lost four workers of Addis Tire because of the counter-revolutionary elements," he said. "Many have been wounded. We lost one in the workers' militia at the front defending our country against Somali aggression, and two have been wounded. Those in the factory have been waging a bitter struggle against the counter-revolutionaries inside and outside Addis Ababa."

Abebeck is twenty years old, and a member of the revolutionary defense squad in Higher 1, Kebele 8. Why does she volunteer to carry a rifle and protect the kebele for eight hours every day? "It is my revolutionary task," she explained simply.

When the revolution came, it made many enemies. Not all were the very few, highly privileged members of the feudo-bourgeois class that owned almost everything. Some were just people who depended on the old way of life and were horrified at the thought of a society run by the masses—who thought of themselves as superior in some way.

And then there were those whom poverty had so brutalized that they could be hired as terrorists against the revolution.

The headquarters for Higher 11, Kebele 14, consists of a three-room building meagerly furnished with benches and a few desks. On the walls are pictures of Fidel Castro and Temgen Madibo, former chairman of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union, who was assassinated six months ago. The comrades show us bullet holes in the wall of the meeting room and explain that a meeting of kebele residents had been attacked during the white terror.

But now there is the "red terror," or, as Dr. Alemu Abebe, the



A brand-new kebele center!—built through the sacrifice of the urban dwellers, including these enthusiastic teen-aged youth.



The counter-revolution is no abstraction to the workers of Addis Tere. Several have been killed defending the revolution.

mayor of Addis Ababa, calls it, "the free action of the masses," and things are quiet. The counter-revolutionaries have not all been killed, or imprisoned or exiled—far from it. Most are still around. But the people know who they are and are determined that, as a handwritten poster in the kebele office proclaimed, "Ethiopia will not be a second Chile."

**Arussi Province
February 10, 1978**

Freeing the land

A visit to the members of the Arssi Peasants Association can leave no doubt whatsoever about where they stand on the Ethiopian Revolution.

"What would you do if the landlord tried to come back?" I asked an older man, rifle in hand, his sun-baked face serious and his eyes sad. "Either he or I would die," he answered quietly.

How had the revolution changed his life? "The privately owned land was given to the people," he explained. "We've been organized into the peasant association and our product has been improved. More children can go to school now. We can get seed and fertilizer and grain at the cooperative store. Our life has been improved, so we want to spread the good news about our revolution."

We stood on the vast sloping field running down from the nearly 14,000-foot summit of Mount Bada. Warm sunshine lit up the golden reaches of the plain below and the ridge of mountains far beyond.

A human perimeter nearly enclosed us. The peasants were lined up three and four deep around three sides of a football-field sized area. Some wore traditional homemade clothing; others were in European-type shirts and pants that had seen many, many years of

sun and rain. A cluster of women sparkled in spotless white scarves and headdresses trimmed with bright embroidery.

A shout rang out and the horsemen thundered into the enclosure, their spears flashing, red harnesses jingling. His horse rearing in front of us, a man of fifty with only one eye stabbed the air again and again, his passion shaking his whole body.

"Down with the reactionary Somali invaders! Down with! Down with! Down with!

"Everything to the war front! We will kill the invaders or we will die fighting!"

LAND AND ARMS TO THE PEASANTS

There are now 27,000 peasants associations in Ethiopia with six million members. Arssi is one of the larger ones. They have been set up in the period of National Democratic Revolution following the collapse of the feudo-bourgeois regime of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), or Derg, which moved into the vacuum left after the collapse of the old regime, has supported the peasants against their former landlords. Most important, this has meant arming them against the counter-revolutionary forces that are still a great danger here in Ethiopia.

Particularly hated by the peasants is the EDU—the so-called Ethiopian Democratic Union—which for a while had a sizable army in the north that was receiving support from Britain, Sudan and from the ELF, an Eritrean secessionist group. This "democratic" army was in reality commanded by the most reactionary representatives of the old nobility, former princes and feudal lords, some of them members of the Selassie family.

It was decisively defeated in battle last summer by a force made up largely of peasant militia. But it still beams its propaganda into northern Ethiopia from three transmitters in Sudan.

The peasant militia, which receives its training in a large encampment near Addis Ababa, will soon be 500,000 strong, and the final target figure is to arm and train six million farmers—or one out of every five people in Ethiopia—according to a recent statement by Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, Chairman of the PMAC.

We saw a detachment of the militia in Arssi. They drilled with great discipline and conviction. There was even a children's unit, young boys in red uniforms who marched in close order and chanted in unison while carrying little wooden rifles.



Horsemen of the Arssi Peasants Association let a group of foreign journalists know how they feel about defending their revolutionary motherland.

It was clear from the people's response that to be in the militia commands respect, and that the need to defend the revolution is taken very seriously.

STRANGLED BY FEUDAL RELATIONS

The old feudal system of land tenure in Ethiopia meant the greatest misery for the vast majority of the population. Some tenants had to turn over as much as 70% of their crop to the landlord. They were bound to the land in a semi-slave condition, and not only had to work in the fields for the benefit of the landlord—often a member of the aristocracy who lived in Addis or Europe in great luxury—but were bound to perform a variety of services for him as well. Even the peasant's children had to serve as retainers in the landlord's household.

The slow arrival of capitalism in Ethiopia—mostly through foreign penetration—did not alleviate the condition of the peasants; it only made it worse. As a market economy developed in the cities,

the landlords became businessmen and squeezed their serfs even more in order to get the necessary capital to operate their businesses.

The peasants lived on the verge of starvation. All it took was a few years of bad weather to push them over the edge.

THE WOLLO FAMINE

That disaster happened in Wollo Province in 1973 and 1974. A drought deprived the people of any new crop, and they had nothing to fall back on. The backward feudal system had prevented the development of modern roads or means of communication, so that the surplus product from the rest of the country was not made available to them. They died by the hundreds of thousands.

The Haile Selassie regime tried to cover up the terrible famine, even from various international agencies that might have been in a position to help. It was only because of the frantic appeals made by leftist Ethiopian students abroad that news about the famine began to get out to the world.

Even in Addis Ababa itself, the government-controlled media tried to conceal the news about the disaster. But a British filmmaker, Jonathan Dimpleby, went to Wollo and filmed the terrible suffering and death there. His film was finally shown on TV in Addis.

It was the very next day that the struggle began which brought down the Emperor.

RICH LAND, POOR PEOPLE

High up on the clean, windswept hillside near Mount Bada, the Arssi peasants looked strong and healthy. They had brought their traditional foods to share with us: raw milk, fresh from the cow, tasting smoky in a homemade clay pot; a porridge made of barley and fresh butter; round spicy wheat cakes, the whole grain making them crisp and chewy.

"It has been estimated that Ethiopia has enough fertile soil to feed all of Africa," a young woman cadre from the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs told me. And as you drive through the countryside, you see that that is probably true.

Although greatly eroded in recent years because of a lack of flood control projects and proper methods of farming, the topsoil in Ethiopia is rich and deep. In places where steep gullies have been cut by the heavy summer rains, you can see that it goes down 15 and 20 feet.

That there should have been famine in this land was clearly due to archaic social relations, and the recognition of this fact deepened the

burning anger of the masses against the parasitic rulers on top.

Now the land has been nationalized, the landlords have fled or been killed or imprisoned, and for the first time the masses are enjoying the fruits of their labor.

COLLECTIVE AND STATE FARMS

There are two basic types of organization on the land now: collective farms, like in Arssi, where the peasants still till the land in the traditional way but collectively share the harvest, and state farms, which have been set up where formerly there were large-scale private lands hiring field labor.

While any form of mechanized agriculture is still a long way off in Arssi, just getting improved seed and fertilizer through the collective shops that are part of the peasant association is already improving the yield. We visited these shops; big cool sheds with cement floors and tin roofs where the sacks of seed and fertilizer were shielded from the beating sun and rain.

Nearby were cooperative stores selling foodstuffs and clothing at prices a half or a third of those in the private stores in the nearby town of Assela. But in general the supply of these goods is still limited, due mostly to the difficult transportation situation caused by the war, and also because there is now a greater demand for goods from the peasants who have some cash to spend for the first time. (When they needed cash before, they had to go to the landlords for it, and sometimes paid as much as 300% interest.)

The realization of the slogan "Land to the Tiller!" has been the greatest accomplishment of the program of the National Democratic Revolution. It has broken the back of the old reactionary ruling class and has set in motion the millions and millions who have known the greatest suffering and humiliation.

REVOLUTION MUST GO ON

But the politically conscious Ethiopians, whether in the city or the countryside, know that the revolution cannot stop here. In order for there to be a decisive victory over the old order, it must continue to move forward to a proletarian revolution with a working class party leading the way to the reconstruction of society on a socialist foundation.

And whether they are workers in the factories or cadres in the army, most have intimate and personal ties with the peasantry. Just as in Russia in 1917, the proletariat in Ethiopia is overwhelmingly made up of people of peasant origin. The capital city of Addis Ababa, now 1.2 million, was a town of 50,000 only 50 years ago. And



The Arssi women are organized and politically aware.

in many ways, the countryside has penetrated the cities rather than vice versa.

Ask any of the committed and heroic cadres who are struggling to build the working class party, and who are intensely studying the lessons of Marxism-Leninism, about their family history and as likely as not they will tell you they come from a peasant family, and that their childhood was full of hunger and deprivation.

But as they put it, it is not the quantitative size of the working class here that will be decisive. It is the influence of the **ideology** of the world working class movement, which is being embraced avidly and intelligently by those committed to the revolution, be they workers, soldiers, peasants or intellectuals.

PROLETARIANS AND PEASANTS UNITE!

"Proletarians and peasants unite!" reads the poster in the hands of a grizzled peasant in Arssi.

"We oppressed women are also conducting our class struggle," says the leader of the Arssi Women's Association, who in her traditional costume speaks directly for her sisters present. They smile and welcome her back to their ranks with ululating cries.

On Friday afternoon in Addis, the people are gathered with their bedrolls in Revolution Square waiting for the open trucks that will

take them to the countryside for the weekend. There they will help the peasants bring in the harvest, will joke with them and share their food and take a step toward breaking down the age-old barriers between country and city.

And they will discuss together the struggles that are yet to come, will sharpen their understanding of who are the enemies of this revolution, both at home and abroad, and help turn their slogans for unity of workers and peasants into reality.

**Near Harar
February 12, 1978**



Commander Lemma Gutema briefs the press on the unfolding Ethiopian counter-offensive in the Ogaden.

War in the Ogaden

All along the dusty dirt road that leads from the walled city of Harar to the war front, the corn is standing high; its dry stalks rustling in the breeze.

In other parts of Ethiopia we have seen it was harvested long ago and now the tied-up bundles of stalks make neat piles in the fields of stubble. But not along this road.

For the Somali invasion that swept into Ethiopia last July rumbled along this very road right up to the gates of Harar, and the peasants living here—the peasants that the Somali regime claimed were being “liberated”—had fled before they could bring in the harvest.

As our bus lurched along we saw the peasants coming back to their homes to salvage what they could. Driving their cattle, goats, and donkeys before them, the women delicately balancing their loads on their heads, they pick their way past empty artillery shells and a dozen disabled Somali tanks, armored personnel carriers, and trucks.

Two weeks ago the Ethiopian army, greatly reinforced by the workers' and peasants' militia, launched its counter-offensive. In three days it drove the Somali troops to a point 60 kilometers southeast of Harar. This section of the front has been quiet since then.

FEDIS: A GHOST TOWN

The town of Fedis was occupied by the Somalis for many months and was just liberated in the recent fighting. There are a few peasants who have returned out of the 3,000 who once lived here, but for the most part it is a ghost town. Many roofs of buildings have been blasted off, and the sheets of corrugated tin lie twisted on the ground beside other bits of mangled metal that look so out of place in this pastoral setting. Empty k-ration cans are scattered next to broken water gourds left by the peasants when they fled. A mini-twister picks up dust and pieces of paper and swirls them around. Even the paper scraps are evidence of the war, for here in the Ethiopian countryside paper itself is a luxury and normally there is no litter.

The part of the front we visit is deceptively quiet. It is merely a stop along this road, where a few trucks and cleverly camouflaged bivouacs seem to mark only a temporary encampment in the Ethiopian forward thrust. The Somalis are 20 kilometers further on, we are told, and there has been no contact for some time.

ROLE OF MILITIA

It is not just the regular army that is carrying out this offensive. Mingled with the army troops are members of the militia. One man in militia uniform guarding the camp is pointed out as a member of a formerly very oppressed minority. He is distinguished by the ebony blackness of his skin and his bright headdress.

Militia members can often be seen walking along with the returning peasants. All smile, wave, and make clenched fists as our bus rolls past stirring up great clouds of dust. Others are camped by the roadside in little tents in the shade cast by large trees growing beside a rare stream.

There is great confidence here that the Somali invaders are on the run and that their complete rout is not far off. When the invasion came in July, Somalia had the benefit of surprise and had obviously been preparing its attack for some time. A highly mechanized army—under the pretext of being a guerrilla force, the “Western Somalia Liberation Front”—advanced rapidly across the arid plains of the Ogaden until it reached these highlands.

U.S. CUT AID BEFORE SOMALI ATTACK

Ethiopia was caught at a difficult moment. The United States had cut off its arms supplies in a move meant to cripple the revolution and leave it defenseless before its enemies. Even weapons that had already been paid for were not delivered.

Internally, the fierce class struggle going on here was being felt inside the army. A number of high-ranking commanders pulled back their troops during crucial battles. Political agitators rushed to the front and rallied the rank-and-file both to fight the invaders and to force out the reactionaries among their officers.

The Somali forces captured Jijiga and got to the very gates of Harar. There was fighting inside the city of Dire Dawa; some shells even reached the strategic airport there. But the Ethiopian defenses held, and for many months there was a stalemate.

In the meantime, the socialist countries came to Ethiopia's aid. Soviet and Cuban weapons were sent to replace the U.S. arms that had been withheld from this besieged nation. Some technicians also arrived to instruct the Ethiopian forces in the use of these weapons. (U.S. advisors had been in Ethiopia before the revolution, instructing the army of Emperor Haile Selassie.)

VISIT SOMALI POW'S

In Harar, we met the 17 Somali soldiers who had been taken prisoner in this latest counter-offensive. Almost all were youth 20 or under. One was a lad of 13. Several had been wounded, but they told us they were receiving good treatment. They were in a simple but clean and ample barracks.

The commander in charge of the prisoner of war camp explained Ethiopia's commitment to the humane treatment of these soldiers. “There is no contradiction between the broad masses of Somalia and Ethiopia,” he said. The Ethiopians regard these young soldiers as having been duped by the rhetoric and propaganda of the Siad Barre regime.

But it is not Siad Barre alone, with his imperial aspirations to a “Greater Somalia” which would annex over 384,000 square kilometers of Ethiopian territory, all of Djibouti, and a third of Kenya to the south, that is the problem. Were that the case, this war would have been over long ago—and probably would never have even started.

It is the concerted campaign by the NATO powers, led by the U.S., and their collaborators among reactionary Arab regimes, that has kept the Somalis supplied with the most modern weapons and that even now is sending troops from Egypt and other nearby countries to bolster the flagging Somali army.

[On February 15, Kenya forced down an Egyptian jet on its way to Somalia that contained bombs, explosives, and 122 mm shells.]

CAPTURED WEAPONS FROM NATO, ARAB REGIMES

Both in Harar and Dire Dawa, we were shown vast quantities of captured weapons that attested to imperialism's deep commitment to this aggression. Rows and rows of ammunition crates were stamped with their countries of origin: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the NATO bloc. There were 81 mm mortars and 106 mm anti-tank guns from the U.S. and anti-personnel mines made in Italy. Egyptian bombs stood alongside Soviet-supplied materiel left over from the days before Somalia's aggression against Ethiopia when the Siad Barre regime professed to be progressive and was receiving Soviet aid. All the recently supplied equipment, however, came from the imperialist countries and their allies, and some of it was clearly marked for delivery in 1977.

It is generally understood here among all politically conscious sections of the population—from the urban dwellers organized in kebeles, to the workers, to those in peasant associations—that this war is not merely a territorial struggle with Somalia but a war to defend their revolution against a concerted attack coordinated by the class enemies of the Ethiopian masses: the imperialist bourgeoisies of the West and their puppets and clients in the reactionary states in the Middle East.

This consciousness among the masses shows itself in posters, drawings, banners, songs, and chanted slogans everywhere.

POLITICAL AWARENESS OF THE MASSES

When we visited Higher 1, Kebele 8, one of the units of urban dwellers in Addis Ababa, two long lines of militant teenaged boys and girls greeted us. They sang a song that repeated the refrain: "The peasants, oppressed women, and workers must unite and destroy all our enemies!"

In the Akaki Textile Factory, the workers had draped banners above their machines that said, "The Somali masses are our friends." The well-guarded headquarters of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union was also festooned with red banners and such slogans as "We will defend our revolution and territorial integrity" and "Workers of all countries unite!"

The airport terminal at Dire Dawa has its message, too: "NATO—Hands off Revolutionary Ethiopia!"

And on a windswept hillside 180 kilometers south of Addis Ababa, the fervent leader of the Arssi Peasants Association took the microphone and told over a thousand listening peasants and the 120 or so foreign journalists present:



Somali President Siad Barre, covertly backed by the NATO imperialists, claimed he was "liberating" the ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden—like these children in a refugee camp in Harar.

"I am sure this imperialist encirclement will be broken by the Peasants Association militia and the Somali reactionaries will be expelled from our country. Down with international imperialism! Down with the Eritrean secessionists and Somali reactionaries! The international socialist movement will triumph!"

REFUGEES OF THE WAR

But most moving of all was the display of drawings and hand-lettered posters that had been made ready for us at a refugee camp in Harar that houses 5,000 people driven from their homes by this war. Here the people greeted us quietly, solemnly, without the exuberance of the Arssi peasants.

A group of about 50 small children stood apart. One boy of eight held a sign in English: "We are some of the children orphaned by war."

Leaning up against one of the long barracks-like buildings where these displaced persons have neatly set up housekeeping with their few possessions were the messages they had prepared for the foreign visitors. A drawing showed a three-headed monster standing over a pile of corpses, blood dripping from his sword. The heads were labeled Somali reactionaries, international imperialism, and the feudo-bourgeois class of Ethiopia.

One poster proclaimed: "We support the African people's anti-imperialist struggle." Another took the letters EPRP—the self-styled Marxist group that has been carrying out counter-revolutionary terror here for the last two years—and told what they really stand for: "Ethiopian Princes Restoration Party."

Over 20,000 people just in this area of the front have been uprooted by the war. They are almost all peaceful peasants who eke out a bare existence tending their cattle and planting a few crops. They have had little contact in the past with urban life, let alone the rest of the world. But they know that the revolution has broken the age-old hold of the landlords on this fertile land and that the selfish emperor and his princes have been toppled.

Now, with the brutality and destruction of the war has come the urgent need to understand why this is taking place, who has directed this crime against them, what imperialism and reaction are, why the tanks and troops have been sent down the dusty road past Fedis, past the round stone houses on the hillside that now stand with gaping holes and crushed roofs.

And their anger against those who have hurt them so is very, very real.

Addis Ababa
February 25, 1978

A revolutionary auction

Here in Ethiopia's capital and in all the major cities, the weekends are the time for the grand fund-raising activities of the kebeles.

The kebele is the basic neighborhood unit into which the urban masses have been organized in revolutionary Ethiopia. These in turn are grouped into higheres, so that a given neighborhood may be a part of Higher 8, Kebele 15, for example.

DEFENSE FUNDS RAISED BY KEBELES

We visited the fund-raising festival of Higher 1, which incorporates eight kebeles. The money being raised is to go to the warfront—particularly in the Ogaden, where Ethiopian regular troops and militia men and women are battling to push out the invading army of Somalia. It is common knowledge that Somalia is being heavily supplied by a group of Western imperialist nations and their allies among the most reactionary states in the area, particularly Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan.

The fund-raising festivals are colorful events. They are also a proof of the tremendous mass support for the slogans "Revolutionary Motherland or death!" and "Everything to the war front!" which appear everywhere in this besieged country.

As we approach the neighborhood where the festival is taking place, it is clear that something extraordinary is going on. Flags and banners line the streets, and many of the people are wearing round paper badges pinned to their shirts. Young girls in bright red caps are selling the badges for one Ethiopian birr (about 50 cents, proceeds to go to the kebele).

A demonstration of about 50 women with red flags marches through the streets, clapping and singing. They are from the Women's Association and they are urging everyone to go to the festival.

KEEN AWARENESS OF THE WAR

On television the night before, a recently made documentary had footage from the Ogaden. (Even here in desperately poor Ethiopia, there are TV aerials scattered through the kebeles. Many of the sets are in public places like bars and cafes where crowds can watch the programs.) Long columns of militia men and women filed past the camera, going to the front. Their commitment to the defense of revolutionary Ethiopia was shown by their smiles and clenched fists.

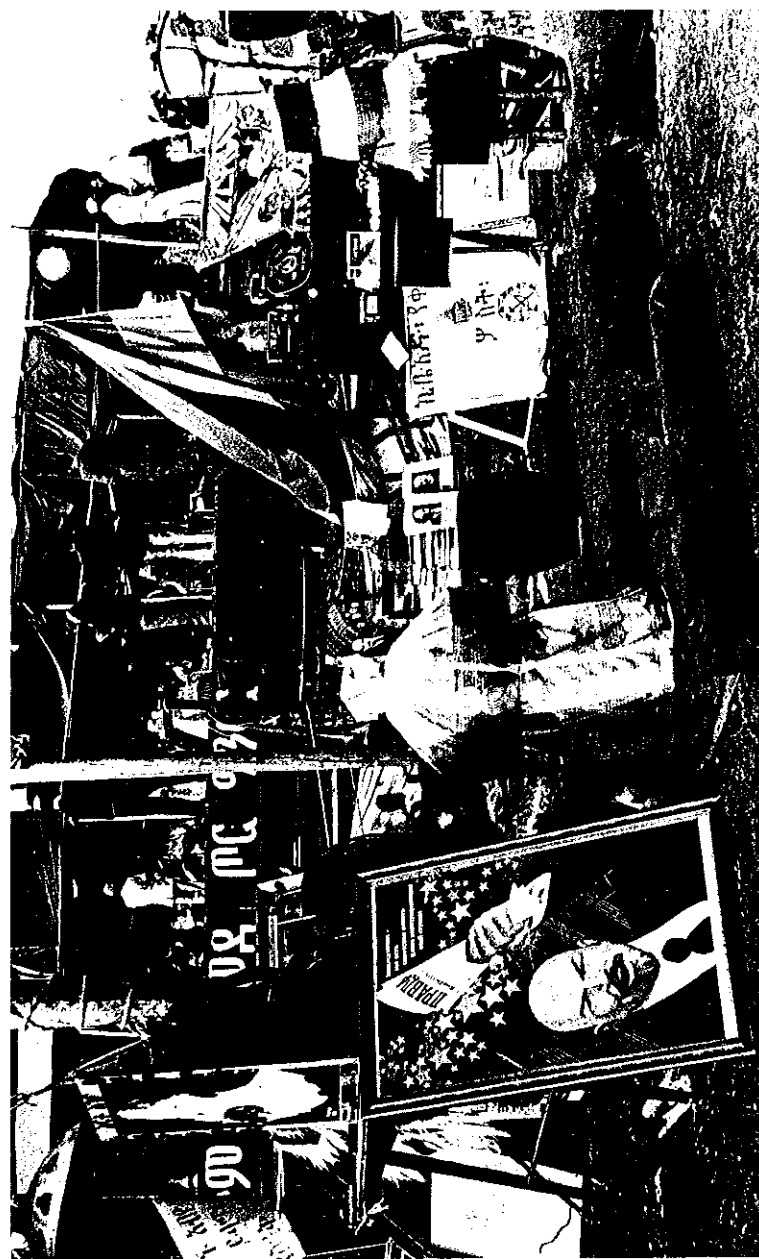
The village of Erer had recently been liberated from the Somali occupying forces. Peasants were interviewed who, when the Somali army came, had fled into the wilderness and survived on their wits in the harsh, semi-desert land. They returned to their villages with the expulsion of the Somalis, and are now trying to repair the damage inflicted on them: homes destroyed, bridges blown up, their crops unharvested, and their cattle killed or dispersed.

It seems as though every other person in Addis has a relative or friend at the front, either in uniform or living in the war zone. (Somalia still occupies 70% of Hararghe province, as well as enormous areas further south, and lays claim to over a third of Ethiopia.)

So there is not only great popular indignation against the Somali regime but also the understanding throughout the population that this war is a reactionary onslaught against their revolution, a revolution which for the first time has given the land to the tillers and brought the broad masses of Ethiopia into consciousness, organization, and struggle for control of their destiny.

A REVOLUTIONARY AUCTION

The fund-raising festival takes place in a large compound much like a fairground. Several thousand people, closely packed, are facing a broad open-air stage where an auction is in progress. On the ground before the stage, so that people can inspect them, are the items to be auctioned.



Revolutionary art is much in demand in Ethiopia today. Here at a kebele fund-raising auction political posters and paintings mingle with radios, household items, and handicrafts.

Goats, sheep, cattle, and chickens appear unmoved by the excitement of the auctioneer's call, but a noble horse gaily decked out in a homemade harness paces back and forth to the music. A sack of coffee waits to be sold, a hand-lettered sign pinned to the burlap: "Let red terror also visit the bureaucracy."

(The campaign of counter-revolutionary violence, which has claimed the lives of hundreds of the most devoted organizers of the kebeles, trade unions, and other mass organizations in the last year, is known as the "white terror." Red terror was launched just a few months ago against these enemies of the revolution, and many have been killed or captured so that today things are quiet in Addis. The bureaucracy means all those members of the old feudo-bourgeois order who still occupy important positions in the running of society, even though their control over the key sections of the economy and over the armed forces has pretty much been broken.)

There are many objects of art for sale that express the themes of the revolution. One large and vibrantly colored painting, skillfully executed, shows a worker, a soldier, and a peasant man and woman standing on three bodies representing feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucratic capitalism. The four figures depicting the masses are brandishing their rifles and a hammer and sickle aloft, while over their heads is the symbol of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU).

A framed collage of political pictures and handbills contains a blood-stained 10-birr note from the pocket of Tewodros, the first chairman of the AETU. He was assassinated by the "white terror," and the bill was in his pocket when his body was found.

An electric injera maker is for sale, with a sign hanging from it: "Breakfast for my life, lunch for my revolution." Injera is the national bread of Ethiopia, big and round like a floppy pancake.

A SINGING MILITIA WOMAN

Up on the stage, the auctioneer takes a break and a militia woman, complete with rifle, comes to the microphone. She begins a revolutionary song to great applause. As she sings, members of the audience start coming up, one at a time, to stuff bills under her cap, in her pockets, under her belt. An older woman in traditional costume puts a 10-birr note in her hand and kisses her.

People start taking off their rings and putting them on her fingers, until she is wearing at least a dozen. The act is so successful she is called back for an encore.

A wedding party is led up onto the stage. The bride and groom are decked out in Western-style gown and tuxedo, but the bridesmaids wear the kebele badges for decoration. They go to the microphone



What better way to celebrate a wedding than at a kebele fund-raising festival?

and announce that they are donating their wedding money to the kebele. Wild applause.

The auction resumes. The featured prize is the "militia bull." The kebele organizers tell how they searched for weeks to find this bull—born in the month of the revolution, February 1974, and speckled all over like a militia uniform. The bull stares placidly out at the amused crowd.

Last week, it is announced, Higher 25 auctioned this same bull for 15,000 birr. It was then given back by the winner to be sold again. (This writer is reminded of a story by Mark Twain about a similar fund-raising device used to get money for hospitals during the American Civil War. In Nevada, where sentiment for the anti-slave Union Army ran high, the same sack of corn was auctioned and re-auctioned from town to town, raising in the course of a year about half a million dollars.)

The bidding begins at 6,000 birr. It quickly goes up to 9,000. Who can afford these high bids in a country where the average annual income is less than a hundred dollars?

MERCHANTS AND MASSES

The auction gives a fascinating glimpse of the class contradictions and struggle that are going on here in a country where the masses are trying to push the revolution through to completion—to the total expropriation of the ruling classes and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship. While the land and the key sectors of production have already been nationalized, there are still many private merchants and other representatives of the propertied classes who occupy privileged positions.

The first bid is from a coffee exporter. His offer is topped by an individual known as the "salt man" because earlier he had bought a block of salt for 5,000 birr. Some competition between these merchants goes back and forth as they inch up the bid, a hundred birr at a time.

When the bidding slows down, a group of young workers form a football huddle around a second microphone, chanting the name of the last bidder over and over, and adding, "He's a patriot, he's a patriot."

But it looks as though the bidding has reached a plateau. Then the social service workers' union steps in and pushes the bid up by a thousand birr. The merchants have to go along with it and put in new bids. This happens a few times, until finally the bull is sold to the coffee merchant for 11,000 birr. He makes a little speech ex-

pressing his support for the revolution and the war effort and donates the bull back.

I ask the comrades who have brought me to the event whether they feel there's a danger that these merchants will be seen as heroes by the masses just because they have the money to dominate the auctions. After all, a worker or peasant donating a few birr to the revolution is actually making a much greater personal sacrifice.

"We've been discussing this," they say. "Of course, this could be a danger if it were not explained to the masses." But it seems to be widely understood that it is the pressure of the masses themselves that has brought forth this generosity from the merchants, and that the auctions are a useful way at this point to channel some of the wealth in their hands into the mass organizations.

From the point of view of the merchants themselves, they undoubtedly feel that with the masses getting increasingly armed and organized, it is wise to cultivate the reputation of being a "patriot."

There were 22 such fund-raising festivals being held in Addis today, and many more in other parts of the country. All together, they succeed in raising millions of birr to strengthen the revolutionary defense of Ethiopia through the voluntary action of the masses rather than through some form of government taxation.

And they also must serve notice on the enemies of the Ethiopian Revolution, at home and abroad, that the masses are willing to make every sacrifice in defense of what they have won.

**Addis Ababa
February 27, 1978**

Women breaking tradition's chains

Just a few years ago, the celebration of International Women's Day was unheard of here in Ethiopia. Women belonged in the home—especially the poor and oppressed women who made up 95% of the female population—and would be beaten by their husbands for their outrageous behavior if they went out to discuss their problems with other women, let alone dared to demonstrate in public.

There was a women's association—of sorts. It was headed by one of Emperor Haile Selassie's daughters, a princess, and it was a parody of the bourgeois women's groups in the West. It held fashion shows, it chose beauty queens, and it existed to strengthen the domination of the ruling Amharic elite over the horrendously oppressed masses. Its officers in almost every province were the wives of the court-appointed officials. The head of the provincial women's association would be the wife of the governor and so on down the line.

But this year, for the third March 8 in a row, tens of thousands of women will demonstrate here in Addis and in other cities as part of the worldwide celebration of International Women's Day. In the countryside, the women's associations that form part of the peasants' associations will be organizing their own activities.



Workers' militia drill at the Akaki textile plant.

Women's associations in the factories will be honoring the day, too, as will the women's groups in the kebeles, or urban dwellers' associations.

Posters are already going up all over as part of the agitation and propaganda building up to March 8. This effort is being supported and materially aided by the Provisional Military Administrative Council or Derg which exercises state power in revolutionary Ethiopia.

How did this transformation in women's position and consciousness, which is still going on, take place in Ethiopia? Why is it that a country which is materially so far behind the Western capitalist nations, and where women are still by and large doing traditional "women's" work, now officially puts the liberation of women on its agenda when women in the United States, who make up over 40% of the work force, can't even get the government to pass an equal rights amendment?

DISCUSSION WITH A WOMAN ORGANIZER

A discussion with the organizer of the Akaki Women's Association sheds light on some of these questions.

Sthaye is her name, and her looks are deceptive. Her face is round and young, and she is barely five feet tall. She was born in the town of Warder deep in the Ogaden—the region occupied last summer by Somali troops where the Ethiopian army and militia men and women are now waging a fierce counter-offensive—and she has lived and worked at low-paying jobs in Dire Dawa, Harar, and Addis Ababa.

She is a woman who would hardly have been taken notice of by the cultured, bourgeois ladies who ran the pre-revolution women's association. But that would have been their mistake, for Sthaye is a formidable adversary.

When she starts to speak, she is organized, forceful, and full of humor. Her strong, compact figure in blue jeans and sweater is animated and her gesturing hands press home her points.

Akaki is the industrial suburb of Addis Ababa, but it is not industrial in the Western sense. This is no sooty factory town with huge plants everywhere. Rather the plants that do exist are interspersed with open fields and little huts. One paved road runs through the center of town, and a constant traffic of pedestrians, domesticated animals, and horse-drawn carts streams along in both directions.

Yet this is where in the past the peasants forced off their land by greedy landlords came hoping to find a steady job, either in the

deafening roar of the textile plants or in the tire factories or glass-works.

Women got jobs in the Akaki textile plant. Some gave birth to their children beside the roaring machines, for there was no such thing as maternity leave and they couldn't afford to stop working, even though all they got for their labor was a few dollars a week.

Sthaye had worked in such a factory in Dire Dawa during her teens. She had done it to get money for some schooling, for her soldier father had been killed when she was three and her mother had subsisted since then by tending a small soft-drink stand.

By the time she came to Akaki a year and a half ago, she had already had many struggles with the bourgeois women's associations. These began shortly after the proclamation made by the Derg that nationalized all the land and set up peasants' associations. This tremendous event, which took place in response to the rising struggle of the peasants against the landlords, unleashed the energies of the oppressed masses, making it easier for them to take the offensive in every area of life.

LAND REFORM TRANSFORMED THE WOMEN

"After the land reform it was much easier to organize the women," she told me.

"When the rich families owned the land, women weren't allowed to till the fields. There was a feudal saying, 'If a woman cultivates the land, fruits will not grow.' Women weren't even allowed to touch the farm implements, although they could have kitchen gardens and give vegetables to the landlord, which was a real contradiction.

"Since they got a percentage of the crop, the landlords only wanted strong men working the fields, so if the husband died the women had to leave and become either servants, beggars, or prostitutes.

"But with the land reform every family, whether it was headed by a woman or a man, got the same amount of land to work.

"Here in Akaki everyone has very close family ties to the peasants, and there are many people here who still work the land nearby. So the land reform had a big effect here as everywhere.

"Before that the bourgeois women's associations had fought against the organizations of the oppressed women, which had started originally as mutual aid groups when there was sickness or death in the family. They had a countrywide organization which made them strong, while we were just separate groups in the neighborhoods.

"Anyway, the bourgeois women's association tried to prevent us from organizing; they even tried to jail our leaders. At one point the organization of oppressed women had to function underground for four months. But finally we beat the bourgeois women's association and were proclaimed the legal women's group."

This took place at a time when the feudo-bourgeois class was on the defensive all around. Not only was rural land nationalized, but so were urban land and extra houses, the banks and other financial institutions, and about 180 major industrial enterprises.

MATERIAL PROBLEMS

But after this battle was won, more intractable problems came to the surface. The biggest one was illiteracy. Nearly all the oppressed women were illiterate, and so the Akaki Women's Association announced classes in reading and writing.

"The first week everyone came, and there was great excitement. But the next week there were only 20, and the week after that just a handful."

Everyone knew what the problem was. The women had no leisure time; every minute was filled with hard work. There was no one to watch the children; there were no prepared foods available, or laundromats to do the wash.

"A woman in Ethiopia can spend 12 to 14 hours just preparing food for a few meals," Sthaye told me. "Everything is prepared at home—and tradition says that it **must** be prepared at home, that a woman isn't a good wife if she doesn't clean and grind the grain by hand. She must prepare the hot peppers herself, boiling and drying them and grinding them up—even if it makes everyone in the house go around with red eyes," she laughed wryly.

So the Women's Association members thought, and came up with a plan. Now that there was land available to till, they would get some from the government and would work it collectively, and with the proceeds they would start to build the things they needed: kindergartens, markets, communal restaurants. They would even bring in electricity to neighborhoods that hadn't had any.

We saw one of these farms. It was a truck garden near Addis, and there were women tending the vegetables in the rich, dark earth. It looked quite commonplace; it was hard to imagine the struggle with tradition and privilege that had had to take place before the seeds could be put in the ground.

"It was even harder for the factory women. They had to work all day and then come home and do all the housework too—the men



Throughout Ethiopia, millions of women have helped provision the front-line fighters. These members of a kebele women's association in Addis Ababa are preparing food for the front.

wouldn't take the responsibility. A city woman might get four or five hours sleep a night, she had so much to do.

SOLIDARITY

"Now through the women's associations in the kebeles and factories, we are trying to solve this. The women who don't have jobs prepare food which can be bought at the kebele store. And where factory women used to be ashamed to buy their lunch, and went home on their lunch hour to prepare food, we are now building tearooms in every kebele where the factory women can get a good lunch."

Sthaye didn't mention it, but it was obvious that the strong comradeship now being exercised by the women had done a lot to discourage their spouses' chauvinism.

"To develop comradeship between the rural and city women, we go to the peasants' associations to get milk—and at the same time we get a more balanced diet for our children.

"In turn, the factory women's associations make sure that a generous proportion of the textiles they produce is requisitioned for sale to the rural women's associations at a modest price. You see, the private merchants have plenty of money to buy up all the material and then sell it at a good profit, but we say no, so much must first be sold to the women's associations."

All these measures, of course, are hampered by the need to mount a war of defense against the Somali invasion—an invasion promoted and supported by Western imperialism. The women's associations are devoting much of their time and resources to preparing food for the war front, time and resources which would otherwise be going to build more kindergartens, more cooperative markets and kitchens.

But the modest material gains made thus far by Ethiopian women are not what is so startling, anyway. It is their changed consciousness after centuries of humble submission, after centuries of abuse and resignation, that comes through so remarkably in women like Sthaye.

It is a part, an indispensable part, of the Ethiopian Revolution itself, which is sweeping this ancient land and overturning all that is outmoded in social relations. It is the prerequisite to changing the material conditions, just as it has been in all previous great revolutions.

This March 8 it will burst forth in militant, disciplined organization when the vanguard women of Ethiopia join their sisters around the world in celebrating the emergence of the movement of proletarian women.

**Addis Ababa
February 15, 1978**

Mengistu speaks to the press

The Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, told a press conference here today that the efforts of the NATO imperialists in collusion with the reactionary Arab regimes to dismember Ethiopia will never succeed and that the revolution of the broad masses for justice, equality, democracy and socialism will triumph over internal reaction and foreign intervention.

The head of state of revolutionary Ethiopia spoke for several hours at the National Assembly Hall answering the questions of foreign journalists who have been visiting Ethiopia for the past week.

His remarks were interrupted by the applause of political cadres working for the revolution who were also in attendance.

The chairman of the PMAC wound up his remarks with an analysis of the main lessons of the Ethiopian Revolution in answer to a question from Workers World.

Many of the questions reflected the bias and distortion of the western imperialist press and were answered candidly and strongly by Colonel Mengistu.



PMAC Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam.

SOMALI TROOPS DEEP IN ETHIOPIA

The oft-repeated charge of the Somali regime, echoed by the NATO countries, that Ethiopia intends to invade Somalia, Mengistu commented wryly, is "like someone shouting for help while he is actually doing the beating."

Pointing out that Somali troops, heavily armed with the most modern weapons, have penetrated 700 kilometers into Ethiopian territory, and that Ethiopia "is waging a defensive war around heavily populated cities like Harar and Dire Dawa," he stated that "Ethiopia has no aim other than expelling the invading forces of Somalia from her territory. Ethiopia neither entertains any claims on the rights and territories of any neighboring countries nor pursues any expansionist policy."

Most of the journalists had visited the front near Harar that past Sunday, where disabled Somali tanks and armored personnel carriers plus a vast quantity of captured Somali weapons supplied by NATO, and by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Iran, attested to the undisguised aggression that has been carried out against the people of Ethiopia.

ASSISTANCE OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Since the U.S. government refused last spring to deliver any more weapons to Ethiopia, even those which had been contracted and paid for already, Ethiopia turned to the socialist countries for aid. In reply to a question about the role of Soviet and Cuban advisors in Ethiopia, Mengistu explained that they were there to acquaint and orient Ethiopian troops in the use of these weapons, much as U.S. military personnel had been aiding the former monarchy of Haile Selassie.

But before answering the question, he first registered his strong objection to it, saying "This is interference by certain arrogant powers who consider themselves to be the policemen of the world. Why should we be asked these questions? Who has the right to ask us?"

"Is there anyone who has asked anything about the forces that America has in the Far East, in Europe or in the Middle East? Is there anyone who has asked anything about the forces which France and Britain have in Africa? . . . Was there anyone who had asked such questions during the 25 years when the American army had a military base and numerous forces in Ethiopia?"

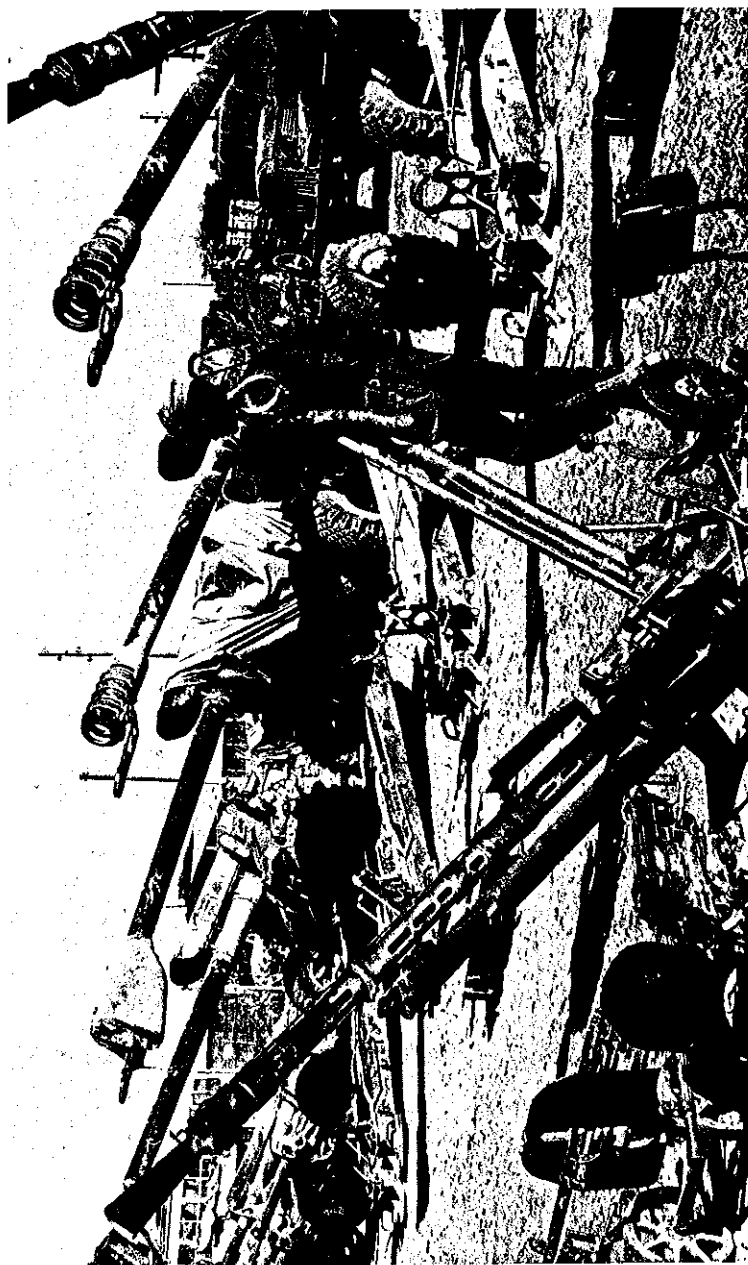
He continued this point by taking the opportunity to extend Ethiopia's gratitude to the Soviet Union and Cuba for their assistance.

NEGOTIATIONS ARE AN IMPERIALIST PLOY

On the question of negotiations, which the imperialist countries are now calling for, Mengistu answered:

"Two years ago the Western world was pressing for a negotiated settlement (in Angola) when the invading armed forces of racist South Africa had reached Luanda. But they did not force the withdrawal of the invading racist forces of South Africa. In fact, the Western powers did not condemn the invasion.

"It is now more than seven months since the arrogant and reactionary armed forces of Somalia opened a war of aggression against Ethiopia. Having widened the extent of their war of invasion,



Captured Somali weapons on display in Dire Dawa. At first, Somalia tried to claim that all the fighting was being done by "guerrillas" but then Ethiopia began showing the world downed planes and heavy weapons like these.

the invaders have now penetrated almost 700 kilometers deep into our territory. When all this was happening, we have not heard of a single Western government condemning Somalia's war of aggression and invasion of their troops.

"But now, because the People's Armed Forces of Ethiopia have strengthened their defense, the phrase 'negotiated settlement' is being heard from every corner. . . . Why don't they put pressure for the immediate withdrawal of the invading armed forces of Somalia from our territory? Why are they pouring in additional invading forces and armaments into Somalia so as to help it widen its invasion and promote the blood of the oppressed masses being spilt in vain?"

WARNS U.S. TO END INTERVENTION

Discussing the role of the United States government in all this, Mengistu pointed out while the U.S. has refrained from direct intervention and has assumed an air of neutrality, "The collaborators of the U.S. have been meeting Somalia's demands for weapons from their stockpiles which are then replenished by America. . . . To say that the U.S. government which is the source of this anti-people and anti-Ethiopian plot does not know about its own deeds is tantamount to saying that officials of Capitol Hill do not know about the Pentagon's position to make the neutron bomb, which is dangerous to the human race."

The chairman took the occasion of this press conference to issue a strong warning to the NATO imperialists. "If, from among the Western governments, the U.S., Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany, in particular, continue their policy of devising in secret means of causing the bloodshed of the people of Africa and widening the scope of destruction and annihilation—and, by going even further, persist in doing so openly and with adventurist arrogance—and unless the peace-loving broad masses of these countries put pressure on them and duly check their actions, maintaining diplomatic relations with them becomes totally meaningless."

MENGISTU REPLIES TO WORKERS WORLD ON LESSONS OF REVOLUTION

Colonel Mengistu chose to end the press conference by answering a question from the correspondent of Workers World newspaper on the lessons to come out of the Ethiopian Revolution.

While, "in general, the basic and essential laws of revolution have worked for Ethiopia," he replied, "there are certain situations which make the Ethiopian Revolution different from other revolutions." He pointed to the spontaneous character of the February 1974 Revolution.



Ethiopian revolutionaries have learned from other struggles, both the victories and the bitter defeats.

"Although it is not to be denied that ideal conditions for the revolution had existed for [a] long [time], the absence of a movement to spearhead the masses, or of a proletarian party is a drawback which we have not even now overcome.

"What does set the Ethiopian Revolution apart from other revolutions is the ability to introduce drastic measures without a proletarian party and still manage to foil subversive activity. The fact that the armed forces which were molded under a feudo-bourgeois system have until now stood and struggled with the democratic revolution of the broad masses is the other novel aspect of our revolution."

He added that the military, because it had been "one of the trampled and oppressed sectors of society," had "rejected the role assigned to it," and had revolted against the feudo-bourgeois establishment.

PARTY BEING BUILT

"This is not to imply that the situation is lasting," the PMAC chairman added, "or that what has been accomplished to date is enough.

"It can easily be seen that even now Ethiopia's communist forces are engaged in a committed struggle to lead the program of the national democratic revolution to the desired goal and establish a proletarian party in order to ensure the proletarian dictatorship. A reliable foundation has been laid for the establishment of the Party."

He added that the Ethiopian Revolution has learned from the experience of other revolutions and revolutionaries, and particularly he referred to Lenin.

"There are areas of activity which justify us in saying that Lenin's great lessons in militancy and leadership have served us well. Making decisions promptly and without hesitation or constraint can be counted as decisive factors for the triumph of our revolution."

The comrades in the hall laughed and applauded as Mengistu concluded, "That is to say, that the anti-people forces who had lined us up for their lunch—we have had them for breakfast."



PMAC Chairman Mengistu arrives in Cuba for triumphal visit after Ethiopia's resounding victory in the Ogaden. Photo: Granma

Chronology of the revolution

Included in this chronology are important dates which highlight some of the significant political and economic victories which the oppressed masses of Ethiopia have scored since February 1974.

February 18, 1974 • Ethiopian teachers went on strike in opposition to the proposed Education Sector Review. • Taxi drivers went on strike; opposition to the government continued unabated.

February 20, 1974 • Students and workers staged a peaceful demonstration in Addis Ababa against the government and made political demands.

February 27, 1974 • The cabinet of Aklilou Hapte-Wolde, a tool of the feudal oligarchy, was toppled by popular pressure.

April 26, 1974 • Members of the former cabinet were detained in a designated place.

June 28, 1974 • A Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army was established.

July 8, 1974 • The Coordinating Committee issued a statement containing 13 points explaining the aims and objectives of "Ethiopia Tikdem"—Ethiopia First.

July 9, 1974 • Ethiopian political refugees were invited to return home from abroad.

July 22, 1974 • The cabinet of Endalkatchew Mekonnen was dissolved and in accordance with the demand of the Coordinating Committee Lij Michael Imiru became Prime Minister.

August 16, 1974 • The Coordinating Committee abolished the following institutions which were established under the feudal system: The Crown Council, The Imperial "Chilot" which used to review court cases and appeal to the former Emperor, and the "Chilot" Judicial Review Commission. • The Coordinating Committee also transferred the office of the Chief of Staff of the former Emperor's private cabinet to the Ministry of National Defence.

August 27, 1974 • The Anbassa Bus Transport Company was transferred to public ownership. The company had for 21 years served as a source of income to the royalty and feudal oligarchy.

September 5, 1974 • The St. George Brewery and the Haile Selassie Prize Trust were transferred to the Ministry of Finance. • It was disclosed that the former Emperor had earned more than 11 million birr in dividends from the St. George Brewery.

September 11, 1974 • Institutions run by the Welfare Trust came under the supervision of the government. These were five hospitals, three clinics, two orphanages, two homes for the aged, hotels, buildings, agricultural estates and three other institutions. It was disclosed that the former Emperor was unwilling to bring back to the country fortunes he had amassed in foreign banks so that they could be utilized to overcome the country's grave economic crisis. • The Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army invited the Emperor and the people to watch over television a film on the disastrous Wollo famine, "The Hidden Hunger" by British journalist Jonathan Dimbleby.

September 12, 1974 • Haile Selassie was deposed. • The 1955 Constitution which gave complete power to the former Emperor was suspended. • Parliament which was established on feudal and nobility class lines was dissolved. • Guidelines for Ethiopia's new foreign policy issued.

October 18, 1974 • Establishment of Zemetcha, the National Work Campaign for Development Through Cooperation was announced.

November 24, 1974 • The PMAC disclosed that in accordance with its political decision, 60 former officials and members of the Armed Forces were executed on November 23, 1974, for crimes committed against the Ethiopian people and for attempts to disrupt the country's popular movement. They included the first chairman of the PMAC and two former prime ministers.

December 20, 1974 • The Provisional Military Government declared policy guidelines on Ethiopian Socialism.

December 21, 1974 • National Work Campaign for Development Through Cooperation launched throughout the country.

December 27, 1974 • Radio Ethiopia for the first time began nationwide broadcasts in the Oromo language.

January 1, 1975 • Three commercial banks, three other financial institutions and 14 insurance companies transferred to public ownership.

February 3, 1975 • Seventy-two privately owned industrial and commercial companies brought under government control.

February 16, 1975 • Mass demonstrations were staged in Addis Ababa to condemn perpetrators of disorder and anti-revolutionary acts in Eritrea.

March 4, 1975 • The proclamation making all rural land in Ethiopia the collective property of the people was declared, putting an end to the feudal system of land tenure in the country.

March 5, 1975 • Close to 800,000 persons in Addis Ababa took part in a mass rally supporting nationalization of all rural land. Temporary surtax introduced to raise more funds for drought relief and rehabilitation.

March 21, 1975 • Asfa Wossen's appointment as king-designate annulled: all titles of prince and princess given to persons of the royal blood abolished.

May 1, 1975 • May Day was observed for the first time in Ethiopia.

July 26, 1975 • All land and extra houses in urban centers throughout the country were nationalized effective August 7, 1975.

September 29, 1975 • Private schools brought under government control.

December 6, 1975 • New labour law proclaimed.

December 13, 1975 • Proclamation strengthening farmers' associations announced.

December 29, 1975 • Proclamation regulating private capital announced.

April 20, 1976 • The program of the National Democratic Revolution announced.

May 16, 1976 • A 9-point policy declaration on peacefully solving the Eritrean problem announced.

July 13, 1976 • Revolutionary measures taken against Major Sisay Hapte and others for plotting against the Ethiopian revolution.

July 17, 1976 • Nation-wide celebrations marking the end of the first phase of the National Work Campaign Zemetcha observed.

July 25, 1976 • Lt. Col. Berhanu Haile, former commander of the 26th Battalion of the First Army Division, and Lt. Haile Mariam Hassen were executed by members of the Battalion

itself by receiving revolutionary justice. The two officers were plotting to restore the old order by repealing all of the revolutionary laws so far enacted.

September 23, 1976 • An attempt made on the life of Lt. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam.

September 26, 1976 • Mass rally held in Addis Ababa condemning the action. • A proclamation issued for the supervision of schools under the control of the masses in rural areas as well as in urban centers.

October 9, 1976 • Proclamation for the consolidation and organization of urban dwellers associations and reform of the organizational set up of municipalities issued.

November 26, 1976 • Proclamation issued establishing a road transport authority to promote an efficient and economical road transport system in the country.

December 29, 1976 • A proclamation issued determining the powers and responsibilities of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) as well as those of the council of ministers. • A proclamation issued establishing a Higher Education Commission and specifying the objectives of Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia.

January 30, 1977 • Mass rally held in Addis Ababa condemning the counter-revolutionary interference of the reactionary Nimeiri and his clique in the internal affairs of Ethiopia.

February 3, 1977 • Revolutionary measure taken against General Teferi Benti, the former chairman of the PMAC, and other members of the Dergue for plotting a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat.

February 4, 1977 • Mass rally held in Addis Ababa supporting the revolutionary measure taken against counter-revolutionary members of the Dergue.

February 11, 1977 • The newly revised proclamation issued defining the powers and responsibilities of the PMAC and the Council of Ministers. This followed the crushing of counter-

revolutionary plot. First Vice Chairman Mengistu assumes Chairmanship of the PMAC. Second Chairman becomes Vice-Chairman. The revolution advances to the offensive.

March 6, 1977 • PMAC begins arming workers and members of the Kebele Associations to defend the revolution.

March 8, 1977 • International Women's Day celebrated all over Ethiopia.

March 12, 1977 • The former "Radio Voice of the Gospel" nationalized and renamed "Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia."

March 14, 1977 • Comrade Fidel Castro, the Revolutionary leader of the heroic peoples of Cuba, arrived on an official visit to Ethiopia.

March 23, 1977 • Revolutionary campaign launched to cleanse the city of Addis Ababa from counter-revolutionaries.

March 25, 1977 • Comrade Teodros Bekele, First President of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union, assassinated by counter-revolutionaries.

April 14, 1977 • Mass rally held in Addis Ababa to defend the Ethiopian revolution and the territorial integrity of the country from the threat of external aggression.

April 21, 1977 • Newly revised proclamation issued defining the powers and responsibilities of the Central Committee of Revolution and Development.

April 22, 1977 • United States espionage centers in Ethiopia closed down.

May 1, 1977 • May Day celebrated throughout Ethiopia for the third time.

May 5, 1977 • Colonel Mengistu, Chairman of the PMAC, paid an official visit to the Soviet Union.

May 8, 1977 • A second revolutionary campaign launched to cleanse the city of Addis Ababa of counter-revolutionary elements.

June 25, 1977 • The people's militia and the regular forces staged a revolutionary parade at Revolution Square demonstrating their readiness to defend the Ethiopian Revolution and the territorial integrity of the country from domestic and foreign enemies.

July 23, 1977 • Somalia launched a full-scale invasion of the Ogaden area of Ethiopia under the cover of aiding a "guerrilla" struggle.

September 12, 1977 • Mass rally in Addis Ababa commemorated the overthrow of Haile Selassie.

November 12, 1977 • PMAC Vice-Chairman Atnafu Abate eliminated after opposing Ethiopia's socialist, anti-imperialist course.

March 5, 1978 • Jijiga liberated from Somali occupation marking decisive forward thrust of Ethiopian counter-offensive in Ogaden.

March 9, 1978 • Somalia announced it was withdrawing all its troops from Ethiopia amid reports that the Somali army had been totally routed.

April 1978 • Chairman Mengistu visits Cuba where he receives the Playa Giron National Order for his contribution to the struggle against imperialism. He is welcomed at a rally of one million people.

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