

continue the unjust fight against the Eritreans and other national movements in Ethiopia, Mengistu sought and obtained Israeli support. This last action made it undoubtedly clear that the Mengistu regime's originally progressive role in the region had been exhausted.

Today the opposition forces in Ethiopia are united within the Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF) which is composed of six organizations working within a national front, based on a democratic program. The EPDRF's main aims were to topple the Mengistu regime and establish a democratic government based on political pluralism. A significant element of the EPDRF's National Charter emphasizes the right of the nationalities to independence, as opposed to the National Constitution of the defeated regime which only gave the right to autonomy. Perhaps this explains the EPLF's coordination with the EPDRF over the past several years.

The EPLF, a Marxist-Leninist organization, has a broad base composed mainly of peasants and workers; it has been liberating Eritrea bit by bit since the mid-1970s through armed struggle. Consequently, the same factors which weakened Mengistu's regime, and strengthened the Ethiopian opposition forces, also gave a push forward to the Eritrean liberation process, but the decisive force behind Eritrea's freedom was the popular struggle, organized by the EPLF.

The EPLF's program

Unity, a clear political line and sound leadership, coupled with self-reliance, were the major elements of Eritrea's struggle for independence. Since the early 1970s, the EPLF has been able to mobilize most of the masses and realize tactical and strategic achievements based on a program for ending Ethiopian domination in Eritrea and establishing an independent democratic state. To this end, the EPLF and the ELF ended their civil war in 1974 and concentrated all their efforts in the battle against occupation, although they never actually united in one organization.

At the same time, the EPLF has been preparing for independence by building an infrastructure in the liberated areas. They have developed agriculture to provide for their people's needs, and have also set up workshops to produce certain items like shoes and clothing. In addition to this, they have set up several hospitals, medical clinics and schools.

As was mentioned before, the EPLF has worked closely with the EPDRF,

militarily and politically, based on a mutual agreement that prevents the latter from entering Eritrean land and on recognition of the Eritrean people's right to self-determination and secession. This is a clear demonstration that the EPLF is in complete control of Eritrea's territory. At the same time, the EPLF's decision not to participate in the interim government formed by the EPDRF, testifies to the former's determination to achieve independence. A recent example of cooperation between the two fronts is the official agreement that allows Ethiopia to use the port of Assab, which is its main access to the sea. In turn, the EPDRF officially recognized the Eritrean front's desire to hold a referendum on Eritrea's future, whereby Eritreans can vote for the type of relation they want with Ethiopia: independence, province or confederation. A UN-supervised referendum has been a priority for the EPLF since 1980, in order to gain international legality for Eritrea and safeguard its sovereignty in the future.

The ground-breaker of the Eritrean liberation process, and that which most enabled the Eritreans to achieve victory, is the *armed struggle*. For over 30 years the EPLF has steadfastly fought and given this form of struggle utmost priority. Although they suffered a military setback in the mid-1970s, due to the regime's escalated offensive, assisted by the Soviet Union, the Eritreans never wavered or surrendered. The opposite is true; they continued to fight and grow stronger. The EPLF was consistent and persistent in pursuing its goals, and its revolutionary practice never gave way to making concessions.

We can safely say that steadfastness and the accumulation of correct revolutionary struggle have been rewarded with victory. And since the Eritreans' struggle is an integral part of the international liberation movement, their victory is a victory for all just struggles, giving hope and encouragement to all people fighting for freedom. ●

Solidarity from Sweden

We received the following message of solidarity from the KPMLR (Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary) in Sweden.

To PLFP and PLO:

We the 500 participants at the summer camp of KPMLR express our solidarity with the Arab masses and the struggle of the Palestinian people.

When the dust after the Gulf war has now settled and the propaganda phrases diminished, the reasons for and the effects of the war can be still more clearly visible. With promises of money and threats, the USA, as the sole dominating superpower in the world, has been able to fight a war in the name of the UN with the aim to gain total control over the oil resources that justly should belong to the Arab masses. With the reason of fighting for human rights and UN resolutions, more than 100,000 people have been killed, a country has been bombed 100 years back and the corrupt dictatorship in Kuwait has been restored. At the same time, the USA is totally uninterested in putting in practice 25 year old resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, 40 year old resolutions calling on Israel to let the banished Palestinians return to their country, and innumerable resolutions calling on Israel to respect the basic human rights of the Palestinians. No

American forces, neither in their own or UN uniforms, have been employed to protect the Palestinians. No real initiatives are taken to solve the Palestinian question in the only way that is possible to reach «a lasting peace in the area,» namely a just solution. This is no surprise since the US aims are not justice or peace but power, wealth and control.

The struggle of the Palestinian people is now facing a hard period in the shadow of «Pax Americana.» The latest assault, the attack of the Lebanese army against the Palestinians in Lebanon, must be strongly condemned. Historical experiences, e.g. from the massacre in Sabra and Shatila, show that the obvious right for the Palestinians to defend themselves must be recognized.

This is not the first time that your struggle is facing strong difficulties, but as in 1948, 1967 and 1982 we know that your struggle will survive and reach still higher levels due to your knowledge, experience and consciousness. We, that always rejoiced in your success, are of course also standing beside you during your difficult times. Our enemy is also yours and your enemy is ours.

KPMLR summer camp, 6 July 1991