

# LSM NEWS

15

Winter / 1978

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QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LIBERATION SUPPORT MOVEMENT

*Hurricane  
in the  
Horn:*

*Eritrea,  
Ethiopia,  
Somalia*



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# Leading Edge

Like many North Americans, LSM views events in the Horn of Africa - Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti - with a mixture of concern and hope. In trying to get a clearer view of the present conflict, we sifted through stacks of written material from many sources, met with liberation movement representatives from Oman and Eritrea, and discussed the intertwined questions facing the Horn of Africa inside LSM and with friends. We believe an independent stance on the Horn of Africa is necessary for anti-imperialists. No single "side" or "camp" takes a position which we can enthusiastically support. But we do support the Eritrean struggle for national liberation and oppose the Ethiopian colonial occupation of Eritrea. We hope "Hurricane in the Horn," which presents our views, will help other socialists and anti-imperialists find a clear perspective to shape their own views and actions.

This issue also carries our first effort in a series of "Left Profiles," in which we hope to demystify for our readers some of the people and

groups active in anti-imperialist work on the North American continent. Our aim is not to create heroes and heroines but to show that, on the contrary, hard work, application of skills, and political commitment by ordinary people is what makes it possible for the anti-imperialist movement to carry out its tasks. Our first installment brings you to meet one of those groups that do the most necessary, though least glamorous, of these tasks: the Glad Day Press printing collective. Our next installment will be a profile of radical journalist Wilfred Burchett.

LSM's October 1977 Congress reconsidered many aspects of our theoretical position, strategy, practice, and structure. While we have not substantially shifted course, we did clarify and cut back some areas. For instance, the Congress updated our theoretical position in 16 points around which LSM members unite. These points appear here along with summaries of other decisions.

We hope *LSM NEWS* readers also read other LSM publications. For some time, we have

*continued on last page*

# Hurricane in the Horn

## Nationalism, Social Revolution, and International Maneuvering in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia

In 1977 the Horn of Africa - Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia - stormed with crisis. The Eritrean liberation movement recorded great military advances; Somali rebels and the regular Somali army carved huge chunks from Ethiopia's southeastern flank. Within the rest of Ethiopia both radical and reactionary groups as well as regionally based movements attacked the country's military regime with arms. And in the middle of it all Djibouti opted for independence from France but kept 6,000 French troops to guard its new freedom.

Each of these events was of major importance. When they all occurred simultaneously, the resulting storm swept across the terrain, leaving

little unchanged in its wake.

Fierce nationalism, class struggle, and international maneuvering converge to create the present conflict and produce paradoxes that are as yet impossible to clearly analyze. The genuine liberation movement in Eritrea is supported on the international level mainly by reactionary states and denied support by many progressive governments. The colonial power, Ethiopia, reportedly receives support at once from Israel, Libya, Cuba, and the USSR. The USSR is now rapidly arming the Ethiopian junta to beat back an attack by Somalia, also armed with Soviet weapons. As Ethiopians fight Eritreans, Somalis, and each other, the revolutionary forces throughout the region

become further divided.

Behind the confusing front stage melee we see an emerging social revolution. As this process unfolds, US-led imperialism will do all it can to resume control over the Horn. It is for this reason that progressive North Americans need to understand developments in the region.

Though the focus of LSM's work remains on Southern Africa, the importance of the struggles in the Horn persuaded us to make the following effort at analysis. In doing so, we stress our lack of firsthand knowledge. Using instead a wide range of unpublished and published - and often contradictory - material our objective is to make enough sense of the situation to know how to act to support revolutionary tendencies.

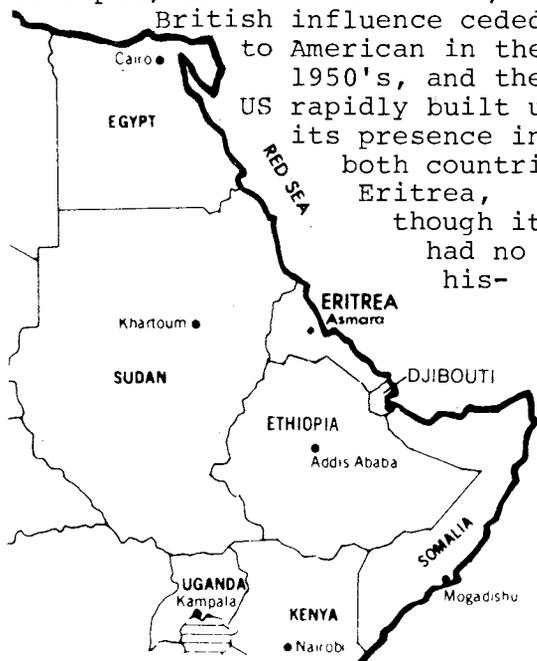
### Regional Strategy: Imperialism vs. Liberation

The Horn of Africa borders Sudan and Kenya to the North and West. In the other direction, across the Red Sea, lie Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of (North) Yemen, and the People's Democratic Republic of (South) Yemen. The Horn juts out into the crowded oil shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean.

In the late 19th century, European powers carved up the region along with the rest of Africa. The area inhabited by the Somali people was parceled out to France, Britain, Italy -

and the newly-formed empire of Ethiopian King Menelik who took forty years to assert control over his new possessions. Italy also took Eritrea, but both this country and the Italian part of Somalia fell under British control during World War II. Throughout the colonial period, European investment in the area remained small; colonial settlement was limited to the port cities and a few inland trading towns.

The entire region remained largely under imperialist control until ten years ago. The British left Aden only in 1967. Somalia, independent since 1960, for years fell under the misrule of a corrupt and completely inefficient regime. In Ethiopia, as in Saudi Arabia, British influence ceded to American in the 1950's, and the US rapidly built up its presence in both countries. Eritrea, though it had no his-



toric ties to Ethiopia, was federated with that country by a UN decision in 1950. The move was sponsored by Britain and the US, but the Eritrean people were not consulted. In 1962 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea. An Eritrean national liberation movement had been formed the previous year, but for several years to come was relatively ineffective under conservative leadership. Only to the North did things look different. Sudan and its neighbor Egypt were ruled by Arab nationalist governments which cooled to the West and built close relations with the Soviet Union.

In the late 1960's the region began to change considerably. A people's war in South Yemen led to the formation of an independent government in 1967. Within two years, a new and more radical regime came to power, declared itself in favor of socialism, and began the protracted struggle to transform backward Yemeni society. (This government also provided crucial support to the Marxist People's Front for the Liberation of Oman which is struggling to topple the British-controlled sultan of neighboring Oman).

Also in 1969, an "official revolution" took place in Somalia where the military, led by General Siad Barre, resolved a parliamentary crisis by taking power. Within five years, Barre's government had initiated programs to settle

the country's nomadic population, end illiteracy, reduce social inequalities, and combat the traditional discrimination against women. Internationally, the regime defined itself as non-aligned and anti-imperialist and received aid from China and the USSR. The latter built up the Somali armed forces and was granted the use of Somali port facilities for its navy.

In Eritrea the lack of progress and internal contradictions of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) split the nationalist movement in 1970. Some of the militants who left the ELF to form the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (EPLF) had been trained in Cuba and China. They criticized the ELF leadership for its lack of politicization of the masses and narrow nationalism. In return ELF leaders called EPLF founders tribal "splitters."

Meanwhile the Ethiopian empire was rotting from within. Economic problems and a famine in the early 1970's left millions of people impoverished and starving. Military losses in Eritrea and related and growing international pressure also contributed to the collapse of the regime in 1974. An army mutiny and a wave of strikes toppled the ruling alliance of the traditional landowning aristocracy and the growing bureaucratic bourgeoisie and paved the way for a military takeover in September of that year. Emperor Haile

Selassie was overthrown and power assumed by a council of lower-ranking military officers - the Dergue. This junta was deeply influenced by the popular upsurge. Within a few months it nationalized a large part of the modern sector of Ethiopia's economy. Then followed the nationalization of all village land and finally, in July 1975, of urban land. Students carried out rural literacy campaigns and worked to improve village conditions. These efforts broke the power of the feudal aristocracy, many of whom were killed by the Dergue or rebellious peasants.

But the Dergue, in order to retain its power in the unstable situation, resorted to greater and greater coercion of the democratic and radical movement as well. Power struggles within the military spilled the blood of soldiers and civilians alike and continue after the emergence in February 1977 of Mengistu Haile Mariam as Ethiopia's undisputed leader. Despite tremendous military setbacks, Mengistu continues the war in Eritrea. He has all but broken ties with the US - declaring his government to be Marxist-Leninist - and received massive support from the USSR, Cuba, and most East European countries on the grounds that a progressive government finally controls Ethiopia.

If these trends in Yemen, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia

unsettled American oil executives and Pentagon officials, they could still find solace in their own accomplishments. Over the past decade, oil-rich Iran and Saudi Arabia have become reliable caretakers for imperialism in this part of the world. (Iran even sent troops to Oman in an attempt to crush the liberation movement there.) During the same period, Egypt and Sudan turned their backs on the Soviet Union and accepted US and Saudi aid in return. Egyptian President Sadat's recent meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Begin are only the latest expression of an imperialist strategy which applies equally to the Horn of Africa: encircle progressive states and liberation movements, then strangle them economically and politically, one by one.

So far this strategy has not been countered at the regional level. A proposal - backed by several African countries, Cuba, and the Soviet Union - for the progressive forces of the Horn to collaborate within a federation or confederation has so far been rejected by Mengistu, Barre, and the Eritreans. Nationalism, chauvinism, and religion among real and proclaimed socialists continue to block regional cooperation. Where mass-based revolutions are indeed developing, the organizational forms may still be lacking. Broad international

designs could lead some foreign countries to sacrifice support for one struggle in order to ensure some perceived advance in the region as a whole. A closer look at each main piece in the puzzle will tell us more about the forces at work.

### Ethiopia's Dergue: Revolutionary or Fascist?

The empire that Haile Selassie ruled was a conglomeration of a dozen different ethnic and language groups. Most of these never completely reconciled themselves to the chauvinism of the ruling Amharic group and local revolts against the Addis Ababa regime have been a constant feature of Ethiopian history. These revolts grew stronger as the emperor's power started to slip in the years before his overthrow.

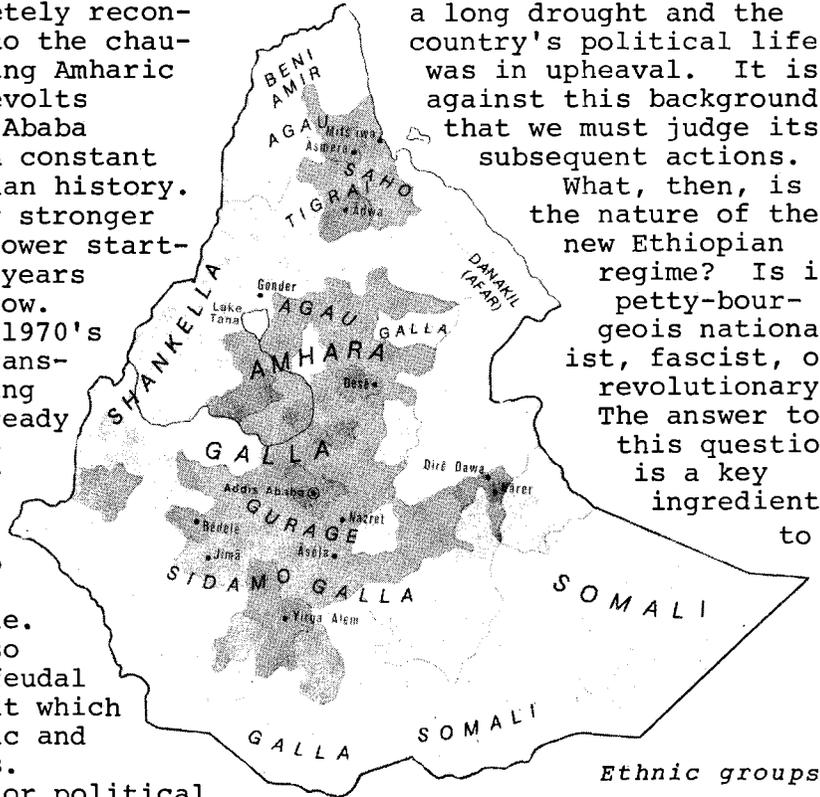
Ethiopia in the 1970's is a country in transition. An expanding capitalism had already weakened the land-owning aristocracy before the 1974 revolt, and the aristocracy had to cede power to the growing bourgeoisie. The latter was also part of the anti-feudal opposition movement which included democratic and socialist elements.

No single class or political current was strong enough to

control the state alone. The old ruling alliances crumbled under the pressure of the 1974 upsurge, but the democratic and left opposition was largely unorganized and had no strategy by which it could seize the initiative. In the vacuum that resulted, power passed to the military which in the meantime had purged itself of its feudal-dominated higher ranks.

The Dergue inherited an empire built on national oppression. The economy was in a state of disaster following a long drought and the country's political life was in upheaval. It is against this background that we must judge its subsequent actions.

What, then, is the nature of the new Ethiopian regime? Is it petty-bourgeois nationalist, fascist, or revolutionary? The answer to this question is a key ingredient to



*Ethnic groups*

any analysis of the situation in the Horn. Three different interpretations are worth summarizing.

Some progressive governments and liberation movements argue that the Dergue is a "revolutionary government."<sup>1\*</sup> The evidence for this statement lies in the junta's accomplishments of ending feudal rule and launching numerous "democratic advances . . . to the benefit of the Ethiopian masses - land reforms, . . . special education, . . . and industrial organization."<sup>2</sup> This is the public position of among others, Cuba, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and, in this country, of the Communist Party USA and the Worker's World Party. Part of this position is to call on the Eritrean liberation movements to lay down its arms and seek a peaceful solution with Ethiopian colonialism.

A second grouping views the Dergue as a fascist phenomenon, holding back a revolutionary solution in the region. They cite the escalation of the war in Eritrea, Mengistu's denial of democratic rights to national minorities, and the brutal repression of the democratic and radical opposition as proof that, in action, the new regime does not differ from the old. This view is held, understandably, by those who face the Dergue's ferocity - both of the Eritrean liberation fronts and Ethiopian left

\*Notes at end of article

opposition - and their supporters. Here in the US, this view has also been advanced by the *Guardian* newspaper.

A third "school" views the Dergue as a contradictory phenomenon. An unsigned article in *Monthly Review* states that

Ethiopia is in the midst of a complex and profound revolution in which violent struggle is inevitable. The revolution expresses cultural, economic, and political tensions which have their roots deep in Ethiopia's history.<sup>3</sup>

The article goes on to say that in the "unfolding tragedy" of "no heroes and too many martyrs" there is little room for clear-cut moralisms. This view makes sense to us but fails to provide a course of action.

Another way to approach the question is to ask who can replace the Dergue. Let us look at the opposition within the country.

The Left is dominated by two organizations, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the Meison (All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement). Both have their roots in the student movement, though the EPRP in particular seems to have expanded its base both in the countryside and towns over the past couple of years. Its existence was announced in August 1975. The EPRP represented that part of the radical movement which opposed the

Dergue from early on and called for civilian rule. From the start the organization supported self-determination for Eritrea. Its tactics of confrontation with the regime soon led the latter to declare a state of siege in Addis Ababa. Student and worker demonstrations met bloody suppression and by mid-1976, the Dergue and some of its civilian supporters had systematically organized an extermination campaign against EPRP militants.

Since late 1976 the EPRP has been involved in a life-and-death struggle against the Dergue and its allies. By now well-organized with a clandestine structure the EPRP responds with counter-violence to massacres by the regime. Though thousands of its actual and suspected members and sympathizers have been slaughtered, it remains a force in most of Ethiopia's towns and over large parts of the countryside.<sup>4</sup>

The Meison did not share the EPRP's view of the Dergue. Since Fall of 1974, this organization advocated "critical support" for the military. As its collaboration with the Dergue increased, this support became less and less "critical," and its differences with the EPRP became a major preoccupation. The Meison was more isolated from the population than its rival on the Left, but in acting as advisers to the regime, its leaders came to exercise a great deal of

power. In 1975-76 the Dergue created the so-called Politbureau staffed by Meison members and given the task of mass politicization and mobilization. This body, however, remained politically isolated and called on the Dergue in its struggle against political enemies. Toward the end of 1976, Meison controlled the "militias" made up of lumpens with license to kill anyone suspected of "counter-revolutionary activities." Soon the Meison, too, was fighting against the EPRP.

The Meison's political influence limited Mengistu's and the Dergue's freedom of action and during this period - late 1976 - Mengistu began to set up a political organization of his own. The growing involvement of the Soviet Union seems to have added a point of friction and in August 1977, the Meison broke with the Dergue and joined the underground opposition.<sup>5</sup>

The EPRP and the Meison are not the only left organizations in Ethiopia. A few smaller groups supported the Dergue and the Politbureau for a period of time, while others have consistently refused any collaboration. Given the present direction of Mengistu's regime, support from the Ethiopian left has virtually dried up.

A second form of opposition to the Dergue comes from the right. The Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) is led by former landlords and members

of the imperial family who organize its activities from London. The EDU professes to be "progressive" though without "ideological affinity,"<sup>6</sup> but other Ethiopian organizations and the Eritrean liberation fronts denounce it as reactionary. EDU forces are based in Sudan, but have had little military success against the Dergue. Its political capability, on the other hand, may still be great considering that feudal structures and mentality still remain strong throughout much of rural Ethiopia. The EDU is an obvious tool for a potential pro-imperialist takeover in the country.

The third main form of anti-Dergue opposition comes from a variety of "liberation fronts" that have sprung up in provinces such as Tigre and Ogaden. Some of these organizations resorted to armed struggle to win democratic rights for their people within Ethiopia. While this represents a legitimate objective, it is difficult to say much about the social and political basis of the various fronts. But the profound social struggles that are sweeping the country today make it unlikely that the peasants will quietly accept a return to the exploitation and humiliation of the past, whether by a military regime or by returning landowners.

Neither left organization is today strong or well-organized enough to relieve the Dergue

at the helm of the Ethiopian state. The regional movements have only local influence and can at best make it impossible for any government to rule without respecting their peoples' democratic rights. For any left-democratic coalition to take over, much work must be done to heal the bitter schisms of the past. While left forces have fought the Dergue and each other, the EDU's political capacity remains untested. The class forces it represents have been set back, but have by no means been crushed yet. An alliance between these elements and more traditionally conservative elements within the army is still a possibility. In short, a change of regime in this period is likely to provide an opening by which US and Western influence could stage a comeback in the country.

In the struggle to rout the landowning class - carried out primarily by the peasants themselves - the Dergue no doubt played a progressive role. By launching reforms in the rural and urban areas, the Dergue also set in motion tremendous social forces that sharpened the revolutionary situation in Ethiopia but are too vast to be controlled by any one organization. Today the presence of the Dergue still prevents a comeback by feudal, bourgeois, and pro-imperialist forces.



*Kommentar*

*Ethiopian workers*

The above accomplishments, however, must be measured against other actions of the Dergue. At the outset - back in 1974 - the junta was deeply influenced by the popular upsurge and attentive to the demands of the Left. But within a few months, as the turmoil and "chaos" of revolution spread throughout the country, it became increasingly preoccupied with self-

preservation. Political "deviations" were suppressed, the trade union movement was forced into line, and peasants were forced to back down on demands that went beyond Dergue/Meison objectives. Agricultural and industrial production plummeted as the former ruling classes were uprooted and, faced with an economic crisis, "law and order" became a chief concern of the

military.

The Dergue is indeed a contradictory phenomenon. Socialist rhetoric cannot mask its many anti-socialist actions. We question how responsible revolutionaries can justify the incredible brutality with which the Dergue asserts its rule. The Dergue's three years in power, make it clear that a revolution in Ethiopia cannot be imposed from above, by laws and coercion. The Dergue's widely documented violence is not the revolutionary discipline of a socialist government distorted by bourgeois propaganda, but more of a reign of terror which strikes at more than just the reactionary classes. The forces at play *within* the junta are surely complex (too complex for us to attempt an analysis at the present time), but as a body the Dergue is not moving Ethiopia toward socialism.

All the Dergue's contradictions come together on the question of colonialism and the rights of national minorities within Ethiopia. "All the wealth that has been nationalized," EPLF Central Committee member Amdemichael Kahsai told LSM recently, "is being used in the war against Eritrea instead of being used for the development of Ethiopia."<sup>7</sup> Mengistu's continuation of imperial colonialism and oppression of national minorities has become the main obstruction to so-

cialist advance within Ethiopia and to a progressive solution to the conflict in the Horn.

## The Eritrean Nation

The Eritreans' view of their situation is summarized in the following statement by Kahsai.

The Eritrean question is a colonial question because Eritrea existed as a separate political entity within its present boundaries from the time it was occupied by the Italians, and it was during this period that Ethiopia as we know it today was formed with the support of the Italian government to then King Menelik.<sup>8</sup>

Eritrea meets all criteria necessary to define it as a nation. Although the country has been invaded several times, no invader was able to stay for long until the Italians arrived at the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore Eritrea's history is distinct from that of Ethiopia, and when the country was "federated" with Ethiopia through a UN resolution in 1952, the population continued to resist foreign occupation just as they had done for decades. At no time did they willingly accept rule from the palace in Addis Ababa.

Popular resistance to Ethiopian colonialism was first organized by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) which



*Bruce Parkhurst*

*Eritrean peasant militia*

began the armed liberation struggle in 1961 - one year before Haile Selassie unilaterally annexed the country. The ELF comprised many different shades of Eritrean nationalists and was supported by many Arab governments which regarded the country as an extension of the Arab world. Israeli assistance to Haile Selassie was an additional incentive for Arab support to the Eritreans.

Despite this foreign assistance and widespread popular support within the country, the ELF at first made small gains against the colonial power. The lack of success accentuated differences within the front and resulted in a split that led to the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (today the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, EPLF) in 1970. The ELF leadership's attempt to eliminate its competitors resulted in a civil war that held back the struggle against the colonial power.

Angry protests by the Eritrean population finally forced the two warring factions to conclude a ceasefire in 1975. Coming at a time when turmoil and confusion seriously weakened the power of the Ethiopian state, the ceasefire enabled the Eritrean liberation fighters to seize the offensive. Today the colonial presence in Eritrea has been reduced to a few besieged garri-

sons and total liberation may be only months away.

## Disunity in the Liberation Movement

The differences within the Eritrean movement were further complicated in 1976 when the EPLF expelled its "foreign mission" led by Osman Saleh Sabbe. Sabbe's group, the ELF-PLF, maintains a well-financed propaganda machinery abroad, but has only a small presence within Eritrea. The group has been denounced as "reactionaries" and "traitors" by the EPLF, but collaborates with the ELF.

In contrast to Sabbe's group, the ELF and EPLF each control large areas of Eritrea. As the final defeat of the Ethiopian colonial army looms on the horizon, the continued differences between the two fronts cast a shadow over the country's future.

It is extremely difficult to assess these differences. In their propaganda abroad, both organizations use a socialist vocabulary. As front-type organizations, both embody various class elements under a "petty-bourgeois" leadership. None receive assistance from either China or the Soviet Union; both receive assistance from the anti-communist governments of Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Rhetoric and sources of foreign support are unreliable indicators, however. The

nature of each movement can best be determined by their practice within Eritrea - by their military success and, above all, by the way they administer the regions under their control.

Reports from the EPLF-held regions<sup>9</sup> indicate that a deep-cutting social revolution is taking place there. This organization appears to be making great efforts to overcome religious and ethnic differences among the population and to open the way for the full and equal participation of women at all levels of the struggle. Difficult years of isolation and virtually no foreign support - after the break-away from ELF and the expulsion of Sabbe who represented the movement abroad - forced the EPLF militants to rely on their own efforts and adopt an ascetic and self-sacrificing lifestyle that may also be of great advantage in independent Eritrea. The very rapid military advance of the EPLF indicates that the ideological struggle has produced a growing and increasingly strong organization.

Accounts from the ELF regions are in many ways similar, and some experienced observers who have visited both say there are no notable differences.<sup>10</sup> ELF, too, runs consumer and producer cooperatives, constructs clinics for the population and uses Marxist vocabulary in their political education classes.<sup>11</sup> Earlier practices

of coercion and arbitrariness vis-a-vis the population appear to have declined. On the other hand, reports from ELF territory are fewer and less detailed than those from EPLF's regions.

## A Difficult Independence

Many attempts have been made to reconcile the two Eritrean liberation movements. On 20 October 1977 they issued a joint statement which announced the establishment of common structures in a number of areas and forecast "a unification congress which will create the national democratic front in Eritrea." (Also, Sabbe's people were asked to join as individual members of one of the two fronts.)

Despite this agreement, tension between ELF and EPLF prevails throughout the country. One recent visitor to the EPLF regions reported that many EPLF militants expect a confrontation with the ELF when independence is achieved. And from abroad polemics continue in publications and communiques of both organizations.

Thus it is a likely prospect that Eritrea will be the scene of a revolutionary conflict even after the Ethiopian colonizers have been driven out. The liberation war has unleashed a class struggle that cannot stop with national independence. Political and even violent confrontations could break out between pro-

gressive and conservative elements across the present organizational lines. With the possibility of an ongoing war with Ethiopia, as well as attempts by reactionary "allies" such as Saudi Arabia and Sudan to extend their control over an independent Eritrea, the progressive forces within the country's liberation movements are going to need all the strength they can muster. A revolutionary victory would be a major setback for imperialist plans for the entire Horn of Africa region.

### Somali-Ethiopian War

In the summer of 1977 regular Somali armed forces joined fighters of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) to drive the Dergue's representatives out of Ogaden, the Somali-inhabited southeastern province of Ethiopia. The joint offensive scored early gains and succeeded in driving the Ethiopians out. After a few months of war, however, the Somali advance ground to a halt as the Dergue rushed in fresh troops and newly received supplies. As we go to press, the battlelines are drawn beyond the main Somali-speaking area of Ogaden and Ethiopian planes have been reportedly bombing towns within the Somali republic.

The roots of this war go back one hundred years to the division of Africa by European

powers. The Somali nation - sharing a common language, a common religion (Islam), and a common culture - was then chopped into pieces and divided between the British, Italians, French, and the Ethiopian emperor. Today, portions of the nation's territory lie in parts of Kenya, Ethiopia (Ogaden), and Djibouti. The Somalis have never reconciled themselves to this division; they refuse to give up their claim to the territories beyond the present borders of Somalia.

The question of nation-state borders is a sensitive one throughout Africa. The colonial power brokers who divided the continent in 1884 drew lines on a map and did not consider the social reality. Colonial borders therefore divided traditional tribal lands and united under one administration tribes that previously had little in common. The Mandinga people, for instance, ended up in five separate West African colonies while what is today Nigeria includes the lands of more than one hundred tribes. This kind of division presented an obvious - and potentially explosive - problem as colonial rule faded in Africa. In order to prevent destructive border wars throughout the continent, the Organization of African Unity determined in its charter that colonial borders should remain in independent Africa.

But the lack of sympathy by other African states has failed to quell Somali nationalism. The strategy of the Barre regime, which came to power in 1969, was to cool the claims for "reunification" by its policy of social reform and political mobilization.<sup>12</sup> Barre and his colleagues made considerable progress. Regional disparities were greatly reduced during the early 1970's. Self-help schemes in the countryside and projects to settle the nomadic population - hard hit by the disastrous drought of 1971-74 - also reduced the urban-rural differences. A standardized, written Somali language made possible wider political participation and clipped the wings of the colonially-educated bureaucratic elite. These reforms gave Barre's government great prestige among the population and helped divert attention away from the dream of a new "Greater Somalia."

But the dream nevertheless remained a forceful factor in Somali politics. "No Somali government . . . can survive in our country if it abandons the policy of recovery of the territories that remain occupied by foreigners," said Barre in June 1977.<sup>13</sup> "(If we did that) our revolution would immediately collapse. Nobody can betray the sacred rights of his people without being punished." Thus when the Ethiopian regime was

weakened by internal dissent and the war in Eritrea, the Somalis seized the opportunity to "recover" part of the "occupied" territories.

## Who Gains?

National chauvinism on the part of successive Ethiopian regimes, including the Dergue, and Somali nationalism have proven stronger than their socialist inclinations. Who gains from this war? Ethiopia suffers great devastation. The Dergue has resorted to even greater coercion than the feudal regime and has conscripted a peasant militia. The tremendous resources needed to fight this war have made the country completely dependent on its foreign supporters, notably the Soviet Union. With its attack, Somalia has set a precedent that can only benefit expansionist regimes. Cut off from further military support from the USSR, its former supplier, the Somali government now has the option of encouraging the mediation efforts of friendly countries such as South Yemen and Malagasy or accepting military assistance from countries like Iran and Egypt - states which Barre until recently assailed as tools of American designs in the region. (Economic assistance has already been obtained from Saudi Arabia.)

The longer the war goes on, the more difficult it will be

for progressive forces to survive - let alone consolidate their position. Past progressive reforms within both Ethiopia and Somalia are threatened by the war situation. Some countries and liberation movements find themselves caught in the middle. South Yemen and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, for example, are in the strange position of supporting both the Dergue and the Eritrean liberation movements. Both have also enjoyed friendly relations with the Somali and Ethiopian governments, as have many other progressive African states.<sup>14</sup> The war in Ogaden is a setback for those who struggle for the genuine independence and non-alignment of African countries.

### **American "Noninvolvement"**

Emperor Haile Selassie was a chief US ally in Africa and for a long time Ethiopia received more American military and economic assistance than any other African country. In return, the US exercised considerable political influence and was permitted to establish an important military communications base in Eritrea. To the southwest, Kenya, too, was a haven for American corporations and a recipient of military aid. In order not to alienate these two allies, the US turned down requests for similar assistance by

Somalia in the 1960's, even before the Barre government took power. After 1971 the US completely cut off Somalia after Somali ships called on ports in North Vietnam.

In recent years the US consolidated its influence in the region through growing ties with Sudan and oil-rich Saudi Arabia. The latter has come to serve as the banker for American interests and finances anti-communist schemes from Jordan to Oman. Neighboring Iran, with its huge and well-equipped armed forces, is willing to act in a corresponding military capacity. From these bridgeheads US imperialism has applied tremendous pressure on all progressive forces in the region.

After the 1974 removal of Haile Selassie, American support to Ethiopia continued as before until the Dergue, under Mengistu's leadership, decided to turn away from "American imperialism." By this time, however, Ethiopia had become dispensable to the US; and it was no disaster to American plans when the Dergue closed most of the US government's offices in the country in April 1977, and called on the Soviet Union for aid instead. In any case, the State Department may have thought that the Dergue was about to collapse and that the liberation of Eritrea was inevitable - in which case a break with Mengistu would be an investment in

## ERRATUM

P.21, second paragraph, first sentence should read:

The best ways open to North Americans to contribute to a progressive solution are to support the revolutionary forces in Eritrea; to call on the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Ethiopia to do the same; and to oppose further US intervention in the region.

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the future.

With growing Soviet support for the Dergue, the US reversed its view of Somalia, as well. In June 1977 President Carter sent a secret emissary to Mogadishu with offers of military assistance and reportedly let Barre know that the US would not oppose a stepping-up of the campaign in Ogaden.<sup>15</sup> Somalia subsequently turned the guerrilla war into a full-scale attack on Ethiopian positions. The Dergue, then desperate for supplies and spares for its American-equipped army, (Soviet support was still in the pipeline) toned down its anti-US rhetoric. It is not clear whether there were any direct efforts by either the Dergue or the US government to mend the breakdown in relations. In any case, President Carter reversed his position on aid for Somalia and announced American "non-involvement" in the Horn.

So, is the US sitting on the sidelines watching passively while the battles rage? Not at all; "noninvolvement" is just the US way of keeping it's options open. The Agency for International Development continues to give grants to Ethiopia and the International Monetary Fund gave the Dergue a loan of \$57 million in May 1977. Even US ally Israel plays a role in providing anti-guerrilla training for the Dergue's Army. US ties with the Dergue's enemies are indirect; through Sudan and Saudi

Arabia to the EDU and the Eritrean liberation movements and through Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran to the Somalis. But in December 1977, AID suddenly announced plans for two projects amounting to \$27 million in Somalia - the first since 1971.<sup>16</sup> With the Horn of Africa in upheaval, the US is moving to exploit any sign of weakness and division among the progressive forces of this strategically important region.

### Role of Soviet Union & Cuba

In 1950 the Soviet Union opposed Eritrea's federation with Ethiopia and proposed the country's independence. After armed struggle began, however, the Soviet Union ignored the Eritrean cause. Cuba helped train some Eritrean cadres in the late 1960's and Fidel Castro openly supported the liberation movement as late as 1972.

Elsewhere in the region, the Soviet Union was the main backer of the Sudan regime until 1972, when President Numeiry crushed the Sudanese Communist Party. Soviet support has also been crucial to the progressive regime in South Yemen and the liberation movement in Oman.

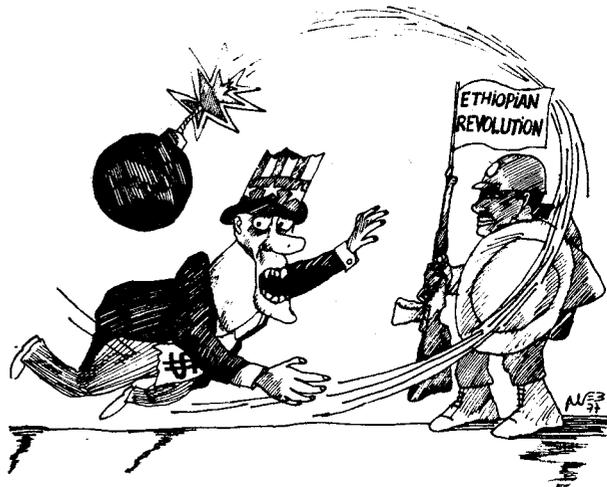
Until 1977, however, Somalia was the main recipient of Soviet aid in the region, both economic and military. The USSR provided large amounts of assistance, for example, dur-

ing the disastrous drought of 1971-1973. Fuel, arms, and machinery supplied by the USSR must have had an impact on Somali foreign policy. The Soviet navy also obtained use of the Somali port of Berbera. Cuba, too, provided technical assistance to Somalia.

The turning point for the socialist countries came with Mengistu's coup in Ethiopia in February 1977. Under his control, the Dergue became the instrument to lead Ethiopia through its stage of "national democracy" and toward a socialist transformation, in the eyes of the USSR and Cuba. Just as in India and Egypt before, the "non-capitalist" road in Ethiopia struck a deep chord in Soviet strategy. Somehow, the Soviet theory runs, underdeveloped countries can break from imperialism without a popular-based revolution; a military regime can make a revolution from "above." Assistance to the Dergue thus became a priority because it was seen as the bulwark against reaction. All opposition to the Dergue was consequently labeled counterrevolutionary. The Soviet magazine *New Times* wrote that Eritrea's claim to nationhood is "inconclusive." The Cuban *Granma* described the Eritrean liberation movement as "separatist elements . . . who oppose the policy of change and hamper the progress of the Revolution and the achievement of indispensable national unity."<sup>17</sup> Soviet arms began

to arrive in Ethiopia in June and are now in use in both Eritrea and Ogaden. The Cuban government sent military instructors to help train Mengistu's conscripted "peasant militia." Both Soviet and Cuban military involvement appear to be rapidly growing. We are sadly reminded of nearby Egypt where Soviet weapons were unable to make up for the lack of a genuine popular movement with real power.

Soviet and Cuban support for the Dergue was initially paralleled by diplomatic efforts to reconcile the actual and potential anti-imperialist forces in the region. Both Cuba and the Soviet Union attempted to initiate a dialog between Barre and Mengistu before the war in Ogaden. During his visit to the region in March 1977 Fidel Castro brought the two together



*Granma*

*The Cuban view*

and argued for a regional federation or confederation of progressive regimes, also involving South Yemen and possibly the Eritreans. But this idea, previously aired by Guinea and Malagasy, got nowhere.<sup>18</sup> It is possible, however, that this initiative is still being discretely pursued. With the Somali offensive in Ogaden the USSR cut off all arms shipments to Somalia and reportedly warned the government against meddling in the "internal affairs" of its neighbor. A few months later Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Cuba and the USSR and cancelled its friendship treaty with the latter.

### The Horn in Transition

The Horn of Africa is an area in rapid and violent transition. The crumbling of the Ethiopian empire began a period of tumultuous revolutionary change within that country. The military regime has played out its progressive role and the Ethiopian revolutionary forces are without unified national leadership.

The Eritrean liberation struggle has played the role of catalyst in this process. Within the liberated areas of Eritrea fundamental social change is taking place. The socialist forces within the Eritrean liberation movement need unity and support in

order to ensure the genuine independence of their future state.

Somalia has abandoned its former ties with socialist countries and, unless the war in Ogaden is called off soon, will have to turn to US allies like Iran and Saudi Arabia for military support.<sup>19</sup>

Forces of nationalism and national chauvinism on the part of the Ethiopian and Somali regimes are stronger than their "official" socialist internationalism and contradict the revolutionary rhetoric of both. Reinforcing these are significant material factors such as Ethiopia's longstanding economic reliance on Eritrea's ports. In the region as a whole ethnic and religious factors are still powerful and present obstacles to progressive change.

The United States and its allies have enormous economic and strategic interests in the areas surrounding the Horn of Africa. It is crucial for them to prevent changes that could undermine their control over Middle East oil supplies and access to the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet Union, protecting what it sees as its state interests and assisted by Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, seeks to counter US domination in the region. Its priorities have led the USSR - and Cuba - to participate in a genocidal war against the colonized Eritrean people.

## A Progressive Solution?

Despite the depth and complexity of the present conflict, a progressive solution is still possible. Such a solution must include genuine independence for Eritrea and the Addis Ababa regime's recognition of the democratic rights of the national minorities within Ethiopia. If the Soviet Union can exert influence, it should be exerted on Ethiopia to accept these. The wars that are now making the peoples of the region victims of foreign-supplied arms must be ended. Collaboration between revolutionary and progressive forces throughout the Horn is the best way to protect the interests of the peoples who live there.

The best ways open to North Americans to contribute to a progressive solution is to support the revolutionary forces in Eritrea, oppose further US intervention in the region, and call on the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Ethiopia to do the same. When the present crisis eventually subsides in the Horn of Africa, the real question will be whether progressive, popular forces have advanced or whether imperialism resumes uncontested domination over the region.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Resources

Much of the information above has come from discussions with friends and comrades in the anti-imperialist movement, including members of the Association of Eritrean Students in North America (AESNA) and the Organization of Arab Students, as well as representatives of the EPLF and the PFLO of Oman. Other than the specific material referred to in the footnotes below, the following publications are useful to anyone interested in a better understanding of the conflict in the Horn of Africa.

*Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* by John Markakis and Nega Ayele. To be published in early 1978 by Spokesman Books and *Review of African Political Economy* (c/o Merlin Press, 2-4 West Ferry Rd., London E 14, England).

*Eritrea in Struggle* Monthly Newsletter of AESNA. (Box 1247, New York, NY 10027) AESNA, which is linked to the EPLF, has also published a series of pamphlets on the Eritrean liberation struggle.

*The Eritrean Newsletter* Biweekly News Report published by the ELF Foreign Information Center (P. O. Box 14/5385, Beirut, Lebanon).

*Eritrean Revolution* ELF Information Bulletin published by

ELF Foreign Information Center.

*The Eritrean Review* Published by ELF-PLF (P. O. Box 14/5404, Beirut, Lebanon).

*Liberation* Bimonthly organ of AESNA.

*MERIP Reports* Journal of Middle East Research and Information Project (P. O. Box 3122, Columbia Heights Station, Washington, DC 20010).

*Vanguard* The official monthly organ of the EPLF. Translated, reprinted, and distributed in North America by AESNA.

"The Ethiopian Revolution & the Struggle Against US Imperialism" Available from *Workers World* (46 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10010).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Arce: *Granma* (Havana), 7 August 1977.

<sup>2</sup>"Special Issue on the Red Sea Region," *DFLP Report*, no. 16, July 1977.

<sup>3</sup>"Revolution in Ethiopia," *Monthly Review* (New York), July-August 1977, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>See Markakis and Ayele: "Class and Revolution in Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy* (London), no. 8, January-April 1977 and Sommer: "Etiopien: Tre ar av militaer-diktatur," *Kommentar* (Stockholm), 5-6, 1977.

<sup>5</sup>Other than the Dergue's "pro-Soviet alignment," Meison charged the junta with refusing to arm militias from the Galla nationality and arming Amharic landlords, among other things. *Eritrean Revolution* (Beirut), 1 September 1977.

<sup>6</sup>*EDU Advocate*, Vol. 2, no.2, 1977 summarized in *Africa Currents* (London), no. 9, 1977.

<sup>7</sup>LSM Interview, September 1977.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Gerard Chaliand: "Erythree, haut mal de L'Ethiopie," *Le Monde* (Paris), 7, 8-9 May 1977. Jean-Claude Guillebaud: "Dans Le Magnis d'Erythree," *Le Monde*, 9, 10, 12 December 1977. Dan Connell: *Guardian* (New York), 19 and 26 October; 2, 9, and 16 November; and 7 December 1977.

<sup>10</sup>Sommer: *Kommentar*, no. 9, 1977.

<sup>11</sup>Fulvio Grimaldi: "Life in Liberated Eritrea," *The Middle East* (London), no. 39, January, 1978.

<sup>12</sup>David Laitin: "Revolutionary Change in Somalia," *MERIP Reports* (Washington), no. 62, November 1977.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with Simon Malley: *Afrique-Asie* (Paris), no. 137, 13-26 June 1977, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Reports in the Western press claim South Yemeni troops are now in Ethiopia in support of the Dergue.

<sup>15</sup>Jim Paul: "Struggle in the Horn," *MERIP Reports*, no. 62.

<sup>16</sup>David Ottaway: *Washington Post*, 6 December 1977.

<sup>17</sup>*Granma*, 18 May 1977.

<sup>18</sup>There is an apparent contradiction in Cuba's position and

actions in the region. In a letter dated 5 October 1977, Radio Habana Cuba stated "This matter must be settled between the Ethiopian revolutionaries and the Eritrean people, and when we say settled by the people, we mean without any foreign interference."

<sup>19</sup>According to Western press agencies, such aid is already in the pipeline.

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Angola is independent People's power is resplendent



There's no road but revolution People's power's the solution



Angola Angola Cabinda Cabinda



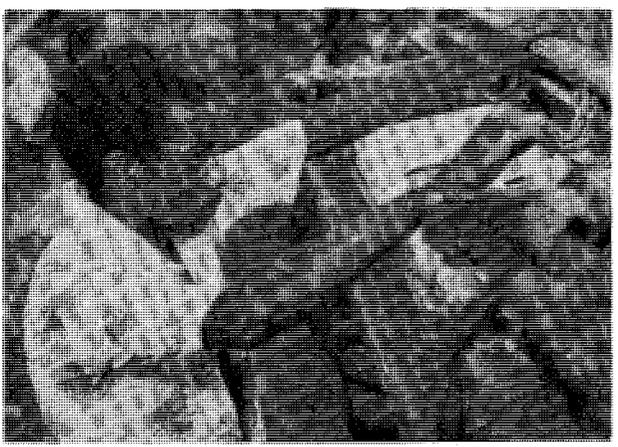
All the way to Cunene Angola la is free

## II

*Movimento Popular  
Libertacao de Angola  
MPLA - people's power  
Liberation now in flower  
Chorus*

## III

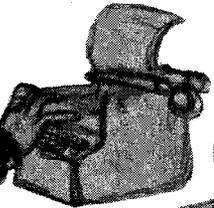
*Freedom's fight is never ending  
Vigilance must be unbending  
Enemies are still surrounding  
Traitors fight PRA's founding  
Chorus  
Repeat first verse and chorus*





# Left Profile

**Glad Day Press**



Perhaps it is natural that we start this series of "Left Profiles" with a group that in many ways is close to LSM. Our collaboration dates back to 1973 when the Glad Day collective produced a poster to help us raise funds for a printshop for MPLA of Angola. A similar effort was made last year in making a fundraising poster for SWAPO of Namibia. And if you have ever wondered who actually produces some of the good books and magazines you depend on ..., well, just read on.

In Ithaca, New York, four hard-working people quietly perform a crucial service to the anti-imperialist movement in the United States. From their printshop, sandwiched between a laundromat and a gas station, publications on Indochina, Africa, Chile, and the Middle East have reached every corner of the North American continent. On the back cover of tens of thousands of books and pamphlets you can find their tiny logo: Glad Day Press, IWW Union Shop. Without Glad Day, many progressive groups would have little or no access to printing.

Glad Day's history began in the mid-1960's when the anti-war movement took root at Cornell, the prestigious Ivy League university that dominates Ithaca. The local Peace Center, one of many throughout the US, at first had only a mimeo machine.

"Every group from the Students for a Democratic Society to Quakers Against the War worked out of the office," says Arlene. "Nobody had to pay for their printing as long as it was against the war." Supported financially by local liberals, the embryonic press reprinted articles from such sources as *The Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *New York Review of Books*. The reprints were distributed by Peace Centers across the country.

Even when the office later acquired a small offset printing press, most of the work

continued to be done on a voluntary - and often spontaneous - basis. "People would come and go all the time," Al recalls. "Many wanted to contribute, but few took the technical work seriously." He and Willie, a draft resister who joined the press in 1967, struggled to give it some stability. Both were former science students who had become outraged by American aggression in Vietnam, and both were determined to stay and work at least until the war was over.

As the 1960's drew to a close, Glad Day's work became more difficult. SDS disintegrated in 1969 and other differences developed within the anti-war movement. "Our funding began to dry up, and distribution declined when our publications became dated," Willie remembers. The American invasion of Cambodia in 1970 provided a brief resurgence of activity, but by the middle of the following year the slack returned. Glad Day's collaboration with the Indochina Resource Center in Washington, a group that originated from Cornell, was not sufficient to keep the printshop going.

A reorganization was necessary. First the collective began to take in commercial printing to finance their political work. As this required a higher professional level and better equipment, it gradually became necessary to rely less on volunteers.



OTARD  
1951

*Al making ink fountain adjustment on Glad Day's biggest press, a Chief 126.*

It was a difficult period. "Our skills were minimal, but there had to be ways to improve," Al says. "We established contacts with local commercial printers and learned through the mistakes we made." The hard way - but these efforts made possible a more stable existence.

In 1973 the two sides signed the Vietnam peace agreement, US ground troops withdrew, and the anti-war movement fizzled out. It was a watershed for the Glad Day collective: should they disband? But over the years they had come to see the Vietnam war as only one aspect of a much broader question. Exploitation and oppression continued unabated within the United States and in other parts of the world. Glad Day's printing services could be put to good use in the protracted struggle for socialism.

Soon after their decision to continue, the collective began to work with the American Indian organization that publishes *Akwesasne Notes*. In more recent years they have also worked with the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), the African Youth Movement, Palestine Solidarity Committee, and the Association of Eritrean Students in North America, among others. By donating part of their labor to these groups, the Glad Day members feel that they make a direct contribution to the struggles concerned. "Our concern was always with the Viet-

namese, not with the anti-war movement per se," they all stress. In the same way, "Our present contributions to liberation struggles in Africa and the Middle East are simply channeled through groups in this country." "Movement rates" for the work are determined by Glad Day's assessment of the political value and the group's ability to pay. Commercial work is taken in as necessary to acquire new equipment and pay the collective's subsistence salaries.

To achieve their objectives, the Glad Day people usually work a fifty to sixty hour week. On top of that, they often take time out to help other, less experienced, press collectives. Last year, for instance, they handed over one of their older presses to a group in Maine and then helped the group set up the press at its new location. They feel this is one way to overcome the lack of personal contact with comrades doing similar work.

Still, the members often have to struggle to establish a political relationship with progressive groups who sometimes look at Glad Day as "cheap printers" and do not take the time to establish the merit of their own work. "Sometimes they don't even identify themselves," Arlene says in frustration. "All they say is 'How much for 200 posters?' and 'How soon?'" The Glad Day workers find this lack of ap-

preciation for the human role alienating. They attribute it to the power of capitalist ideas even among progressive people and consider it part of the contradiction of having to engage in market relations to further the struggle for socialism.

Over-specialization and division of labor along sexual lines is a related part of the same contradiction. Arlene, who worked as a journalist and "public relations" person before joining the Glad Day collective in 1972, is critical when she recalls the past. "When I came in, I did the type of work I was used to - correspondence, answering the phone, talking to customers. Though I participated in production, it was always in a very secondary way." The men, of course,

were more mechanically "inclined" and were the ones to operate the machines. "The skilled nature of the work and our commitment to getting it done made it difficult at first to combat this artificial division of labor," Al concedes.

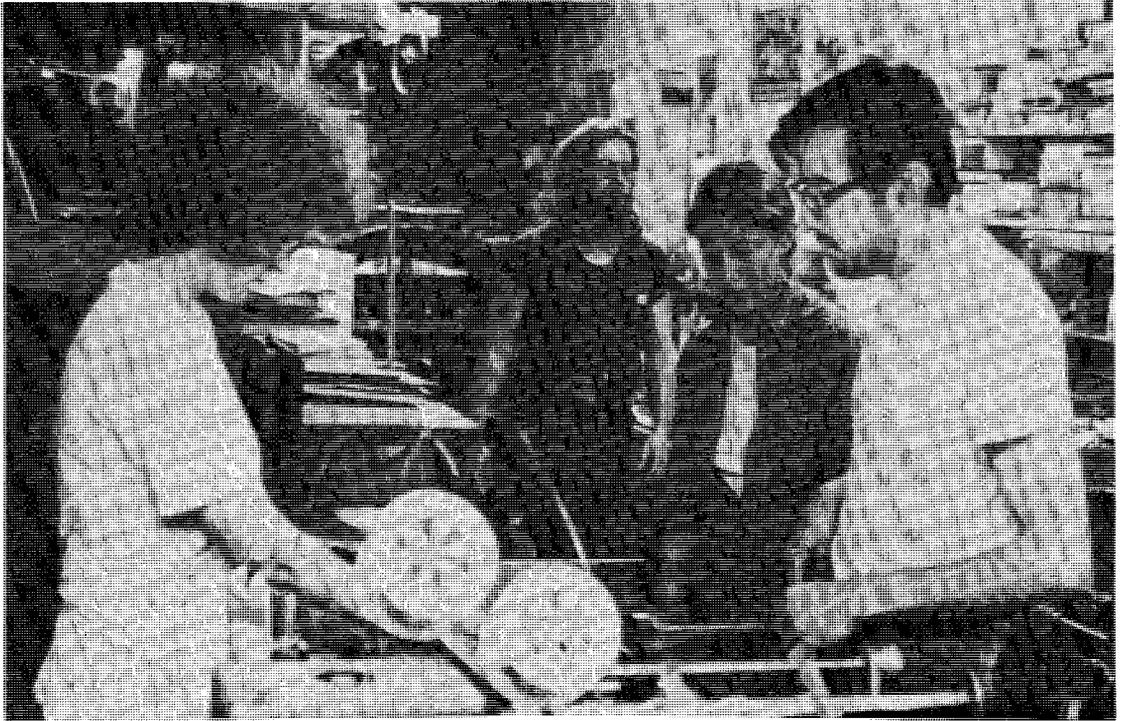
This division of labor reinforced sexism within the collective. "It was difficult for me to learn new skills from someone with a low opinion of my innate ability to learn," says Arlene. "But since my main concern was to work for socialism - and not with my position as a woman - I put my frustrations aside though I wasn't at all happy with the way things were."

The change has been accelerated since Kathy joined the collective last year. Breaking down the sexual division

*LSM photo*

*Arlene & Kathy setting up the bindery equipment*





LSM photo

The Glad Day Crew (Arlene, Willie, Kathy & Al)

of labor is now part of eliminating over-specialization. Each member will from now on be trained in several areas of work; no skill will be exclusive to one person or to one sex. This is also seen as insurance against sudden departures; the Salsedo Press collective in Chicago almost had to close some time ago when their main printer suddenly left. "It scared us to think that this might happen to us, too," Arlene says.

Is it an accident that most of their political printing is internationalist in content? The question causes some re-

flection. No, they agree, it seems they can better meet the needs of groups focusing on internationalist, anti-imperialist work. But they have supported domestic-oriented struggles, as well, and recognize the need to work on both fronts.

On this issue, as on many others, their internal agreement is loose. What binds them together is a common recognition of the usefulness of their work. "Our differences are miniscule in comparison to the need for our services," they explain. "The revolution is still far enough away for our small differences not to really matter."

# LSM Second Congress

Liberation Support Movement held its Second Congress in October 1977. Since 1973, our structure, leadership, and political direction have been set at a biannual meeting (Congress) of all LSM members. The main task of the Second Congress was to redefine our unity and strategy in light of changes that have occurred over the past two years.

Preparations began in late Spring when three groups were set up to prepare discussions on LSM's history, North America, and the imperialist system. As the Congress approached, we also evaluated our relations with liberation movements, our economics, and other aspects of our past practice.

Aside from electing new leadership, the Congress drafted three documents. Here we print our political platform in full and summarize the essential points from our decisions on strategic and practical priorities and structure.

We hope *LSM NEWS* readers will have comments and criticisms to send us on the results of LSM's Second Congress. We have also published a new pamphlet: *Liberation Support Movement: Our Unity and Practice*, which includes a brief history of LSM in addition to the documents and summaries printed below.

\* \* \* \* \*

## LSM Political Platform

1. LIBERATION SUPPORT MOVEMENT (LSM) is an independent anti-imperialist organization. We use scientific socialism - the method of analysis pioneered by Marx and Engels - to understand the world around us. Our practice centers on informational and material support for revolutionary liberation movements and governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
2. Located in North America, we find ourselves in the center of a vast social system which economically, politically, and culturally dominates more than half of the world's population. The basis of this CAPITALIST SYSTEM is the exploitation of human labor as a commodity - resulting in the enrichment of a small minority and the emiseration of the vast majority - and the irrational squandering

of natural resources.

3. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION OF OUR ERA opposes the international systems of capitalism and socialism. Capitalism remains the dominant aspect of this contradiction. Socialism is a stage on the road toward a classless society, economic and social equality, and the fullest possible development of humanity's creative potential. The transition to socialism on a world scale is a complex and often violent process which meets with setbacks as well as advances on its revolutionary course. Still in its early stages, this process is not likely to be completed in our lifetime. In the broadest sense, LSM's objective is to contribute to the advance of socialism at the international level.

4. CAPITALISM IS ESSENTIALLY AN EXPANSIONIST SYSTEM which from its inception extended beyond national borders. The pillage of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European merchants and the aristocracy signalled the rise to power of a new class, the bourgeoisie. The growing economic and military subjugation of these continents and their peoples accompanied capitalism's consolidation in Europe. As monopoly capitalism, or imperialism, became dominant in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a wave of

colonial expansion fueled further accumulation of capital and industrialization in Europe. As a result, the capitalist world became structured into a dominant imperialist center (North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand) and a dominated colonial/neocolonial periphery. This structure has come to color nearly every aspect of life within both sectors of the increasingly integrated and cohesive imperialist system. Any class analysis of contemporary capitalism must use this entire system as its basic unit of analysis.

5. IMPERIALISM HAS EXTENDED CAPITALISM'S LEASE ON LIFE. While the exploitation of the periphery's people and natural resources grew increasingly important to capital, the growth of trade unions and organized class action strengthened the working class of the center. As intensified imperialist expansion in this century enabled capitalism to weather its domestic crises, the flow of value from periphery to center became a torrent. An important aspect of this process has been the material and ideological co-optation of the large majority of European and North American workers by "their" bourgeoisies. Established trade unions and working-class political parties, originally instruments for radical change, now work

to reform rather than replace capitalism. The convergence of immediate interest between the different classes and segments of the population in the center is now greater than the conflicts which separate them.

6. THE UNITED STATES is today by far the strongest of the states of the center: economically, militarily, and politically. The other imperialist states are in part dominated by the United States but also participate in the plunder of the periphery. Rivalry between various factions of the international bourgeoisie still produces conflicts which weaken the overall strength of this class. On the whole, however, their unity is now the dominant feature.

7. IN THE PERIPHERY imperialist expansion gradually reduced the indigenous peoples to slaves and servants of a system controlled from afar. The process of underdevelopment has completely distorted the economies of the periphery countries and reduced the exchange value of their peoples' labor power. To the vast masses of African, Asian, and Latin American peasants and workers, imperialism means emiseration. Their super-exploitation serves to reinforce the basic divisions within the imperialist system.

8. IN THE PERIPHERY, CAPITAL-

ISM MEANS UNDERDEVELOPMENT. The international bourgeoisie's grip on economic power blocks the underdeveloped countries' road to genuine independence. Industrialization in the periphery, largely controlled by the multinational corporations, serves more to entrench structural distortions than to create viable national economies. The local bourgeoisie, where it exists, is generally a dependent ally of imperialism. Increasingly, the struggle of workers and peasants in the "Third World" is against their own ruling class as well as imperialism, strategically one and the same enemy.

9. ONLY SOCIALISM CAN DEVELOP THE PERIPHERY. To break imperialist domination, transform property relations, and retain the surplus for productive use by each country have become indispensable to the advancement of "the wretched of the earth."

10. THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM thus pits the superexploited laboring masses of the periphery against the international bourgeoisie, represented by multinational corporations and imperialist states. The struggle for national liberation in the neocolonies and colonies, as well as the struggles of the newly independent countries for economic independence, are con-

crete manifestations of this contradiction and constitute today the main force of change within the system. (We note that all socialist revolutions since World War II have taken place in the periphery.) The initial nationalist objectives of most liberation movements are often transcended by anti-imperialism and socialism in the course of the conflict. China, Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, and Angola exemplify this process.

11. A GROWING NUMBER OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE HAVE REJECTED CAPITALISM and since 1917 begun the transition toward socialism. However, the history of the two largest countries which began this transition, the Soviet Union and China, shows that there is no straight line in the revolutionary process; even with state power in the hands of the revolutionary party, internal contradictions and class struggle persist.

We support both the USSR and China as progressive social formations compared to capitalism but recognize that each also has weaknesses. Our position regarding the Sino-Soviet differences is one of critical non-alignment. We are independent but not neutral; we believe that each country has made significant contributions in improving the lives of its population and in advancing socialism internationally. Our sketchy under-

standing of the internal dynamics of each country and of socialist development in general presently limits our ability to analyze their differences.

Other socialist and progressive states must also be evaluated on the basis of their internal achievements and their contributions to the liberation of other peoples around the world. Advances in each of these areas contribute to the weakening of imperialism. While we are not blind to shortcomings and mistakes on the part of socialist countries, it is important also to understand the problems inherent in building socialism. Criticism of progressive and socialist states must never obscure imperialism as the principal enemy of the world's people.

12. IN NORTH AMERICA there are currently no classes or large strata ready to rise in revolt against the capitalist system. Two contradictory aspects characterize the position of the working class. On the one hand, this class is exploited by capital, and its long-range interests are in fundamental opposition to those of the bourgeoisie. Some elements within it also have immediate interests that lead to conflict with the bourgeoisie, and their actions against racism, sexism, and national chauvinism contribute to the anti-imperialist struggle.

On the other hand, North American workers have gained materially from imperialist expansion. This contributes to the relatively low level of social consciousness and militancy within the class. The lack of a strong socialist tradition makes progressive action within the workers' movement still more difficult. While capitalism's capacity to absorb discontent and divert movements of protest may be on the decline, it still remains great.

The present state of affairs is neither stable nor permanent. As revolutionary forces in the periphery slowly force the contraction of the imperialist system, the crises of capitalism will deepen, and objective conditions within North America will make possible the rise of a revolutionary socialist mass movement.

13. THE EXISTENCE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES complements class divisions within North America. Each of the oppressed nationalities has a particular historical relationship to United States imperialism, and each will reveal its nature through a growing struggle to advance its interests. (Our limited understanding of "the national question" leaves us unable to define the criteria for each of these national groups to form a self-determining nation.)

The struggles of national minorities and oppressed nationalities against discrimination and for democratic rights and self-determination will increasingly come to test the strength of monopoly capitalism. These struggles will be crucial in the development of a revolutionary force on our continent. The trend which looks at only the racial or national aspect of these struggles, however, obscures the class aspect and may open the door to opportunism and class collaboration. It therefore becomes important to distinguish between the struggles which advance the cause of the whole national group or minority and those which serve only a privileged elite.

14. THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN is integral to capitalist society where women's primary role has been to reproduce the labor force. In the work force, women are generally channeled into the lower echelons, doing much of the menial and stultifying work. While all women are subject to sexist discrimination, conditions vary a great deal according to class, race, and nationality, with "Third World" women generally occupying the least wanted positions. The progressive elements of the North American women's movement thus link the question of sexism to capitalism and national oppression. The liberation of women is an integral aspect of

any socialist revolution.

15. INTERNATIONALISM - IN DEED AS WELL AS IN WORDS - IS INDISPENSABLE for all progressive people. The internationalism of the bourgeoisie - its ability to move raw material, machinery, and personnel throughout six continents - is an important part of its strength. The growing pressure from periphery nationalism and revolution forces the bourgeoisie to propagate reactionary and chauvinist sentiments in the center. In this situation North American progressives must actively counter such propaganda and work to forge stronger links with revolutionary forces overseas.

16. WE SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-SECTARIAN, NON-DOGMATIC LEFT within North America. The lack of a mass base currently leaves the progressive movement numerically small and fragmented. While the realization of a strong socialist movement will require a change in objective conditions, we believe that efforts to increase mutual effectiveness and unity through practical collaboration and theoretical exchange are necessary.

### **Program of Work**

The above platform will guide LSM's practical work over the next few years. The

Congress decided that we continue to focus our practice on Southern Africa. Our past experience and current relations with revolutionary forces in Namibia and Angola prepare us to work most effectively in this region. We recognize, too, the strong interconnections among the struggles in the different nations of Southern Africa - and the crucial role of South Africa throughout - and so note the need for flexibility in defining our priorities within the subcontinent.

The Gulf/Red Sea area is rapidly becoming the arena for a growing confrontation between imperialism and the forces of national liberation and socialism. We chose to make this area a secondary focus of our practice, preparing for possible greater efforts later.

The core of LSM's practice will continue to be written propaganda and information. By concentrating our efforts on such work we can make our strongest contribution to revolutionary struggle. We aim to develop a more coordinated publication strategy which takes into account both political needs and the need for our Information Center to become economically self-sufficient.

Our work has always been supported financially by our members who have had to seek outside sources of income to cover their own subsistence. Mounting economic pressures

make it difficult to improve the quality of our work. We aim to make our informational work self-supporting and to reach a wider audience with our materials. Contributions from friends and supporters will therefore be of great help.

We will complete our current project to supply SWAPO of Namibia with a printshop, but consider that similar large-scale support projects are beyond our present capabilities. We will, however, take on small, specific projects and collaborate with other North Americans in raising concrete support for liberation movements. To avoid overstraining our capacity, we have to limit our participation in coalitions and conferences to those which directly advance our priorities and informational work. LSM members are, however, free to work in other committees and coalitions on their own initiative.

## **Basic Structure and Methods of Work**

Our organizational methods are based on the application of democratic centralism to our conditions of work.

Democratic centralism rests on the responsibility of all members to help set LSM's political direction through the appropriate channels. We expect each member to contribute to regular evaluation of our collective practice, com-

portment, and political development and to struggle against values which impede the achievement of our objectives. LSM members are always accountable for the responsibilities they have taken on. Criticism and self-criticism regarding the performance of our tasks are vital tools of democratic centralism.

Respect for leadership and its directives is basic to democratic centralism. Leaders are elected for their political and practical understanding and experience. While leaders are responsible to make decisions based on discussion and consultation, all of us must strive to be innovative in our particular areas of work. Members must be self-motivated as well as concerned about the progress of their comrades.

Our Annual Meeting to review questions of theory, strategy, and structure; plan our practice; and elect leadership is LSM's supreme body. To underline their commitment, members are required to submit written projections for their work over a one-year period. Between Annual meetings our Chairperson, in consultation with the Steering Committee, leads the work of the organization. Other than the Chairperson, the Steering Committee consists of the Information Center Manager, and the leaders of our work units - Writing/Research, Production, and Distribution/Out-

*continued on last page*

# LSM Notes

## Printshop Project Enters New Stage

We are pleased to report that technical training of two SWAPO militants will begin soon. At press time, travel arrangements near completion. Once our SWAPO comrades have the know-how to run the printshop on their own, the project will be successfully launched; and SWAPO will be on its way to publishing for itself.

We reported in the last *LSM NEWS* that we had reached our minimum fundraising goal which covered supplying the Luanda shop with all the basic equipment. We now require additional funds for the trainees' subsistence and supplies. Our projected goal is another \$5,000. We will supply more details in the coming months; but, in the meantime, checks can be made payable to SWAPO Printshop Project.

The solidarity contributions from individuals and organizations have put the project where it is now, with two SWAPO comrades serious and eager to learn the techniques of design, litho camera, printing, and other graphic

skills. Your contributions will see them through their training. We encourage groups to organize fund-raising events like those which have been successful in the past.

## White Lines of Apartheid

Our friend, Dennis Brutus, President of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, alerts us to a Davis Cup tennis match scheduled between the United States and South Africa. The match is to take place March 17-19 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Protests like those at last year's Los Angeles match are expected to challenge the white lines of apartheid. Dennis is also the Chairman of the International Campaign Against Racism in Sport (ICARIS), which plans an international conference for mid-March at either Nashville or Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Contact Dennis for more information on these events:

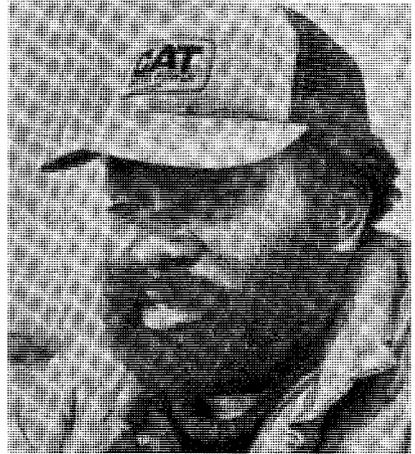
SANROC  
624 Clark Street  
Evanston, IL 60201  
(312) 328-9154

## New Trial for Eaglin!

Two long-time friends of LSM were recently informed by Amnesty International that it is considering adopting their cases as "prisoners of conscience." Ray Eaglin and Eva Kutas were convicted in May 1975 of conspiracy and harboring a man who had escaped from Oregon State Penitentiary. Several appeals were turned down, and in November 1976 Eva began serving a two-year sentence. Ray was sentenced to four years in prison to begin in April of this year.

Eva and Ray were charged with aiding a prisoner who escaped while doing time for murder and kidnaping and who killed an elderly couple before being recaptured. The circumstances of the escape caused the authorities acute embarrassment. To deflect widespread public criticism, the government investigated a number of Oregon political activists in connection with the escape, using it as a convenient cover to get its "enemies."

Eva and Ray were members of the Eugene Coalition which for several years had been active around prisoners' rights, community projects, and anti-imperialist work. For this, the Coalition had been the subject of police persecution and Ray had been arrested several times previously. At the time of the escape, Eva worked at a half-way house for



*Ray Eaglin*



*Eva Kutas*

women where she challenged the myth of the official prisoner rehabilitation programs. Both had shown they could stand up to police intimidation and would carry on with their political work in spite of it. Thus they became prime candidates for the witchhunt.

The conviction of Eva and Ray rested on the testimony of a single state witness who changed her story a number of times before and during the trial and who was given immunity from prosecution in return for her cooperation. The defense, on the other hand, was disorganized and refused to challenge the rationale and purpose of the prosecution. None of the defendants were called to take the stand because the defense lawyers felt their political views would increase the likelihood of conviction. A member of the defense team, for instance, felt Ray was "too big and too black" to testify.

Having served one year of her sentence, Eva has been released on a work furlough

program. Ray is trying to win a new trial before his bond expires in April. For more information on how to support his efforts, we urge our readers to write to:

Eaglin/Kutas Defense Comm.  
215 S.E. 9th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97214

### Cross-Continental Collaboration

As a postscript to the profile of Glad Day Press, elsewhere in this issue, Al Ferrari of Glad Day visited LSM at the end of the year to help us rebuild an old printing press. Al took out two weeks to work day and night on the project. For Glad Day such solidarity is part of "putting the technology of an imperialist nation at the service of anti-imperialism."

### Eritrea on the Air

The Association of Eritrean Students in North America (AESNA) and the Association of Eritrean Women in North America (AEWNA) recently launched a campaign to raise \$50,000 for a radio station in EPLF-held liberated regions of Eritrea. Imagine how this could facilitate the mobilization of the people in the armed struggle and through independence.

Contributions can be sent to:

AESNA  
P. O. Box 1247  
New York, NY 10027



## ANC Visits Bay Area

Thami Mhlambiso, UN and North American representative of the African National Congress of South Africa visited the San Francisco Bay Area at the end of November last year. His stay, sponsored by LSM, was the first here by an ANC representative in recent years and was important in clarifying many of the questions surrounding the South African liberation struggle.



photo/Lou Dematteis

Thami Mhlambiso

In his speech at the People's Cultural Center in San Francisco and in radio and newspaper interviews Comrade Mhlambiso stressed the importance of North Americans campaigning against US corporate support for the apartheid regime. He pointed to actions against the sale of the Krugerrand and against bank loans to South Africa as positive contributions to his people's struggle.

As a first result of Thami Mhlambiso's visit, a coalition of anti-imperialist organizations is sponsoring a fundraising event for the ANC at the People's Cultural Center on February 4. We hope this event signals greater efforts on the part of Bay Area groups to support the fight against apartheid.

## West Coast Solidarity Activity

One result of the advance of liberation struggles in Southern Africa is the growth of a support movement here in the United States. In the Northwest, for instance, several new groups and coalitions have sprung up over the past year.

In Seattle, the American Friends Service Committee-sponsored African Liberation Study Group organized a series of six film and discussion programs which brought South African, Zimbabwean, and Namibian liberation movement representatives to the city. The group is now setting up a permanent resource center on African liberation struggles.

A number of groups such as AFSC, the Coalition of Citizens Against Racism, and People for a Free Southern Africa have also been active in Oregon. After an intensive campaign last fall, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education decided to withdraw its investments from corporations with interests in South Africa. Another campaign resulted in

the Portland City Council passing a resolution against investment in apartheid. In both Portland and Eugene, groups picketed sales outlets for the Krugerrand.

In the Bay Area, several groups are working together on the Zimbabwe Medical Drive, a six-month campaign to raise funds and medical supplies for Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique. This project follows-up a successful clothing drive which last year mobilized a wide range of progressive people to aid the Zimbabweans. The Medical Drive is paralleled by frequent film and discussion programs in the cities around the Bay.

All these efforts indicate a growing awareness and concern about the global importance of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa. As these struggles advance, the need for united action here in the US can only grow.

### Far and Wide

For years LSM has enjoyed close ties with two anti-imperialist groups in Denmark: the Communist Working Circle (KAK) and the Committee for the Revolution in Oman and the Arabian Gulf (KROAG). The basis of our relations is a similar theoretical perspective and common practice in support of liberation movements. Various Danish comrades recently translated more LSM publications into Danish. These are

Don Barnett's *Principles of LSM's Anti-imperialist Work* and our recent article, "Sino-Soviet Split" which is being discussed by Danish study groups.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were also pleased to find one of our interviews with SWAPO President Sam Nujoma turn up in the Luanda newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*. We continue to encourage publications to reprint and credit *LSM NEWS*.

### Resources

The first issue of SWAPO's new publication, *Namibia*, appeared in 1977. Number 1 exposes Vorster's choice of war in Namibia, reports on military activity inside, and analyzes imperialism in general and as applied to Namibia. LSM Information Center will supply subscriptions to *Namibia* for \$5 per year (3 issues in 1977, 6 thereafter). Please indicate 1977 or 1978 subscription.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Mozambique-Zimbabwe One Struggle* is a 27-page pamphlet by Mozambique Solidarity Action in England and available from LSM Information Center for 40¢ per copy (add 50¢ postage and handling). The pamphlet has articles on Rhodesia's war against Mozambique, Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique, and more.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Workers' Struggle for Freedom* (50¢) and *Economic Crisis*

in South Africa The Workers' Burden (40¢) are each 22-page pamphlets from the South African Congress of Trade Unions and available from LSM (add 50¢ postage and handling). *Workers' Struggle* contains SACTU's principles, the Freedom Charter, and SACTU demands. *Economic Crisis* reports on the worsening economic conditions for South Africa's workers in 1977 and presents demands to employers in South Africa.

\* \* \* \* \*

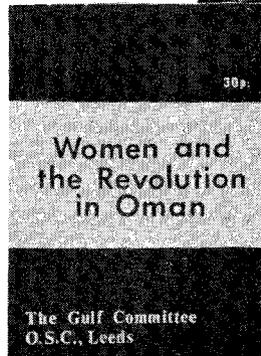
In the last *LSM NEWS* we reported that subscriptions to *Workers' Unity*, the organ of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, were £5 per year. We have since learned this is the price for organizations. Individual subscriptions to *Workers' Unity* are £1 (\$1.95) per year from:

SACTU  
49 Rathbone St.  
London W1A 4NL ENGLAND

\* \* \* \* \*

Peoples Press recently published two attractively designed and politically valuable books. *Our Roots Are Still Alive* is a political history of the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination in their homeland against colonialism, Zionism, and imperialism. This book should fill a big gap in the knowledge and understanding of people in the US. Available from LSM (\$3.50 plus 50¢ postage and handling).

The other new book, *Puerto Rico: the Flame of Resistance*,



also \$3.50, could play a similar role in acquainting many people with the Puerto Rican independence struggle. At a time when the drive for statehood is likely to be accelerated, we would do well to arm ourselves with this factual history. Available from:

Peoples Press  
P. O. Box 40130  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
\* \* \* \* \*

The Support Committee for the Iranian People's Struggle has published two pamphlets in a series entitled *Iran the Struggle Within*. The first is a new edition of the essay, "On the Necessity of Armed Struggle & Refutation of the Theory of 'Survival'" by martyred guerrilla leader Amir Pouyan, with an introduction by George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (42 pages, \$1.25). The second is entitled "Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic" by Massoud Ahmadzadeh (74 pages, \$1.50). Both are key summations of the theoretical lessons of guerrilla struggle in Iran. Available from:

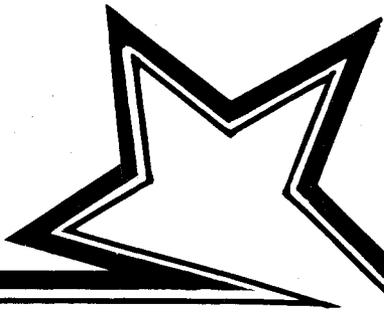
SCIPS  
P. O. Box 671  
New York, NY 10011  
\* \* \* \* \*

A number of other books on Iran and Oman are available from the Gulf Committee in England. *Torture & Resistance in Iran* (153 pages, \$2) by Ashraf Deghani is the moving life story of a guerrilla cap-

tured by the Iranian police. Deghani describes her prison experience in graphic detail and explains how she survived torture and humiliation to eventually escape. *Armed Struggle in Iran: the Road to Mobilization of the Masses* by Bizhan Jazani is another theoretical piece on the Iranian armed movement (143 pages, \$1.70). *Women and the Revolution in Oman* (60¢, 43 pages) is a collection of articles and interviews on the role of women in Omani society and their participation in the revolution. Available from:

Gulf Committee  
6 Endsleigh St.  
London WC1 ENGLAND  
\* \* \* \* \*

Best wishes  
for a  
revolutionary  
1978!



# BOX 2077

## Revolution and Religion

Thank you very much indeed for sending me the new calendar. I think it is a great improvement on last year's and I congratulate you on its presentation. I trust it will help to stir many people to help Africa. . . .

Guinea-Bissau is passing through a difficult period because of the rice shortage owing to lack of rain this year. A short while ago a boat load of rice was sent from America and this met a great need. So many countries sent aid. A boat is expected on the 20th (of December) bringing rice.

You ask what kind of work I am doing. Maybe you will be surprised to hear that I am a missionary. We are about 20 in all, mostly British, but several Americans, one Dutch, and one Brazilian. We are evangelists and the only group working here.

I have been here since 1951, returning to England every 4 or 5 years, so I have been here through the armed struggle. We rejoice with the people at their Independence. We

do medical and midwifery work as well as agricultural work in the Bijagos Islands and in the North. The PAIGC is always most helpful and encourages us in our work. We have always sought to help the people in their struggle.

Before the war I was engaged in leprosy work with an American doctor and his wife, but when the war was at its height the Portuguese made us leave the interior and come to Bissau. Our houses were burnt down.

However, just last year we were able to start rebuilding in Lendene, near Bissora, and a British couple is there doing agricultural work and helping the Balanta people to improve their crops. A nurse from Finland is learning Portuguese and will be coming to restart the leprosy work. We work in conjunction with the Government medical services and they help to supply our medicine, although we do buy a great deal ourselves from Britain.

. . . Our aim (is) that the African should take over, and it is rewarding work.

A Luta Continua  
CS, Guinea-Bissau

## More Information!

The people definitely need to be made aware of the various liberation struggles going on around the world and also the fact that such struggles still exist. The imperialist media tend to downplay such struggles or write them off as "terrorist" activities.

Also, certain elements of the Amerikan left seem to have attached a connotation of shame or counter-revolution to armed struggles and this attitude must definitely be overcome.

A luta continua!

JWP, W. Virginia

## Across the Great Divide

Your analysis of the Sino-Soviet split was sorely needed. Too often rigid, doctrinal positions cause schisms among the people who should be allied against a common enemy, who should be working together instead of fighting among themselves.

SC, New York

## Clippings for Mozambique

Thanks for your letter and package of clippings. . . . The clippings have proved to be very useful, especially for our section "Jornais e Revis-tas." Also I'm starting a file on western journalists who cover Africa, as, when a journalist applies to come here we often know nothing about the sort of reporting he/she does - your cuttings have already filled in some

gaps in this regard.

Vitoria e Certa

PJ, Tempo Magazine, Mozambique

*LSM has been supplying clippings on southern Africa to Tempo at their request. Readers can help by sending news clippings to include in our packets. Especially needed are items from the New York Times and Washington Post. Tempo also wants to follow progressive activities in North America. Left organizations can send their publications to:*

*C. P. 2917*

*Maputo*

*People's Republic of Mozambique.*

*Send by air, as surface mail is unreliable.*

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BASIL DAVIDSON

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## Leading Edge

*continued from p. 1*

not published any new books, in part because we are re-printing old ones consumed by the recent surge of interest in Southern Africa. Now, however, some new books near completion and are advertised in this issue, such as *Sowing the First Harvest*, on reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau and *Liberation Support Movement: Our Unity and Practice*. *LSM NEWS* 11-12, our special issue on SWAPO, is out-of-print and we will soon publish an updated version titled *SWAPO: the Namibian People in Arms*. Other books in the preparatory stage include the life history of John ya Otto, SWAPO's Secretary of Labor, and a collection of short life histories from Guinea-Bissau. We also plan books on women in African liberation movements and on South Africa.

## LSM Second Congress

*continued from page 38*

reach.

We expect our members to agree with and be able to articulate LSM's theoretical and strategic views. People who want to participate in our work and get to know our organization better, can join as trial members or become sympathizers.

- The Patriotic Front: Aims & Objectives
- SWAPO on World Anti-imperialist Struggle
- ANC's Underground Work in South Africa
- People's War Combat Diary
- Imperialist Strategy in Southern Africa

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\$5.00

**ZIMBABWE REVIEW** Zimbabwe African People's Union (Patriotic Front)

\$3.00

**SECHABA** - African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)

\$6.00

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