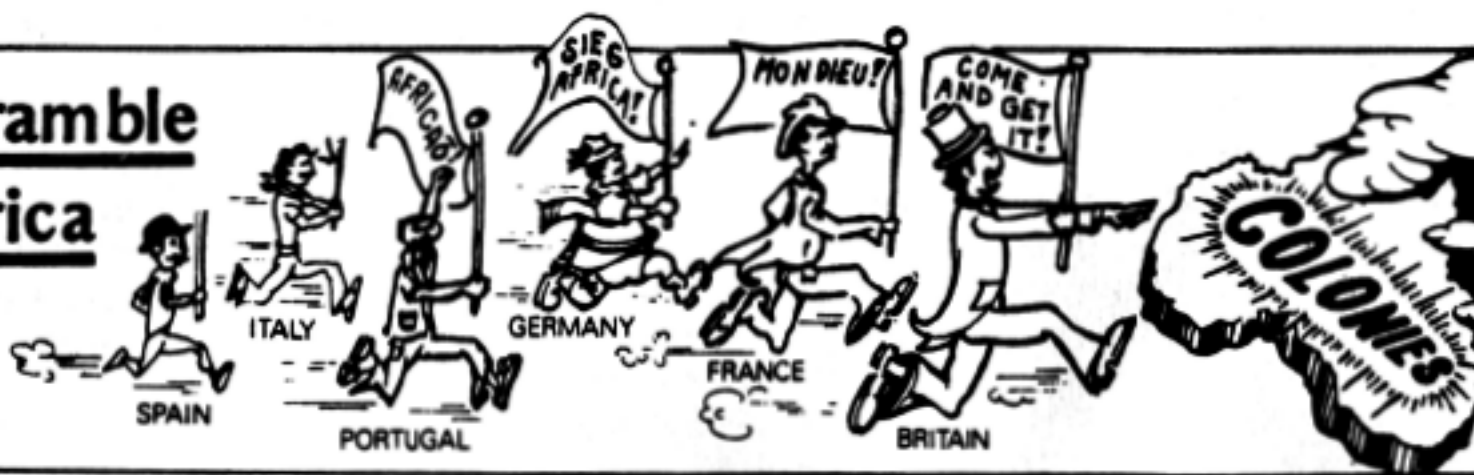


The scramble for Africa



The war in Eritrea is now in its twenty third year. Hundreds have been killed or disabled or have fled their homes. Over a third of the population is now facing a major famine. Africa's longest liberation struggle has been fought against successive Eritrean regimes, backed and heavily armed first by the U.S.A. and now by the U.S.S.R. The Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (E.P.L.F.) who administer 80% of the Eritrean countryside are now winning major victories which may prove to be the turning point of the war. The EPLF have not only been

fighting for Eritrea's right of self-determination, but also for the transformation of traditional social structures which have served to perpetuate poverty, famine and oppression. They have introduced land reforms, have established a network of services providing the population with basic health care and education and have implemented practical measures to ensure women's rights not given to them in feudal society.

The only time we in S.A. hear about Eritrea / Ethiopia and the Horn of



Africa in the commercial press and on T.V. is when we are showed starving people as a result of the famine there. Is this the complete picture? Is the Eritrean struggle a genuine one? What is the nature of the Ethiopian regime? Is it really socialist as it claims? The answers to these questions are rooted in historical development of Eritrea / Ethiopia.

ETHIOPIAN HISTORY

During this same period Ethiopia underwent a very different process. Emperor Haile Selassie -of Rasta fame-with the help of British and American imperialism ruled over the area. Class struggle in Ethiopia continued to be characterised by isolated sporadic peasant revolts against feudal lords until the mid'60's. British and Ethiopian interests conspired to subject Eritrea to an Ethiopian

controlled "federation". This did not happen to other Italian colonies in Africa. In 1952 through a U.N. mandate, Eritrea was federated to Ethiopia. The deal provided land-locked feudal Ethiopia with two major Red Sea ports, highly

ERITREAN HISTORY

productive agricultural highlands and Eritrea's growing industrial development. The U.S. received formal rights to establish military bases throughout Eritrea. In March 1958 Eritrean workers, supported by other patriotic classes, staged a militant four day general strike in protest against Ethiopia's colonial powers. The Ethiopian government called out its troops killing 88 workers and wounding 455 others. The bitter outcome of this peaceful protest led to the beginning of the armed struggle with the formation of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1961. By 1966 internal contradictions began to surface as the Front's more progressive elements began agitating to end class privilege within the movement. Some people left the E.L.F. and formed the EPLF in 1970.

ERITREA/ETHIOPIA

As European powers scrambled for control of Africa, Italy emerged victorious in Eritrea, integrating the area as we define it today under one political economic entity for the first time. Under Italian rule (1889 - 1941), feudal Eritrea was restructured to fill the needs of a cash-based colonial economy. Britain seized power from the Italians at the height of the second world war and established a military administration. Eritrea's first nationalist political parties were founded during the 11-year period of British rule (1941-1952). A rapidly growing movement of rallies, demonstrations and workers' strikes around both economic and political issues was met with violence and repression. The period of colonial rule forged an Eritrean working class and a national consciousness amongst the masses which became a unifying motivating force for struggle.



EPLF CADRES

'SOCIALIST REVOLUTION'

As the struggle inside Eritrea has grown and developed, likewise conditions in Ethiopia itself had changed. By mid 1974 the Selassie regime had begun to crumble under the weight of massive workers' and students'

strikes and demonstrations. The pressure of the war in Eritrea and a devastating drought left more than 100 000 dead. The resistance was largely due to the EPRP (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary party). A massive popular movement emerged shattering the regime's foundations. In September 1974, the self-proclaimed marxist military council known as the Dergue stepped in and declared a "socialist revolution".

The Dergue's claim to revolution rests primarily on the nationalization of selected profit-making enterprises, on an agrarian reform based on the expropriation of large landholdings & on the establishment of various mass organisations and a proclaimed break with Western imperialist powers.

Like its nationalization and agrarian reform programme, the Dergue's mass organisations look better on paper than in practice. The overwhelming aims of these groups is directed for the internal and external war effort. While the Dergue organises women's organisations to support its military undertakings, more than



ERITREAN WOMEN

100 000 of Addis Ababa's two million people still earn their living through prostitution after 11 years of "socialist revolution". The Dergue's claim to socialist revolution is further eroded by its liquidationist policies towards its real and imagined critics on the left. Within months of seizing power, the military council imprisoned or executed virtually the entire leadership of worker and student movements.

In April 1977 over 2000 young people many of whom supported the EPRP were killed. Does the Dergue think that Stalin's terror of the 1930s and the use of heavy armour against demonstrators as in the streets of Budapest (1956), Prague 1968, and more recently in Poland are necessary to maintain "socialist" power?

The Dergue's administration in Eritrea has been mocked by the massive escalation in the use of napalm, poi-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

son gas , incidents of rape , physical mutilation and torture. Hundreds of villages throughout the country have been wiped out. Soviet supplied planes have carried out these continuous bombings.

SUPPORT FOR ERITREA

Internationally, EPLF's closest ties is with the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. Guinea - Bissau and Algeria have expressed public and private support. Mocambique has expressed private support for the struggle. It is one of history's bitter ironies to find Cuba and the U.S.S.R. alongside the U.S. and Israel supporting the Ethiopian Dergue.

One of the best measures of revolutionary

progress under EPLF is the social gains achieved by women. Under the slogan "Equality through equal partic-



ipation in the Revolution and Social Production", sectors of the Association of Eritrean Women (AEW) are being organised by EPLF women cadres

throughout the liberated areas and in the underground cells in enemy territory. The AEW's highest priority is political education and mobilization to fight both the traditional feudal culture and imperialist-colonial

control that have enforced it, maintaining repression of Eritrean women for centuries. Today, women from all parts of the country are participating in every aspect of the revolution. 50% of EPLF fighting forces are women. According to the EPLF there is no work for men or women. They must do the same work. A conscious effort to eradicate the economic underpinnings of sex discrimination is resulting in the mixing of women into virtually every sector of the economy, from machine design and repair to public administration.

Companies made Big Profits!

Management always tells workers:

FROM A MAWU PUBLICATION

- they are not making any money
- they are struggling to keep the factories open
- they are losing customers
- the workers must be reasonable.

IT IS A LIE. Look at these results for 1983.

COMPANY	PROFIT (after tax)
Dorbyl	R60,4 million
Haggie	R50,4 million
Siemens	R12,7 million
Highveld	R23,3 million
Metkor	R64 million
Altech	R31,2 million
Barlow Rand (Engineering)	R80 million

And remember- there are many ways of hiding profits. Companies employ many accountants to hide profits so that they won't have to pay tax. Workers make these profits for management. So we have a right to see your books. Let us see how much profit you really made.

Companies say to workers: don't be irresponsible. Don't demand such big increases. We say to companies : It is you who are irresponsible. It is you who make Super- profits. It is you who throw even more people out of work by putting in more machines. If you want us to be responsible- **SHOW US YOUR BOOKS!**

These few companies control most of the output in the engineering industry.

Last year all the companies told the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU)

that they would be lucky to make any profit at all. But that was not true.

They still made HUGE PROFITS.