

The Heroic Struggle of the Ethiopian Peoples and Youth against Feudalism and Imperialism

The gigantic mass revolutionary upsurge that erupted dramatically last February (1974) has resulted in overthrowing one of the bloodiest autocracies in contemporary history. The February movement, though dramatic in its form and content, cannot be dissociated from the numerous peasant rebellions, workers' struggle, student agitation and struggles, etc ... that have been raging in the country for several years. However, the February Movement was special in so far as it affected a broad cross-section of the oppressed masses (workers, peasants, women, poor soldiers, students, teachers, priests, moslems, oppressed nationalities, democratic army lower-officers ...) who rose up to struggle for fundamental change. Aside from this militant and united upsurge of the masses, the February Movement is characterised by the exemplary leading role played by the Ethiopian working class.

The February Movement broke the reactionary ruling class coalition made up of feudalists and comprador bourgeoisie. The ruling class' futile attempts to halt the struggle of the masses were evidenced by the promises of reform made and the changes that occurred as concerns ministers and Prime Ministers. However, our masses were not duped at all. In fact their struggle intensified and threatened to destroy the whole feudo-imperialist structure. It is at this period that the American imperialists made their decisive move to check the masses' advance by pushing the military to intervene. The pro-American officers, who had short-circuited the movement of poor soldiers now intervened directly to abort the struggle of the masses and to protect the interests of the imperialists and their local allies.

At present the junta rules by force, and all over the country an atmosphere of terror reigns. The basic democratic rights of the masses (right to organise, to demonstrate, to strike, to free speech, etc...) are prohibited and the fascistic police of the military regime continue to hunt and arrest all genuine and democratic elements. Moreover, the junta has categorically refused to honor the demands of the masses calling for an end to its arbitrary rule, and the setting-up of a provisional, popular government. The junta's demagogue of "Ethiopian socialism" has been rejected by no other person than the regime's minister of information, who declared in an interview with a Lebanese newspaper (AL-NAHAR, Jan. 26th) that "we do not intend to build a socialist state; our principle is based on humanism derived from our religion". The basic socio-economic problems facing our country remain unsolved. The junta's so-called land reform is going to be implemented by none other than Colonel Belatchew Jemaneh, presently Minister of Interior, former chief of Haile Sellasie's Security department, and one of the closest allies of U.S. Imperialism! Eritreans are still denied their basic democratic right and are being killed by the American-armed barbaric Army.

As we commemorate the first anniversary of the February Movement we feel obliged to reaffirm the glorious struggle undertaken by the Ethiopian Student Movement on the side of the labouring masses. The ESM⁺, ever since it adopted a revolutionary line of uncompromising opposition to feudalism and imperialism, has been in the forefront of the struggle for the true liberation of the Ethiopian peoples. The violent repression of the Haile Sellasie regime has met with no success to halt the march of the youth's struggle. And in the historic days of February, the student movement coordinated its actions with the workers and other oppressed peoples to assault the bastions of reaction and imperialism. Agitate,

integrate, mobilise and struggle to organise and so on has been the watchword of the movement. The esteem it has earned from the masses is a proof of its correct line.

The junta which came to power by force has tried all in its powers to get the support of the students so as to use them to dupe the people; but with no success. The youth, just like the masses, rejected the fascistic junta and called for its replacement with a popular provisional government. The junta, then, showed its true nature and along with attempts to disperse the movement, it unleashed a systematic repression against student leaders - kidnapping some like Melese Tekle, hunting others like USUAA's president Getachew Begashaw. Once again the things have come full circle and the oppressed masses are being repressed. The present reign of terror has not succeeded to check the struggle of the Ethiopian peoples. One year has passed since February and our people have deepened their struggle.

The isolated junta has found no ally but sheer brute force and demagogy. In both it is being actively helped by U.S. imperialism. At another level it is being actively assisted by traitorous intellectuals who have sold themselves to the junta and imperialism in order to protect their interests by filling bureaucratic and advisory posts. The reactionary leaders of the ESUE are at present the vanguards of the junta's offensive to DWIDE the student movement and to create CONFUSION among the people. Covering their reactionary and counter-revolutionary nature with pseudo-revolutionary phrases these despicable elements spread reactionary ideas, chauvinism and the like. They try to abort the anti-imperialist struggle by declaring that the primary contradiction the people have is ONLY with feudalism! They try to divide the forces of the people by calling on all classes and nationalities to have their own separate parties. They eulogise the petty bourgeoisie and heap insults on the masses. These traitors serve actively the junta and imperialism.

But their frantic acts are in vain. The junta and imperialism along with their bootlickers will be swept away by the struggle of our masses. February has ushered to Ethiopia a new era - an era in which there is no place for feudalism, imperialism, traitors and other scums. The lessons of February are still fresh and we repeat that neither feudalism, nor imperialism, nor the traitors of the ESUE leadership nor the Junta and other dogs can stop the struggle of the Ethiopian peoples and youth for democracy and socialism.

Down with the Military Regime and Imperialism!

Down with Feudalism!

Victory to the struggle of the Ethiopian masses!

Victory to the Eritrean Revolution!

Long live the ESM!

Glory to our Martyrs!

Down with all Traitors and Reactionaries!

* ESM = Ethiopian students' movement.

+ ESUE = Ethiopian student Union in Europe

by Waje Wayom

ESUE member West Germany