

The Anti-Colonial Political and Military Struggle (Part IX)

Written by Million Eyob

The EPLF had, in the course of the heroic struggle for independence, proven many fundamental points. It showed its loyalty to the just struggle of the Eritrean people. It had proven that a just struggle cannot be vanquished no matter how huge the colonial military force (and that of extra force) arrayed against it. It has demonstrated beyond any doubt the correctness of the military strategy it pursued. And the protracted war which has demanded heavy sacrifices, the EPLF has built a people's army with regular, regional and militia units evincing numerical growth., employing sophisticated strategies and tactics, possessing consciousness and morale, well organized, equipped and proficient in light and heavy weapons; dedicated, productive' and a guarantee for the liberation of Eritrea and its reconstruction. The EPLF, however, is not a militarist organization, but a democratic organization which wages an all sided national liberation struggle. It has worked tirelessly for a just and peaceful political solution because it believed this to be the simplest solution, one which minimizes destruction and blood shade and assures peace, prosperity and stability to the people of Eritrea, Ethiopia and the region as a whole.

The Eritrean people's struggle for a just and peaceful political solution went for over 30 years. The Eritrean people took up arms and embarked on their just and legitimate armed struggle, not because this was their choice but the world community had denied their case due attention. In the early years, dialogue of any kind was not possible as the Haile Selassie regime with the active collaboration of the United States had built walls of isolation around the Eritrean struggle and was striving to quietly liquidate the armed struggle.

After the fall of Haile Selassie, the Dergue regime made formally declarations about the issue, as a "peaceful solution" to the Eritrean case was one of the main slogans of the people. What the case demands, however, was not empty proclamations and feigned acceptance of the peoples will, but convection and seriousness, which the Dergue lacked. This lack of commitment on the part of the Dergue doomed any-peace efforts and the peace maneuvers it carried out when it first seized power ended in total failure.

In 1977-78 fake peace talks concocted by the Soviets and directly by the East Germans were conducted as a pretext for the eminent large-scale offensive of the Dergue. A collateral objective of the peace maneuvers was to secure the submission of the Eritrean revolution through deception and intimidation. Four successive meetings were held at the invitation of the German Socialist Workers Unity Party. The first from 25-23/03/77 and the fourth from 09-10-/06/78. On 15/07/78, a month after meeting, the Dergue launched its first large-scale offensive.

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At the first meeting held between the EPLF delegation and leaders of the Socialist Workers Unity Party of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), the latter submitted the following deception opinion.

We affirm the right of the Eritrean peoples to self-determination up to independence, and the Dergue has also assured us that it believes in this right. There are some in the Dergue, however, who do not accept it. talks should, therefore, start to resolve the case. The EPLF delegation gave this initiative its positive consideration and took the opportunity to elaborate on the just and legitimate nature of the Eritrean case, and assured the German side that the EPLF's commitment to peaceful solution and its readiness to start dialogue. A date was set for the next meeting.