

"Reactionary and corrupt regime" in Mogadishu. The US air lifted arms to Somalia and Italy did the same. President Mubarak of Egypt promised support for Somalia declaring that his country's "Strategic security is linked to what takes place in the region of the Horn of Africa". On the 13th of December a week long US-Somalia joint manoeuvres ended with the staging of a mock air battle over Mogadishu.

From all this it should be clear that the Horn is once again heading towards a disaster. The prospects for a peaceful solution based on the recognition of the rights of people to self determination and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the region, are becoming more and more slim.

The rising tension in the region, which is the direct result of the Soviet backed pact between Ethiopia, Libya and South Yemen, has nothing to do with the interests and the aspiration of the peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia. As we clearly stated at the time of the signing of the treaty "ME'ISONE stands opposed to any unprovoked aggression against any neighbouring state and will continue to work for peace and stability in the region, based on the principles of non-alignment and good neighbourliness".

Events in Ethiopia

2000 troops seek asylum

The Sudanese deputy commissioner for refugees Mr. HASSEN ATTIYA confirmed early this year that an estimated 2000 Ethiopian troops had crossed the boarder in December and requested political asylum. Over the past months the government of Sudan has already granted asylum to over 1000 Ethiopian army defectors.

It is reported that the 2000 defecting troops were ambushed by loyalist army units while they were awaiting a decision from Khartoum. Asked if these troops would be given refugee status, the UNHCR director in the Sudan said "Deserters of any army, according to the international convention are not refugees. But we are not excluding the possibility that they might be recognized in the future".

* 2nd COPWE Congress : Institutionalizing the military dictatorship.

The second congress of the "Commission to organise the Party of the working people of Ethiopia" (COPWE) was held in Addis Ab ba in January 1983. A statement issued at the end of the 4 day congress said that it represents "the final chapter for the formation of the worker's party". The Ethiopian regime gave no further details concerning the date of the creation of the party. But the Soviet News Agency TASS disclosed on the 6th of January that the constitutive congress will be held in September 1984. TASS also hailed the holding of the congress as "A clear demonstration of the will of the working people of Ethiopia to continue on the path of Socialist construction and to develop fraternal relations with all communist parties in the world led by the CPSU".

Not-with-standing the DERG's (and Soviet) assertions to the contrary, the nascent party has nothing to do with Ethiopias working people or with democratic and patriotic forces in the country.

The composition of the central committee of COPWE with its 123 members issued at the end of the 1st congress in July 1980 showed beyond any doubt that the so called "working class party" will be nothing more than a gang of chauvinists and traitors devoid of anything democratic or patriotic. As we pointed out in July 1980 :

"The COPWE central Committee is dominated by high ranking

military officers. The list of CC members that has been officially published shows only 36 officers in the 123 member central committee. But according to ME'ISONE sources in Addis Abeba, 46 more officers simply designated as "comrades" without any mention of their military ranks sit in the CC of COPWE. This gives a total of 82 officers i.e. a full 2/3 of the entire CC are members of the military. According to the same sources the composition by ranks shows that there are 16 generals, 28 colonels, 15 majors, 14 captains, 6 lieutenants and 3 comodores. High ranking officers, i.e. generals and colonels represent over half of the men in uniform in the CC" (New Ethiopia July/August 1980).

The figures revealed by MENGISTU at the 2nd congress showed that no progress has been made by way of democratizing the COPWE leadership. He disclosed that just after the 1st congress workers constituted 2.9 % of the membership of COPWE, peasants 1.2 % and what he called "Intellectuals civil servants, the revolutionary army and other social sectors" represented 95.5 %. By November 1982 workers' membership had gone up to 21.7 % that of peasants to 3.3 % and the third group has gone down by a full 20 %.

Even taken at face value, these figures call for some clarifications. As the six CC members purged in January are not replaced the composition of the CC is the same as in 1980. It now comprises 91 members (down from 93) and 26 alternate members (down from 30). This means that the alleged "rise in workers' and peasants' membership" is not accompanied by a corresponding rise in representation at the leadership level. It is interesting to note that even Radio Moscow deplored this fact in a commentary on the 7th of January. Moscow's reasons for dissatisfaction are clear. Those appointed by the regime as "leaders" of the workers and peasants associations are not represented in the CC. And these elements are controlled by the Notorious KGB agent Captain LEGESSE ASFAW.

On the other hand by putting together "Intellectuals, civil servants, the revolutionary army and other social sectors" Mengistu is deliberately trying to confuse issues. These different groups can not be put on equal footing for the

simple reason that more than 2/3 of the CC are members of the armed forces !

Any way one thing is already sure. The creation of the "workers' party" will not bring anymore stability in the country. Its only "achievement" will be an institutionalisation of the chauvinist military dictatorship that now misrules Ethiopia. The regime will never be able to cope with the problems of the country which are essentially of its own creation. As we noted in July 1980 "It will not help to contain or appease the ever widening opposition nor put an end to the vicious internal strifes of the rival factions scrambling for the spoils of power".

Our position is clear. "ME'ISONE, together with all Ethiopias democratic and patriotic forces, will ruthlessly fight this Commission and the "workers party" that will come out of it. It will continue the struggle for the recognition of full democratic rights to the Ethiopian people, the creation of a genuine workers' party and for the right to organise other democratic and patriotic parties and for the establishment of a free and democratic Ethiopia on the ruins of the present dictatorship and its foreign masters" (New Ethiopia July/August 1980).

* COPWE leading members purged

As the internal strife with in the COPWE leadership continues 6 leading members of the CC were purged in early January. Those purged in Mengustu's latest drive to "Purify" the ranks of COPWE before it achieves full party status include Captain TAMRAT FEREDÉ a former top official of the DERG and Mr. TAYE GIRMU the head of COPWE'S cooperatives department. The other four leaders were General MERID NEGUSSIE, former chief of staff of the Ethiopian Armed forces, General GEBBREKRISTOS BULI, Mr. TSSFAYE SHEWAYE former minister of culture and Mr. TEFFERA WOLDE SEMAITE the former minister of finances said to have defected while on an official trip to Canada.

Another group of 34 members were expelled from COPWE and unspecified "disciplinary measures" were taken against five leading members charged with "activities contrary to the objectives of COPWE". It is reported that the foreign minister Col. FELEKE GEDLEGIORGIS is among the five "undisciplined" elements.

* "Undisciplined" Peasants and Inefficient state farms

Ever since agricultural production started to fall in 1978, MENGISTU had lost no occasion to blame Ethiopia's peasants for the famine in the country. At the 2nd congress of COPWE he again stressed that "The decline in agricultural production for the consecutive two years can be attributed to sudden change in weather conditions, the lack of the necessary work discipline on the part of the peasants..."

The regime proposes collectivisation and extension of state farms as suitable solutions to Ethiopia's food problems. But the governments collectivisation drive is strongly opposed by the peasants. In 1982, there were only 850 producers' cooperatives in a country with over 25.000 peasants associations. As for state farms, the total land area cultivated rose from 73.000 hectares to 300.000 hectares during the last two years. But Mengistu's report says "while 25 quintals of wheat per hectare could be realised on the average, the yield does not exceed 14 hectares per hectare in most state farms and this is not much better than that produced by peasants in many areas using backward implements of production".

No workable solutions are proposed to combat peasant "indiscipline" or to increase efficiency of state farms. But the government still hopes that by 1990 the latter would be able to fulfill their main role; that of feeding the urban population now that the country's peasants are consuming more of their own production.