

forward

This December issue of "New Ethiopia" is mainly concerned with the question of democratic liberties. We have tried to present briefly in an article the different positions of the Marxist-Leninist groups and organizations on this question. Our readers must have realized that in previous issues we devoted much space to this question. This is owing to the fact that the question of democratic liberties has become a central issue in the debate within Marxist-Leninist groups and organizations.

In fact, there is in Ethiopia today, an intensive ideological struggle waged between the Marxist-Leninists of ME'ISONE and right-wing opportunists, particularly the leaders of the "Proletarian League" and the "Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization" (MALERID). These opportunists that have betrayed the programme of the National Democratic Revolution as well as their own declarations, are attempting to discredit the ideological achievements of the last two years.

The question of democracy has always been - even during the dark days of Haile Selassie - one of great importance to the development of the revolutionary process. Today this reality takes on greater importance. If the revolutionary process has come to a standstill in Ethiopia, if we are witnessing an unprecedented resurgence of the forces of the Right, it is precisely because the question of democracy has not been correctly solved.

The military regime has denied the masses all freedom of expression, organization, assembly, press, etc., which it had nevertheless recognized officially as necessary when it proclaimed the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution. The national question still has not found a democratic solution. On the contrary oppressed nationalities are subjected to increasing national oppression and chauvinism is becoming rampant. Democratic freedom is scoffed at and the Marxist-Leninists of ME'ISONE, who went underground in August 1977, are being liquidated, imprisoned and shot.

This is the objective situation at present. Today the right-wing opportunists who pursue this policy are trying to give "ideological" support to this swing towards

the right. Consequently, it is imperative to wage an all-out ideological struggle in order to wipe out the subterfuges of the reaction which is aggravating the present state of things. The importance of an ideological struggle in all political conflicts needs no further explanation. It suffices to see that, within the Ethiopian context, the political bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois revolutionists of the EPRP was largely due to their ideological defeat. Therefore, in order to crush right or left-wing opportunism on the political, organizational, and military level, it is necessary to dismantle it in the ideological struggle. We shall here attempt to present certain elements of the struggle that characterize present day Ethiopia.

Begning with this issue we have opened an "information" column which presents the most important events in the last few months. In future, we intend to afford more room to the diffusion of information on the political life of our country in general.

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