

HAND BOOK

ON

ELEMENTARY

NOTES ON REVOLUTION

AND ORGANIZATION

*OF Ethiopian Student
Movement*

prepared by the Executive
Council of ESUNA
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Editorial: In memory of Comrade Mesfin Habtu

Comrade Mesfin Habtu was an intensely dedicated patriot whose conscious life was shaped very much by the struggle of the Ethiopian peoples. He was fearless in his life and thus joined all honest compatriots in helping to chart the course of the student struggle at home and abroad.

His stunning death came so difficult for many a compatriot in Ethiopia. Those who know him unmistakably recall his decisiveness, commitment and other rare revolutionary qualities which were the trade marks of his short life.

Elementary Notes on Revolution and Organization—the highest achievement of the year in the whole Ethiopian Student Movement—is dedicated to the comrade-revolutionary. Our belief that the ideas generated in this beautiful work will encourage the development of dead serious revolutionaries is only excelled by the belief that comrade Mesfin is survived with no less an issue than the Ethiopian REVOLUTION ITSELF! To the people engaged in this revolutionary process, there simply is no time to honour the heroes of the people other than intensifying the struggle for which their lives were a total expression. This is the paragon of the revolutionary essence—to struggle and never stop struggling, no matter the price, the burden or the sacrifice this struggle entails.

Comrade Mesfin Habtu was born in November 1948 and was consumed by the struggle in November 1, 1971 in New York City, U.S.A. His entire conscious life was put to the service of the Ethiopian peoples. He was a patriot on a par with such revolutionary immortals as Belaye Zeleke, Tilahun Gizaw etc. At home he was respected and loved. He served USUAA in the capacities of acting president, secretary-general and one of the editors of the *STRUGGLE*. He was one of the few crops of all out revolutionaries with which USUAA alone in the arena of student organizations was able to produce. He was thrown in jail for six months by the barbaric autocracy for his tireless service to the people.

In the U.S.A., comrade Mesfin had a tough one year struggle and his imprint on ESUNA is indelible. Foremost among his achievements was the successful struggle to unmask the social-chauvinist and opportunist tendencies in the student movement. His staunch internationalism—condemning both big and narrow nationalisms—was too much for the Amhara supremacists and their ilk who thrive by fanning and perpetuating these “isms.” Although the pressure against him was intense, he was a model in the debate and unflinching in the ideological struggle. Consequently, in August 1971, he was elected president of ESUNA at the 19th Congress held in Los Angeles. His short tenure as president of ESUNA was marked by a concern for the well-being of the Ethiopian Student Movement *as a whole*.

We remind our readers that we must unite and together remember our deceased comrades by making the revolution the very purpose of our existence—the business of our lives! *Elementary Notes on Revolution and Organization* can be a good guide in this direction. Let us study, memorize, understand and act according to its instructions.

In conclusion it is one of the iron laws of the struggle that it be advanced forward at the price of genuine comrades. Some die, some get jailed and others are banished from their home. Whenever the enemy unleashes these attacks, we are never surprised—instead we unleash our own secret weapon (at the disposal of the revolutionaries), which is to sustain superior morale and a spirit of organization—unique only to revolutionaries. Only then can the revolution be assured a safe landing zone in our homeland.

This work is a compilation. Almost nothing—not even the style—is original to the compilers. In many cases the writings of revolutionaries have been quoted verbatim and passage after passage. Our attempt is to present the correct ideas on the questions which are relevant to our own revolutionary movement. We have taken the liberty to quote from the writings of revolutionaries and revolutionary movements without due acknowledgment for the simple reason that these revolutionaries do not claim the bourgeois ownership concept of 'copyright' and will not accuse us of plagiarism.

However, we take full responsibility for any misquotation or misinterpretation as well as for the validity of judgments made on certain prevailing tendencies amidst Ethiopian revolutionaries.

What is compiled here is aimed at a specific audience and we are definitely sure they will benefit from it. If there are some who read this paper and then exclaim, "there is nothing new in it; we know it all", we say to them, "Do practice what you know!"

"in a political struggle of class against class, organization is the most important weapon." E. Engels

"Without an organization the working class has nothing." V.I. Lenin

"If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs." Mao Tse tung

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully." V.I. Lenin.

"However active the leading group maybe, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level." Mao Tse tung

The Supplement

At present there is an intense discussion among all genuine members of the Ethiopian Students Movement on the role of the ESM in society and what its tasks are. This discussion is crucial and its importance has been doubled by the fact that the discussion has come rather late in the life of the ESM. Moreover, it is to be noted that absence of knowledge of the role and character of the ESM has led some members to be misled by certain reactionary and chauvinist persons who posing as "super-revolutionaries" or "real proletarians" aim at creating disunity within the ESM.

This short supplement, we hope, will help the discussion on the nature, role and tasks of the ESM. It is our belief that the confusion that exists on this issue stems basically from an absence of a precise knowledge as to the nature, role and tasks of mass organizations and political parties. The ESM is a mass organization; it is not a political party and it can never be one. On the other hand, a working class party (a Marxist-Leninist party) is a political party and not a mass organization. Hence to confuse the ESM with a working class party—even if the student members profess Marxism-Leninism as their ideology or subjectively consider themselves as the vanguard of the labouring masses—is a grave error. That this error is committed by many within the ESM can be attested by reference to many student publications as well as loud proclamations of certain students to the effect that, "the ESM is a vanguard of the labouring masses", that "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung-Though is the basis of unity within the ESM", that "the ESM should fight capitalist roaders (sic) in its midst", that "the task of the ESM is to organize a working class party", that "there is left opportunism in the ESM" (this last one being a spectre raised to hound out any genuine criticism of the Eth. Student Unions abroad), . . . etc.

We do not attempt to discuss in this brief paper what the role and tasks of the ESM are or should be. Instead we would discuss what is meant by a political party (and since the ESM confuses itself with a working class party we will, in the main, discuss what are the general characteristics of a working class party) and what is meant by a mass organization. Thus we will discuss what the ESM is (a mass organization) and what it is not (a working class party or a political party of any kind). For it is apparent that if we understand clearly what the ESM is and what it is not we will find it relatively easier to set the tasks and chart the course of the ESM. Otherwise confusion of identity leads to confusion of role and duties and this will inevitably result in blunders or fatal defeats. And the sooner the ESM (especially the Eth. Students Unions abroad) realizes this and solves its identity crisis the better it will achieve its modest yet very important tasks in the battle to bring about the total liberation of the Ethiopian peoples. A battle which will be waged by the peoples themselves, and which can achieve victory *only* under the leadership and direction of a working class party.

A WORKING CLASS PARTY

1/ *What are the characteristics of a working class party?*

(A) A working class party is a *class party*.

Each class in society has its own definite interests which it wants to protect. This pushes it to strive for state power so that it can best maintain its class interest by becoming the ruler of all other classes. This is true of the landlord class, the bourgeois class and it also holds true for the working class. In all cases the landlords and the bourgeoisie want to impose and perpetuate their own dictatorships over the labouring masses, while the working class wants to wrest power from the ruling classes and bring about the total liberation of the working peoples by—among other measures—subjecting the enemy or enemies of the working peoples to a rigorous proletarian dictatorship.

And each class in order to strive effectively for power or to maintain the power it has in its grip organizes itself around a political party. Therefore, each political party pursues definite aims—the party of the landlords protects the interests of the landlord class, the party of the bourgeoisie fights to protect and maintain the interests of the bourgeois class, and the party of the working class fights to bring about the emancipation of the working class and all working people by establishing the dictatorship of the working class (proletariat) and subsequent creation of a communist society.¹

Hence each political party is a class party—a party that serves the interests of the particular class. Thus a working class party is a class party—the party of the working class. And as a party of the working class it is the highest form of organization of the working class. This means that the working class, which has its economic and other forms of organizations (ex., trade unions), reaches its highest level of organization in its *political party*—the working class party.

At this juncture, however, it is necessary to answer certain questions that will inevitably be posed.

Question 1. *Does it mean that each class will and should always and everywhere necessarily form its own political party?*

In general we can say that each class if it is mature (conscious) enough to know how to best defend its interests will organize itself around its own political party. This statement, however, needs clarifications and qualifications and we will try to see its relevance to each class in the Ethiopian society.

(a) *The Working Class*: —without an organization, without its political party the working class has nothing. It will remain scattered, divided and powerless. The maximum it can do being fighting economic struggles (i.e., struggles which do not attack capitalism as a system, but aim at fighting individual bourgeois or employer to gain higher wages, safety measures for workers, etc). If the working class is to stand as an organized force, to fight a political struggle (i.e., to struggle against the feudo-capitalist class as a whole,

1. We must realize that the establishment of a communist society is the final aim of the working class parties of *all* countries. However, this should not lead to confusing the new democratic revolution—the only way semi-feudal neo-colonial Ethiopia can move towards socialism—which is characterized politically by the joint dictatorship of all revolutionary (in Ethiopia all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal) classes led by the proletariat with the socialist revolution which is characterized politically by the immediate establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

to fight against the capitalist system of wage slavery), to change itself from a class "in itself" (meaning a class unaware of its historic role to end the exploitation of man by man and ignorant of what it has to do, whom it has to fight and destroy to achieve its historic mission) to a class "for itself" (meaning a class consciously engaged in a struggle to bring about a communist society), it *must organize itself around a Marxist-Leninist party*. This is the *only* way it can smash the organized force of the ruling class, grasp state power in its hands, lead and achieve the new democratic revolution, assure the transition from the democratic to the socialist revolution and proletarian dictatorship, and finally bring about a communist society. It can be said that the rise of the working class party is the sign of maturity (class consciousness) of the working class. Hence the working class should at all times and everywhere have its own political party—a Marxist-Leninist party.

(b) *The Peasantry*: The Ethiopian peasantry does not represent any distinctive mode of production nor does it have an independent political position or its own ideology. It is disunited politically and economically—in relation to the cultivable land it [the peasantry] is thinly spread over a large area,—and is subsequently unable to build up a *successful* one of its own. History attests to this.²

In Ethiopia the peasantry is a revolutionary force and it will be the main fighter—under the leadership of the working class party—against serfdom and the autocracy as well as the imperialists. However, the impetus, the direction has to come from what Engels calls the alert population concentrated in the towns. Specifically it means that the leadership has to come either from the bourgeoisie or the working class. Who leads the peasantry is *the* crucial issue of the revolution. If the bourgeoisie lead it the peasantry will never be liberated. On the other hand, under the leadership of the working class the peasantry will achieve total liberation and see its short and long range interests realized.

In Ethiopia the basic demand of the peasantry is "land to the tiller". This demand can only be satisfied by a radical agrarian revolution which will overthrow the feudal class and abolish the system of feudal land ownership. Consequently only a social class that makes common cause with a genuine revolutionary movement of the peasantry and that does not hesitate to abolish the system of private ownership can set forth and lead the agrarian revolution to victory, final victory. The national bourgeoisie is not such a class as in this epoch the national bourgeoisie cannot even lead and bring about a classical bourgeois revolution and thus cannot even fully satisfy its own interests. How can it then realize the peasantry's interest?

On the other hand, the proletariat is *the* class that can set forth and lead the agrarian revolution to final victory as it is not at all 'involved' in the system of private ownership and as the working class's task at this stage is mainly to deal with the peasant question—a task which the working class has necessarily to undertake in order to satisfy its own interests. Moreover, in contrast to all exploited classes of previous socio-economic formations (slave and feudal) the proletariat is a class which cannot free itself from exploitation without abolishing all exploitation of man by man and all forms of oppression, and consequently, without freeing all the working people from pre-capitalist and capitalist yoke of dependence.

Is all this pure theory? No. Practice has shown that it is true.

—The Russian experience shows that even in a case where the peasantry had what could roughly be called its own party³—the Socialist Revolutionary Party—it was only the Bolshevik (working class) Party that brought about a radical land reform and persistently defended the peasants' short and long range interests while the S.R.P. was busy undermining the peasantry's interests by incessantly compromising with the ruling class.

—In China it was only when the Chinese Communist Party appeared on the political scene that the peasantry's interest began to be realized. Only under the CCP were the Chinese peasants able to realize "land to the tiller" and move towards their total liberation.

—Vietnamese history also shows us that. Despite the fact that numerous classes or social strata (feudal scholars, national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie)

2. Consider the Derassa, Tigriu, Bale, Arussi, Gojjam peasant movements in Ethiopia. Refer also to the Jacques in France (14th and 15th century), the Peasant War in Germany (16th century), the Taiping Rebellion in China (1900-1), etc.

3. Note that as the peasantry is unable to bring forth its own leaders it was led in this case by petty bourgeois intellectuals.

led the national (anti-colonial) revolution, none of them had been able to, or even dared to undertake an agrarian revolution. The radical agrarian revolution was set forth, tackled and consequently solved only when and because the revolutionary party of the Vietnamese working class appeared on the political scene in 1930.

Thus we can say that the peasantry which lacks revolutionary ideology, political and economic unity, revolutionary tradition, etc., can have its interest best guaranteed *only* by the working class party.

(c) *The Urban Petty Bourgeoisie:* The Ethiopian urban petty bourgeoisie—characterized by vacillation, extreme timidity and submissiveness under Haile Selassie's autocratic regime had either been supporting the regime with zeal or engaged in stupid activities like appealing to and petitioning the autocrat to bring about reforms. It is only after 1965 that a section of it—the students and later the intellectuals—rejected reformism and started to follow the revolutionary path. In general, the left wing of the urban petty bourgeoisie will definitely join the side of the proletariat while its right wing will side with the exploiters. It should not be forgotten that it is a class in 'transition'—suspended between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and constantly vacillating between the two. Because the Ethiopian urban petty bourgeoisie is weak (small in number—due to smallness of urban centers and population as well as the absence of the artisan class in the cities as it is still connected with the rural economy, etc.) and is seeing its conscious members—students, teachers and intellectuals—joining the ranks of the proletariat. And due to its weakness and reformism (reasons for the latter being its fear of being in outright opposition to the autocracy and its ability—until very recently—to find accommodation in the government bureaucracy) as well as its lack of revolutionary and organizational tradition it has not up to now formed its own political party.

The majority or the greater section of the urban petty bourgeoisie can see a society without feudalism and imperialism—which are at present oppressing it—only if it submits to the leadership of the working class and accepts proletarian ideology. In this connection we should note that it is erroneous to forget the nature of the petty bourgeoisie and thus to lump all as reactionary, dangerous, etc., or on the other hand consider them as revolutionary.

(d) *The National Bourgeoisie:* In Ethiopia this class is weak, flabby, spineless and despite its contradictions with the imperialists, big bourgeoisie and feudalists it is prone to compromise and reconcile with them. It is in contradiction with the feudo-comprador class and the imperialist but at the same time it is afraid of the proletariat and other working people, afraid of a proletariat-led social revolution. This accounts for its dual nature as a class.

Due to its political and economic weakness, its lack of revolutionary tradition, its poverty in initiative, creativity, dynamism, aggressiveness, higher culture, . . . etc. (i.e., all qualities that characterized the early anti-feudal bourgeoisie in history), it has not even dared to organize itself around a political party to fight feudalism and imperialism. In fact, it will never *persistently* fight imperialism and feudalism.

This does not mean, however, that it will not attempt or strive to come to power. On the contrary, it will never cease from attempting to come to power and it will use all ways and means to achieve this aim and to impose its dictatorship over the people. But it will not succeed, as history has shown this again. The present epoch is that of socialism and not the era of bourgeois dictatorship and the working class which has appeared on the scene as a powerful force is against bourgeois dictatorship. The national bourgeoisie will try all means (demagogic cries or appeals of democracy, land reform, nationalism, etc.) in an effort to win the majority of the population (i.e., the peasantry) to its side. The working class must and will have to fight this and the working class party's opposition to bourgeois leadership of the masses persists even when the national bourgeoisie decides to join the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist united front.⁴ For the united front can succeed only if it is lead by the working class and if it is based on a solid worker-peasant alliance.

(e) *The Ruling Class:* In general the oppressive ruling class or classes have their own political party which is considered as the party in power. But it is not only through this political party that the ruling class in power defends its

4. When the national bourgeoisie joins the United Front it is *not* the intensity of the opposition of the working class party to the bourgeoisie's attempt to impose its leadership that decreases but the way and means in which the working class party manifests this opposition i.e. the manner in which it fights the national bourgeoisie may change.

interests. To enforce its rule, to defend and maintain its class interests the ruling class in power uses the organs of state power, essentially the Army, the Police, the courts and the prisons. The task of the political party, in these cases, is mainly to serve as a vehicle of the ruling class ideology and to wage the ideological struggle against any revolutionary ideology that may "grip the masses". The existence of the political party also helps the ruling class to make pretensions of "democracy", "popular base", etc. while in reality it rules over the people by sheer force and terror which sometimes borders on fascism.

In Ethiopia the ruling class—the feudalists and comprador bourgeoisie—maintain their dictatorship over the people by incessantly resorting to reactionary violence. The ruling class in Ethiopia is anti-democratic, barbaric and reactionary—and it knows this. Its language is that of force and violence. And in such a case the role of the political party is played by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which has a vested interest in spreading its obscurantist ideology. However, why the Ethiopian ruling class has not formed its own political party can be explained by the country's peculiar historical evolution and present political realities (extremely backward, archaic and medieval ruling class with no concept of democracy, an absolute monarch ordained by God, etc.). How can an autocrat who claims to have come to power not through a political struggle (in which case the need for a political party) but by a special ordinance (appointment) from God himself, allow the existence of any political party as such an act would mean that he admits that he can be replaced or fought out of his place [palace] democratically, legally or illegally by any one political party? In short, a political party and all that it entails is by definition and from the outset opposed to the basis and concept of authority or power of the autocracy.

However, if at any time in the future the ruling class—compelled by the revolutionary democratic upsurge of the peoples—"allows itself" or decides to form a political party one cannot have any illusions that the ruling class has become democratic, popular, etc. The ruling class is inherently anti-democratic and anti-popular whether it forms a political party or not.⁵

To conclude Question 1 then:

- the working class must necessarily have its own party
- the peasantry's best guarantee to realize its short and long range interests is to accept working class leadership. The same holds true for the majority of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

Question 2. *We have stated that each class forms its own party. Does this mean that no two classes can have the same or single party?*

No. Two classes can have the same party, especially in countries where the landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie are the ruling class and share power. Each cannot rule without the other. The landlord class is still strong so the comprador bourgeoisie cannot kick it off; and the landlord class cannot do without the comprador bourgeoisie which is the special agent of the imperialists, and which effectively runs the bureaucracy and state machinery. In relation to the popular masses the feudo-comprador bourgeois ruling class is weak. Hence, even all the more reason for them to form a bloc and maintain their similar fundamental interests.

Question 3. *If two classes can have the same party, can a single class have (or should have) more than one party?*

The answer to this is that the bourgeoisie can have more than one party but the working class cannot and should not have more than one party. Let us elaborate:

The existence of several bourgeois political parties is a common feature of bourgeois politics and of bourgeois democracy. In reality there is no substantial difference among all these parties—they all defend the capitalist system. The reason why there exist several bourgeois political parties are the following:

- a) The bourgeois is not homogeneous in composition. There are big industrialists, bankers, financiers, those connected with the processing and sale of agricultural produce, etc. All these compete with one another for division of profits, i.e., each group wants to come to power so as to amass as much profit to itself. Hence, each bourgeois political party is motivated not by "an end to bourgeois rule", but by "maximum profit for my own group of bourgeoisie and long live capitalism."

5. This does not mean, however, that it is of absolutely no significance to the working class if a ruling class that allows the formation of political parties comes to power or not.

For example, under capitalism the competitive struggle between the capitalists and monopoly associations plays a big part in every sphere of production. Each bourgeois group finances and supports its political party which it tries to put in power so as to be in a privileged position for obtaining government orders and subsidies. The question is as to who will get the most profit; for whatever bourgeois party comes to power will defend not only the private interests of a particular group of monopolists but also the interests of the bourgeoisie and monopoly associations as a whole. It is to be noticed, in this connection, that each monopoly association, each bourgeois group, aims at supporting not just one party but all of the most influential bourgeois parties so as to stand to gain from whichever of them is successful.⁶

b) Another important reason why the bourgeoisie uses the system of having several parties is in order to create illusions about supposed differences between them and so confuse the broad masses of the people. From this confusion the bourgeoisie benefits, especially during an election campaign. Because the bourgeoisie aims to ensure that when the people (i.e., voters) have become disillusioned with the ruling bourgeois party and have turned against it, they (the votes) will fall into the net of the other or one of the other bourgeois parties appearing to be in opposition to the ruling party. Thus the bourgeois "oppositional parties" echo the people's criticism of and opposition to the government in order to gain prestige, replace the ruling party and in reality continue the same policy. At the same time the existence of several bourgeois parties supposedly in opposition to one another basically, makes it possible for the bourgeoisie to boast of the freedom and democracy that prevail under its capitalist rule. While all that it has done by transferring power from one bourgeois party to another is [to] assure the continuation of the rule of the bourgeoisie as a *class*.

And in certain instances where all existing bourgeois parties have been compromised, i.e., rejected by the masses, petty bourgeois and pseudo-socialist parties which are under the control of the bourgeoisie will appear on the scene as claimants for power. Such parties claiming to be socialist and revolutionary and basing their rhetorics on the masses' real aspiration and pretending to stand in opposition to all bourgeois parties and even capitalism aspire to win over the masses to their side, come to power and assure the continuation of the bourgeois rule. To conclude then: The bourgeoisie can have many political parties but all serve its interests as a *class* and thus it does not as a *class* suffer any major disadvantages due to the existence of several bourgeois political parties.

The contrary holds true for the working class. The working class cannot have more than one party that represents its interest. There can be only one working class party and this is an essential factor for the success of the working class in its historic battle to end the exploitation of man by man. Evidently, the working class contains groups that differ in their kind of activities and the degree of class consciousness. Some of them may have certain particular interests differing from the temporary interests of other groups. But it is an indisputable fact that the workers can defend their general as well as temporary interests only if there is no disunity and competition between them, only if they are united in a single organized force, i.e., around a single political party. And since *unity* and *organization* are the chief sources of strength of the working class, they necessitate the unity of leadership, a single party expressing and defending both the temporary and general interests of the working class.

At present, one can see a splitting of the world working class movement into a revolutionary and reformist trend. This split is not at all a consequence of the nature of the working class and its interest but rather a result of the non-homogeneity of the working class and its penetration by the liberal bourgeois outlook and revisionism.

To conclude then: The working class can have only one party. It must stand united—ideologically and organizationally. Without this organizational unity, without this strong unity around a single party the working class cannot achieve its glorious and historic mission to emancipate itself and all the working peoples by creating a communist society.

Question 4. *We have said that each party is a class party. Does this mean that all the members of each party are necessarily members of that class?*

No. Each class that contends for power aims at influencing and bringing to its side the broad masses of the people. Consequently the bourgeoisie which is very small in number, aims to bring the broad masses of the people into its political party by claiming that it is fighting for their interests. And to attract the masses it will try to taint its political programme and propaganda with "land reform", "Democracy", "nationalism", etc. As to whether the labouring masses, above all the proletariat, will be rallied by the bourgeoisie is dependent on the degree of class consciousness of the working class and the political consciousness of the working people in general. However, in any bourgeois party the masses who have become its members exercise no power within it and are called upon only during times of election and crisis threatening bourgeois rule or existence i.e., in cases where some confrontation and dying has to be done the bourgeoisie calls and "relies" on the masses who are the members or followers of its political party.

On the other hand, the working class party—as the vanguard of the working class and all working peoples—thrives on the conscious, active and uninterrupted participation of its members. And in general, all those who accept the party's political programme⁷ as well as its rules and regulations and participate fully in the organization's activities become members of the working class party. And this includes individuals issued from the national bourgeoisie as well as feudal backgrounds. When such people betray their class (and betraying the bourgeois and feudal class is good) and fully accept the working class party's political programme, ideology as well as rules and regulations they can be considered as members of the working class party.

To conclude then: Each party—be it the bourgeois or the working class party—strives to gain the leadership of the masses in their majority. Which one of the two succeeds is a matter that is decisive for the success or the failure of the revolution.

(B) A working class party is a party that struggles to gain state power.

The state is an instrument by which one class oppresses another. The bourgeoisie uses the state power to perpetuate its dictatorship over the labouring masses, to oppress and exploit them. On the other hand, the working class aims at establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and suppressing all exploiters and by assuring the liberation of the masses. . .consequently bring about the withering away of the state.

That is why the question in every proletarian revolution becomes that of state power—a state power that can be taken by the working class mainly through a violent revolution. Thus any party which calls itself a working class party but forgets the question of state power or shuns from taking it violently and instead bases its main strategy of taking power—if it all—through peaceful means, through parliamentary struggles, etc., is not a working class party but a reformist appendage of the ruling classes. For the working class the question of power is fundamental, of number one priority and as this political power grows out of the barrel of a gun the working class must grip and keep the gun firmly in its hands. Thus—the seizure of political power by armed force—is the central task and highest form of revolution.

Therefore, to recognize or not to recognize that the state is a form of violence, that the bourgeois state [in Ethiopia the feudo-bourgeois comprador state] must be destroyed by force and the necessity of the suppression of the exploiting classes by the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat [in Ethiopia—at this stage—by the peoples' democratic state of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes led by the proletariat] is the main factor that distinguishes a genuine working class party from all other parties.

(C) *A working class party has its own ideology. This is Marxism-Leninism.*

We have said that the working class party is a class party and that in order to safeguard the general interests of the working class and working people it will have to lead the masses, to take state power through a violent revolution, smash the reactionary state machinery, establish its own dictatorship and suppress the ruling class. But in order to carry out the revolution, to transform social relations, to destroy the old order and build a new society—a new life—the working class needs to have a political ideology.

7. The ultimate aim stated being the creation of a communist society.

8. Note the various "socialisms" with national and religious labels such as Libyan socialism, Islam socialism, African socialism, Baas (socialism), Christian socialism, etc.

What is a political ideology? Political ideology is a form of social consciousness that reflects social being and the position of a given class in the most immediate and profound way, i.e., the political ideology of any class clearly registers the aims of this class, its basic interests and the methods used for defending its interests and achieving its aims. Therefore, political ideology consists of the sum total of basic postulates and general ideas that express the attitude of a particular class to a given social system and its view of the historical process as a whole.

Each class has its own ideology that serves to protect its own (class) interests. Thus bourgeois ideology tries to prove the necessity of capitalist production relations, feudal ideology tries to present the feudal order as necessary and inviolable (or ordained by God), while working class ideology strives to protect the interests of the working class and all working people as opposed to the feudalists, bourgeoisie and all other exploiters. And in contrast to the ideology of either the feudalists or imperialists (and their bourgeois hangers-on) that of the working class reflects its position in society and its role as the creator of communist society. It exposes the contradiction of imperialism and shows the peoples the way leading to emancipation from imperialism and capitalism and the creation of a society without classes, exploitation or others forms of oppression.

Marxism-Leninism is the ideology of the working class. The following are some of its general characteristics.

a) *Marxism-Leninism is partisan.* In all class societies every ideology is partisan i.e., belongs to a definite class. The bourgeois ideology serves the bourgeoisie, the same with that of the feudalists. Communism openly admits the partisan nature of all ideology in class society and asserts that communist ideology serves *only* the working class and the working people. Hence, it stands opposed to the attempt of the bourgeoisie to present bourgeois ideology as "objective", "an ideology serving all people and the entire nation", etc., it consistently and incessantly exposes and opposes all varieties of bourgeois ideology masquerading as revolutionary or socialist. Ideological struggle is a form of class struggle and working class ideology—as the ideology of the working class and serving the interests of the working people—fights feudo-bourgeois, imperialist ideology in all its forms.

b) *Marxism-Leninism is scientific.* Marxism-Leninism is the first ideology ever to appear in history that serves the working class and all working peoples and not the exploiting classes. It is scientific and revolutionary. It correctly reflects objective reality and expresses the vital needs of society's material life. As such it is opposed to all religions and idealist world outlooks which distort the state of affairs.

As a theory communism is the expression of the position of the proletariat in class struggle [outside the class struggle socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naive phrase], and the summation of the conditions necessary for the emancipation of the proletariat. Theoretically it is based on dialectical and historical materialism.

Marxism-Leninism scientifically shows us the nature of capitalism and imperialism and serves us as a tool in the battle against the oppressive systems and classes. Marxism-Leninism teaches us how to discern beneath the pall of rooted customs, political intrigues, feudal obscurantism, "complicated" laws, and intricate doctrines—the *class struggle* between the propertied classes in all their varieties (feudalist, capitalist, monopoly capitalist, etc.) and the proletariat which is at the head of the propertyless. Moreover, Marxism-Leninism objectively and clearly indicates that socialism will triumph over capitalism and has, consequently, set the task of the revolutionary working class party to organize the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of a socialist society. And it is this and the recognition of the historic role of the working class and the world socialist system that distinguishes scientific communism from all branches of petty bourgeois socialism which submerges the working class in the general concept of "toilers" or labouring masses.

One of the essential elements of Marxism—Leninism's scientific character is that it is creative. It responds actively to changes in social life and people's minds, undergoing constant improvement and development, overcomes both revisionist concessions to the bourgeois world outlook as well as reverence for obsolete propositions that have been turned into dogmas.

Marxism-Leninism is a guide to action and the working class party of each country (besides accepting the fundamental principles of communism) must outline the specific features of the struggle for peoples' power, and of the tactics and strategy of the class struggle and analyze the special forms of the development of the socialist revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat in a given country. Thus a working class party of a specific country must integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the country's revolution. However, to apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete situation of the given country—take Ethiopia as an example—does not mean to feudalize Marxism-Leninism or to "Amharize" it with extra chauvinist zeal and vigor. Rather, it means "no revision of the fundamental principles of communism but no dogmatism either." Marxism-Leninism is dynamic and not static; that is why it is consistently being enriched and developed by Marxist-Leninists of our time. It should be noted also that Marxism-Leninism's scientific nature is organically combined with its partisan nature—in the service of the working class and all working people. It does not, like bourgeois ideology, claim to be above or supra-class.

c) Another aspect of working class ideology is that it expresses the fundamental interests of the working class of all countries irrespective of their nationality. Its supreme principle is the solidarity, cooperation and mutual aid of the working class and all the working peoples of all nationalities, from all countries in the struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism. Marxism-Leninism is opposed to the oppression of any nationality by another (it recognizes the *right* of all nationalities to self-determination including secession). At the same time it is opposed staunchly to bourgeois nationalism which tends to foster its own narrow—and by definition exclusive—national and oppress other minorities or continue to exploit the working peoples by dividing them.

Marxism-Leninism considers the working class and working peoples of all nationalities and countries as one, with the same *fundamental* interests. Hence, the slightest retreat from internationalism to nationalism means departing from the class standpoint of the proletariat and going over to that of the bourgeoisie. Fight chauvinism (i.e., to recognize the right of nationalities to self-determination including secession), fight oppression of nationalities but fight narrow (bourgeois) nationalism also. In short fight to realize the historic call "workers of the world and oppressed nations, unite."

d) Marxism-Leninism is the most humane of all ideologies. Feudo-bourgeois ideology is oppressive, exploitative, anti-mass and hence, anti-human. It is based on ruthless exploitation of the working peoples. Marxism-Leninism is based on lofty ideals. It is the ideology of the working class and aims to introduce genuine human relation between peoples and between nations, to end all kinds of exploitation of man by man, to abolish war, to achieve eternal peace on earth and to free and happy life for all the oppressed peoples, i.e., creation of a communist society.

(D) A working class party is a solidly united organization based on democratic centralism, strict discipline and practising criticism and self-criticism.⁹

What does a solidly united organization mean? It means that it is monolithic, one, united. There cannot be factions within a working class party. All members are united around the party and its programme, all accept the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. This, however, does *not* mean that there will not be differences in view among the party members. That there are differences and contradictions is an aspect of the party's political life but these differences and contradictions will be duly discussed (in accordance with the situation and following the party's procedures, rules and regulations) and ironed out. The discussion starts from the basis of unity and is based on Marxism-Leninism; criticism and self-criticism is actively practised. However, it will be a grave and fatal error if the members' views are to be suppressed or given no due weight on the pretext of absolute unity or monolithism. Different views should at all times be presented; no suppression can be allowed. What is forbidden is the formation of factions, groups or cliques—within the party—around these views and thus threaten the cohesion and unity of the party. In this respect, discipline and democratic centralism play an important role.

9. For a discussion of democratic centralism, criticism and self-criticism and discipline see "Notes on Revolution and Organization" pages 20-22 and pages 31-33. Mimeographed December, 1971.

A solidly united organization with all members united as one, acting as one—this is a very important factor, in fact one of the decisive factors for the victory of the working class party in its various forms of struggle. This is why the raising of the members' political consciousness, their intensified study of Marxism-Leninism and the subsequent elevation of their class consciousness and staunch opposition to all bourgeois and petty bourgeois tendencies becomes a *priority one* task of the working class party. Hence, unity of will in all its works and actions, militant voluntary union of all members (leaders included) based on a single discipline characterizes a working class party.

(E) Another characteristic of a working class party is that it adheres to the mass line. A working class party is not an elite party. It is the instrument of power of the working class and all the working peoples—it is their conscious and leading party. As such it can only be strong if it practices the mass line, it can only be "effective" if it serves, joins, links itself and leads the masses. Starting from the basis of the "the people alone are the motive force in the making of world history", that "the revolution is the work of the masses," that "the masses have boundless creative potentials and enthusiasm for socialism," the working class party must strengthen its links with the masses, learn from them, teach them in return and lead their struggle.

The party must not cut itself off from the masses, rush ahead regardless of the level of political development of the proletariat and other working peoples but must always advance with the masses raising them to its level. This does not mean that the working class party—which is a vanguard party—must sink to the level of the backward workers or trail in the wake of the workers' movement. No tailism but no adventurism either.

The mass line governs the party's every aspect of activities and to forget this or to pay lip service to it (and instead rely on a "talented," "educated," or "dedicated" few) will bring the total isolation and impotence of the working class party.

(F) A working class party is internationalist. It practices proletarian internationalism. This stems from the fact that the fundamental interests of the working class and all working peoples of the world are one. There are no frontiers in the struggle of the working class to end the exploitation of man by man. The struggle of the working class and working peoples of all countries supplement one another. Proletarian internationalism is a duty, an unavoidable necessity and what actively animates a working class party. The working class which has no country and no frontiers opposes all kinds of chauvinism and narrow nationalism, and counters the bourgeoisie demagogic cries of "nationalism" by the rallying call of internationalism "workers of the world and oppressed nations unite."

Before we conclude our enumeration of the general characteristics of a working class party (and these are not the only important ones but are the ones we need to help us understand a working class party as "opposed" to mass organizations), we would make a short distinction between a clandestine working class party and a working class party of the "mass type."

The clandestine working class party is also referred to as a cadre type working class party. It is the kind of party that can exist and survive in countries like Iran, Thailand, Greece, Brazil, Ethiopia where the ruling class is either autocratic and barbarian or anti-democratic (or even the bourgeois type) and fascist. Fully underground, such a party will be extremely select (on the whole made up of professional revolutionaries), extremely disciplined, secretive, exercise democratic centralism with the latitude of democracy considerably affected by the need for centralism. No public election, no public congresses, no public meetings, or official declarations. Absolute secrecy. This does not mean, however, that such a party will not have any connection with the masses and their mass organizations. On the contrary, without such links—and strong ones at that—the party cannot be effective; but the links, the bonds will be forged secretly.

A working class party of the mass type is different. It is the type of party that exists in relatively "democratic" countries (as compared to Iran, Brazil, Ethiopia, etc.) like Italy, Britain, Sweden, etc., the party is above ground, "it is legal" as some would say. It is called a mass party because, in contrast to the clandestine one, more members join it and participate publicly in its activities as party members. Such a party usually has a public headquarters, an open newspaper (sold on the market), possibly a printing press, it can hold mass rallies, public meetings and run for seats in the parliament or national assembly. Its members can meet in open congresses to elect their leaders who are, in most cases, known publicly.

What are the general characteristics of mass organizations? mni

Primarily let us attempt to give a general definition. A mass organization is an organization made up of the various members of various classes or a class who have come together on the basis of a common trade or profession that all of them are engaged in, or due to a common interest—be it social, professional or otherwise (religious, for example)—that all of them share or have. This is a general definition and thus we need to make further clarifications and explanations to achieve exactitude and precision.

(A) A mass organization does not aim to seize power exclusively and organize a new society accordingly. This is because of the nature, composition and role of the mass organizations. More specifically:

1) A mass organization is a special interest organization aiming at keeping the special interests of the members and does not seize state power and create a new society. This is the task of political parties. Even in the case where mass organizations are outright political or from the outset political as in the case of the mass organizations directly associated with or formed by the united front (e.g. The Women's Union for Liberation and the Peasants' Association for Liberation of the FNL of South Vietnam) in the sense that they accept the political programme of the united or liberation front, we cannot say that the different mass organizations are attempting to seize power. Power can be seized only by one or the other social class and the political party that serves one or the other class can be said to be fighting to seize power. It is in this sense that we state that it is the political parties within the liberation front that are attempting to seize power by employing the strategic tool of the united front.¹⁰

2) A mass organization does not have a class or a political ideology. It comprises of members with conflicting ideologies, ideas, tendencies, etc. How can such an organization be at the helm of society, at the helm of the labouring masses? How can it lead the masses when itself, it remains in conflict and disunited ideologically?¹¹ etc., etc.

Hence only a class or the political party of a class can take state power as the representative of the specific social class.

(B) Mass organizations do not have a political ideology or a scientific world outlook. This is closely linked with the nature and limited, defined, specialized tasks of the mass organizations. The majority of the members of a mass organization may be under the influence or adherents of one ideology or another, but on the whole the mass organization does not have a specific [class] ideology. Let us explain through examples:

1) *Trade Unions*—Any worker in the particular trade or industry who understands the need to unite for the struggle against the employers joins or can join the trade union; it is on this basic minimum that all unite within the trade unions. Hence, we can find in a trade union members with conflicting ideologies. The basis of unity being the need to unite to fight for their specific interests as employees against employers. The question of which ideology will prevail among the majority depends on the degree of activity of the various political parties (bourgeois or working class) amidst the members of the trade unions.

2) *the student unions*—In general, all students who understand the need to unite to fight for their specific interests as students (better lodging, student participation in school administration, academic freedom, freedom to form associations and unions, etc.) join the student unions.

However, in the case of Ethiopia, the student movement has broken this "student interest keeping" shell and turned political i.e., anti-feudal and anti-imperialist. But to be anti-feudal and anti-imperialist does not mean to have a political ideology, for anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism is not an ideology (and specific to a certain class) nor is it an all-round scientific world outlook. It is merely a basic minimum, a platform around which students with all shades of political ideology (ranging from Marxist-Leninists to those

10. Note that in the broader sense of the word a United Front is itself a mass organization (coming together of various classes on the basis of a minimum programme, no class ideology as its basis, etc.) and so is its liberation army.

11. Note that the United Front versus imperialism and feudalism can achieve victory only if it is lead by the ideologically united class party—the working class party which is the sole vanguard of the working class and all the working peoples.

who stand for capitalism) can unite.¹² This fact is well understood by the student unions inside Ethiopia who do not proclaim that only anti-feudal and anti-imperialist students can be members of the student unions. That USUAA tries and attempts to make all members anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist is only correct.

Thus to proclaim Marxism-Leninism or Marxism-Leninism—Mao Tsetung Thought—as the basis for the unity of students or to proclaim that students and their unions should consider “capitalist-roaders” as their enemies and fight them accordingly within the unions is either crass ignorance or sheer phrasemongering. And even if the Marxist-Leninists are a majority in the Ethiopian Student Unions, the basis for the union cannot be Marxism-Leninism. Such a stand or an assertion will lead to the adoption of a sectarian attitude and consequently will weaken the ESM by isolating it from non-Marxist-Leninists who may nonetheless be anti-imperialist and anti-feudal. However, this does not mean that Marxist-Leninists within the student unions should refrain from struggling to spread their ideology and this they must do but only democratically. The basis within the union is democracy and anybody who forgets this and either forbids the entry of Marxist-Leninists into the union or prohibits and hinders the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideology amongst the members is anti-democratic and should be kicked out of the union. The same holds true for a Marxist-Leninist who instead of democratically struggling to get the majority on his side rather breaks away from the union claiming that his resolution has not been adopted as this is also a violation of the democratic principles of the union: Thus

- the basis for the union is not Marxism-Leninism, however,
- Marxist-Leninists have the right to democratically fight for and to spread their views among the members
- and this is a task that cannot be avoided, i.e., the Marxist-Leninists have the duty—inescapable duty—to spread Marxism-Leninism among the members
- the struggle to get one’s view, ideology adopted by the majority of members is a democratic struggle and to forget this is to act in a feudal authoritarian way and to violate the basic principle of the union. mnm¹

3) *the women’s union*—It includes all women who understand the need to unite to safeguard their interests, attain equality and emancipation. As such bourgeois women can be members just like proletarian or peasant women. The basis for the union is not Marxism-Leninism but the desire to fight male chauvinism and all forms of exploitation of women. Thus all those women who do not accept the Marxist-Leninist analysis on the oppression of women and the road for their emancipation may, can and will be members of the union. It is sufficient that all unite on a minimum. As to the struggle for predominance of one ideology over all others within the union—it is a struggle that continues for long in all broad mass organizations.¹³

To conclude then:

- mass organizations do not have a class or political ideology
- mass organizations unite members on the basis of specific interests or a certain minimum without any requirement of adoption of any class ideology
- even under socialism broad mass organizations like trade unions do not have as their basis Marxism-Leninism but continue to accept non-
- Marxist-Leninists as members just as they accept communist party members
- failure to understand what is the basis of the union will lead to confusion, ultra-leftism, sectarianism, isolation and impotence
- that Marxism-Leninism is not the basis for the unions does *not* mean that revolutionary members of a mass organization should neglect their duty to do political work and disseminate Marxist-Leninist ideology.

(C) A mass organization is not an organization serving the definite *full* interests of a specific class (i.e., as a class taken in its entirety). As its name implies a mass organization is an organization of the mass as distinct from an organization of a specific class Let us elaborate.

12. that in anti-imperialist-anti-feudalist United Front the national bourgeoisie (which believes in bourgeois ideology and fights for capitalism) may participate together with the working class (which stands for communism) and other working peoples.

13. In this connection note an important difference with a working class party. In the party’s newspaper no bourgeois ideology can be spread and propagated. No ideological concession to the bourgeoisie. While if we take a students’ union paper both Marxist-Leninist and bourgeois ideology have the *right* to be propagated. To forbid one or the other is to violate the basis of the union and act against its democracy.

1) A trade union is a mass organization. In general it is a mass organization of the working class and the working people. A trade union is usually organized either by trade (e.g., Trade Union of Textile Workers), profession (e.g., Trade Union of Teachers) or industry (Trade Union of Railway Workers, Trade Union of Miners, Trade Union of Petrochemical Industries, etc). It is not organized on a class basis. The aim of each trade union is to safeguard the special interests (which are above all economic of its members. Membership is exclusive to the trade, profession or industry. Thus, despite the fact that teachers, on the whole, belong to the petty bourgeois class, no other petty bourgeois, except a teacher, can join the Teachers' Trade Union. And even though miners are members of the working class no other worker except miners can join the Miners' Trade Union. And so on. In short, membership is not on a class basis but on trade, professional or industrial basis.

2) The same holds true for the student organizations. The membership to the student unions is not on a class basis—all students, no matter their class origin or background—can join the student organizations, for the primary purpose of these organizations is to protect the interests of students as students. And no one but students can join the student unions.¹⁴

3) The same holds true for the women's organization—which is a mass organization whose membership is open to all women of the various classes who agree to come together on the basis of keeping their interests as women, fighting for their equality against male chauvinism, oppression and exploitation. And no one who is not a woman can join the women's organization.

4) Even in the case of mass organizations of either a social or religious nature (e.g., Mahiber, Haimanote Abew, Wollamo-Sodo Meredaja, Mahber, etc.) the ground for membership is not the class background of the individual, as the basic aim is not to protect the interests of a particular class but the defined common interests of all the members coming from various classes.

Hence, mass organizations are not class organizations (in the way political parties can be), but specialized, interest-keeping organizations of the mass. However, this does not mean:

a) that the various mass organizations cannot unite on the basis of a bigger programme. Trade unions do unite to form a federation or confederation of trade unions—embracing the whole nation, i.e., a nation-wide confederation of trade unions—so as to keep their interests in common as working people. And various mass organizations can unite under a united front. For example, the NLF of South Vietnam includes some of the following mass organizations: the Peasants' Association for Liberation, the Trade Union Federation for Liberation, the School and College Students for Liberation, the Women's Union for Liberation, Association of Former Resisters, Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of the U.S., Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity, etc.

b) that the task of mass organizations should be only economic or social, and never political. To keep mass organizations away from politics (i.e., revolutionary politics) is what the ruling class wants. But for the working class and its party the contrary is true—as it aims to involve the various mass organizations in the political struggle. In this respect the working class party fights trade unionism which excludes the political struggle, and calls for a closer relationship of the trade unions with the working class party, for trade unions can serve—apart from consolidating and developing the economic struggle—as a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organization. The trade unions can and must serve as the economic and political school of the working peoples.

In short, we must fight all attempts to render mass organizations (like trade unions, student unions, women's unions, etc.) as merely economic or social. At the same time one should realize the specific nature of the mass organizations and thus engage in cautious, patient and systematic all-round politicization of the members, i.e., to make mass organizations political. This, however, does *not* mean that we skillfully and effectively politicize the members of mass organizations with an aim to change the mass organization(s) into a working class party. No. The aim is to make the mass

14. That Ethiopian Student Unions abroad accept non-students as members is more of an exception—rather than the rule—that has its roots in the particularities of the Ethiopian student movement and especially of the student unions outside Ethiopia.

organizations political, combative and firmly attached and strongly linked with the working class party.

In the case of our student movement this means that we attempt to unite on the broad basis and then undertake the politicization of the members in order to make all firm revolutionaries and thus make the ESM revolutionary and a worthy reserve of, and in the service of the working class and all working peoples. To conclude then:

—a mass organization is not a class organization like the working class party or any other bourgeois political party.

—that the basis for unity of the members is initially economic, social or of a religious nature does not mean that the mass organization should not be political

—that it is the task of all revolutionaries as well as the working class party to see to it that the mass organizations become political

—that certain mass organizations like the Eth. Student Unions have become political should not make us lose sight of the initial basis for unity among the students and push us to wrongly maintain that only sons of true proletarians or dedicated Marxist-Leninists can become members of the unions or any other mass organizations.

—and that mass organizations have become political does *not* mean that they have become a working class party, or that the aim in politicizing the members is to change the mass organizations into a working class party.

—and that once the basis for unity, the nature and task of the mass organizations is well understood, as well as their difference and nature of relationship with the working class party clearly realized—all conscious members of the mass organizations should engage in the politicization of all other members.

(D) Mass organizations are not basically animated by proletarian internationalism. Proletarian internationalism stems from the fundamental identity of the interests of the working class of all nationalities and countries. Proletarian internationalism is the guiding principle of the Communist movement and is based on Marxism-Leninism. Only the working class (and its party) can be a true internationalist. Thus mass organizations being interest-keeping organizations, "specialized," localized, not representing a class in its entirety, not having Marxist-Leninist ideology cannot be internationalist.¹⁵ (i.e. due to its nature, basic composition, task, ideology, more exactly non-ideology).

(E) Structurally mass organizations are generally characterized by their broadness, amorphous nature, lack of centralism, absence of requirement of strict discipline and strict secrecy. Mass organizations may or may not practice criticism and self-criticism.

We must be aware by now that all the subsequent differences that a mass organization has with the working class party issues mainly from the difference that exists as to their basic nature, composition, guiding principles and tasks. That is why the tasks and nature of the mass organizations affect their structure also. This holds true even in the case of secretly established trade unions where the structure is characterized by more "amorphosity", etc., as compared to a clandestine working class party.

Finally let us give certain examples of mass organizations in Ethiopia as well as another country, South Vietnam.

Ethiopia: Mass Organizations—Mahiber, Idir YMCA, YWCA, Wolamo Sodo Meredaga Mahber, USUAA, various high school student unions, Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, Teacher's Association, various trade unions in the Confederation of Ethiopian Laborers Unions (CELU), Mutual-Aid Peasant Associations like Gosso, Haimanote Abew, Temiro Mastemar, armed and police force Soliders' wives Meredaga Mahiber, Support Committee for Soliders in Ogaden¹⁶ etc.

Vietnam: the following are member mass organizations of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front—Association of Writers and Artists for

15. The anti-imperialist solidarity that exists amongst the liberation front fighting imperialism or the same imperialist country should not be confused with proletarian internationalism.

16. Note that the purpose for which the mass organization is formed may be reactionary. It still does not decrease anything from the organization being that of the mass *so long as the masses are in it*. To go into these organizations and change the masses by mobilizing them is the task of revolutionaries. If such is the case then the support committee for soldiers in Ogaden may turn against the government and demand the right of the Somali people to self-determination. This being the real support for the soldiers in Ogaden i.e. to bring the soliders back.

Liberation, Association of Peasants for the Liberation of South Vietnam, Association of Former Resisters, Association of Patriotic and Democratic Journalists, Association of Patriotic Buddhists, Association of Catholics Dedicated to God and the Fatherland, Committee for the Defense of World Peace, Committee for the Protection of Women and Children, etc.

We can note the variety of the mass organizations that exist. More can also be made to exist. The FNL of South Vietnam was/is made up of the above and many other mass organizations as well as three political parties: the Radical Socialist Party, rallying patriotic intellectuals; the Democratic Party of the national bourgeoisie; and the Revolutionary People's Party, the party of the working class. The RPP is the vanguard of the South Vietnamese Revolution.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly attempted to show the differences between a working class party and mass organizations. The task is not a simple one nor is it one that can be exhaustively discussed in so short a paper. We feel we have made a modest beginning. Let all revolutionaries intensify the discussion and research on this issue. It is vital. And one of the major requirements of such a discussion will be a deep research into the various mass organizations that exist in Ethiopia—especially the ones formed by the peoples of various nationalities in rural Ethiopia.

Such work will help our discussion, will help us undertake the task of politicization more effectively and professionally as well as deepen our own understanding of the nature and tasks (and limitations) of the mass organizations.

As students we should be concerned with strengthening the ESM—and strengthening it in an all-round way. *Broad basis for unity, then intensified politicization within the unions.* This is the only way we can fight the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples as well as all those within our own movement who try to subvert and weaken the ESM. It is in this respect that we say all those who proclaim the student movement Marxist-Leninist want to make the Ethiopian Student Unions serve as "exclusive social clubs," or incapacitate the ESM by assigning it the burdensome and historic role of a working class party (a task it never can perform) are deeply in error and hence, should be criticized vigorously and corrected.

ELEMENTARY NOTES ON REVOLUTION AND ORGANIZATION

Our country is living through the most savage period of its history. We lead the nations of the world as regards hunger and malnutrition. We are a people with the lowest average national standard of living in the world. We are a people that toils from dawn to dusk but go hungry, barefoot and in rags. We are a people victimized by endemic diseases. Malaria, cholera, typhus, small pox, etc. claim thousands of victims every year. Infant mortality, at 60% is one of the highest in the world. Our life expectancy is 35 years. Our cultural level is abysmal. Illiteracy is the lot of 95% of the population. Millions of school age children do not have the opportunity to go to school. Secondary, technical and university education is a privilege. The discrepancy in educational opportunities between the capital and the province and between the town and the countryside increases with every passing year. The discrimination in education practiced on the children of various nationalities increases as more and more emphasis is put in giving opportunity to children of the dominant Amhara nationality. Law and justice remain a dead letter as the entire administration and judiciary is in the pay of the autocracy. The human dignity of the humble (common man) is continually abused. Police brutality is an everyday occurrence. Arbitrary arrest, torture, forceful extraction of 'confessions', illegal detention and imprisonment and execution are too common. Our law is the law of the policeman's whip and the hangman's noose. Our peoples enjoy no freedom or any kind of equality. Bourgeois freedom without equality or opportunity means freedom for the exploiters. The parliamentary system is simply a caricature of popular sovereignty and serves only the ends of the exploiters.

The Parliament is a farce that gives opportunity for a few greedy people to fatten their wallets at the masses' expense. Popular suffrage is also a farce as the feudalists and their servants control the electoral machine and as even these "elected" can hardly do anything. The feudo-bourgeois state keeps our people in subjugation by all possible means in order to pursue the interests of imperialism, the big landlords and big bourgeoisie.

Massacres of peasants, workers, students and systematic extermination of certain nationalities have become institutionalized. The peoples of Ethiopia have shed much blood and many a bitter tear. The slaughterers, bloody murderers and torturers of the Ethiopian peoples are rewarded and promoted. The moral crisis within the system becomes increasingly more severe and critical. Administrative corruption is assuming unbelievable proportions. Maladministration is the surest and fastest way of becoming rich. The bribe opens all doors including the doors of the Jubilee Palace. The law, civil service, public offices, promotions, university and college entrances, etc. are manipulated by the highest bidders. Money, flattery, servility and unscrupulousness are the key to success.

Wealth and success are obtained at the expense of the laboring masses who toil, sweat and shed blood. And because of the oppression and exploitation of the masses and the absence of prospects or possibilities, our youth are living through a very serious crisis. Prostitution, sexual perversion, drug addiction, drunkardness and other vices and signs of degeneracy are becoming more widespread and particularly affecting the youth. Delinquency is on the increase; the reason for it lies in the injustice permeating the economic and social structure of Ethiopia and the example of corruption and unpunished delinquency set by the privileged classes or the holders of power.

And everyday imperialism strengthens its grip. Our country has been sold to the Americans and Israelis who have installed their military bases of aggression on our soil. The Americans and Israelis totally control the army, the police and the security organs of Ethiopia, and they direct and supervise the repression of the masses. Through the system of loans our country is finding itself mortgaged or sold to the United States. The misappropriation of mines, land, industries, transportation, trade, banks, etc. by the United States and other imperialist countries continues at an increasing pace. The wealth of our country is robbed—with the help of the Ethiopian feudalists and big bourgeoisie—by the United States, Israel, Britain, Italy, 'West' Germany, Japan, etc.

All national activities such as education, agriculture, medical care, post and telegraph, production, labour union organization, the press, national defense, politics, economics, etc. are filled, controlled and run by imperialist personnel mainly American. These new Italians, new fascists called American and Israeli have mapped and remapped the terrains of our country, sent their spies throughout the country, spread their reactionary and decadent cultures, increased their moral and material aid to the Ethiopian autocracy, prepared invasion plans of our country and are doing all other things that bring misery to our people.

Truly, our country is a neo-colony of American imperialism. The imperialists' and feudalists' dominations coalesce in the feudal structure of the economy (agriculture essentially). No limit is set to the accumulation of land. 1% of the population owns 90% of the cultivable land. The majority of the farmers are serfs who are required by law ("Civil" Code Art. 2991) to hand in 75% of their produce. The peasants are slaves and are required to render personal service to the feudalists. Extremely archaic methods of production predominate in agriculture. The political and judicial authorities all favor the large landowners at the expense of the peasantry. The Church, a big landowner itself, spreads its obscurantist philosophy to mystify the peasantry, and to justify exploitation as "ordained by God" while presenting the exploiters as "elect of God." It invokes a "crusades"-like campaign in order to rob the lands of Moslems, animists or oppressed nationalities.

Hunger, exploitation and ignorance perpetuated by the large landowners ensure a regular supply of cheap workers to foreign-owned factories, industries and modern agricultural plantations. The country's economy is leading downwards towards disaster as huge sums of money are spent on the security apparatus and the Army needed to suppress fighting peasants, militant workers and students. The country's treasury is almost empty due to the misappropriation of funds by the ruling class which spends a lot of money on importing luxury goods or hoards huge sums of money in foreign banks. The more money the ruling class steals and puts in foreign banks, the more the economy is threatened, the more taxes the peasants have to pay, the more money the ruling class will have to steal, and so on resulting in the perpetual impoverishment of the masses.

And the limitations of our internal market, the competition of foreign imports, the restrictions and scheming of all the Banking and Credit institutions and the absence of state protection, etc. are at the basis of

stagnation of national industry or its merciless plundering to the advantages of American and other foreign businessmen. In all this the big bourgeoisie whose wealth comes from landed property and the misappropriation of public funds flourishes under the protection of imperialism and on the basis of the feudal system.

The very small national bourgeoisie (the few whose interests are not linked with foreign capital) is powerless, shackled by the monopolistic big bourgeoisie, the feudalists and imperialism. The petty bourgeoisie composed of small merchants, and manufacturers, handicraftsmen, teachers, students, etc. is becoming progressively impoverished; potential areas of development are blocked and it is oppressed by the big landowners, big bourgeoisie and imperialism. The peasantry remains the largest and most deprived class in Ethiopia; it forms the basis of the social pyramid and is exploited, abused and subjected to all types of sufferings. The working class, its number swelling due to the influx of an impoverished peasantry, is subject to bourgeois, imperialist and feudal exploitation; it is subjected to racial discrimination and economic exploitation by the foreign capitalists. It receives famine wages, employment is restricted and the unemployed and/or underemployed swell the labor pool thereby bringing wages of workers down. Its attempts to struggle for minor improvement in its working conditions (wages, insurance, social security, protection from accidents, better living places, etc.) have been crushed with inhuman ferocity by the Ethiopian fascist police and Army. In addition, bureaucratic leaders and traitors to the working class (leaders of CELU) restrict the working class's struggle and slow down the process whereby it becomes the class conscious vanguard of the revolution.

Who then can deny that our country is living through the most savage period of its history, that it is on the brink of disaster, that bankruptcy is staring it in the face, that despite all palliatives, all attempts to smooth things over and all the propaganda the country, as a whole, is poised over the abyss?!

History presents us with an inescapable dilemma: either we accept our duty as Ethiopians, our mission to save the country whatever the sacrifice called for, or we become accomplices, whether active or passive, in the exploitation and oppression of our people.

Many are those

Many are those that will choose the easier way, the way of indifference, that which consists in swimming with the tide, in letting everything go to blazes, so long as one is alright oneself. This is the way of individualism, egoism, acceptance of privilege, betrayal of the legitimate aspirations and interests of the laboring masses. We revolutionary workers, peasants, soldiers, students and intellectuals are opposed to these types of people. *We stand for armed struggle against feudalism and imperialism.*

We choose armed struggle knowing it to be the most difficult, the one that calls for the greatest sacrifices, the one that most infuriates the feudalists and imperialists, but at the same time the one that constitutes the highest form of the popular struggle, the one that shatters the skepticism, fatalism, defeatism, obscurantism, fear and deception that have afflicted the masses, the one that brings all the positive qualities of the masses at present submerged under corruption, exploitation and injustice, the one that restores the feelings of national pride and confidence, a bright future, the one that is the only reply to the reactionary violence of the ruling class. We choose armed struggle because it is the only way that leads the broad masses of the people (led by the working class) to power.

Our revolutionary movement is under way now at a time when the world is passing through the most revolutionary phase in its history, when the colonialist chains are being snapped in Asia and Africa, when the socialist world is expanding and growing stronger and when the struggle for the liberation of the people is reaching its climax in all the continents.

Internally our revolutionary movement is under way at a time when the ruling class is wrecked by various crises, when the peasantry is up fighting against serfdom, national oppression and religious discrimination, when our manual and office workers are increasingly becoming radicalized, when the young in our schools and universities are strengthening their revolutionary consciences, taking an active part in the peoples' struggles and contributing their share of blood that is needed to sweep away the feudalists, big bourgeoisie, the American and Israeli imperialists and all reactionaries from the soil of our country.

The revolutionary process is under way; it has started. But not much headway has been made because the revolutionary forces are scattered and isolated. The masses are not *organized* and they have to be if feudalism and imperialism are to be defeated. And this task of organizing the masses falls squarely on the shoulders of the educated and politically conscious who should use their political knowledge to *educate* and *mobilize* the masses for revolutionary battle—for class struggle.

A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. It can be added that a revolution is neither shouting revolutionary slogans, or parading on the streets with Mao Tse tung or Che Guevara badges. Nor is it exhibiting long hairs or carrying Marxist books in one's hands or pockets. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of *violence* by which one class overthrows another. *It is a battle of strategy and tactics.*

A revolution is not an armed mob rushing through streets or forests bent on destruction and death. It is not destruction and death that is its end but creation and birth, and the blood that is shed is like the placenta that accompanies the arrival of life. Above all the revolution is the expression of the revolt of the masses. Once they have tried every peaceful means of implementing their demands and have been frustrated by the brutality and the violence of their enemies, the labouring masses resort to violence as the only and necessary means of getting what they want.

And for all its appearance of disorder, the revolution is not disorderly or blindly spontaneous, but is (and should be) led, with a *scientific knowledge of society* and with the precise guidance of main forces, allies and reserves, based on the most possible correct estimate of a given situation.

Wherever there is revolution you will find its friends on one side and its enemies on the other. Therefore, the settlement of the question: Who are the enemies? Who are our friends? is of primary importance for the revolution. A revolutionary party is the guide of the masses, and no revolution ever succeeds when the revolutionary party leads them astray. To avoid going astray and to ensure definite success in our struggle, we must pay close attention in uniting with real friends in order to attack our real enemies. Knowledge of the real enemy helps us to concentrate our attacks on him and to rout him out at each stage of the revolution. To distinguish real friends from real enemies we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes (in Ethiopia) in order to be able to know their respective attitude towards the revolution waged by the labouring masses.

Who is the enemy of the Ethiopian masses?

There are those who say that the enemy is Haile Selassie, a bloodthirsty autocrat who passes bad laws and make decisions harmful to the people; who defends the big landlords and foreign capitalists and turns his back on the people when they complain . . .

Others say it is the feudalists (big landlords) who are the enemy. They own immense gashas of land while the peasants have nothing. they take the biggest share of the crop. They over-exploit the peasantry, they hire civilian guards to terrorize the peasants, etc. . .

Some others claim it is the government ministers who are the enemy. They are corrupt, they extort and embezzle money, they are idle and bureaucratic. . .

But others insists that it is the Church (essentially the High Clergy) that is the enemy. It owns 30% of the cultivable land, it exploits the peasantry, it confuses and mystifies the peasants with its unenlightened preachings thereby implanting defeatism into their minds and it justifies oppression and exploitation as "ordained by God" and presents the oppressors of the peoples as "elect of God". . .

Many more persist that the Armed Forces and the police are the enemy. They are the ones with the guns who shoot down the peoples when they stand up for their rights. They ask, if it were not for the brutal men in the army and police how could Haile Selassie, the landlords and their government last for long?

No, it is imperialism, that is the enemy say some. The imperialists are the ones who bribe the government and tell it what to do, who arm, train and direct the Armed and Police Forces, and who keep our country under their control (look at the many American and Israeli military bases throughout Ethiopia), and who impoverish our peoples by robbing our national wealth mercilessly.

Who then is the enemy: In general the enemy is the man who says YES to the exploitation, to the deprivation, to the abuse and torture of the Ethiopian peoples. A friend is any man who says NO, I am against it. That is to say whoever sides with the revolutionary peoples (essentially workers and peasants) is a friend—a revolutionary, while he who sides with the ruling class is an enemy—a counterrevolutionary.

Specifically the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples are the feudalists (big landlords), the big bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The feudalists: essentially these comprise of the Royal Family, the nobility and high clergy. They own the largest part of the cultivable land (90%) and are the main source of the misery and suffering of the majority of the Ethiopian peoples. Their interest is contrary to that of the peasantry since what they want is to maintain their control over the land by keeping the peasants in servitude, to overexploit the serfs, to secure a high price for their produce and to rent their lands at very high prices. The poorer the peasants get, the richer these feudalists become. Their happiness is obtained at the expense of the peasants' sweat, tears and blood. Evidently, the feudalists are opposed to any social revolution and as they will not hand over land (and power) peacefully, they must be liquidated by force.

The big bourgeoisie: This is a section of the Ethiopian bourgeoisie that is totally dependent on the imperialists. It is also known as comprador bourgeoisie. It lives on American aid, on trade with the imperialist countries and seeks joint investments with foreign capital. It is alien to all notions of national interest and is ready to sell itself to the richest imperialist bidder. It also includes elements from other social classes, such as the big landlords who seek refuge in the larger cities and become bourgeoisie. The most important segment of the big (comprador) bourgeoisie is the bureaucratic bourgeoisie which fills the government bureaucracy holding managerial or other key positions in the economy and controlling all the important branches of the government administration. They use their power to get rich quick through pillage, embezzlement, speculation, extortion, etc., and help the American imperialists to make crafty economic penetration through the creation of "share" companies or investments in joint enterprises.

The entire big bourgeoisie—these traitors, agents of imperialism and social parasites—is opposed to any social revolution. Its interest is inseparably linked with that of imperialism—mainly U.S. imperialism. And like the American imperialists, the Ethiopian big bourgeoisie has to be smashed by force if a free, democratic peoples' Ethiopia is to be established.

Imperialists: By these we mean the foreigners who control our economic, political and social life and whose military presence tramples on us day in and day out. These are the American, British, Italian, Israeli, French, West German and Japanese imperialists. Of all these enemies, the American and Israeli imperialists are the most important. But the main enemy—the number one enemy of the Ethiopian peoples—are the American imperialists.

Why?

(1) Because the American imperialists are the best friends of the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples. That means they are on the side of Haile Selassie and his feudo-bourgeois clique thus standing in opposition to the Ethiopian peoples. In this respect the American imperialists arm, train and advise the brutal Imperial Army and Police which butcher innocent peasants, workers and students.

(2) The American imperialists have, through the so-called Mutual Defense Pact, signed with the traitor Haile Selassie, transported their troops on to Ethiopian soil and constructed various military bases which threaten the sovereignty of the Ethiopian peoples. The American soldiers have mapped and remapped Ethiopia and have prepared invasion plans if peasants and workers overthrow their puppets (Haile Selassie, the big feudalists and big bourgeoisie) and establish a peoples' democratic Ethiopian republic. Already the American soldiers are committing untold crimes against the Ethiopian peoples by participating in the repressive government actions against peasant uprisings, by advising and planning the assassination of student and worker leaders, etc.

(3) The American imperialists have cleverly and gradually assumed control of the Ethiopian economy and impoverish our country by robbing its resources.

(4) The American imperialists have, through their "Peace Corps," information centers as well as due to their control of the newspapers, radio

and television, spread their reactionary and decadent culture to poison the minds of our people.

(5) Moreover, the American imperialists are the oppressors of our African, Arab, Latin American and Asian brothers. They also oppress and exploit Blacks, Indians, Mexicans and poor whites in America itself. The oppressed peoples of the world are the friends and allies of the oppressed masses of Ethiopia. Therefore, the enemy of one is the enemy of the other. Which makes American imperialism the Number 1 enemy of the oppressed peoples of the world.

In short, if the murder and oppression of the Ethiopian peoples is to stop, imperialism and feudalism have to be destroyed. The two struggles—i.e. against feudalism and against imperialism, are interconnected as the one cannot be destroyed without the other. These enemies of the Ethiopian people are ruthless and stubborn; they will not resign peacefully. Power must be taken from them by violence. And no one can or will do this on behalf of the peoples. The masses must do it themselves and this is what is essentially meant by the assertion that the revolution is the work of the masses.

And by the masses we mean essentially the working class, the poor peasants (including poor peasant priests). The working class and its sure ally the poor peasantry constitute the motive force of the revolution. They are not alone, in fact, if success in the revolution is wanted, it is imperative that the worker-peasant alliance be strengthened, according to varying circumstances, with all classes and strata that can take part in the revolution. In Ethiopia, a scientific class analysis shows that the Ethiopian petty bourgeoisie (comprising of small merchants, handicraftsmen, civil servants, members of the liberal professions, intellectuals, college students and school pupils) can be a reliable ally of the workers and peasants. In fact, a sector of this class—the student population—has already shown its solidarity with the working peoples through various demonstrations calling for an end to worker's exploitation, demanding land to the tiller, etc. However, to unite with all sections of the petty bourgeoisie, a strong revolutionary propaganda and organizational work should be undertaken to counter their characteristic individualism, subjectivism, vacillation and tendency to fall easy victims to bourgeois and imperialist propaganda.

Though at a secondary level, all those who have one or another kind of contradiction with the big feudalists and big bourgeoisie and imperialism can be won over to participate in the revolution against the imperialists, big feudalists and big bourgeoisie. These are middle (small-owner) peasants, rich peasants, national bourgeoisie (the small, almost non-existent sector of the Ethiopian bourgeoisie whose interest is not linked with imperialism) and the lumpen proletariat (thieves, beggars, prostitutes, shoe shine boys, etc.). And the existence of national oppression by the Amhara nationality over all others should also be given its due consideration as it is an important factor that will increase the number of people that will participate in the worker-peasant revolution to end feudalist, big bourgeois and imperialist rule as well as all forms of national oppression.¹⁷ To sum up then:

—the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples (and hence the targets of the Ethiopian revolution) are the big feudalists, the big bourgeoisie (essentially the bureaucratic bourgeoisie), and their imperialist masters (mainly American).

—the motive forces of the Ethiopian Revolution are the workers, peasants, and urban petty bourgeoisie. The *leading force* of the revolution is the working class as it is the *most resolute* and the most radically revolutionary of all social classes.

17. Evidently it is not our intention here to give a class analysis of the Ethiopian society. Practice in the revolution itself is the only way that can show us which class can rally to the worker-peasant side. This is more true when we speak of the rich peasants and the national bourgeoisie. What is essential is that revolutionaries make a concrete analysis of the concrete situation and attempt to unite *all* forces that can unite to fight against feudalism and imperialism. Apart from this we should remember that it is only the worker and poor peasants who will resolutely participate in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution and that there is a greater need of revolutionary education when it comes to making the petty bourgeois and the lumpen proletariat dedicated revolutionaries.

—the main task of the Ethiopian Revolution will be to destroy feudalism and imperialism. Thus it will have to carry out a national revolution to get rid of the imperialists and a democratic revolution to destroy feudal oppression. The two tasks are interrelated. Hence the Ethiopian Revolution will be a national, democratic revolution. And it is only through this path of an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution of the broad masses of the peoples led by the working class that Ethiopia can advance towards socialism.

The victory of the struggle of the labouring masses against feudalism and imperialism is definite. War is a comparison of strength and the masses are fundamentally strong. The enemies' strong points are essentially material (arms, propaganda, well trained troops, high level of organization) while the peoples' strengths are moral and political. *If the peoples persist in a long, protracted struggle, the peoples strong points will increase*—as they come to acquire arms, perfect their military knowledge and increase their organizational level—to the disadvantage of the enemy. The peoples' war against their oppressors and exploiters is a just war and will inevitably triumph. But to guarantee this victory in the coming revolution the broad masses of Ethiopia must be politicized, organized and united. To unite the peoples against their enemies is the primary task. The stronger the unity the greater will the strength be. In order to have unity we must have a common political aim under which we can be united. We need a revolutionary organization and a correct programme of action as revolutionary achievements can be obtained only if we know how to organize and how to prepare for the class struggle.

Class struggle The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle. This means that slaves and slave owners, landlords and serfs, bourgeois and proletarians (working class) have stood (and still stand) in constant opposition to one another. The reason is that their class interests are contradictory and irreconcilable. "What is good for the slaveowner is bad for the slave, the medicine of the landlord is the poison of the serf, and the happiness of the bourgeoisie is the misery of the working class." The class struggle is resolved only through a revolution—the outcome of which determines which class shall be the ruling one.

In Ethiopia the feudal landlord class and the big bourgeoisie are the ruling class. It is their interest that predominates, which means that the peasants (serfs) and workers are oppressed and exploited. And this oppression and exploitation is carried out because the ruling class has power. What is the State? It is essentially the Army, the Police, the courts, the prisons, the bureaucracy. These serve the ruling class, who in Ethiopia can say that the Army, the Police, the courts safeguard the interests of the labouring masses. The fact is that the Army, the Police, the courts and the whole administration serve the ruling class and act against the basic interests of the working class and the peasantry. Therefore, the State is an organization by which one class oppresses another. The Ethiopian feudo-bourgeois state is an organization by which the feudalists and the big bourgeoisie oppress and exploit the labouring masses.

It follows then that to liberate themselves from the oppressors the Ethiopian masses—led by the working class—must smash the feudo-bourgeois state power (i.e. abolition of the monarchy, etc.) and replace it with a people's democratic republic in which the state power shall be utilized in the interest of the labouring masses.

The labouring masses must destroy the state—the organization of the feudalists and big bourgeoisie. But can the masses destroy this feudo-bourgeois organization without themselves getting organized? Scattered and isolated, can the masses render decisive and destructive blows at the organized Army and Police? the answer is NO. If the Ethiopian masses—led by the working class—are to seize power (and they must if they want to put an end to oppression and exploitation) by destroying the feudo-bourgeois state apparatus it is a must that they GET ORGANIZED. There is no other way. **THE ORGANIZED FORCE OF THE REACTIONARIES CAN ONLY BE DEFEATED BY THE ORGANIZED FORCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES** for material force can only be smashed by material force.

True, the Ethiopian masses have never ceased struggling against the feudo-bourgeois dogs. One has only to cite the uprisings by the peasants of Tigray, Bale, Arussi, Gojjam, Sidamo, etc. the national liberation struggle in Eritrea, the struggle by the Somalis in Ogaden, the strikes and work slow-downs by workers at Wonji, Akaki, E.A.L. etc. and the numerous

demonstrations by students throughout the Empire. But all these struggles—apart from showing that the masses as a whole have said enough to exploitation and national oppression and are determined to take up arms—have not resulted in the overthrow of the autocracy and the monarchy.

WHY?

The main reasons are the following:

(1) the armed struggles were not struggles for power and as such were not genuine armed struggles. The fact that the armed struggle of the peoples lack the aim—the seizure of power—was the fundamental defect of the heroic action of the Ethiopian peasants.

(2) the struggles were isolated. That is to say there was no coordination of action amongst peasants, workers and students. As such the regime found it easy to suppress each struggle or uprising one by one after isolating it in one way or another from the support of the masses of other regions.

(3) in many cases, these struggles were spontaneous and neither the peoples nor their leaders had any concrete grasp of the reality. They could not determine who is the enemy and as such could not lay down correct strategy and tactics. In practical terms this resulted in:

(a) making premature attacks against the Army
(b) using the wrong tactics to fight the enemy i.e. instead of employing guerrilla warfare—hit and run, ambushes, surprise attacks, mobile warfare and gradual build up of forces—they resort to conventional war which means certain defeat in the hands of the more numerous, well-equipped, and better trained army.

(c) failure to make unity with other forces fighting the feudo-bourgeois regime; failure to make maximum use of the contradiction within the enemy camp

(d) failure to correctly interpret the situation, to know their short and long term interests. As such, the rebellious masses are cheated by the ruling class which pretends to have made a concession to the masses (for example, removing or disgracing a hated governor or Police Chief) while in reality laying the ground for their further exploitation and oppression.

The above stated reasons are mainly true of the peasant uprisings. As to the workers, their main drawback is their lack of political consciousness which has limited their struggle to mere fights against individual employers. That means the workers have not made their struggle a political one, i.e. not a demand for better working conditions by a fighting call for an end to the whole feudo-bourgeois system. The student struggle, on the other hand, can only bear fruit if it joins hands with the workers and peasants.

All these factors being absent, the various struggles of the peoples have not resulted in the abolition of the monarchy and feudalism and the total liberation for the working peoples. In general, the main reason for this is the absence of a political organization that can politicize the masses, unite them and prepare them for armed struggle.

The most important reason why we need a political organization is to give political education to the masses and thus make an organized preparation for a protracted struggle against the feudalists and imperialists. In Ethiopia where there has never existed a political party, freedom of speech, assembly or the press, where feudal ideology reigns supreme over an illiterate population; the need for political education must be extremely emphasized. Our peoples are totally ignorant of the most elementary political concepts. Hence the need for teaching the masses starting from the most elementary, patiently working up to enable them to understand their society and to embrace socialism. If this is achieved—and it is one of the major tasks that has to be accomplished for any revolution to succeed—then the organized masses can smash their enemies to pieces as they will come to clearly realize their class interests, know their real enemies and real friends, and understand the ways and means of getting what they need or satisfying their basic class interests.

This important task of political education can be done effectively only by a revolutionary political organization which is aware of the immediate and long-range tasks of the revolution. If the masses are to be given relevant education then it can only be done by an organization which understands the actual situation (i.e., correctly interprets the situation, tells the trend of historical development, knows the alignment of forces both internally and externally at a world level, etc.) and determines what is essential for the masses to know to help them accomplish their immediate and long-range tasks of total liberation.

There are some conscious Ethiopians who claim that there is no need of politicizing the masses. The solution presented by such people is the starting of "guerrilla warfare" immediately by way of installing a small band of conscious guerrillas in the countryside. The peasants are expected to rally to these liberators. This theory is wrong for the following reasons (among others):

(a) it forgets that the uprising of the masses must rely on the high tide of the masses revolutionary consciousness which means that to create guerrilla groups, establish solid paramilitary organizations and prepare the armed struggle well, we need first of all sufficient political and propaganda work among the masses and to organize them.

(b) it forgets that a non-politicized, non-organized peasantry will not rally to the small band of conscious liberators who by necessity will have to come from the urban areas (or at least from areas far from the remote locality where the guerrillas operate) and are alien to the local peasants.

(c) it forgets that the Ethiopian masses have time and again taken up arms and fought heroically, and that what they lack are not sharpshooters but capable organizers and political instructors.

(d) it forgets that the revolutions that occurred in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. are essentially different from that of Ethiopia for the simple fact that the degree of consciousness prevailing in these countries (in their pre-liberation period) was much higher than that prevailing in Ethiopia. Let us elaborate.

Russia: Lenin speaking on the Russian political scene fifteen years before the October Revolution of 1917 said, "No other country knew anything even approximating to that revolutionary experience, that rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, local circles and mass movements, and Parliamentary and terrorist forms." Can we speak of such situations in our case? Even if we take the period from 1896-1905, we see a series of economic strikes of workers, barricade fighting and armed uprising and partial peasant revolts all culminating in the 1905 revolution that shook the autocracy. In short, the Russian masses had a richer political experience (Bolsheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchist Terrorists, Democrats, etc. all agitated and politicized for years) than their Ethiopian counterparts. Thus to talk of the Russian masses uprising in October 1917, as if it was a spontaneous affair by forgetting the degree of *political work* that was undertaken before 1917 is a gross mistake.

China had its bourgeois revolution under Sun Yat Sen in 1911, had its great revolution of 1925-1927, had a "Literary Renaissance Movement" which spread modern and radical ideas amongst the masses, and most important of all there existed a communist party which undertook the organization and political education of the workers and peasants openly before it was declared illegal and had to go underground. And when the communist party of China launched its armed struggle, it took more than twenty years of intense political and military struggle for the revolution to succeed. In our case can we talk of a bourgeois revolution? Do we have a communist party that has politicized the labouring masses? Are radical ideas spread among the masses? Do the peasants know the use of organizing or how to organize? etc.

Cuba is another example. The fighting guerrillas led by Fidel Castro had an "easy" job because they found the agricultural workers of the Sierra Maestra politically conscious and capable organizers. This was thanks to the work undertaken by the old Cuban communist party. Can we talk of similar workers and peasants in Ethiopia? Where is the organizational and political experience of our workers and peasants? In short, those who claim that there is no need for (a) political education and cite the experience of other countries are either misinformed or do not know the reality of Ethiopia. One must never forget the backwardness of our peoples, the absence of traditions of political parties or organizations, and the subsequent absence of political education, whatever the form and the brutally repressive and autocratic nature of the regime.

(e) it forgets that the fact the regime is repressive does not mean that no political work can be undertaken among the masses. In fact it is precisely for this that a revolutionary organization is needed. That is to recruit professional revolutionaries, to organize secretly, to publish and spread an underground revolutionary newspaper which can teach and train the masses, to secretly

organize for battle, etc. In a repressive country revolutionaries cannot hold public assemblies so they hold secret ones, they cannot write freely in government newspapers so they publish their own newspapers, pamphlets and tracts which speak the "peoples' voice" and at the same time they serve to raise the political consciousness of the masses.

This politicization is a prerequisite for armed struggle and continues with it. The task becomes, therefore, to organize, to politicize and to organize more. On the other hand, there are those who equate organization with having a very sophisticated organization of numerous members, having a nation-wide network of supplies, communication, etc. and conclude that unless we have such an organization, we cannot launch the armed struggle. This is a mistaken view as an organization can only develop and become "sophisticated" only through actual struggle. Without actual struggle, the organization cannot develop and will, in fact, be easy victim of the police after a certain period. Therefore, we should balance between these two extremes (the one saying no need to politicize and organize before the armed struggle and the other claiming a high level of organization and political consciousness before the armed struggle is launched) and work for a *minimum* level of organization.

An organization does more than politicize the masses. It gives firmness to the peoples' movement and changes their spontaneous uprising into real class struggles. For example, the struggle of the workers can become class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are *conscious of themselves as a single working class* and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the entire bourgeois class and against the government that supports that class. Thus only when the individual worker realizes that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognizes the fact that his petty day to day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become class struggle.

An organization also gathers and collects the various revolutionary forces, avoids premature attacks and lays down the correct strategy and tactics based on a concrete analysis of the concrete situation of Ethiopia. In short, the revolutionary organization conducts the peoples' struggle (armed or unarmed, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal—using all available forms of struggle) effectively towards victory.

The worker and peasant is helpless and defenseless against the feudalists, big bourgeoisie and imperialists unless he organizes. Helpless on his own, the worker or peasant becomes a force when organized with his comrades. Only thus can he face his enemies, only then can he defend himself from their onslaught by retaliating to their reactionary violence with revolutionary violence. Without a revolutionary organization, the labouring masses of Ethiopia have nothing and will not succeed in overthrowing their oppressors.

We have said that a revolution, if it is to succeed, must be led by a revolutionary organization. But what do we mean by a revolutionary political organization in this context of a vanguard of the revolution? We mean nothing else but a *Working Class Party*—the only organization that can perform the role of the vanguard, lead the social revolution to success and guarantee the total liberation of the labouring masses. For among the broad masses of the people that will fight against the imperialists, feudalists and big bourgeoisie, it is only the working class that is the most revolutionary and most resolute and capable of assuming the leadership. It is the most resolute and revolutionary because it is subjected to the triple oppression of imperialism, the bourgeois class and the feudal landlord class. Moreover, like all proletarians everywhere, the Ethiopian working class is associated with the most advanced form of economy and lacks the private means of production—factors which have resulted in the working class's strong sense of organization and discipline as well as its *firm* stand in the revolution against ownership by the few and the so-called sanctity of private property. Despite its ideological limitations (which can only be improved if socialist intellectuals do political and organizational work among the workers) the Ethiopian working class has shown its revolutionary spirit and combative ability and being essentially of rural background, it has natural ties with the peasant masses, thus facilitating the formation of a close worker-peasant alliance. For all these reasons, the working class and its party must lead the revolution if the labouring masses are to be totally free.

The Ethiopian peasantry is highly revolutionary but cannot lead the revolution for it does not represent any distinctive mode of production and

has neither an independent political position nor an ideology, the national democratic revolution it can only go with and be guided by the working class. The peasantry cannot even carry the agrarian revolution by itself—a task that can only be undertaken by the working class which will take the satisfaction of the short and long range interests of the peasantry into account.

It is clear then that the working class must lead the masses and it does this through its party. The Working Class Party stands for the revolutionary reorganization of society. It is the only Party that is capable of giving competent leadership to the peoples' struggle and properly combining all its forms. The Working Class Party is the advanced revolutionary contingent of the proletariat, its vanguard. *And why is it capable of performing its mission as a vanguard?* It is because the party is equipped with the most scientific theory—Marxism-Leninism. Marxist-Leninist ideology enables the Working Class Party—the only genuine peoples' Party—to know the laws of social development and to apply these laws in practice for the revolutionary transformation of society. Only such a party can gain the full confidence of the peasantry and only such a Party imbued with Marxism-Leninism can satisfy the short and long range interests of the peasantry.

Who are the people that join a working class party? Essentially they are the workers, poor peasants and elements from the urban petty bourgeoisie. Do all workers join the Working Class party? Not necessarily. No where and at no time has any party been able to enroll all the members of the class which it represents; never has any class reached the requisite degree of consciousness resulting in the enrollment of all its members in the party. Generally speaking, those who organize themselves into a party are the most advanced members of a class; those who best understand their class interests; those who are most daring, most energetic and most stubborn in the fight (such people are the Communists of the Working Class Party). For this reason the number of adherents of the Party is always considerably less than the number of those composing the class whose interests the Party represents. Since, however, the Party represents the rightly interpreted interests of the class, it plays a leading role. Thus a working class party—even if its members are small in number—leads the whole working class and the broad masses of the people.

And who organizes this Working Class Party, this Marxist-Leninist Party? In a country like Ethiopia—as almost anywhere—this task falls squarely on the shoulders of those who have been lucky (fortunate) enough to get educated. By "educated" we mean those who have studied, grasped and accepted Marxist-Leninist ideology. This means the "proletarianized" intellectuals in Ethiopia. It is the task of such people to organize themselves and teach socialism to the workers and organize the most conscious among them. For socialism can be introduced into the working class struggle only from without; left to itself the working class develops only trade union consciousness (i.e., fight for better wages, better working conditions, etc. and not against the whole exploitative system).

The Working Class Party is a revolutionary party which is a class party, conscious, militant, disciplined and always in contact with the masses. And the only way it holds its line through each and every turn of events, consolidates the link between the revolutionaries and attracts the masses to the revolution is when it has a revolutionary political programme. What is a programme of a party? Generally speaking, all the aims which a party representing the interests of its class vigorously pursues constitute the party programme. From the programme of the party we can always learn what interests the party represents.

A Working Class Party Programme would

- (a) formulate the Party's basic views. That is give a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the society
- (b) exactly establish the immediate political tasks and
- (c) lay down the Party's ultimate aim which in all cases is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of a **SOCIALIST SOCIETY**.

What will be the immediate tasks of a Working Class Party in Ethiopia? It would be to do political work among the masses (mainly workers and poor peasants) and organize the revolutionary forces (workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals) into a broad united front to fight imperialism and feudalism. The Party must also bring all patriotic and progressive popular stratas, unite all nationalities within Ethiopia, all religious communities, all forces that

could be rallied into the United Front against feudalism and imperialism, thereby neutralizing all forces that can be neutralized and directing the spearhead of the revolution at the imperialists and their local feudo-bourgeois puppets.

But what is a United Front in our context? It will be a Front that will unite the workers and peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie elements of the national bourgeoisie, patriotic and progressive forces from all nationalities and various religious communities of Ethiopia to fight against the common enemies—U.S. imperialists, feudalists and big bourgeoisie. In general, a United Front is a unity of opposites which includes various classes in league with each other on the basis of a definite common programme of struggle. In Ethiopia such a struggle will essentially be anti-feudal (such as agitation for "land to the tiller") and anti-imperialist ("an end to foreign military economic, political and cultural presence and domination in our country"). Within the Front there will be classes with essentially similar interests (workers and peasants, for example) and there will be also classes whose interests are linked together only to a certain extent (for example the workers and the national bourgeois elements who may join the Front as the unity between the two exists in so far as they stand against imperialist economic domination). Each class for the sake of its own interest and of the common interest joins force with other classes within the Front.

Each class views the common interest from its own angle. It is only for the working class that its class interests and the common national interest are identical. For other classes their respective interests are not in many cases the same with the national interest. For this reason while maintaining unity within the Front there will necessarily be ideological struggle between the various classes in the Front.

And it is precisely because of this that the working class, through its party, must lead the United Front. Otherwise, the revolution will fail or end up by bringing bourgeois elements to power. The interest of the revolution and that of the nation require that one should constantly enhance and consolidate the leading role of the party within the Front, firmly maintain the Party's independent political line and organization, and oppose all tendencies to downgrade the Party's role and dissolve it in the Front. The key to firmly maintaining the Party's leadership within the Front and strengthening the latter is to ceaselessly reinforce the worker-peasant alliance. Without the worker-peasant alliance as its firm foundation, there can be no genuine United Front. Nor will it be possible to broaden it. The Working Class Party must lead the front and maintain a policy of "unity and struggle within it," i.e., work for unity while at the same time combatting resolutely against all feudalist, bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideological trends or manifestations within the Front. And the Working Class Party will use the programme of the Front to educate, mobilize and organize the masses with a view of making them accept the Party's maximum programme embodying its ultimate aim of conquering political power by the proletariat and the organization of a socialist society. To sum up then:

A. WE NEED AN ORGANIZATION

- to seize state power through an organized destruction of the feudo-bourgeois state apparatus
- to mobilize and educate the masses
- to change the spontaneous struggle of the masses into a genuine class struggle that will result in the overthrow of the ruling class
- to understand and interpret the concrete strategy and tactics and to lead the masses through various forms of struggle towards liberation and socialism

B. By organization we mean primarily a Working Class party

- a Working Class Party comprising of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals
- a Working Class Party that shall have as its ideology Marxism-Leninism
- a Working class party that shall have a programme of action stating its immediate tasks (a national democratic revolution) and ultimate aim (seizure of state power by the proletariat and the organization of a socialist Ethiopia) as well as a detailed scientific analysis of the political, economic and social conditions within the society

C. The tasks of the Working Class Party will be to

- politicize the masses
- strengthen its organization

- unite the labouring masses of the various nationalities
- strengthen the worker-peasant alliance
- unite with the urban petty bourgeoisie
- win over the national bourgeoisie and other patriotic forces
- form a broad anti-feudal, anti-imperialist United Front

D. The United Front will be

- led by the Working Class Party
- having as its firm foundation the worker-peasant alliance
- comprising of all anti-feudal, anti-imperialist forces

We shall now proceed to deal with some of the characteristics of a revolutionary organization.¹⁸

The primary requirement is that such an organization should be CLANDESTINE. Why? For the simple reason that the highly repressive and authoritarian Ethiopian regime has forbidden the formation of any political organization. And since the ruling class has shown its repressive nature even against peaceful, semi-political movements like the Metcha Tulema, Students' Union etc. and since the nation's prisons are full of political prisoners (not to speak of the many murdered in secret) we cannot have anything short of complete clandestinity. This is the only way a revolutionary organization can survive in autocratic Ethiopia. Secrecy, absolute secrecy is the primary necessity, the cornerstone on which the organization rests and develops. Any relaxation of this rule, the slightest indiscretion will bring about grave blows—sometimes even fatal ones—on the organization. In short, the utmost secrecy is needed if an organization is to exist in an autocratic country like Ethiopia where a ruthless, bloody, and barbaric ruling class exists.

The law is not neutral; the laws of a country on the whole serve the interests of the ruling class of that country. The same is the case with Ethiopia. The laws of Ethiopia are laws that work against the peoples and defend the interests of the feudalists, imperialists and big bourgeoisie. As such, revolution is illegal and there is no other alternative for the peoples but to practice illegal politics, i.e. through their clandestine organization. This, however, does *not* mean that we should make a fetish of clandestinity, practice coup d'état—like conspiracy, cut ourselves from the masses and be totally ineffective. Clandestinity means that we should carry revolutionary struggle within a maximum of *SECURITY* and consequently of efficacy (effectiveness).

The guiding principle of such an organization shall be democratic centralism. Democratic centralism is the basic principle on which all revolutionary parties that have led the revolutions of this age have been established. Consequently the validity of this theoretical point of view alone, but, basically on its validity as established by practice and the experiences of revolutionary action.

Democracy inside a revolutionary organization means the right of every member to know things *within the limits of the organization's security*, to present his views and ideas fully even though his opinion may be wrong. It also means that each member has the right to criticize and stand in the face of error, and that no disciplinary action can be taken without hearing and giving due considerations to his explanations. It is apparent that "broad democracy" cannot be applied, i.e. free election, publicity, public debates, etc. as this will only facilitate the police's work of dismantling and destroying the organization. *The need for secrecy is primary* and democracy within a revolutionary organization is secondary to it. It should be realized that the only serious organizational principle for the members of an organization is the strictest secrecy, the strictest selection of members and training of professional revolutionaries. Given these qualities something even more than "democracy" would be guaranteed, namely complete comradely mutual confidence among the members of the revolutionary organization.

Continuous revolutionary democratic education is the only way which ensures the realization of the essence of democracy. Persistent explanations must be made to counter the "primitive" conception of democracy that exists in many people's minds. It must be emphasized that the understanding by the leaders themselves of the meaning and importance of democracy is very important. In this respect (with the leaders) democracy becomes a genuine desire to know the members' opinions, to avoid isolation from them and their problems. The leadership must shy away from bureaucratic

18. Henceforth in this paper the Working Class Party is referred to as revolutionary organization or just organization.

relations, prevent responsibility from being converted into any moral or material privilege and avoid exercising authority in a manner which is not compatible with the member's dignity.

Also the comrades must extricate themselves from all customs and traditions inherited from the class society in which they were brought up and establish relations of mutual respect, objective appreciation of qualifications *instead* of formal courtesies, adulation and servility. There must be openmindedness among the comrade-leaders so that instead of being impatient with criticism they will encourage it and endeavour to enhance the members' moral courage and develop their revolutionary outlook. Thus democracy becomes more than just a set of rules and regulations—it becomes a revolutionary human life pattern.

However, democracy is one of the aspects of the basic principle which is at the root of relations within the organization: democratic centralism. Democracy without centralization will result in complete anarchy, digression and lack of discipline and consequently in paralyzing the organization and rendering it incapable of uniform motion towards the execution of its plans. The two—democracy and centralism—must go together; freedom and discipline, democracy and centralism are correlated. Centralism has three aspects. The first is that the minority submits to the majority. Every point of view inside the organization is entitled to be presented in full freedom within organizational channels. However, after this point of view is discussed and the organization (the majority) takes a definite position concerning it, then it is the *duty* of every member in the organization to sponsor this position and to defend and be fully committed to it until another organizational occasion arises for discussing anew the matters of work.

The second aspect is the subsidiary leadership ranks' submission to the higher leadership ranks and the consideration of the central leadership of the organization to be the decisive authority in all basic matters and to be entitled to criticize all positions and decisions taken by any leading group below it. The organization's action in any field, area or department may affect the conduct of the organization as a whole, and any mistake committed by a particular leadership rank may affect the organization's ranks or future. Consequently, the way to control organizational matters, preserve the unity and harmony of all party plans and activities and prevent any gross error or deviation by the organization's different bodies is the central leadership's right to criticize any decision taken by any subsidiary leadership rank. Naturally this does not mean that the central leadership will have to intervene in every act undertaken by the organization. It only means that it has the right to intervene when, in its judgment, such intervention is necessary to protect the interests of the labouring masses.

The third aspect of centralism is the leadership's absolute power during execution and the shouldering of full responsibility for the execution of what the party has democratically decided. *When execution begins democracy ends, and so do discussion and debate to give way to obedience, discipline, commitment and full submission to instructions.* Without this we cannot have a highly disciplined revolutionary organization which is capable of conducting the hard and long liberation war to final success.

The understanding of the principle of democratic centralism by all members, their comprehension of all its meanings (freedom and discipline, minority submits to the majority and the individual to the organization, no factions within the organization, the relationship between leaders and members, etc.), and an honest and responsible effort by both the leaders and members to apply this principle is sure guarantee of the organization's development and efficiency.

It is important at this point to emphasize the question of discipline. Discipline in a revolutionary organization (individual submits to organization, lower body of organization to higher one, and all the members to the central committee) means that *all* members should observe and obey the organization's rules and regulations. Organizational discipline is iron discipline as any laxity or carelessness will result in seriously endangering the whole organization. Discipline in a revolutionary organization is not forced; it is entirely voluntary. The discipline is within the individual, born of his profound conviction, of the need to obey all the rules and regulations as well as instructions in order to maintain the effectiveness of the organization. A revolutionary organization does not have all the complex system that is

supposed to ensure discipline, say in a reactionary government's army. The organization has no repressive apparatus, no threatening force. The self-control of the individual is the operative force; the important thing being the member's rigid awareness of duty and discipline, the awareness that an error is fatal and that no one should commit even the smallest slip, as his life and that of his comrades will be at stake.

To sum up then, discipline in a revolutionary organization is firm and voluntary. It means that members will obey and execute instructions without hesitation (even if they are individually opposed to it) and observe all the rules and regulations of the organization at all times. Apparently, this requires from the members theoretical clarity, dedication and a correct concept of leadership and authority.

Theoretical clarity means that the individual should grasp and understand the theory of Marxism-Leninism by which he/she can interpret each concrete situation. Every member must always strive to develop himself/herself ideologically so that he/she may grasp the reality objectively and in a scientific way. If this is done, the individual will become aware of what is to be done to change the decadent system and what is required of him/her as an individual. For an individual to voluntarily accept non-discipline, he/she must first of all grasp what the struggle is all about, be convinced of the justness of the cause and the struggle's inevitable victory. As such ideological development is a necessary prerequisite for maintenance of strong discipline within a revolutionary organization.

We also say that the individual must be dedicated. This means that he must dedicate his life to serve the peoples, to accept and do whatsoever that is necessary to forward the struggle of the peoples for total liberation. If the individual becomes a dedicated servant of the people, he will readily discard all his shortcomings among which figure individualism, vacillation, opportunism and hatred for strong discipline. Evidently the degree of dedication is affected by how much the individual is ideologically mature and convinced of the justness of the peoples' struggle.

Along with this there arises the need to understand the role and meaning of leadership. At present there is amidst Ethiopian revolutionaries a mistaken idea on this point. Many think that to obey a leader or leaders is to accept dictatorship or a sign of ignorance and weakness on their part. This point of view confuses the difference between leaders in a revolutionary organization and all reactionary leaders, and is in fact an argument that manifests the petty bourgeoisie's individualism, arrogance and hatred for iron-discipline.

It shows individualism and arrogance because the petty bourgeoisie, especially the intellectuals, tend to be very self-centered and egoistic and as a consequence inflate their stature and importance. This results in their refusal to accept that somebody knows better than them. As such they reduce everybody to a level of an equality in which they in reality, do not believe in. A revolutionary is completely different; he has no ego and is not at all self-centered. He acknowledges that some or many people have better theoretical knowledge of laws that govern historical development, have as a consequence better foresight and ability to grasp the whole. From these people the revolutionary is ready to learn and to better himself to serve the masses effectively.

The wrong view on leadership manifests the petty bourgeoisie hatred for iron discipline. And because it cannot submit itself to iron-discipline (due to the petty bourgeoisie's characteristic individualism, vacillation, arrogance, hatred for hard work, detachment from the masses, lack of persistence or determination) the petty bourgeoisie develops an anti-leader (in reality anti-discipline) attitude and usually ends up by preaching anarchy.

Leaders in a revolutionary organization are completely different from leaders in the feudal or bourgeois sense. This is primary. Leaders of a revolutionary organization are not chosen because they are rich, influential or have power or arms. Neither are they gods or demi-gods. They become leaders essentially because:

- (a) they are the most capable, i.e. decisive, dynamic, *theoretically advanced*
- (b) they are the most faithful to the mass line, i.e. integrated with the masses, know their potential, real needs and desires and can inspire confidence among them and lead them correctly
- (c) they are devoted and highly disciplined

In a revolutionary organization exercise of power is a heavy burden and

inexhaustible source of sacrifices. To take a responsible post means primarily to accept others, to be wholeheartedly at the service of others. This requires knowledge of the needs and difficulties of the masses—a knowledge that can be obtained only by integrating oneself with the masses. The leader, faithful to the mass line, practices "from the masses to the masses" which means taking the scattered and unsystematic ideas of the masses, and systematizing, concentrating and spreading these ideas among the masses.

In a revolutionary organization members obey the leaders solely because they trust their judgment and have no doubt of the leader's capability and dedication to the cause of liberation. And the leaders are not alone; there will always be cadres assuming greater and greater responsibilities and incessantly developing themselves. For a revolutionary movement is not a mortal creature that dies when the head is cut; it is a living organism that grows and multiplies and continually reshapes and develops itself.

As such there is no mystification to revolutionary leadership. A leader is neither sacred, nor infallible and incontestable. If he falters or betrays, the revolutionary movement does not stop—it would cast him away and march forward; the empty place is filled and the movement continues its growth. On the other hand, those leaders who die in the struggle become the peoples' heroes and those in prison the masses' symbols of resistance. That is all. The leaders of a revolutionary organization arise from the peoples, get their powers from the peoples, and wholeheartedly serve the peoples.

We have said that much is required from those who assume the posts of leadership in a revolutionary organization. We have also emphasized the need on the individual revolutionary's part to improve himself/herself ideologically, to accept discipline and strictly observe the organization's rules and regulations. But what are the qualities of a revolutionary? What are the qualities that each revolutionary should strive to acquire? We will deal with this now and try to describe what a revolutionary is.

I. *Primarily a revolutionary is the servant of the masses.* He has indentified himself with the peoples,¹⁹ their joy is his just as their suffering is his suffering and pain. He loves the peoples and listens attentively to their voices, immerses himself among them and learns from them. At the same time he is their untiring teacher, their friend, their son, their comrade. A revolutionary believes that the peoples and the peoples alone are the real heroes, the motive force in the making of world history. A revolutionary is the servant of the people means that he will dedicate every ounce of his strength, every minute of his time and most important of all his life to the liberation of the masses. As the interests of the masses are his and as the masses are invincible, he is neither afraid to die nor does he have the slightest fear of or respect for the enemies of the masses.

The revolutionary—the servant of the people—follows the following rules (and other similar ones) firmly.

- (a) Respect, love and serve the peoples
- (b) Wherever you are serve the peoples of those regions with all your forces
- (c) Refuse to do all things which may harm the peoples
- (d) Do not say any humiliating words to the peoples
- (e) Do not coerce (use force on), terrorize or insult the peoples
- (f) Do not hurt the peoples' sensibilities with awkward attitudes or negative comments on their habits, customs values or beliefs
- (g) Act, speak, sleep, walk, eat, dress, hold yourself at all times like the peoples
- (h) Do not damage their property and take liberty with the womenfolk
- (i) Do not cease to *learn* from the peoples, to *teach* them in return, to help them in all their work, to *organize* them and to support their organizations..

A revolutionary's best measurement of his work is to ask himself "am I serving the peoples best." One who does not serve the people to the full every second, every minute, hour, day, night, month and more until he dies is not a revolutionary.

II. *A revolutionary is one who has organizational spirit.* Organizational spirit means readiness to sacrifice personal interests, to sacrifice one's life for the organization. The revolutionary's motto is "the organization first, the individual last." As such a revolutionary is ready to undergo all deprivations and suffer all hardships for the sake of the organization (which represents the

19. By "peoples" and "masses" we mean essentially the labouring masses comprising of workers and poor peasants.

masses' interests). This spirit which is inseverably linked with dedication and discipline is very important. A revolutionary who has an organization spirit is at all times aware of the general, bigger interest of the organization and will serve these interests and not *his* individual ones. Concretely this means that if the organization instructs a member to leave his job, school, wife, fiancée, mother, etc. and perform a certain dangerous task or go to another region, or join the guerrillas etc., the member will do so without hesitation. This does not mean that a revolutionary is not human, does not have sentiments. Far from that. Those who think that a revolutionary is anti-human, or a wild killing machine without any feeling or sentiments are grossly mistaken or influenced by anti-revolutionary American propaganda which portrays revolutionaries as heartless beasts. On the contrary, the revolutionary is the greatest humanist, the most emotional lover of humanity. To him every life is sacred. But a revolutionary is not a humanist or a pacifist in the abstract sense. His humanism is based on a class basis. He loves the peoples with all his heart—that is why he dedicates his life for their total liberation—and hates the masses' enemies with all his heart. A revolutionary's feelings towards the enemies of the peoples is unflinching hatred. For him every life is sacred except that of the enemies of the people; he has no respect for the lives of these murderers and butchers. In short, a revolutionary kills the enemies of the peoples—and he should do this efficiently—not because he is a heartless beast but because he loves the masses with all his heart and wants to put an end to their suffering.

Consequently, a revolutionary leaves his wife to go on a dangerous mission or join the guerrillas in a far away region not because he is a wild-blooded beast who has no sentiment for his wife but because his LOVE for the majority of the oppressed peoples (whose interests the organization serves) is stronger. This is what is meant by sacrifice of personal interest for the general, bigger interests of the organization.

It should be realized that a revolutionary organization is not a cold, impersonal, bureaucratic organization made up of men without feelings. A revolutionary organization comprises of comrades—men who are united by a common political aim. The organization does its work efficiently and is also highly concerned about the lives and difficulties of the members. Organizational spirit requires that comrades within it help one another, care for and love one another. Each revolutionary is the first to worry, the first to suffer hardships and the last to enjoy himself. This is the correct spirit. Each revolutionary is ready to suffer humiliation, misunderstanding, torture and death for his comrades and the masses. Each revolutionary is at all times doing things that will enhance and develop the organization and render it more effective. All this makes up what is known as organizational spirit and any revolutionary who lacks this can hardly be called a revolutionary member of an organization.

III. *A revolutionary is one who is staunchly opposed to liberalism and places practice, hard work, discipline and principled unity at the forefront.* What is liberalism? Liberalism manifests itself in many ways. One is to let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly done wrong and refrain from principled argument because he is an old acquaintance, a schoolmate, a fellow townsman, a loved one, etc. Or to touch on the matter lightly so as to keep in good terms. Another type of liberalism is to indulge in irresponsible criticism, to gossip behind people's backs, to say nothing at a meeting but to gossip afterwards and to disregard the collective life while following one's own individual inclinations.

Other types of liberalism are to give pride of place to one's own opinions and reject the organization's discipline, to indulge in personal attacks and petty squabbles, to hear incorrect views or counterrevolutionary remarks without rebutting or reporting them, to fail to conduct propaganda among the masses, to feel or do nothing when someone acts contrary to the masses, to work amateurishly and half-heartedly, to think of oneself as the "most intelligent or most dedicated" and feel conceited and become lazy, to know one's own mistakes and to fail to correct them, etc.

Liberalism is extremely harmful to a revolutionary organization. It creates dissension, causes apathy (indifference) and erodes cohesion and unity. A revolutionary is and should be staunchly opposed to liberalism. A revolutionary stands for hard work, ideological struggle, constructive criticism (intended to help the comrade get rid of his weakness or avoid a mistake), iron-discipline, modesty, principled unity and an incessant (uninterrupted,

unending) effort to teach the masses to learn from them and to put theory into practice.

IV. *A revolutionary is an internationalist.* This means that an Ethiopian revolutionary should feel as much for the peoples of Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Palestine, Vietnam, China, Bolivia, South Africa, Ghana, Cameroons, etc. as he does for the Ethiopian peoples. The joys of these peoples are his and their misery his sorrow. To say he is an internationalist means that he will be as ready (and proud and honored) to fight and die for the oppressed peoples anywhere in the world as he is for the Ethiopian masses. Does this mean, however, that all Ethiopian revolutionaries should fight elsewhere than Ethiopia? NO. For the task of Ethiopian revolutionaries is to fight U.S. imperialism—which is the enemy of all peoples of the world—and they can do this better or efficiently in their own countries which they know better. This means that the revolutionary struggles of the peoples in all countries have the relationship of supporting and complementing each other and join together in one stream of world revolution.

By fighting imperialism in Ethiopia we will be helping our oppressed brothers all over the world by weakening the force of imperialism. This is to say that in wars of national liberation, patriotism (fight against the American or other imperialists) is applied internationally. Internationalism is wholly opposed to narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism. Therefore the Ethiopian revolutionary who stands against the oppression of all nationalities in Ethiopia by the Amhara nationality, who stands for the unity of the peasants and workers of all nationalities (including Amhara) in Ethiopia, who stands against chauvinism as well as narrow nationalism can hardly be anything else but an internationalist who stands for the unity of the oppressed peoples of the world. The revolutionary (and the working class) has no country and recognizes no frontiers. He is on the side of all oppressed peoples wherever they may be fighting against imperialists and their lackeys.

V. *A revolutionary is one who has the finest and highest human virtues.* A revolutionary has moral integrity. Selfishness, limelight seeking, slackening, corruption, cheating, lying, conceit, individualism, opportunism and double-dealing are (and should be) all alien to him. A revolutionary avoids unscrupulousness in dealing with comrades. Neither does he believe in the reactionary concepts that "man is a selfish animal," so everyone (should worry only) for himself. A revolutionary's morality is based on love for his comrades and love for the working people. He compares himself with others on the basis of the work he has done, shuns (avoids) arrogance and praiseseeking, detests servility and toadying. He acts and behaves towards the masses as his and their equal. However, a revolutionary's morality—like all his stands—is of a class nature, i.e. based on a class analysis. Thus it does not mean that a revolutionary will not misinform, trick and expropriate the enemies of the peoples. In such cases he is acting (lying, "cheating," expropriating, indulging in flattery of the enemy in certain cases) in the interest of the organization and the labouring masses.

To sum up then, the best qualities of a revolutionary are:

(a) *discipline*—iron-strong, very firm discipline

(b) *hard work*—the revolutionary recognizes that work is struggle and that if the enemy is to be destroyed one must struggle (work) hard. It means perseverance in studying, in working among the masses, in organizing them, in doing political work. Those who do not work obtain nothing—except those who live off peoples' labor. The revolutionary goes and works where the difficulties and problems are greater. This quality is essential in a revolutionary. To be hard working one must combat laziness, rashness in doing things, desire to postpone work, tendency to take things lightly, unsystematic approach to work, etc. The labouring masses do not have to learn to work hard as they toil from dawn to dusk everyday. It is essentially students, intellectuals, lumpen proletariat and others in the city doing light work who have to learn to discipline themselves to engage in persistent, hard work.

(c) *Theoretical soundness*—this is the most essential quality of a revolutionary. A revolutionary never ceases learning, studying and improving himself. His quality is that he never tires of learning. Therefore, a revolutionary must read Marxist-Leninist books, study diligently, observe society, integrate with the masses and learn what he does not know. Theory is a guide to action; without theory practice will be blind and fruitless. A revolutionary's attitude towards learning is different—he does not study by

heart or learn dogmatically. He studies the experience of the peoples, i.e. their revolution, not to implement it wholly in his particular society but to learn what can be useful and relevant in his own country. He knows the inequality and difference in each country and understands that theory must go with practice or else remains utterly useless. Reading is learning but applying (practice) is an even more important learning. Moreover, the revolutionary is neither complacent (lazy) nor conceited; as such he strives always to study, learn, practice more and avoids feeling arrogant, sassy, cocky, or "superior" just because he has learnt some book phrases. Above all, a revolutionary gets knowledge from class struggle, through practical work and very close contact with the masses of workers and peasants. Thus, one of the best and important qualities of a revolutionary is his unquenchable thirst for knowledge (both from books—essentially Marxist-Leninist—and practice), revolutionary theory. Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary organization.

(d) *Perseverance* is one of the qualities of a revolutionary. A revolutionary who does not have perseverance will not achieve much. The struggle against the U.S. imperialists and the feudo-bourgeoisie will necessarily be long which means that a revolutionary who is not able to persevere will lose hope, get frustrated, disillusioned, pessimistic and will consequently abandon the struggle. From the outset *all* should know that there is no easy victory, that the revolution entails hardships in all forms, that there will be setbacks and failures as well as successes and that if the masses are to understand what is to be done, long and persistent political work is required.

The revolutionary's stand is "fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again, . . . till victory." Perseverance does not mean *only* to persevere in a virgin forest as part of a guerrilla unit but also means to persevere, all over the country, in day to day political and organizational work among the masses. The enemies of the Ethiopian peoples are stubborn and ruthless and can only be defeated if we succeed to persevere and mobilize the entire oppressed peoples of Ethiopia. It is only if we succeed in arousing the oppressed masses of Ethiopia that way can overcome the many obstacles and difficulties, twists and turns and arrive at total liberation.

(e) *Patience* is one other quality that must be present in a revolutionary. The revolutionary is patient in his work among the masses. He understands that it will take some time for the masses to grasp the whys and hows of their misery. A revolutionary has full trust in the masses' boundless creative power, their potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism and since at the same time he also recognizes their shortcomings (not conscious, divided, under the influence of reactionary ideologies, illiterate) the revolutionary does patient political work among them to politicize and arouse them. A revolutionary who is not patient and does not follow the mass line will very likely be rash and abusive towards the masses and end up with the wrong and reactionary conclusion "the masses (are ignorant and) will never understand." It should be noted that a revolutionary is patient does NOT mean that he should patiently fold his arms and let the people suffer. NO, the revolutionary can never be 'patient' and inactive in the face of injustice. But the revolutionary is a realist who has grasped that all the work done for the masses must start from their needs and not from the desires of any individual however well-intentioned he may be. For, it often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases the revolutionary who believes (and correctly so) that the masses must make up their own minds and make the revolution waits 'patiently' *doing his political work amongst them*. serves the people and the people are powerful while the U.S. imperialists, feudalists and big bourgeoisie are cowardly and paper tigers though they may look ferocious. Their ferocity like all reactionaries—is only when it comes to killing old men and women as well as children. As such the revolutionary has no fears of these despicable dogs. A revolutionary fears no sacrifice and is prepared for death as his strength is drawn from the masses and their glorious history of resistance against feudal lords, foreign invaders and the like. "Dare to struggle, dare to win;" "Courage in battle, fear no sacrifice;" "Be hard, firm, resolute" are the mottoes of the revolutionary.

The revolutionary is not only courageous in facing the enemies of the peoples but also in facing himself. This means that the revolutionary has the courage to criticize himself. He does not cover his mistakes or hide his weaknesses; instead he increasingly brings up his mistakes and weaknesses,

criticizes himself mercilessly and tries to improve himself. A revolutionary never ceases to criticize himself as well as others for mistakes and weaknesses in an effort to improve all members of the revolutionary organization.

In short, the revolutionary should be courageous in facing the enemies of the people, in facing a hard and difficult job. He should also be courageous enough to carry the "fight against himself" i.e. to change himself into a radiant, worthy fighter in the service of the peoples. How can he criticize others for their mistakes if he himself lacks the courage to criticize himself on himself and demands more from himself than he does from others.

(g) *Ingenuity* is an essential quality of the revolutionary. A revolutionary has to be ingenious, otherwise he will be bogged down and unable to extricate himself from situations for which he has not been previously prepared. The ability to make maximum use of a given situation, material or scope of action is a necessary one. We shall cite some examples of ingenious actions by revolutionaries.

(1) During the 1969 parliament "election" campaign in Addis Abeba, a donkey with a placard on its neck reading "Elect me. I am as good as all the others" was seen on the streets of Addis Abeba. This ingenious method was a very effective method of propaganda.

(2) In South Vietnam the N.L.F. sent a lot of monkeys with anti-dictatorship writing on their backs into villages and cities. The monkeys could not be easily trapped or caught by the reactionary police and as such the people were able to read what was written and at the same time to enjoy the police's anger and frustration.

(3) Urban guerrillas in Uruguay raided a bank but were unable to have the vault (where the money was kept) opened. Still they managed to take certain secret documents of the bank which showed that the bank was engaged in illegal activities. They sent the documents to a newspaper which published them and this forced the government to send Internal Revenue agents to investigate the bank's activities. This time the urban guerrillas came dressed as Internal Revenue agents and were able to have the vault opened and take all the money.

(4) Russian revolutionaries used to evade the Czar's censors by sending Lenin's books disguised as harmless books. A censor would receive a postal parcel, open it up and see a book by Henry Ford, "How to be a millionaire," which after its fifth or sixth page is Lenin's book "What is to be Done?" The censor hardly looks more than at the cover and the first few pages. This is one of the ways to beat the security's tight control over the coming of revolutionary books into the country.

(5) The Vietnamese people have used ingenious traps (used for animals) to trap the American aggressors and daily newspapers of the world are filled with examples of ingenious actions by the Vietnamese masses who rely on their creative ability to defeat the technologically advanced Yankee (American) aggressors.

(6) *Optimism* is more than a quality in a revolutionary. A revolutionary can hardly be anything else but an optimist. He is so because he has maximum faith in the masses and the justness as well as invincibility of their cause. As such a revolutionary is not the one to despair, to lose hope, get frustrated and abandon the struggle. He is aware that the road to liberation has its twists and turns and is consequently prepared for all setbacks. The revolutionary believes that the masses are invincible and however fierce the enemy may be it will inevitably be defeated. The revolutionary does not work by enthusiasm alone but also combines revolutionary sweep with practicalness i.e. he carries constant propaganda among the masses on the fact that the forces of reaction will inevitably be defeated, that socialism is winning while imperialism is on its death bed, and that despite obstacles and difficulties in the way the future is bright and beautiful. All this so that the people will build their confidence, in victory grasp the victorious nature of socialism and know what is to be done to achieve it. And history attests that the forces of progress and socialism are gaining strength while that of reactionaries and imperialists are getting weaker and weaker. That is why the revolutionary's optimism is not day dreaming or wishful thinking but based on objective reality and scientific laws. Also one can be a hardline pessimist, but the irony is that one does not get a pleasure out of his pitiful situation. As such all reactionaries and accomplices can become ardent pessimists. No revolutionary is a pessimist by *definition*.

(i) *Honesty, modesty and self-respect*: A revolutionary is honest otherwise there would have been no ground for him to feel angry and bitter at other's dishonesty. A revolutionary is modest; he is neither conceited and arrogant nor does he use his position over others or expect special treatment because he is talented or has done a commendable job (and though good work should be appreciated and praised, it must be understood by all revolutionaries that to do one's job well is a duty). Modesty as is commonly known in Ethiopia is hypocritical and a hinderance to efficiency as a man who knows how to do a certain task well is not expected to say he knows or can perform it. On the other hand, a revolutionary dares to say "I know" and dares to acknowledge that "somebody else knows." A revolutionary's modesty is not in avoiding saying what he knows but in avoiding arrogance and conceit because of his talent or knowledge.

A revolutionary has self-respect and self-esteem. He carries himself with dignity and acts accordingly. He never cringes low before the enemy to get small personal benefits. As a servant of the people he is proud and neither begs the enemy nor whimpers in front of him. A man who has no self-respect will have none for others and such a person cannot at all be a revolutionary. The self-respect of the revolutionary comes from the peoples which make him contemptuous of the imperialists and feudalists. A revolutionary has self-respect and is proud in front on the enemy because he represents the most respectable human beings on earth—the labouring masses. These, in general, are the qualities of a revolutionary.²⁰ To acquire and enhance them one must integrate with and learn from the masses, struggle incessantly against the peoples enemies, work diligently, study Marxism-Leninism and make the revolution. And the effective tool that a revolutionary uses in the struggle to change himself and others is criticism and self-criticism.

The revolutionary tool of criticism and self-criticism is based on this statement: "If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it." Every one is liable to make a mistake, at one time or another, but what distinguishes a revolutionary is his ability to criticize himself and to learn from the past mistake to avoid future ones. The revolutionary does not have an inflated ego, nor does he consider himself beyond any criticism. On the contrary, he is always eager to improve himself, to practice conscientious criticism and self-criticism so as to rectify a bad style of work and keep the good.

He who is not afraid of death cannot be afraid of criticism. And the revolutionary fights the conciliatory stand many people take by distributing the responsibility of a fault amongst all while it is an individual who is responsible.²¹ The revolutionary has an organizational spirit and is eager to see his comrades improve in all aspects (which will guarantee the effectiveness of the organization) and thus he never hesitates to criticize them and point out their mistakes. In doing this his sole interest is to "cure the patient" which means to help the comrade avoid mistakes or get rid of bad attitudes or a bad style of work. A revolutionary is not a liberal and he rejects unprincipled peace. He stands for *active* ideological struggle and strives for a *unity based on principles*.

The main task of criticism is to point out political and organizational mistakes. Hence there is no need to be overcritical on personal shortcomings unless they are related to political and organizational mistakes. Criticisms should stress on the political side and the statements made, while criticizing a comrade, must be based on facts. Points should be raised from the point of view of principle and not likes or dislikes, feelings, intuitions, etc.

The problems that confront revolutionaries in utilizing criticism and self-criticism are caused by the low theoretical level of comrades, by the presence of petty bourgeois spirit of vengeance (if he has criticized me I must also do so, at all costs, correctly or not), by the absence of democracy (i.e. objective mutual discussion of problems), and by the tendency of some

20. Other secondary, yet *important*, qualities are cleanliness, physical fitness, punctuality, etc.

21. This attitude prevails in Ethiopia. Our elders who are charged with making peace between a husband and a wife will often maintain the position "you are both at fault" when they know that it is only the wife or the husband who is at fault. Clear-cut opposition, putting the blame where it should be put, calling a spade a spade, telling a person at fault he is at fault, all this is avoided. Hypocrisy and fake "peace" reign.

comrades to present themselves as super-revolutionaries by assuming extremist positions and overcriticizing everybody.

The following eight "rules" should be followed to ensure correct application (usage) of criticism and self-criticism.

1. Say all that you know and say it without reserve.
2. Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words or correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not.
3. Do not provoke conflicts and disputes (by using criticism) in order to ruin the unity of the organization, to show off, to improve one's criticism as a means of personal attack.
4. Criticize in good time and not always after the event.
5. Do not engage in criticism and self-criticism without observing rules or correct organizational procedures. This is unprincipled and can only be an attack against comrades provoking dissention, plotting, betraying, etc.
6. Avoid excessive criticism (i.e. criticizing day after day without giving the comrade some time to improve) as our aim in criticizing is to "cure the patient" and not "to doctor him to death."
7. Fight against those who are shocked when disagreements arise and who do all in their power to maintain peace and unity based on *no* principles. In such cases the tool of criticism and active ideological struggle should be maintained to guarantee principled peace. Remembering that before we can be united and in order that we may unite we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the line of demarcation between the various groups. Unity of principle, unity based on a common political aim, a common ideology can *best* be guaranteed through firm and continuous ideological struggle and criticism of incorrect lines and ideas.
8. Have criticism and self-criticism sessions at all levels of the organization as often as possible so as to prevent all kinds of political dusts and germs from contaminating the minds of the revolutionaries and the body of the organization.

It is not enough for an organization to have theoretically clear, dedicated revolutionary members who constantly use criticism and self-criticism and attempt to develop themselves so as to best serve the people. The revolutionaries of a clandestine organization in a repressive country must also be perfect in the professional art of combatting the political police (security apparatus).²² Without such professionalism the organization—whatever the justness of its cause—cannot survive long as the police will find it easy to infiltrate and subsequently destroy the organization. The day to day painstaking revolutionary actuality (politicize, mobilize and organize the masses) requires skill in combatting the police, requires *strict* adherence to the rules of secrecy and calls for careful preparation, the mobilization of strength and nerves, self-sacrifice and conspiratorial skills.

How do the political police succeed in destroying an organization? It is mainly because they have been able to get adequate information (membership, activities, documents, etc.) on the clandestine organization. How do they get this information? Generally they gather information in two ways:

- (a) through the weakness of the revolutionaries themselves, i.e. their amateurishness and inability to adhere strictly to the rules of secrecy
- (b) by infiltrating police agents or informers into the organization

We shall now discuss some of the precautions that a revolutionary must take in order to get rid of his amateurishness and to increase his professionalism thereby frustrating the attempts of the political police to get information (from him) on the organization.

1. *Shadowing* is the method utilized by the police in trying to identify potential or actual members of a clandestine organization. This means that the police will be following day and night (secretly of course) a suspected organization member and will get to know whom he contacts, which house he frequents, etc. This may enable them to locate a secret rendezvous place and to make a raid thereby arresting all gathered inside.

So how does a revolutionary combat this? Primarily consider yourself as *always* being shadowed or followed by the police and never cease to take steps accordingly. Your follower can be anybody (who is not easily distinguishable)—worker, chauffeur, priest, shoeshine boy, newspaper vendor

22. In Ethiopia the political police are the agents of the Security Department and the Imperial Cabinet. The Police Special Branch and Army Military Intelligence also lend a hand to gather information on the activities of "suspected political agitators."

porter, student, etc. However, you should guard yourself from the mania (tendency) to taking every passerby as a *surveilleur* (shadower). Thus you should make detours, change mode of transport, utilize backdoors, etc. making it impossible for anybody to follow you to your appointment (rendezvous) place.

2. *Correspondence and Notes*: carelessness in this respect results in damaging blows to the organization as it enables the police to get documented evidence. The principle for a revolutionary to follow is **DO NOT WRITE OR WRITE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE**. Everybody knows that words pass but what is written stays. You are responsible not only for yourself but also for others, for the organization; so do not collect letters and addresses neither at home nor in your pockets. Down with the petty bourgeois individualist behavior of collecting documents, an act which has nothing to do with courage.

Hence making annotations in the margins of newspapers, lost documents, calling cards, letters or notes and keeping these is forbidden. A revolutionary should never keep archives of legal or illegal names, biographical information, maps and plans. Revolutionaries work by memory.

Therefore
-when you have finished reading a letter commit the important points to your memory and burn the letter. Scatter the ashes after burning the letter as there are devices that make it possible to read from non-scattered ashes
-do not take notes on delicate subjects. It is better to forget certain things than to write them down.

-devise techniques of remembering names, addresses, telephone numbers. Develop your memory.

-if you have to write, take unintelligible notes i.e. notes that *only you* can understand. In this respect create your own code, give people nicknames *only you* will know, give streets and bars names *only you* will know. The principle is never to write names or people, addresses, or rendezvous (contact) points.

-in creating codes, remember that the enemy can break any code by using computers. So the best guarantee is to change the codes as often as possible and *never* to use a code that follows a certain pattern or system.²³ The more systematic the code the easier it is to decipher (break) it.

-if you have to write avoid writing in invisible ink as it is easy for the enemy to detect and will only increase suspicion and aggravate things for you. Instead write unintelligibly in a way only you can understand and if you are writing to another person write in such a way only the receiver can understand. The principle is to make what is written as normal as possible. e.g. A letter from Kebede to Asefa may have a sentence in it which runs like this. "I have planned to take my mother to Zuquala on Wednesday. I will leave at 4 o'clock." Now this is a normal innocent sentence but to Asefa it means "Wednesday at 4 o'clock. Pamphlet to be distributed." (as Asefa had been waiting for instructions as to the date and time of distribution of the pamphlets or tracts he has been given.)

-try to disguise your handwriting. Learn to write with both the left and the right hand.

-do not receive important letters or documents through your own post office box or at your address. Use a third person.

3. *Telephone*: it is easy to tap or bug telephones using electronic instruments which are not easily detectable. Therefore, a telephone conversation by two revolutionaries can easily be heard and tapped by the police. Telephone operators also serve as government agents and report conversations.²⁴ Thus a revolutionary should take extreme caution in using the telephone and follow the three following rules strictly.

- a) Use the public telephone. It is not easy to trace the caller and they (the police) cannot bug all the public telephones.
- b) speak for a very short period—which makes tracing the caller even much

23. A common example of such codes is to substitute numbers of the alphabet, i.e. A is 2 then B is 4, C is 6, D is 8; or A is 2, Z is 4, B is 6, Y is 8 and so on following a pattern which the computers can decipher easily.

24. In this respect note the Institute opened up by the Israelis (near the Haile Selassie Theatre, Addis Ababa) to train telephone operators, hotel messengers, office boys, etc. These people (telephone operators, office boys, etc.) will occupy a strategic position in many hotels and offices and can help report on telephone conversations, steal documents, search drawers and files, all this for their Israeli or Ethiopian police masters.

more difficult.

c) Speak normally and say things which you can repeat to the police. This means that you should speak in such a way that only the receiver will understand the *real* meaning of what you are saying while if a third person listens in he will not think you are saying anything suspicious or out of the ordinary.

4. Another aspect where carelessness on the revolutionary's part results in serious danger to the organization concerns *meetings*. Few meetings should be held and if held must not last longer than 5-10 minutes. If the issue to be discussed takes more time, another meeting should be held the next day. The aim is to make a surveilleur (shadower) believe that your meeting was only casual and long enough only for the exchange of salutations and a few jokes.

If a comrade fails to appear at the contact point (appointment place) on time do not wait for him and do not go on looking for him at his home or office. The police may have arrested him and may be waiting to arrest anyone who comes looking for him.

And the revolutionary should remember that it is better to talk things while walking as there can be many eavesdroppers in bars or hidden microphones and taperecorders in rooms. If you have to meet in a bar sit at a place where you can see most without being seen. Avoid sitting with your back to the door and sit at a place where you can easily escape in case of an emergency.

5. The most serious slip up that a revolutionary can make is to talk on organizational matters to persons that are not directly concerned with what he is talking. Or to talk to persons outside the organization about the organization and its secrets. A revolutionary within an organization *knows only* what is relevant to his work. A "nosey" revolutionary is not at all a revolutionary, for the more he gets to know about things that are not relevant to his work, the more he will tell the police in case he is arrested and tortured. Which will result in the loss of the lives of many revolutionaries and the subsequent weakening of the organization.

For a revolutionary the rule to observe is "to know more than you should is dangerous and that the less we know of things that are not directly relevant to our work, the less we can talk even under torture and this is good for the organization." Therefore it is not permissible for everyone to know everybody else and everything else. Each revolutionary knows only what relates to his work; in many cases and whenever applicable he should not even know the true names of the other members of his own cell (group). If his task is to distribute leaflets he should not ask (or try to know) who wrote the article, who mimeographed it, where the duplicating machine is, just as the one who duplicates the papers (leaflets) should not ask or try to know who wrote the article, who typed it out on the stencils, who is going to distribute it, etc. This is the whole essence of compartmentalization and the golden principle of "each knows only what related directly to his task and NO MORE."

The revolutionary unity of an organization is seen in terms of the strategic, tactical and organizational principles that we adopt and *NOT* on the basis of names and persons. It is this identity of ideological, theoretical and practical concepts that allows revolutionaries in different parts of the country who are not in contact with each other (who do not know each other) to act in such a way as to be identified as members of the same organization. It is principles and identity of goals that unite revolutionaries and not the fact that one comes from the same village, region, and/or nationality as the other.

Thus the petty bourgeois individualist tendency to know everyone and everything is *fatal* to a clandestine organization. Such a tendency should be criticized and condemned vigorously as it is a manifestation of indiscipline and lack of faith in the organization. We follow an organization not because Kebede or Abebetch are its members but it is because it has a just programme and fights for the peoples' liberation. In this respect the best quality of a revolutionary is *to know to ignore voluntarily things one should not know*. And the things we should not know are all the things that are not directly related to our specific work.

And since the police infiltrate spies, provocateurs and agents (informers) into the organization, a revolutionary should exercise extreme caution. Silence is golden. As such to talk (even in the organization) on organizational matters, except to those comrades *directly* concerned is prohibited.

One other serious (grave) fault is to tell organizational matters and secrets to "reliable" friends who are not members of the organization or to tell

comrades in the organization things which do not directly concern them or are related to their work. This fault must be eradicated early and should be weeded out completely, thoroughly and mercilessly. The rule that must be strictly observed by all members of the revolutionary organization is: "DO NOT CONFIDE TO A VERY INTIMATE FRIEND OR A SURE COMRADE A SECRET OF THE ORGANIZATION WHICH IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THEM TO KNOW. This is a crime against them as they are responsible for what they know and *fatal* to the organization as its secrets are not kept but are told even to non-members." Anyone who does not accept and strictly observe this rule *cannot* be a member of a revolutionary organization. Such a person is not a revolutionary but an amateur and a loud mouth fun-rider who has not understood neither the dead-seriousness of the revolution nor the essence of discipline and organizational secrecy.

On the other hand, there are people who are disturbed, shocked or annoyed if a comrade does not tell them "things" about the organization but rather keeps silent. This is a wrong attitude for one should not be shocked or annoyed by the silence of a comrade as it is not an indication of his lack of confidence in you but more of a fraternal consideration and an awareness or consciousness of revolutionary duty. How fraternal consideration? Because the more you know the more dangerous it is for you, say if you are arrested and interrogated. How is it an awareness of revolutionary duty? Because as the member of an organization, it is his primary duty to keep organizational secrets. You may be his friend or his comrade but the organization is primary as it represents the millions of the labouring masses and also comprises of numerous other comrades. As such a revolutionary's duty is to keep the secrets of such an organization, to observe its rules and regulations as well as the requirements of discipline. In fact it is the *DUTY* of a member to seriously criticize not directly relevant to his (the listener's) work. To sum up then

- know only things that relate to your work
 - refuse to know things that do not concern your work
 - do not talk on organizational matters
- remember that to keep organizational secrets is your primary revolutionary duty

6. *Arrest*: it is through illegal arrest of suspects that the police try to gather information about the clandestine organization, i.e. the interrogation. A revolutionary who has taken the necessary secrecy and caution measures (vis a vis shadowing, correspondence and notes, telephones, meetings, conversations, etc.) will have nothing to fear. Still arrest puts the revolutionary at a disadvantageous position—since he is at their mercy—care must be taken to frustrate their "clever" interrogation techniques.

The best thing is to be prepared for everything from simple interrogation to brutal torture. (The enemy is capable of all things evil—and the brutality of the American and Israeli advisors to the security department is well-known). Therefore:

- keep absolute calm. Be neither provoked nor intimidated
- say nothing. Admit only the obvious such as your name, your address
- do not forget that your interrogation is linked with that of other comrades so that the little you say to the police may give them (the police) documentation
- so do not explain yourself. Do not get involved in emotional arguments
- do not believe them (the agents) if they pretend to be sympathetic; so make no effort to convince them of the justness of your cause
- when you deny, deny firmly. Your attitude should be "polite but firm"
- DO NOT CONFESS
- whatever they tell you do not be surprised. As far as possible keep calm so that they may read nothing from your face
- never give the impression of lying. Never give the impression of "cooperation." The technique to follow is to use lie and "cooperation" tactfully
- never respond to their provocation or intimidation which usually runs as follows:

"WE know everything, you better talk." "It will cost you dearly. We will torture you, castrate you, jail you, kill you, etc." "Your friend has confessed, so you better talk." "Are you a coward? Are you ashamed of what you do? We admire your courage, your heroism. Now tell us the truth."

"We will bring your mother, your sister, your father, etc. and torture

them, accuse them, send them to prison, etc. So you better talk." Their idea is to terrorize, to confuse, to fraternize all in an effort to make you talk. The truth is that they know very little; otherwise why spend so much interrogating you? However, this does not mean that they do not have any information in their possession. They may, and it is this little bit of information that they have which they will use to convince you that "your friend has talked" and that you better do so in turn.

—do not sign anything without reading it

—do not fall victim of their "war of nerves" or "psychological torture"

Example: They will put you in a cell and let you hear the cries of a man being tortured. Or they will put an agent in the cell with you who will tell you vividly all the horrible tortures that he has "undergone." Or they will interrogate you in the torture chamber where you can see the various tools and instruments of torture. Or they will release suddenly an arrested comrade of yours and inform you (directly or indirectly) that he has "talked" and is now free, etc.

All this is to create fear in you. Terrorize you. To make you feel cornered and isolated. To weaken your morale and to push you to confess. Remember that you are a revolutionary, a servant of the people and that the labouring masses are your strength (moral and physical) and that you are superior to all these police dogs—despicable, inhuman, cowardly traitors—and they can never frighten or trick you.

ZZZ

—avoid making efforts to establish "the truth." There is no truth devoid of its class basis. There is no justice. So long as the feudalists and big bourgeoisie are in power their injustice and falsehood will be taken as justice and truth in their courtrooms. Proletarian justice comes only when the working class assumes power at the head of the masses. So your attempt towards establishing "truth" in the police stations or security headquarters and in courtrooms is futile, fruitless. Have no illusions about legality or justice under the present reactionary system.

—and do not ask the police when you will be released as they will take it as a sign of weakness

Thus if a revolutionary maintains organizational secrecy, observes discipline and increases his professionalism in combatting the political police, the amount of information that the police can gather due to the revolutionary's (own) mistake will be reduced to nil. Along with this a struggle must be waged to protect the organization from infiltrators of the police and to weed them out if they have managed to get into the organization.

A very good measure to combat police infiltration is *never* to accept into the organization any person **WITHOUT FIRST** knowing all about his past and his revolutionary origins. **WE MUST BE CAUTIOUS AND STRICT IN RECRUITMENT.** Better to be few than to be twenty and ten of them police agents or informers. Therefore all potential and new members must be studied and observed.

The importance of keeping organizational secrets and not talking, even in the organization, on organizational matters except to those comrades directly concerned should be emphasized again. For if informers and spies have infiltrated the organization, what they will hear or know will be very limited. Thus the less we know, the less we can say (tell), the less the police infiltrators will hear, the less they can report to their reactionary police masters and this is good for the organization.

However, a revolutionary organization does not form a counter police apparatus to combat police infiltration. The main weapon the organization uses—aside from the strictest selection of members—is intensified political education so that members will become politically conscious and:

a) will not be cheated by the pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric (fiery talk) of provocateurs who are paid police agents who attempt to sabotage and divide the organization or push it to take up premature action.

b) will observe strict discipline and maintain secrecy, and

c) will know their tasks and be vigilant against all attempts by the enemy to destroy the organization

An organization of professional revolutionaries, of revolutionaries that are conscious and politically mature is a protective device against the police just as it is a guarantee against theoretical weakness, lack of principle,

opportunism and revising of revolutionary philosophy. Therefore, the fight against police infiltration is the elevation of the political knowledge of the organization's militants rather than "police-mania" or a tendency to see a police agent lurking in all and every individual and to end up in an unwarranted isolation and impotence.²⁵

If we are to sum up the fight against the political police by way of "rules of attention" we shall say:

- 1) Observe strict organizational discipline
- 2) Guard organizational secrets with your life
- 3) Recruit new members into the organization very cautiously
- 4) Intensify political education (study of Marxism-Leninism in a living way i.e. theory linked with practice)

5) Know your enemy i.e. know the political police. And to know the political police means nothing else than persistent and systematic attempts to know them and their techniques. This can be done by reading their literature (like *Policena Ermijaw*), like reading anti-revolutionary warfare books written by the Americans and Israelis (the teachers of the Ethiopian Security men), making investigations by talking to thieves, convicts, and students who have been arrested and subjected to interrogation, watching the political police i.e. making all efforts to identify them, to get to know about them (their weakness, private lives, etc.) to get a photo of them, etc. Ultimately they should be pointed out to other peoples for the more people get to know a security agent, the more ineffective he becomes.

In conclusion let us assert that before the seizure of power and in the pursuit of that aim, the only weapon available to the revolution, to the masses is organization. The hallmark of the revolutionary movement led by the working class is its high organizational standard. All activities aimed at bringing the masses to the point where they will rise up and topple the ruling class may boil down to this: to organize, organize, organize. The purpose of political propaganda and agitation is indeed to organize the masses; only by organizing them one way or another will conditions be created for educating them and building up the immense strength of the revolution, for once organized their power will increase one hundred fold. It is for combat that the masses are organized; conversely it is through combat that they are organized and educated and the forces of the revolution expanded. Therefore, *propaganda, organization and struggle* must go hand in hand, the common purpose being to form and enlarge the political army of the masses for the long protracted struggle against imperialism and feudalism. The motto is then to *organize and to struggle to struggle and to organize, again to struggle . . .*"

Thus the *primary task* of any Ethiopian revolutionary organization is to organize the workers and peasants i.e. to *form a Marxist-Leninist Party* that can gather the broad masses of the peoples under a United Front to fight imperialism and feudalism. And the only way the Working Class Party can pursue the revolution to victory and thus contribute to the world revolution is if it, conforming to the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, makes a deep analysis of the class relations within its society, makes a concrete analysis of the present situation, the history

of the country, its particularities and the specific theoretical and practical problems that the revolution poses. An independent, concrete, deep analysis of the Ethiopian reality is the only guarantee to the solving of the major questions and problems of the revolution.

A revolutionary is a revolutionary everyday of his life; he is a man of action. As such while he is attempting in all ways to form a revolutionary party, he does not in the meantime stop the task of propagating and mobilizing the masses as well as improving his own ideological outlook. This means that the revolutionary will *not* fold his arms, sit back, relax and wait for the organization to come (from where?) and undertake the politicization of the masses. Instead he goes to the masses and propagates among them and prepares for the future organization politicized members. Therefore

(1) Ethiopian revolutionaries should make all attempts to *form an organization (Working Class Party or Marxist-Leninist Party)* and should in

²⁵ It may be interesting to note that thousands of police agents "participated" in the Russian Social Democratic Movement and that the CZARIST political police compiled volumes of information on Social Democrats. All this did not prevent the October 1917 Revolution. And the Vietnamese revolution is another example which proves that one should guard against the spies of the enemy (the American CIA) but in the final analysis no police agent can stop the the revolution of the peoples led by the working class.

the meantime prepare themselves to be valuable members to the coming organization. With this in mind they should (a) form secret circles or groups to study revolutionary (Marxist-Leninist) theory (b) and should make technical preparations such as being physically very fit and acquiring the necessary skills such as shooting, photography, forgery, first-aid, typing, printing machine operations, etc.

(2) Ethiopian revolutionaries should *integrate* themselves with the masses and *politicize* them. How to integrate? Go to the factories, to the countryside, to the villages as teachers, clerks, community workers, researchers, etc. and maintain close contact with the masses. Learn about their need and wishes, avoid commandism, aloofness and arrogance in dealing with them, help them in their difficulties, respect them and do all other things that will make the masses consider you as "theirs" i.e. their son, friend, comrade. What to propagate?

(a) What is propagated must relate to the *specific condition* of the factory, of the locality as well as the *general situation* in Ethiopia. This means that we must study the concrete situation in each factory, village, town, etc. and base our propaganda on it. In doing this we must *never* forget to relate the specific condition to the general situation prevailing all over the country and affecting various classes. Therefore, we should point out that what prevails in the Indo-Ethiopian Textile Factory does prevail in the Wonji Sugar Factory, and that the plight of the peasant in one part of Sidamo is like that of peasants in one part of Wollega, and what happened to peasants in Bale (bombing, massacres, etc.) happened to peasants in Gojjam, and that the enemies of the peasants all over and/or the workers all over are the same and that the demands of the Ethiopian student movement ("land to the tiller," "an end to imperialism" and "the right of self-determination up to and including secession to all nationalities in Ethiopia") stand for the true interest of the peasants and workers.

The aim is to create sympathy and active solidarity (and consequently *alliance*) amidst workers and peasants as well as revolutionary students. The intention, moreover, is to show that the problem is not local but central (country-wide) and that the solution can only come if the system at the center is destroyed. Thus the solution is not to kill only one local feudalist but to exterminate the whole lot of big feudalists, big bourgeoisie and foreign capitalists. And (that) this gigantic task calls for the unity of all the oppressed and exploited masses of Ethiopia.

(b) What is propagated must explain to the peasants and workers *the root* of their suffering i.e. why they are poor, oppressed and exploited while others (a minority) are rich, powerful, etc. This calls for a systematic explanation of the development of society and the concept of classes and class struggle. It calls for a scientific analysis of the Ethiopian society, a simplified yet full explanation of what government means, what class interest means, who the ruling class in Ethiopia is, what methods it utilizes to confuse and divide²⁶ the people i.e. an explanation of the state—the role of the church, the Army, the police, the security, the Ministry of Information, the courts, etc. In short, the whole ideological basis of the ruling class must be exposed and refuted. In doing this we should bear in mind the low level of political consciousness of the masses and we should make widespread and persistent efforts to explain what the basic democratic concepts (equality, election, right, freedom, government by the people, land to the tiller, etc.) mean.

We think it fit to raise at this point that when writing or speaking we should always have in mind the rank and file worker or ordinary peasant who must understand us, believe in our appeal and heed our call to rise up and fight imperialism and feudalism. The masses cannot assimilate our ideas unless we learn to speak the language which they understand; and as the language they understand is the language they speak we ought to learn language from the masses. The peoples' vocabulary is rich, vigorous, vivid and expressive of real life and we should learn it. This is the only way if we want the masses to read what we write or hear what we speak. Therefore, whether talking or writing the revolutionary should avoid empty phrases, abstractions and dull unintelligible styles. He must know his audience well (to whom is he writing?)

26. This above calls for a systematic propagation of the correct theory that all nationalities within Ethiopia (Oromos, Amharas, Tigres, Gurages, Somalis, etc.) are equal and have the *right to self-determination up to and including secession*. And that the unity of the oppressed masses of all nationalities is advantageous and that this unity can only come on a voluntary, equal and fraternal basis.

and get across the truth in the most effective language. Effective because the revolutionary should not write in the language of book formulas but in the language of fighters, for the cause of the masses whose every word, whose every idea reflects the inner most thoughts and sentiments of millions.

(c) What is propagated must explain to the workers and peasants *how* to end their suffering. It is not enough just to explain; the way ahead, the task to be done to change the existing situation must also be stated. How to end the suffering? This is the basic question. the drive to destroy defeatism and fatalism in the minds of the masses. How to end the suffering under feudalism and imperialism? The masses must get organized, take up the gun and fight. Why should we fight? How can we fight? The feudalists and imperialists are so powerful, how can we the unarmed masses defeat them? Who are we to revolt against our masters, anyway? Aren't we ordained by God to be ruled? Isn't it our destiny? to live in poverty? Hence isn't it against God's will to revolt? Didn't the peasants of Tigerai, Gojjam, Borana, Bale and elsewhere revolt? What did they achieve? etc. etc. . . Simple and difficult questions, all kinds of questions will arise and the revolutionary must be prepared to answer them convincingly, with fact and patience. This is the most difficult task, a struggle to defeat fatalism, impotence, defeatism, doubt and lack of self-confidence inculcated into the minds of the labouring masses by the ruling class and its chief propagandist—the church.

The revolutionary's basic ideas should be

(1) *We must fight.* Hence he should explain

- the futility of reform
- the need to counter reactionary violence with revolutionary violence
- that the peoples must take power
- that power grows out of the barrel of a gun
- that the people must organize themselves and conduct a people's war/guerrilla warfare/etc.

(2) *We must organize.* Hence he should explain

- why the peoples need to be organized
 - what type of an organization it should be
 - how do we organize
 - with whom do we organize
 - against whom do we organize
- and so on

(3) *We must unite.* Hence he should explain

- why there is a need for unity
- what do we mean by unity?
- what do we mean by unity between the oppressed masses of Ethiopia?
- on what is the unity of the masses of the various nationalities of Ethiopia to be based?²⁷

Why do we unite? We unite to fight. How do we fight? We get organized and wage a protracted armed struggle—in which the majority of the peoples participate—against feudalism and imperialism. All this propaganda must also be combined with the full publicity of the victorious struggles of the masses of other countries such as Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Dhofar, Guinea Bissau, etc. We must instill confidence in the masses, make them able to realize their potential genius and power, make them believe that the beautiful future ahead (socialism) can be attained and that it can only be attained if they organize and take up arms to smash feudalism and imperialism.

To conclude let us say that we are confident that the politicized, organized and fighting masses of Ethiopia will—apart from giving full play to their creative genius and contributing to the pages of history various acts of heroism, valor, ingenuity and victory—destroy all reactionaries completely and put an end to all forms of oppression and exploitation of man by man. The Ethiopian masses are the true bastions of iron, the invincible ones who shall storm heaven and earth, smash all feudalists, big bourgeois and

27. This calls for the full propagation of the correct stand on the national question in Ethiopia—that all nationalities within Ethiopia have the right to self-determination up to and including secession. *The recognition of this right is primary and necessary if we are to call for unity of the masses of the various nationalities.* Therefore, all revolutionaries should combat against social chauvinists, Amhara Supremacist, narrow-minded nationalists and distorters of the correct stand on the national question. This combat to foster unity and fraternity among the labouring masses of all nationalities is a decisive combat that affects the formation of a multi-national revolutionary organization in Ethiopia.

imperialists, establish a democratic peoples' Ethiopia and finally a society in which all men will live equally, freely and happily working according to their abilities and receiving according to their needs. This is the just cause of the masses and it is the only cause that is worth dying for. And if someday like so many revolutionaries before us, we die for this human ideal that has become our reason for living, it will not be as martyrs or heroes but as simple soldiers in the daily and universal struggle of peasants, workers, students and young peoples. And when we die we shall neither be the first nor the last, neither the best nor the worst. We shall just be one of the labouring masses fighting for the total liberation of mankind.

Serious Shortcomings of Organizers*

SECTARIANISM—To listen to those who are on good terms with oneself even when they are wrong, and to make use of them even when they have no ability. To discard those who are at variance with oneself even when they are gifted, and refuse to listen to them however right they might be. This is a very harmful shortcoming. It deprives the organization of cadres and unity, and always brings the work to failure. This is very dangerous habit.

NARROW-MINDEDNESS—We must bear in mind that everyone has his strong and weak points. We must make use of his shortcomings. To use people is like using wood. A skilled worker can make use of all kinds of wood whether it is big or small straight or curved. Narrow-Mindedness leads to petty deeds and it results in many enemies and few friends. A narrow-minded man receives little assistance from the others. And a narrow-minded organization cannot thrive.

FORMALISM—Questions are not considered for their practical results or urgency, but only for showing off. For example, at present, military training aims only at handling guns, daggers, hand grenades, turning to account topographical conditions, cleverly moving in the dark and reconnoitering; in a word to train everybody for guerrilla warfare. But in many localities time is devoted only to training on parade. This is like practicing music for putting out a fire.

If other places the forms of propaganda are limited to writing slogans, hanging flags and banderoes, embellishing the information houses, and setting tribunes for form's sake, but they never go to the people to give them explanations, to help them thoroughly understand the policies of their organization.

PAPER WORK—Love of red tape. To sit in one's office and send out orders without going to the spot to check the carrying out of the work and to map out plans for the good implementation of the instructions and resolutions of the organization. They are not aware whether the instructions and resolutions sent by the higher levels to the localities can be carried out or not. This style of work is very harmful. It prevents us from closely following the movement and from grasping the real situation. Therefore, many of our policies are not carried out thoroughly.

INDISCIPLINE, LAX DISCIPLINE—in some war-stricken regions, a number of comrades have, of their own initiative, left their localities and gone to work in other places without decision of the higher levels of their organization. Thus, these comrades have not only shown a weak spirit, doing what is easy or to their liking and giving up what is difficult or not to their liking, but also they disregard the discipline of the organization and throw disorder in the ranks of the organization.

SELFISHNESS, DEBAUCHERY—There are comrades who still suffer from Megalomania. They are out for a position in some committee or chairmanship. Others indulge in good food and fine clothing, try to turn public property into their own, abuse their authority or job to indulge in trading transactions and get rich, think more of their private business than public affairs. Revolutionary virtues and public opinion are of no significance to them.

There are comrades who are conceited and self-complacent, believing that as former political detainees or members of the Viet Minh Front, they are more competent than anyone else, and matchless. It is true that the imperialist jails are schools for them, and the Vietn Minh Front is an organization of patriots who devote themselves to national salvation. But it is certain that outside the Viet Minh there are still many able, talented people who the Viet Minh has not yet succeeded in organizing. Besides, if the political prisoners and members of the Viet Minh Front are the best, does it mean that all those who have not had the honor to be jail or those who have not joined the Viet Minh Front have no talent and are of no use at all?

Each of us must be modest. The more veteran and talented we are, the greater must be our modesty. We must have a yearning for progress and keep in mind our teacher's words: "To learn, to learn, and to learn." Conceit and self-complacency will but hinder our progress.

Although you have in general many qualities, such as perseverance, thoroughness, resourcefulness, and initiative, these are invaluable qualities which serve as bases for the development of other virtues. But in this period of great difficulties and heavy tasks, those qualities are not enough. Only if you make use of this good basis resolutely to correct the above-mentioned shortcomings are we certain to come to complete success.

Editorial Note:* We believe that dangerous shortcomings of the nature that was faced by other revolutionary movements, if they exist in the ESM, must be identified and speedily corrected. People that try to show off with pompous and academic phrases (to impress whom?) have cropped up lately. The latest academic quackery which resounded with so big a force and fury came from Hagos Gebre Yesus on a topic entitled *Youth and the National Democratic Revolution*. The writer, a veteran ESUNA member and, in fact, one of the founders of the movement abroad, is now unfortunately "playing footsie" with the student movement. He is guilty of indulging in problems that have no bearing or relevance to the democratic Ethiopian Student Movement. We believe that problems must be examined with a view to their theoretical and practical significance in advancing the Ethiopian revolution in general and the democratic student movement in particular. To pontificate about the fate of not only our movement, from a position of a *clearly decided resignation* at the high-bench of an imperialist institution (and very subjectively too!) is, at best, irresponsible and at worst, reactionary.

To talk about problems without their concrete existence and imagine that they exist is the business more often of a bourgeois novelist than a revolutionary materialist! So people must learn from the revolutionary experience of the Vietnamese and others and shake off their illusions and join the ranks of our movement as soon as they can manage it.

We shall advise all who have differences of opinion with ESUNA to conduct a principled ideological struggle within one organization. To continue to use ESUNA's name *illegally* will not be tolerated especially after ESUNA's generous offer to accept as members all who disagree with it politically.

* This supplement has been added to the original *Elementary Notes on Revolution and Organization*. The reader is referred to read both together.

