

# JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (EPDM) AND THE TIGRAY PEOPLES LIBERATION FRONT (TPLF)

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High level representatives of the Ethiopian Peoples Democratic Movement and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front met from 5th to 10th May, 1988. In the course of their democratic and extensive discussions, they assessed the basic and timely issues; the major current tasks to be carried out; the condition of the people and the enemy in both Ethiopia and Eritrea; and the activities of the various organisations. They also thoroughly examined the relationship of EPDM and TPLF in the past years of the struggle. They analysed the basic common stands which can facilitate their democratic unity, and underlined their differences, which can be narrowed down through struggle in the future.

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Accordingly, recognising democratic unity as one of the most important immediate tasks, the two organisations would like to inform the Ethiopian masses and democratic forces that, based on their common and agreed stand, they have taken concrete steps to form a United Democratic Front, which is anti imperialism, anti dependent capitalism and anti feudalism. This Front initially comprises the two organisations, and will be expanded in the course of the struggle.

They put the stated common democratic objectives for which the two organisations have been fighting, and the joint stand which enables them to form a United Democratic Front, as follows:

1. The two organisations believe that Ethiopian society is subject to an underdeveloped, dependent capitalist system, within which economic, political and social power is controlled and exercised by the enemies, imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism, which oppress and exploit the people.
2. In the Ethiopian situation the main enemies are the ruling classes, Soviet imperialism and the dependent capitalist bourgeois system in power. These are enemies who are exercising dictatorial state power. Although feudalism has been weakened by the resolute struggle of the people, it has not been completely destroyed and must still be considered as an enemy.
3. To identify Soviet Imperialism as the main enemy in the Ethiopian situation does not indicate that American Imperialism has ever ceased to be an enemy of the Ethiopian peoples or that Soviet Imperialism can be fought by siding with American Imperialism. American Imperialism is a fundamental enemy which can never be considered as an alternative.
4. In order to free Ethiopia from the causes of backwardness and dependency, and to overcome the obstacles to development and build a free economy, a democratic revolution which can destroy these enemies must be carried out. The revolution must be led by the proletariat in alliance with the

peasantry, and its objectives will be to form a free people's democratic government and uphold basic human rights.

5. They accept that Ethiopia is a country whose unity is based on brutal national oppression and this national oppression can be solved **only** when the right of the oppressed nations and nationalities to self determination up to and including secession is recognized and respected.
6. In our country the majority of the population belong to the oppressed nations and nationalities. The national contradiction is the main aspect of the class struggle and the two organisations will struggle resolutely to eradicate it. They accept and struggle for the establishment of a democratic Ethiopia, based on the development and prosperity of the peoples of Ethiopia and the equality of nations and nationalities, as the correct priority.
7. They recognise that the struggle of the Eritrean peoples is legitimate and just, and believe that recognition of and respect for the Eritrean peoples' right to self determination should be the democratic and political response. Both organisations confirm their shared aim of cooperation with the Eritrean peoples and the struggling organisations on issues of common interest.
8. Both organisations believe that a protracted people's war is the principal tactic for destroying the absolute dictatorship established by the state bureaucratic capitalist bourgeois in power and its masters, the Soviet Imperialists.
9. The TPLF and EPDM believe in and are struggling for the establishment of two parallel fronts which are independent of external powers. One is a democratic united front which is anti all forms of imperialism, anti feudalism, and anti dependent capitalism. The other is a tactical front which opposes the Derg's Republic and Soviet intervention. Both organisations believe that the remnants of the previous reactionary ruling classes should not be allowed to join this front under the cover of democracy. The masses must realise who they are and oppose them.

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Taking these basic political and other unifying common stands of struggle as their starting point, and believing that the formation of a United Democratic Front will make a great contribution to the consummation of the democratic revolution in Ethiopia, EPDM and TPLF have agreed to form a United Democratic Front and have outlined in detail how this Front will be formed and developed stage by stage. Accordingly, following on from the various areas of agreement which must be considered, they have agreed on the following as the main concrete steps for the Front's formation and development.

1. There will be a committee of representatives of both organisations which will organise the formation of the United Democratic Front and coordinate joint activities.
2. The propaganda and organisational work carried out among the people by the two organisations shall reflect the common objectives, and joint organisational work will be carried out.
3. They will carry out joint political, military and social activities which are conducive to the formation and in the spirit of the United Democratic Front.

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Having taken these concrete steps, TPLF and EPDM have agreed that they must do all they can to strengthen their organisation vis a vis the Ethiopian revolution. In addition to the formation of a democratic front, and concerning the tactical front :

1. They have realised that it is necessary to struggle for the formation of a tactical front encompassing the anti Derg and anti Soviet intervention forces and that this must be strengthened both within each organisation and jointly.
2. More than ever, they believe that their common call for the formation of such a front must be heeded.

At this meeting the representatives of the two organisations have reached an agreement concerning the Ethiopian prisoners of war held by the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front. They would like to announce to the Ethiopian masses that as Ethiopians, they have agreed to negotiate with the EPLF and to receive the prisoners and let them freely decide their own future.

Through their struggle against the enemies of the democratic revolution, the TPLF and EPDM have so far scored brilliant victories and have paved the way for the final victory of the oppressed masses. At this stage of the Ethiopian democratic revolution in particular, for it to maintain its strength and revolutionary spirit and attain its objective, the unity of the struggling forces around common objectives is urgent and cannot be postponed.

Based on these common objectives which will bind them together in the future, within the guidelines of unity in struggle, and aware that the realization of this unity would be a heavy blow to their enemies, the two organisations are more than ever ready to actualize such unity. The concrete steps undertaken to form a United Democratic Front, which is a weapon to defeat the enemies of the Ethiopian peoples, namely all forms of imperialism, dependent capitalism and the remnants of feudalism, is a great victory for the Ethiopian people.

## **OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF ETHIOPIA!**

Those enemies, who have robbed you of the fruits of your labour and of your democratic and human rights, and against whom you have fought so heroically, paying great sacrifices, are weakened and awaiting the final blow. Arise with iron resolve, coordinate your revolutionary strength with those organisations which are on your side, strike against your enemies. Unity is strength! Support the organisations which are on your side with all your capacity. You can own the fruits of your labour only when your fundamental enemies are destroyed, so arise and arm yourselves!

## **ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC AND REVOLUTIONARY FORCES!**

The struggle for which you have sacrificed so much, although it has contributed greatly to the Ethiopian democratic revolution, has not yet achieved the desired goal against our enemies, due to the fact that the questions of leadership and unity have not been answered. The strength of the enemies of the Ethiopian revolution lies in the lack of organisation and unity among the struggling forces. Until the democratic forces are organized and united, the lifespan of the enemies will be extended, causing serious damage to the revolutionaries, the people and the revolution itself.

Therefore, Democratic Forces, wherever you are, those of you who are organised strengthen yourselves, those who are not yet organised, organise yourselves. It is your great, timely duty to join in a democratic front. The TPLF and EPDM, in forming a democratic front, have taken a historic step to coordinate their forces, and they call on you to play your part by joining in the common struggle of the revolutionary forces.

## **ANTI DERG AND ANTI SOVIET INTERVENTION FORCES!**

The Derg and Soviet intervention are the main enemies of our country at this time. These anti people forces have strengthened their political, economic and military superiority, stifled basic human and democratic rights and exposed the people to class and national oppression. These, the pillars of the old order, are the causes of the backwardness and poverty of our country. To destroy these forces, TPLF and EPDM strongly believe that it is necessary, as a matter of urgency, to form a front which is anti Derg and anti Soviet intervention and independent of external powers. Both organisations have struggled for this aim. We repeat our call on all forces opposed to the Derg and Soviet intervention to struggle for the establishment of a united front, on the basis of the necessity for true national independence and unity of the people.

## **ERITREAN MASSES AND STRUGGLING ORGANISATIONS**

The EPDM and TPLF, on the basis of their firm democratic stand have always supported the Eritrean peoples right to independence from colonialism. In their effort to strengthen their relationship with the struggling forces in Eritrea, they have never ceased advocating a democratic solution to the problem. Accepting that the causes of oppression in Ethiopia and Eritrea are the ruling classes in Ethiopia, they will resolutely continue their struggle until these are destroyed.

In past years, the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples have contributed greatly to each other's struggle. Now more than ever it is necessary to strengthen the struggles of the two peoples for true independence, peace and democracy in the area. The time is ripe. We call on you to strengthen your popular struggle and your relationship with our organisations.

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**THE ENEMIES OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE SHALL BE DESTROYED BY OUR UNITED STRUGGLE.**

**WE SHALL TRIUMPH**

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**THE TIGRAY PEOPLES  
LIBERATION FRONT**

**THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES  
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT.**

**MAY 10, 1988.**