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TPLF/EPRDF's Strategies for Establishing its Hegemony & Perpetuating its Rule

The following text is an abridged translation of a 68-page Amharic document which the TPLF/EPRDF published in Sene 1985 E.C (June 1993) for distribution to its members. The document lays out the TPLF/EPRDF's long-term goals, its political and economic strategies for the fulfillment of these goals, and the day-to-day steps it recommends to its cadres for translating the strategies into grassroots actions. The document is an ominous window into the early political thinking of the TPLF/EPRDF, at a time when it was transforming itself from a revolutionary front into an administrative body.

Two points are particularly noteworthy. First, the document reveals the concerns of a group of would-be leaders struggling with how to implement Marxist ideologies in a world no longer hospitable to their political views. Time again, the document notes that certain politics the group would like to pursue, such as curtailing foreign investment, are not options given the likely criticism from the West. In reading these passages, no matter what one thinks of the socialist policies at issue, one is struck by the degree to which the TPLF/EPRDF is willing to change its colors, or at least to conceal its true nature, in order to curry favor with the West. The document is a how-to guide for the art of pursuing one agenda while duping Western international bodies into believing you support a different agenda altogether.

Second, the document reveals how TPLF's overriding goal has always been to win elections and to "permanently establish (its) hegemony." In this, the text is chilling reading for those of us fighting for and committed to the implementation of multiparty democracy in Ethiopia. For how did the TPLF, back in 1993, set out to establish its hegemony? According to this document, the TPLF set out to destroying all political opposition by "cit[ing] any relevant legal article and punish [ing] its detractors; by creating an army that is "free and neutral in appearance" but proTPLF in content. The TPLF set out to establish and use economic power it could translate into political power by "reduce[ing]... the taxes due from those forces or economic spheres which [the TPLF]

Support[s] and pill[ing] up the tax burden of those [it doesn't] support"; by giving workers who support the TPLF "pay and training far better than those of their compatriots working in other enterprises at the same levels"; by "infiltrat[ing] the national trade unions"; and by promoting shadowy economic "revolutionary democratic forces" -- in reality companies affiliated with the TPLF--to "invest as one individual in those economic sectors which have no direct state influence, " that is, to play the economic role the TPLF knew the West would not let it play directly.

Finally, the document reveals that the TPLF was determined from the outset to use to the fullest extent possible "key propaganda tools" such as schools, religious organizations and the mass media, and that it was cunning enough to understand that propaganda that "is not openly presented as propaganda ... will effectively serve its purpose."

In short, the TPLF realized early on that its claim as a legitimately elected administration was so tenuous that it wrote, "If we lose in the elections even once, we will encounter a great danger." This document makes clear that the TPLF is willing to go to any lengths to make sure that that never happens.

In our next issue, we intend to publish the result of our study on who owns the Ethiopian economy.

The document is currently in use as a basic training manual for TPLF/EPRDF cadres. The principles strategies and tactics set forth have already begun to be implemented. Accordingly, the document is a must-read for those seeking to understand better the TPLF and to construct viable opposition strategies.

*Highlighted emphases in the text are **EtR**'s.*

Our Revolutionary Democratic Goals and the Next Step

I. Introduction

We have been struggling for our revolutionary democratic goals. In general, today's conditions are conducive for realizing our goals but this doesn't mean that we can realize all our goals during the current Transition Period. It just means that we can fulfill the objectives of the Transitional Phase to the extent that conditions allow us to do so, and once the Transition Period is successfully completed, we will start fully implementing our Program.

Since the last EPRDF Congress, there have been major changes around the world and in our country. In the course of our attempts to implement our Program, we are forced by internal and external circumstances to adjust our approach in response to these major changes. The aim of this adjustment cannot and should never be to do away with the pillars of our Revolutionary Democracy or to undermine our popular and democratic character. It just means that while maintaining the pillars of our Revolutionary Democracy, we need to make a few adjustments so that we will be able to come out victorious under the circumstances prevailing in our country and around the world. On the other hand, if the goals that were formulated in general terms have to be translated into reality, they have to be defined in detail. They have to be enriched on the basis of our experiences during the Transition Period. Furthermore, the strategies and tactics for realizing them have to be identified and presented in clear terms. This is the objective of this document.

II. Our Political and Economic Goals

Political Goals

Materializing the peoples' political and human rights completely

Revolutionary Democracy has a partisan outlook on the materialization of political and human rights. It doesn't equally stand for the rights of both the people and the ruling classes. From the point of view of Revolutionary Democracy, materializing the rights of the people means materializing the rights of the great majority of the population. The democratic rights of the masses include the right to express one's view, the right to organize at any level and in any form, the right to strike in accordance with the Law, the right to express one's opposition even to the revolutionary democratic government which serves their interest, etc. Respect for the rights of the people includes

refraining from imprisoning people without due process, beating people, confiscating people's property, searching people's houses, restricting their freedom of movement or belief, etc.

As indicated above, materializing human and democratic rights means protecting the rights of the great oppressed majority. Whether or not the rights of the ruling classes will be protected will be determined by the relevance that this will have to protecting the rights of the masses. If the rights of the ruling classes are going to be respected at the expense of the rights of the oppressed masses, then the rights of the oppressors will have to be suppressed and the rights of the oppressed will have to be respected.

The fact that Revolutionary Democracy stands for the rights and interests of the oppressed masses, i.e., its partisanship, is a fundamentally popular position that will never be altered. However, there are two basic reasons why it will not be possible or anymore necessary to continue indicating in our Program that the rights of the people would continue to be respected fully and that those of the oppressor will be suppressed.

In the first place, such an approach will be unacceptable in the eyes of Western Democracy and would invite the fierce opposition of imperialism.

Whether we like it or not, this is a fact we cannot deny. The two imperialist camps have crumbled and given way to the hegemony of the imperialist power led by the United States. On the one hand, this has narrowed down our chances for realizing our goals by shifting allegiance from one camp to the other. ***On the other hand, this has increased the chances for earning the wrath of American imperialism and, under its leadership, the obstruction of the realization of our goals by the mobilization of imperialist forces against us.*** Our country's economy is so weak that let alone faced by imperialist obstruction, it will not revive without great efforts over a long period of time even if it didn't face imperialist pressure.

The second reason is that it is possible to ensure the human and democratic rights of the masses without suppressing all the rights of the oppressors. There are two reasons for this, too.

The first reason is that by historical accident, the enemies of Revolutionary Democracy are poor. Although imperialism has global hegemony, it can only fulfill its interests in Ethiopia through the enemy from within. Feudalism is in a dying state and cannot either regain its former hegemony or serve imperialist interests. The political, economic and military power of capitalism here is too weak. It has been isolated because it could not fulfill the interests of the peoples. Its institutions of repressions have been dismantled. The anti-people bureaucratic force has also been weakened by the local governments and the administrative measures taken from the center. Its organized representatives are paralyzed by internal contradictions and cannot put forward to the people a viable alternative. Due to these factors, this force could not put itself in the service of imperialism.

The other factor which should be considered in relation to this is the national bourgeoisie. Although not a primary enemy as such, this class is nevertheless a vacillating force. This force was economically and politically weak even during Haile Sellassie's regime and was further weakened by the Derg.

In comparison with our enemies and the vacillating forces, our revolutionary democratic power is superior. We enjoy greater support from the people, especially from the peasantry. So, without suppressing the rights of the oppressors, we can protect the rights of the masses.

This can be realized in various ways. The country's constitution should be formulated in such a way that it guarantees the rights of the masses. Based on the constitution, laws which protect the rights of the people and outlaw the obstructionist activities of the enemies can be promulgated. Institutions which protect the constitution and other laws will be established. When members of the ruling classes try to obstruct the exercise of the rights of the masses, ***we can cite any relevant legal article and punish them. If they rebel against the constitution, we will mobilize the people and crush them.***

When we say that all citizens' democratic rights will be respected in the future socio-political system, it doesn't mean that Revolutionary Democracy will stand equally for the rights of the masses and the ruling classes. Our support is always for the rights of the masses only.

In the Resolution of the First Congress of EPRDF, it was clearly stated that the political system which will be established will be a multi-party system. By this we meant then that the masses will have many parties and that the ruling classes, too, will have the opportunity to organize. These parties can compete to hold political power. But if they try to obstruct the masses from exercising their rights, Revolutionary Democracy will use the constitution and other laws to punish them and bring under control their illegal activities.

The current Defense Force is composed of the armies of the EPRDF's member organizations. As long as this Force continues to belong to one political force, theoretically it means that it has to fulfill the interests and political goals of that political organization. However, under a multi-party system, the Defense Force cannot continue as the army of the EPRDF - it has to become the army of the State. Nobody will accept its continuation as EPRDF's army in the context of a free competition. ***Such a condition will invite the opposition of imperialism.***

The army will have to sever its direct organizational link with the EPRDF and cease to be divided into TPLF, EPDM, OPDO armies. These have to be restructured and integrated into a unified defense force. But severing its direct links with EPRDF does not mean abandoning its revolutionary democratic character. Various bourgeois armies do not have direct organizational ties or commissars, yet they could be shaped into any form for any task the bourgeoisie desire them to fulfill. So we need to gain sufficient experience in how to organize our Defense Force to carry out the required revolutionary democratic tasks through indirect ties just as in the case of the bourgeois armies. ***Thus although it becomes free and neutral in appearance, the army will be revolutionary democratic in content and protect the constitution and the rights of the masses.***

Setting up a government which ensures the all-round participation of the masses

To ensure the all-round participation of the people, it is necessary to establish a power structure which will enable people to decide on local issues at the Kebele, Woreda, zone, regional and central level. Proclamation no. 7/1984 E.C. has determined the powers of the central and regional administrations as well as Woreda councils. It now

remains to determine ways of enabling people at the kebele level to decide on local affairs. It is also necessary to provide the means by which the masses could have control over these power structures and recall/replace the elected representatives who fail to serve the interests of their constituencies. The masses also need to organize on the bases of gender, trade/profession, etc. to bring pressure on the policies and actions of the central government and other power structures.

Ensuring the peoples' right to self-determination and building Ethiopia's unity based on equality and free choice

Revolutionary Democracy firmly believes that people get more benefit from staying together rather than from seceding. But the unity of people can be securely realized when it is based on a voluntary association and equal partnership. The unity that people form voluntarily should also be one which they can opt out of when they wish so. The peoples' right to self-determination, including and up to secession, should be guaranteed. However, chauvinists do not accept this right. Though they aspire for unity, they want to bring it about irrespective of the wish of the people. For chauvinist forces, unity means the concentration of power at the center. On the other hand, narrow nationalists, too, oppose the peoples' right to self-determination. Though they support the right to secession, they do not stand for a strong union of peoples. They stand for either a powerless central government and an all-powerful national regional government or the disintegration of the country so that they can rule over their region in the name of their nationality.

The premise on which imperialism and the ruling classes oppose the peoples' right to self-determination is the misconception in the relationship between the individual's rights and the peoples' rights.

Ensuring the peoples' rights is the basis for ensuring the individual's rights. Although the rights of the individual cannot be separated from the peoples', our enemies try to drive a wedge between these rights.

III. Our Economic Goals

Building an economy with sectors that support each other; that promotes self-sufficiency, and that maintains a balance between the regions and the sectors

An economy with relative independence is one whose base is a large local market. An economy based on foreign markets is one which satisfies the raw material demands of imperialism and thus becomes dependent on it. The national bourgeoisie, although it seeks economic autonomy from imperialism, wants to promote its interests at the expense of those of the people.

Creating a condition which facilitates fast economic growth from which the people benefit at each stage and which ensures social justice

To ensure fast economic growth and fulfill the people's interests, the role of the peasantry is crucial. 85% of our country's productive manpower is in the countryside. It is

necessary to create a climate which enables this force to produce more both in kind and in quantity. The government's revenue and fiscal policy can contribute to the realization of social justice. For instance, by taxing heavily the upper stratum of the society and allocating a higher budget to such sectors which benefit the oppressed masses more, one can institute social justice. However, the national bourgeoisie wants a situation in which the farmers do not get land tenure security and are uprooted from their land and end up swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

Which sectors of the society benefit and which ones do not benefit from our goals?

a) The Peasantry: The primary beneficiary of our goals is the peasantry. Developing the human resources of the country means primarily improving the living standards of the peasants. It is they who benefit from the development of agriculture and the growth of the local market.

b) The Urban Petty Bourgeoisie: Next to the peasantry come the urban petty bourgeoisie which includes the intelligentsia, This group, which is involved in small-scale production and petty trade in goods and services, benefits from a rural-based development which expands the sphere of its activities. The intelligentsia is divided into the upper and the lower stratum. The upper stratum is a vacillator and could align itself with enemy forces. Members of this sector do not stand for the rights of the people. Though they may advocate a multi-party system, they stand for a system which protects the privileges of the ruling classes. They advocate the rights of the individual at the expense of the rights of the people. So they are antagonistic to our political goals.

c) The Proletariat: The basic interests of the proletariat can be fulfilled only when it is free from exploitation. Though the aim of our Revolutionary Democracy is not to completely free the proletariat from exploitation, it is still the only approach that best serves its interests now. So, above all else, the proletariat is our most reliable supporter among the urban population, for the realization of our revolutionary democratic goals greatly improves its job opportunities and living standards.

d) The National Bourgeoisie: Though our goals fulfill the interests of this sector, its vacillating nature prevents it from becoming our firm supporter. ***The upper stratum of this section should be neutralized so that it remains a middle-roader and doesn't obstruct the realization of our goals.*** The lower stratum could be drawn towards us.

e) Those who are not beneficiaries: ***Those who do not benefit from our goals and consequently stand as our main enemies are imperialism and the comprador class.*** These forces seek to impose on the country a dependent economy. Their political interests, too, are incompatible with our political goals.

Our revolutionary democratic goals are the only guarantee for the survival of the country

The only means of bringing about fast growth and transforming our backward country is by implementing our goals. This is the only option for improving the livelihood of our people and effecting social justice. ***The only alternative available for the continued survival of Ethiopia as one country is the realization of our revolutionary democratic goals.*** There are no other options to improve the living standards of the people and the survival of Ethiopia as a nation.

IV. Economic Strategies of Our Revolutionary Democracy

Our strategy defines the direction in which our general goals could be implemented and the main economic forces that play a role in this process.

Rural and peasant-centered economic activities

This primarily means that the peasants should have guaranteed access to land. This could be attained by preventing the sale and exchange of land. If the peasants are allowed to sell their land, they will be forced to sell it when they face hardship and then they enter a state of poverty from which they can never extricate themselves and acquire land. ***Therefore, we should continue to pursue our principle that land should never be sold or exchanged.*** To ensure that the peasants will look after the land, it is necessary to redistribute land over a long period of time and when the local people believe that this is essential. At the same time, it is also necessary to enable the farmers to sell their products when, where and at the price they desire to do so. Apart from this the peasants need to be provided with fertilizer, improved tools and seeds, training, etc. to increase their production. Feeder roads, primary schools, health and other services should be made available to them. There should be measures to prevent disaster and conserve natural resources. There should be measures to expand the agro-industrial system.

To achieve the objectives of agricultural and industrial developments, we have to produce the necessary manpower. The current curriculum does not answer these demands. Its focus is on academic education. This has to be changed step by step to make our educational system production-oriented.

The motive forces of our economic strategy and their roles

The role of the government

In the Program approved by the First EPRDF Congress, the government was given the role of regulating the economy by running the state enterprises in the sphere of finance, energy, mines, and industry. Private investors, both local and foreign, were not given any significant role in the economy. It was more or less the same in the area of import/export and State farms.

However, this situation is not acceptable in current global economic thinking. Governments are not expected to be involved in production activities. Where a government has to be involved in such activities, it should be guided by principles of profit-making. Yet, without being widely involved, the government could play a decisive role in the economy by controlling the distribution of foreign currency, the import of fuel, the export of coffee, the regulation of transport operations, etc. Key industrial and agricultural enterprises that affect the export earnings of the country or the livelihood of the people could still be controlled by the State. These include rail, air and sea transport, electricity, telephone, and water supply services, textile industry, engineering works, chemical industry, metal foundries, mining, etc. If these cannot be kept under State monopoly, arrangements should be made for joint ventures in which the State will have a higher share. The State can also play a vital role in the economy by deciding on policy

issues (taxes, budget allocation, interest rate, etc.) to influence economic activities. But imperialism and the comprador class are against the State control of the distribution of foreign currency, the restriction on the involvement of foreign banks, and the limitation on local investors' involvement in certain economic sectors. The vacillating national bourgeoisie, too, is against the involvement of the State in any economic activity.

The role of local investors

By local investor we do not mean the national bourgeoisie only. There are various revolutionary democratic associations, organizations, and individuals who can be involved in investment. These revolutionary democratic forces can play a special and irreplaceable role in the economy. As mentioned above, there are certain economic sectors in which the State cannot be directly involved. So, in order to redirect the economy in the direction of Revolutionary Democracy, a supplementary input is necessary. It is these revolutionary democratic forces that can reliably play this role. Due to their special role, they can be taken as a self-sufficient force.

The role of revolutionary democratic forces

It is necessary to ensure that the investment by this force aim at the following objectives.

- a) Supplementing and/or Carrying out the Role of the State: In areas where due to financial and administrative constraints or external economic factors, the state is unable to play, the role of directly regulating the economy, ***these revolutionary democratic forces should take over the role of the State and invest as one individual in those economic sectors which have no direct State influence.***
- b) Regulating and Influencing the Activities of Private Capitalists: In addition to the state's role in this regard, the revolutionary democratic forces will act as a powerful private investor which will demonstrate modern business practices to small businessmen while putting pressure on the bigger ones so as to strengthen the State's leadership role.
- c) Serving as Revolutionary Democracy's Source of Income: In order to fulfill its mission, our Revolutionary Democracy needs a great financial resources, and supplying these resources and building its strength is a role which these forces should play.

In order to facilitate the attainment of the revolutionary democratic goals, these revolutionary democratic forces should make it their primary objective to monopolize rural credit services throughout Ethiopia and mobilize their resources to this end. They should also select strategic places and, in accordance with local conditions, be highly involved in rural transport, wholesale trade, import/export, rural banking services, production of agricultural raw materials, manufacture of fertilizer and other modern agricultural inputs. Some of these, such as wholesale trade and transport, should be extended to the urban areas, too. They should establish banks, insurance companies, small-scale industries, and service cooperatives in the urban areas. They should also invest in mining.

For the revolutionary democratic forces to achieve the above objectives, they should follow the following strategies:

a) They should select those spheres of economic activity which, though outside the direct influence or control of the State, play a crucial role in facilitating development; they should strive to control these or hold an upper hand in their processes.

b) In order to influence other private investors and successfully play the other role of enhancing rural based development, economic integration of the regions, human and natural resources development, the investment of revolutionary democratic forces should apply modern management practices and should be absolutely profitable.

c) The revolutionary democratic forces should strengthen their ties with petty producers and create the situation which would enable them to guide their development.

d) Our forces should create a favorable working environment which would facilitate the participation of those individuals with a strong revolutionary democratic outlook and rectify the imbalance among the revolutionary democratic forces.

The role of local investors

Next to the State and revolutionary democratic forces, the local investor can play an important role in the economy. ***The upper stratum of this section should be directed by and disciplined to follow the direction of Revolutionary Democracy.*** Of course, it should be encouraged to develop its assets more than the foreign investor. However, priority should be given to the lower stratum which engages in small-scale production and services. It gets its resources locally and can also be easily guided by the revolutionary democratic forces. It can open up the path for the creation of a wide culture of industrial society and enhance the development process. So it should be supported with credit facilities, favorable policies and other services.

The role of the foreign investor

Given the prevailing global economic condition, we have no choice but to give more access to foreign capital. But this doesn't mean that it should be involved in all spheres of the economy. It should never be allowed to involve at any scale in basic services such as telephone, electricity, train transport, etc. Nor should it be given access to small scale industry. Foreign capital should also not be involved in financial services (banking, insurance, etc.). ***If the major international financial institutions or banks are allowed access to this economic sector, they will twist the State's arms and those of Revolutionary Democracy.***

We should follow the policy of allowing them access to investment spheres in which they can bring in more hard currency than the amount they take out. We should also create a situation in which they will be induced to invest in joint ventures with the State. If the foreign investors want to be involved in the restricted spheres of the economy, they should be denied the necessary incentives and pressurized by legal instruments to toe the line. If they, however, adhere to our policies and invest, they will serve us as a means of access to the international market in areas in which we wouldn't have such an opportunity on our own, and enable us to locally build the capacity to replace them eventually.

In order to mobilize the above forces and direct their involvement in the economy, the State should use fiscal instruments to deny or provide incentives and create the necessary investment conditions. Most of the revenues earned by the State should come from the upper class. ***This instrument allows us to encourage the growth of the targeted economic spheres and forces and destroy those that are not in line with the goals of Revolutionary Democracy. We will reduce or write off for some years the taxes due from those forces or economic spheres which we support and pile up the tax burden of those we don't support.***

Imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, and the vacillating national bourgeoisie are not as such against the existence of a fiscal policy, but rather against its objectives and its application. They want to have a policy which enables them to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses.

V. Political Strategies of Our Revolutionary Democracy Ensuring the hegemony of revolutionary democratic outlook

The activities cited above could be carried out only by our revolutionary democratic forces. ***We can attain our objectives and goals only if Revolutionary Democracy becomes the governing outlook in our society, and only by winning the elections successively and holding power without let up can we securely establish the hegemony of Revolutionary Democracy. If we lose in the elections even once, we will encounter a great danger. So, in order to permanently establish this hegemony, we should win in the initial elections and then create a conducive situation that will ensure the establishment of this hegemony. In the subsequent elections, too, we should be able to win without interruption.*** Hence, we need to work towards this end. In this process the people should be made to reject the outlook and views of the enemy as well as the vacillators, and our revolutionary democratic forces' outlook should be made the governing ideology of the society. If this does not materialize, we cannot ensure our hegemony and stay in power for long.

Our revolutionary democratic forces can attain hegemony and stay in power continuously because the objective and subjective conditions are favorable. The interests of the majority of the population would be fulfilled only through our revolutionary democratic lines. So, the objective condition requires the establishment and continuity of our hegemony, and there is fertile ground for this.

When we consider the subjective condition, we find that the opponents of Revolutionary Democracy have not taken root in the society. They are not well organized and their material resources are not well developed. In contrast, our revolutionary democratic forces are properly organized and embraced by the people. We have military and political superiority as well as considerable and well accumulated material resources. So, the subjective condition, too, is conducive for the hegemony of our revolutionary democratic forces.

On the other hand, we should also ask whether the enemy and the vacillators can bring about their hegemony. This is not possible, for if they do the country will be hurled into an endless crisis and Ethiopia will not survive as a nation. The reason for this is as follows:

Imperialism has a massive political and economic power. But it cannot use this power to establish its hegemony in Ethiopia and fulfill its interests. It cannot do this through the local ruling classes which are liable to serve its interests. These classes have been weakened in all respects. These classes are not in a position to create a strong army of their own and a bureaucracy through which they can rule over the people and serve imperialism. The national bourgeoisie, too, doesn't have the economic and political power to establish its hegemony. In the present condition, it is not even in a position to stand as an independent political force.

The motive forces of Revolutionary Democracy

The peasantry

This class is the pillar of Revolutionary Democracy. Just as the center of our economic development program is the rural part of the country, so, too, the focus of our political work is the peasantry. In order to ensure the support and massive involvement of the peasant class in our revolutionary activities, we should mobilize its members through social, political and economic organizations of its own. ***We should lead these peasant associations through loose organizational ties. We should identify and transform into our strong cadres those prominent peasants who have earned the respect of their communities. We should try to increase the number of such rural cadres and, through them, we should increase the influence of our member organizations.*** But we should not try to bring in outsiders to lead the peasants.

In the rural areas, there are an increasing number of GO (Governmental Organization) and NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) development workers. These lower-level members of the intelligentsia can undermine our influence and development program if they oppose our political line. Their counter-propaganda could persuade the peasants to deny us their support and hence obstruct the hegemony of Revolutionary Democracy. Therefore, it is imperative that they be brought over to our side.

The urban petty bourgeoisie

We should pay serious attention to the intelligentsia, which can be divided into the upper and the lower stratum.

Next to the peasantry, this sector can be a major beneficiary of our development program. However, we cannot say that we have secured the support of the majority of this sector. One reason for this is the vacillating nature of this group. The other is that it can be easily and widely infected by narrow nationalism or by chauvinism. Besides, we have not yet created the condition which proves to it that only our approach can fulfill its interests. Nor have we done enough political and organizational work in relation to it.

The political and ideological influence of this sector is considerable. It can develop or paralyze the bureaucracy. As economic growth is heightened, its size and strength, too, increase. So, next to the peasantry, we have to give it our full attention to bring it to our side. We should influence it through an all-round concerted effort involving the government, NGOs, the propaganda machinery of Revolutionary Democracy, etc.

The intelligentsia has a better organizational experience. So, we should encourage its associations while at the same time trying to direct them along revolutionary democratic lines by using our members and sympathizers inside these

associations. We should realize that as our political influence widens, our ability to control them indirectly also grows.

The other means of persuading the intellectuals is to fill their bellies and their pockets. They are likely to be involved in the civil service or economic activities that can be affected by government incentives or the denial of its support. ***The combined strength of the State and Revolutionary Democracy's economic institutions should be used either to attract the support or to neutralize the opposition of the intelligentsia. We should demonstrate to it that our economic strength could serve its interests, and, in the event of its opposition to us, its belly and pocket could be made empty.***

Though we should try to persuade all members of the intelligentsia, we should not try to give equal weight to all stratum of this group. We should put more attention on the lower level, which is large in number, works in rural areas and is easily amenable to our influence.

The proletariat

This is another large sector of the urban population which could benefit from the implementation of our development program and also become our firm supporter. We should encourage its trade unions, but, without compromising their organizational independence, we should try to control and lead them through indirect organizational links. ***Those workers who are employed in the business companies of Revolutionary Democracy should be given pays and trainings far better than those of their compatriots working in other enterprises at the same levels. Thus we can use our workers to infiltrate the national trade unions and play a leading role in drawing the rest of the proletariat to our side.***

The local investor

It is impossible to make the upper stratum of the of this sector our firm supporter. But it is possible to create a situation in which the lower stratum, despite its suspicions and anxieties, can be made our supporter and the upper stratum can be forced to take a neutral stance towards us.

In order to do this, we should demonstrate in practice and through analysis that our approach can fulfill its interests. ***Through the representatives of our own firms, we should penetrate and lead the organizations which it forms. If this is not possible, we should neutralize it so that it does not take an antagonistic stance towards us. We should ensure that the livelihood and profit of this sector are tied up with the goodwill and support of the State as well as our economic institutions, and restrain it from taking extreme positions by filling its belly and pocket.***

VI. Tactics Used to Implement Our Political Strategy Our major slogans

Tactics are instruments used for mobilizing the people for the fulfillment of our revolutionary democratic goals and for concerted action against our enemies. The main slogans used for this purpose are the following:

- Protect all the political and human rights of the masses!
- Establish a government that ensures the all-round participation of the people!
- Respect the right to self-determination as a basis for permanent peace and unity!
- Speed up the peasant-based and rural-centered development process!
- Strengthen the free trade unions of the proletariat!
- Develop the human and natural resources of our country!
- Establish a just system in which the masses can benefit from the national development!

Our propaganda machinery

The mass media are one instrument of our propaganda, but they are not the only means. There are also other key propaganda tools which include schools, religious organizations, and various mass organizations. In order to carry out our propaganda effectively, we should be able to exploit these tools directly or indirectly.

Mass media

The most important mass media are controlled by the State. These can play a useful role by popularizing government policies and activities, bringing to the attention of the government the grievances of the people, and strengthening the relation between the government and the people. The organizational, manpower and other problems of this sector should be solved so that it can effectively promote the goals of Revolutionary Democracy. The news reports, articles, entertainment programs, etc. should be presented in an attractive manner in order to draw the audience. *Apart from the newspapers, radio and television, theater and cinema houses controlled by the State should also be reorganized and their practices reoriented to serve as useful propaganda tools.* The other branch of the media is the one under private control, including those of Revolutionary Democracy. The latter should mobilize their financial and organizational resources to hold a key position in the private sector. The State mass media are poorly staffed and organized. Their activities are not up to the standards that the job demands. We should, hence, mobilize the financial and material resources of our revolutionary democratic forces not only to modernize our existing media but also to set up new ones and control the market. These have to work with all their resources and capacity to publicize our organization and government's activities and policies, facilitate the people's all-round and active participation and influence the masses to fully support the government.

In order for the media under our control to successfully carry out these duties, the journalists' professional quality should be improved through training and their association should be strengthened.

Schools

In the wealthy countries of the West, schools are not openly regarded as propaganda tools. In practice, however, they are indirectly used as sophisticated propaganda tools. We can do the same thing in our country, too. This can be done in various ways.

Firstly, the curriculum can be used to disseminate scientific knowledge. It can also be used to inculcate respect for the peoples' histories and cultures. *In the name of introducing the country's Constitution, we can inculcate the basic goals of our revolutionary democratic system and because this is not openly presented as propaganda, it will effectively serve its purpose.*

The other key factor in this process is the molding of the teachers' outlook. However well the curriculum is designed, the teachers can defeat the purpose unless they are made to stand on the side of Revolutionary Democracy. In order to make them stand behind us, we must first involve them in the designing of the curriculum and convince them about the need for changing the educational system. It is also necessary to bring them to the fold of Revolutionary Democracy by involving them in various social and developmental activities and through the explanations provided on such occasions.

At the same time students, too, should be involved in the developmental and political activities. We should use sports activities, associations such as boy scouts, clubs, and various seminars to mold their views and draw them to Revolutionary Democracy.

Religious organizations

These are always propaganda tools and in most cases they align themselves with the reactionary forces in the society. Therefore, these organizations should be used to disseminate the views of Revolutionary Democracy within a certain limit. If that is not possible we should try to curtail their obstructionist activities. The scientific content of the school education is one means of countering the damage which religious propaganda can cause.

In the process of countering these organizations' influence, the focus should not be on the leadership but rather on their branches at the village level; the religious leaders at the grassroots level are closer to the people. Without denying them due respect, we should mold their views, curtail their propaganda against Revolutionary Democracy, and even use them to serve our end. Focus on the lower level, however, does not mean the upper echelon should be forgotten. We should forge a close relationship with this stratum, find out and exploit to our advantage their internal contradictions, and at least disable them from coordinating their propaganda against us. If possible we should use them to disseminate the propaganda of Revolutionary Democracy.

Mass organizations

These should be used as forums for political and propaganda work to ensure the hegemony of Revolutionary Democracy. Seminars and panel discussions should be organized to draw their members to our camp. However, we should not try to impose our

leadership on them by disregarding their internal organizational autonomy -- rather we should try to influence them through indirect means.

The question of organization

To establish the system we aspire for, the masses have to be organized in various social and political associations which intertwine them and lead them in our direction. We should maintain the relative autonomy of these associations as a means of promoting popular initiative and a check on corrupt tendencies in our cadres. But maintaining their autonomy does not mean that we should not influence their activities or recruit their members. The following are some of the forms in which the masses can be organized.

- a) Organizations of the Peasantry: The peasants can be organized in the form of peasant associations, women's associations, youth associations, cooperatives, local militia, etc.
- b) The Democratic Petty Bourgeoisie's Urban Organizations: These include professional associations (teachers', medical professionals', journalists' etc.), peace organizations, human rights organizations, development associations, etc. In addition to serving their members' interests, they can be made to provide organized support for Revolutionary Democracy.
- c) Workers' Associations: The proletariat can be organized in various forms and at various levels to protect its interests. At present the most desirable form is the trade union. However, trade unions must not be formed on the basis of national identity (ethnicity) or region. Rather, after forming their industrial organizations, the sectors must then unite to form one umbrella organization. They can also form cooperatives.
- d) Government Organizations: The lower levels of government are going to be formed mainly with the involvement of the peasants. In the middle and upper levels, where there are no elected offices, intellectuals will be involved. In this sector we also find the army, the security, the judiciary, etc., which will not be under the direct control of political organizations as such. ***However, since they are there to promote and indirectly implement the goals of Revolutionary Democracy, they, hence, form part of its strength.*** The mission of governmental agencies can be defined as protecting the political and human rights of the masses, contributing their share in the implementation of the development strategies, widening the political influence of Revolutionary Democracy through their activities, acting as its key instrument to this effect and combating the illegal activities of the enemy.
- e) A Nation-wide Organization Formed from Democratic Nationality (Ethnic) Organizations: This is a twin form of organization. On the one hand, we have nationality-based organizations. On the other hand, there is the multi-national organization which these join to form collectively. Initially we had the principle of the multi-national type of organization. The Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) was formed as a multi-national type of organization on the basis of this principle so that it could mobilize and lead the struggle of the Amharas and the other peoples who would not rally around a nationalist platform. However, in view of the fact that those nationalities which the

EPDM was aiming to mobilize have currently formed their own democratic organizations, EPDM's task is now to reorganize itself on a nationality basis and struggle by making the Amhara people to hold a revolutionary democratic outlook. For this reason, the nation-wide political organization will be formed, not by multi-national organizations, but by a union of nationality-based organizations.

The mission of these nationality-based organizations is, on the one hand, to disseminate in various languages the same revolutionary democratic substance, to translate this substance into practice by adapting it to local conditions (history, culture, character, etc.), to rally the peasantry and other progressive forces around the goals of Revolutionary Democracy. On the other hand, it is to promote the common interests of all the people.

The chauvinist ruling classes adhere to the principle of "Itiopiawinnet" (Ethiopianness) which kills identity based on nationality. So they do not follow the principle of forming a nation-wide organization through a union of nationality-based organizations. They aspire to form a dominant multi-national organization composed of individuals from various nationalities and ethnic organizations that have betrayed the causes of their people and bowed to these chauvinists. Secessionists and narrow nationalist organizations do not want the fulfillment of the peoples' common interests. So, they, too, do not want to form a nation-wide organization together with other nationality-based organizations.

VII. Conclusion

Our revolutionary democratic goals can liberate the majority of the Ethiopian society from poverty and backwardness. They can assure the widest democratic rights and participation in the political system.

Our political and economic strategies and tactics ensure the realization of these goals and the victory of Revolutionary Democracy.

If these goals do not materialize, the people will suffer from endless poverty and crises. Not only this, there will be no single and united country called Ethiopia. Therefore, in order to fulfill the peoples' interests and to ensure the survival of our country, the victory of our revolutionary goals is imperative. *The "tegadays" (combatants) who should feel proud of standing for such an honorable cause must do everything possible in order to courageously and successfully carry out this popular and national responsibility*