

CONFLICT IN THE HORN: WHY ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA ARE AT WAR

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Introduction

In May 1991 the capital of Eritrea, Asmara, fell to the liberation movement that had been fighting for the independence of the territory for the past thirty years. At the same time the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, was captured by forces led by northern rebels from the province of Tigray. It seemed, for a moment, that the long and bloody wars that had racked the region might be at an end. The dual victories were the result of a close cooperation between the two movements that had led these struggles - the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Both had been determined to overcome authoritarian rule from Addis Ababa and had worked closely together to achieve this end. Two years later Eritrea achieved formal independence, recognized by the United Nations, by the Organization of African Unity and - most important of all - by the new rulers in Ethiopia.

At the hour of victory relations between the two movements appeared genuinely warm and friendly. Yet just seven years later the divisions could hardly be deeper. Since May 1998 they have been in - or close to - open warfare. Their leaders, who were once close personal friends, are no longer on speaking terms. Tens of thousands of people have been deported or displaced and radio stations blare out vitriolic propaganda against one another. These are complex events that have been further obscured by the contradictory versions of the truth that both sides have advanced.

A troubled history

Until the end of the nineteenth century Ethiopia was rarely more than a loose confederation of kingdoms. The boundaries of the empire were fluid. When Tigrayan princes were in the ascendancy they extended their influence towards the Red Sea coast of Eritrea, exacting tribute from the Muslim lowland chiefs. From the sixteenth century the coastal plain passed through Ottoman and Egyptian hands before coming under Italian rule in the 1880s. Italy promptly attempted to use it as a base from which to extend its influence into Ethiopia. These hopes were dashed when the Italians were defeated in 1896 by Ethiopian forces of Emperor Menelik in the battle of Adua. The Italians accepted their reverse, and signed treaties with the emperor in 1900, 1902 and 1908 establishing the border between their new colony of Eritrea and Ethiopia. With the rise of fascism under Mussolini, Italy was determined to extend its presence in the Horn. Its invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 was condemned by the League of Nations, but it was only with the outbreak of the Second World War that the world took a decisive stand against Italian aggression. By 1941 Emperor Haile Selassie had been returned to his throne by a combined force of British, South African, Indian and Sudanese troops fighting alongside Ethiopian patriots. While Ethiopia was independent once more, the international community was left with the problem of what to do with Eritrea. It was not until 1952 that it was finally decided by the United Nations that the territory should be federated with Ethiopia. These matters might have rested but for the absolutist rule of the emperor, who managed to alienate the population by a series of decrees outlawing the teaching of Eritrean languages, by dismantling industries and removing them to Addis Ababa and by repressing the trade unions and political parties.

By the early 1960s this repression was being met by armed resistance. In November 1962, after intense pressure from Addis Ababa, the federation was ended, and Eritrea was absorbed into Ethiopia. This served to spur on the opposition, led at first by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), whose origins can partly be traced back to the Muslim League of the 1940s and which drew most of its support from the Muslim community. Disputes within the ELF, and particularly the hostility towards Christian recruits, resulted in the formation of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in the early 1970s. The EPLF rejected ethnic differences and stood for a secular and socialist state. A bitter civil war followed. The EPLF finally won in 1981, forcing the ELF out of Eritrea. Despite these divisions, and despite receiving military and economic support from the United States, Ethiopia's campaign against Eritrean self-determination did not go well. Discontent inside the Ethiopian army over the conduct of the war and the handling of a devastating famine led to the overthrow of the emperor in 1974. Haile Selassie was replaced by a committee - the Dergue - which came to be led by the equally autocratic Mengistu Haile Mariam. After initial discussions with the Eritreans failed, the war continued and intensified. Now Addis Ababa turned to the Soviet Union for support, with Moscow providing vast quantities of military equipment to the new regime. But the events of 1974 led to a second, equally important development. Students from Tigray, angered by the lack of development of their province, and building on the ancient claims of Tigray to be the centre of the Ethiopian state, launched their own campaign against

the Amhara, the traditional ruling elite in the imperial state. With the support of the EPLF, the TPLF came into being and began waging its own war against Addis Ababa.

Nationalism

On the face of it the EPLF and the TPLF had much in common, since they both opposed Ethiopian absolutism. In reality, however, the forms of national identity that the two movements pursued were very different. These differences were fundamental, and underly much of the current conflict.

Eritrean nationalism was originally more complex and more difficult to forge precisely because it reflected a more diverse population. Eritrea's 3.5 million people are divided between two major religions and speak nine different languages. The EPLF had to fight a vigorous campaign within its own community to win their support. While the movement recognized and even celebrated the ethnic diversity of Eritrea, it resolutely refused to allow ethnicity to undermine its campaign for an independent state. This is not to suggest that ethnicity did not play any part in the front's activities. Great care was taken to represent the whole population within the leadership, even when they were not as well represented among its membership, but some groups, including the Kumana and the Afar, retain aspirations of their own.

For the TPLF mobilization in Tigray was relatively simple, since it could call upon an existing concept of Tigrayan nationalism, a common history of oppression and a common religion in Christianity. The TPLF's activities were an attempt to end Amhara rule. In Tigrayan eyes the Amhara had usurped the traditional power base of Ethiopian society, and transferred it from the ancient Tigrayan capital of Axum to Addis Ababa. In its first political programme the organization specified that it was fighting for the independence of Tigray from Ethiopia.

Since the TPLF's war aims, at least in the beginning, centred on achieving power in Tigray itself, its successes against the forces of the Dergue posed something of a problem, and led to considerable internal debate. Would the movement be satisfied with capturing Tigray, or would a hostile government in Addis Ababa require it to fight for the control of all Ethiopia?

Achievement of the TPLF's initial objective, and almost total control over Tigray, raised the issue of whether to press on to Addis Ababa, or declare an independent Tigrayan state. Its leadership had ambitions to rule the whole of Ethiopia, creating the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front in 1989, to provide a mechanism for other, ethnically based, parties to join the TPLF. Not all its own members agreed; many spontaneously went home.¹ Only after months of protracted discussion was the leadership able to convince its followers that they should continue prosecuting the war. Tigrayan nationalism was, at least for the time being, to be subordinated to a wider Ethiopian identity.

The EPLF and the TPLF relied, therefore, upon completely different perspectives on nationalism. The Eritrean struggle, which began in 1961, eventually generated a powerful sense of collective identity. It was a nationalism forged in blood and with a clear objective in mind, namely an independent Eritrea, and shaped by its own experience of colonialism. Italian rule had fashioned Eritrea, just as other European colonizers had brought into being Africa's other states, with the exception of Ethiopia. Italian colonialism had also brought with it some of the benefits of European rule, in the shape of modern port facilities, roads and railways. When the Italians were driven out in 1941, they left behind a far more developed state than the feudal empire that existed in Ethiopia. Little wonder that the Eritreans tended to look down on their cousins across the Mereb river as caught in the grip of a medieval power, despite their long shared heritage of imperial rule before the Italian conquest.

The Tigrayans, on the other hand, also had much to be proud of: a historic past, the rule of the last Tigrayan emperor, Yohannis IV, 1872-89, and local rebellions against Haile Selassie in the early 1940s. But while Eritrean nationalism was clearly associated with a potential nation-state, Tigrayan nationalism had to play a difficult balancing act - at once emphasizing the aspirations of the Tigrayan people and coming to terms with the wider Ethiopian state. It was a problem that was to haunt the TPLF and its relations with the EPLF.

A troubled cooperation

While opposition to the dictatorial rule exercised from Addis Ababa united the two liberation movements, they were divided by a number of factors, including ideology, tactics and alliances. Over time these grew, rather than diminished, in importance. In 1974 as the founders of the TPLF were preparing to launch an armed struggle, they made contact with the Eritrean movements, the obvious place to go to get assistance. The TPLF received military training as well as arms from the EPLF. This cooperation was fruitful and it learned much from the Eritreans.

However, not all of it was to its liking. On the face of it both movements shared a Marxist analysis. In reality this was more of an impediment than a spur to unity. The TPLF was firmly rooted in the countryside and among the Tigrayan peasantry. It adopted a Maoist perspective, and was therefore closer to China, and latterly to Albania. The adoption of Maoism also reflected changes within the TPLF. It was at this time, in the mid-1980s that Meles Zenawi gained authority within the movement, and brought about the establishment of a party inside the TPLF - the Marxist Leninist League of Tigray. This was an overtly vanguardist party, with a clear Maoist orientation. Although the EPLF had its own base area in the far west of Eritrea, bordering on Sudan, this was a sparsely populated area, from which few of its fighters were drawn. Its early links with Cuban and Syria meant it became aligned with the Soviet

Union. While Haile Selassie was backed by the United States this proved no obstacle. The fall of the emperor and the assumption of power by the Dergue led to a change in international support. Now it was Moscow that backed the rulers in Addis Ababa. This change tested the Eritrean position to the full, but the EPLF still resisted labelling the Soviet Union as imperialist, believing that it might one day need the latter's support as permanent members of the Security Council to achieve United Nations recognition for an independent Eritrea. The Tigrayans had no such difficulties, and had no hesitation in condemning the Soviet Union as imperialist. Arcane as such arguments may now seem, they were an important impediment to cooperation

²There were also disagreements about military strategy. While the TPLF was prepared to withdraw from untenable positions, the EPLF was determined not to relinquish its base area in the remote far west of the country once it had been established. Matters came to a head in 1982 during Ethiopia's 'Red Star' campaign. It was the most sustained offensive the government forces were ever to undertake, and came within an ace of capturing the EPLF's base area, and with it Nakfa, the last town in rebel hands. Tigrayan fighters training with the EPLF were called upon to go into action, apparently without the permission of the TPLF central committee, who were furious at not being asked. After immense efforts their combined forces just managed to repel the Ethiopian onslaught. Casualties were heavy, however, and the TPLF was deeply critical of the tactics employed by the EPLF, accusing it of moving too rapidly from guerrilla warfare to positional encounters with the enemy. This criticism did nothing to endear the TPLF to its allies, but worse was to follow.

An exchange of insults in the mid-1980s - with the EPLF defined as 'social imperialist' by the TPLF, which in turn labelled the TPLF 'childish' - masked a serious theoretical difference with major political ramifications for the national question in Ethiopia.³ The issue was originally whether or not self-determination should be allowed up to, and including, secession. It was a critical question for the student radicals in Addis Ababa in the 1960s and 1970s, many of whom went on to lead the Eritrean and Tigrayan liberation movements. Inclusion of secession identified those who supported the Eritrean struggle for independence and interpreted it as a colonial question. But in the 1980s, the TPLF, as part of its efforts to win backing elsewhere in Ethiopia, expanded the argument to include, first, other nationalities in Ethiopia, among them Oromo and the Somali, and, secondly and far more controversially, the nationalities in Eritrea as well. During its exchange of polemics with the EPLF in 1986/87, the TPLF even stated that 'a truly democratic' Eritrea would have to respect 'the right of its own nationalities up to and including secession' ⁴ This infuriated and appalled the EPLF, whose campaign was founded upon the unique colonial status of Eritrea, and tied to forging a single nation out of Eritrea's nine linguistic groups. It was this dispute which convinced the TPLF that its relationship with the EPLF could only be 'tactical'. It also believed that the EPLF's relationship with the Eritrean people was undemocratic enough for the TPLF to ally with other 'genuinely democratic' Eritrean movements, such as the Marxist Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrea.

The EPLF became so disillusioned that it decided to teach the TPLF a brutal lesson in power politics. In June 1985, at the height of the Ethiopian famine, it cut the TPLF's supply lines between Tigray and Sudan, isolating Tigray from its chief source of food at a critical juncture. This was indeed a drastic measure. Although nothing was said in public at the time, it is not hard to imagine the animosity that this generated. The TPLF responded with characteristic efficiency, mobilizing 100,000 peasants to drive an alternative route through to Sudan that did not go via Eritrea.

Despite this rupture the imperatives of war continued to drive both movements into each other's arms. It became clear that military advances would only be made through cooperation. In April 1988, after four days of discussions in Khartoum, a joint statement was issued, indicating that their differences had been overcome. It was at this time that the Tigrayans suggested that the two movements should demarcate their mutual border. The Eritreans did not accept this, since they believed there were few real differences and that these could be worked out once victory had been achieved. It was to prove a crucial mistake. Yet at the time it seemed insignificant, and from then until the overthrow of the Mengistu regime, the TPLF and EPLF were allies once more.

By the time the Eritreans finally took Asmara in 1991 and the Tigrayans marched into Addis Ababa four days later, supported by EPLF units, the two movements had forged strong bonds. Their members had fought side by side against appalling odds, and while differences remained, their leaderships had come to know, trust and rely upon each other.

Initial difficulties

Yet even at the moment of victory, cracks were appearing in the relationship. The EPLF not only expelled from its soil the Ethiopian army of occupation, it insisted that tens of thousands of Ethiopian citizens who had been involved in the Ethiopian administration should leave as well. Between 1991 and 1992 as many as 150,000 Ethiopians, including thousands of Eritrean wives and their children, and many Tigrayans, were expelled, forced to leave property and belongings behind. Some had worked in Eritrea all their lives, and knew no other home. The newly installed Ethiopian government neither officially complained nor retaliated. It continued to allow up to half a million Eritreans to live inside Ethiopia.

The circumstances surrounding the victory threw up their own difficulties. Eritrean support for the Tigrayans in

capturing Addis Ababa was seen as a sign by many Ethiopians that the TPLF was in the EPLF's pocket. This was particularly strong among the Amhara, who had been displaced as the ruling ethnic group by the Tigrayans. The accusation that Meles Zenawi was insufficiently nationalist in his policies was to be a source of weakness. The differing interpretations of nationalism referred to above also served to drive the movements further apart. The Tigrayans attempted to re-form the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines. They shaped the constitution to allow for 'a voluntary union of the nationalities of Ethiopia' and inserted the right to secession in the new constitution of 1995.⁵ In Eritrea, the ruling EPLF, renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice in 1994, opted for a highly centralized single party structure. Power was concentrated in the hands of those in control in the centre, with little real influence conceded to local or regional bodies by the 'Proclamation for the Establishment of Regional Administrations' of 1996.

Relations were further strained by the introduction of the Eritrean currency, the nakfa, in 1997. Prior to this both countries had used the Ethiopian birr, but Eritrea was determined to have a currency of its own, partly as a tool of economic policy and partly as a means of reinforcing its hard-won independence. Unfortunately the nakfa was introduced only after considerable rancour between Addis Abbaba and Asmara: the former would not accept an Eritrean proposal that both currencies should circulate freely in both countries, insisting that all but small local trading arrangements should be carried out using hard currency, which disrupted trade and caused considerable hardship.

Despite these tensions, government delegations came and went; the outward signs were that all was well.

The first blows

There is absolutely no agreement between the two countries about what set off the current conflict. All that is agreed upon is that the clash on 6 May 1998 place in the area around Badme. Both countries lay claim to the area, one of several disputed sections of their long border.

The situation in each of these contested areas is complex and the area around Badme is no exception. In the late nineteenth century, at the time when the border was defined, the area was sparsely populated. Over time Eritrean and Tigrayan farmers came to settle it, joining the Kunama who had originally lived there. In the 1960s the Ethiopian administrator of Tigray paid little attention to the area, but allowed the development of agricultural settlements on both sides of the border that were administered by the Ethiopian district of Shire. Indeed, once the United Nations federated Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952, the border had little relevance. Essentially, therefore the main area now under dispute, around Badme, was administered from Tigray, irrespective of which side of the line it fell.⁶ Much of the area fell under control of the two liberation fronts in the 1970s, but this made little difference, as long as they had good relations. The EPLF also administered pockets of territory that fell within Ethiopia.

However, occasional disputes did occur along the entire Ethiopian-Eritrean border after 1991. Most were local and small-scale. They were the sort of conflicts that frequently flare up along any ill-defined border which is straddled by farming communities. Low-level meetings between local officials took place in an attempt to resolve these matters, but when these failed the problems were referred upwards. Finally, after a particularly difficult confrontation over the Bada area in 1997, Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki wrote to Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on 25 August, proposing that a Joint Border Commission be set up at governmental level. The first meeting of the Commission took place in Asmara on 13 November 1997. This achieved little, and there was no further meeting until 8 May 1998, with the Eritreans blaming Ethiopian procrastination for the delay.

In the meantime an apparently minor, unrelated event occurred that convinced the Eritrean government that the Tigrayans were up to no good. Early in 1997 the German government aid agency, the GTZ, was asked to help fund the printing of a new map of Tigray for distribution to primary schools. The map turned out to be deeply controversial, for it incorporated into Tigray several areas that had been the subject of the heated discussions between the two countries. For the Eritreans this was proof positive of the hostile intentions of the Tigrayans. Some interpreted it as the realization of the long-held TPLF dream of a 'Greater Tigray', that would take in all Tigrayan speakers, as outlined in the TPLF manifesto of 1976.

⁷ Against this background a high-level delegation arrived in Addis Ababa as the first incident took place on 6 May. Nevertheless talks proceeded cordially. Ethiopia reports that it was agreed that the Joint Commission would meet in Asmara a month later to hammer out an agreement.⁸ On 9 May the Eritrean delegation flew back to Asmara. There followed three days of intensive telephone discussions between senior leaders on both sides. These discussions proved fruitless, with each side blaming the other for the failure to resolve the growing crisis. On the morning of 12 May Eritrean troops backed by tanks took Badme and its environs. The following day the Ethiopian parliament passed a resolution condemning the Eritrean 'aggression', demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Eritrean forces and warning that Ethiopia reserved the right to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Ethiopian troops were mobilized and sent to the border, to replace the police who had been previously deployed.

The conflict and its aftermath

The initial clashes between 6 and 12 May left the area around Badme badly damaged. Ethiopia claims that the Eritrean action displaced over 24,000 people and destroyed twelve schools, a veterinary clinic, fertilizers and grain

stores. After a lull the military confrontation between the two countries escalated into a series of brief but bloody battles along the border between 22 May and 11 June.

On the ground the fighting centred on three areas: around Sheraro and Badme in the west, around the town of Zalambessa on the road linking the two countries in the centre, and in the far south for control of the road to the Eritrean port of Assab. A series of air raids resulted in a number of civilian casualties. Ethiopian planes attacked the airport in Asmara. The Eritrean air force was also in action, hitting targets in the Tigrayan regional capital, Mekele. Civilian targets, including a school, were hit and 47 people killed. Whoever launched this air war, the Eritreans were clearly embarrassed by the civilian deaths. President Afeworki expressed his regret at their deaths and insisted they were not intentional.

Considerable diplomatic efforts were by now under way to end the fighting, though only one intervention now bore fruit. President Clinton, speaking to both President Afeworki and Prime Minister Zenawi, managed to secure a moratorium on the air raids, which both sides promised not to break without first giving adequate warning of their intentions. This led to a wider cessation of hostilities, although it was never formalized.

There followed several months of uneasy calm. Both sides moved rapidly to modernize and replenish their arms and ammunition, including the acquisition of MiG 29s by Eritrea, and of Sukhoi 27s by Ethiopia, both supplied by Russia. Ethiopia bought Mi 24 helicopter gunships, and Mi 8 cargo helicopters in a deal which provided, as with Eritrea, for technical support as well as training and pilots. Ethiopia also bought arms and ammunition from China, and tanks from Bulgaria. Eritrea obtained weapons and ammunition from Bulgaria and other east European countries. Each side has already spent several hundred million dollars on arms.

The humanitarian costs of the conflict have been immense. Ethiopia began a systematic attempt to rid itself of any Eritreans it regarded as pro-EPLF, no matter how long they had lived in Ethiopia. Amnesty International condemned the mass deportation of 52,000 Eritreans, declaring that women, children and even hospital patients were being arrested and deported under inhumane conditions. It noted that while some 40,000 Ethiopians had left Eritrea for economic reasons, there was no sign that they had been ill treated, or forcibly deported. Several hundred thousand people have been displaced on both sides of the disputed border by the fighting.

With an uneasy peace prevailing along the border the international community launched a series of missions to defuse the crisis. The most significant was a joint US-Rwandan initiative in late May 1998. This called for the deployment of a small observer mission to the Badme area, from which Eritrea would redeploy, and for the re-establishment of the previous civilian administration. This was to be followed by a demarcation of the border on the basis of colonial treaties and international law. The proposals were incorporated into a framework for a settlement that was discussed by the Organization of African Unity at a meeting in Ouagadougou in November, and later endorsed by the United Nations.

The proposal, which has been largely accepted by the Ethiopians, was regarded with considerable hostility by the Eritreans. They accused the Americans of releasing the details of their plan prematurely, and of attempting to 'bounce' them into acceptance without adequate discussion. Furthermore, they were unwilling to withdraw from Badme, since to do so would - in their view - concede that it was Ethiopian territory. Nor were they willing to see the re-establishment of Ethiopian administration in the disputed areas. Instead Asmara asked whether Ethiopia was prepared to abide by the colonial treaties that defined their mutual border. Ethiopia's response was to insist that face-to-face discussions could only take place once Eritrea had withdrawn from what Ethiopia considered to be its territory.

As the months went by and peace initiatives came and went, the situation on the border became increasingly tense. In February 1999 the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, warned that fighting could resume at any time. Ethiopia closed schools and colleges all along the border, and restricted the movements of foreigners in the area. Eritrea declared that it had a number of reports, including some from Western intelligence sources, that Ethiopia was planning a three-pronged attack between mid-January and mid-February. An increasingly concerned international community also sounded the alarm, but to no avail.

At dawn on Saturday 6 February the eight-month lull was abruptly brought to an end. Ethiopia made the first of a series of probing attacks on the Badme front, following this with attacks on the Eritrean positions inside Ethiopia at Zalambessa and Bure, on the road to Assab. Each side accused the other of renewing the fighting and of breaking the air moratorium. The UN Security Council called for an immediate cease-fire, and rather belatedly threatened to impose an arms embargo against both countries. In the last week of February, Ethiopia finally launched a major offensive at Badme. After initial failures, the attack broke through the Eritrean defences, driving the Eritreans out of the disputed area, over-running the whole of Baduma plains and penetrating 25 km into Eritrea. Casualties on both sides were very heavy, but the scale of Eritrean defeat was apparent when Eritrea unexpectedly accepted the OAU peace framework on 27 February, though it coupled this with a complaint about Ethiopia's aggression to the UN Security Council. Although both sides have accepted the OAU framework, a number of factors continue to militate against any complete cessation of hostilities, including the position of Eritrean troops in Zalabesse and Bure. Ethiopia made it clear that any cease-fire and any subsequent negotiations would depend upon its recovery of all its

territory, whether by military action or by diplomacy. The OAU framework is also likely to face problems in organizing any cease-fire and arranging for monitors and observers. It is likely to be a considerable time before arrangements for any border demarcation can be completed.

International ramifications

When President Clinton toured Africa in March and April 1998, praising young and dynamic leaders for being the standard-bearers of an 'African renaissance', President Afewerki and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi were precisely the kind of politicians he had in mind. Hard-working, uncorrupt and determined to break with the continent's sleazy past, both men were promoted as role models for Africa. The new governments were seen as running just the kind of self-reliant regimes that international agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund could cooperate with.

The conflict has torn apart this image, and has affected international relations throughout the Horn of Africa. The first and most serious damage has been to the alliance against the Islamic fundamentalist government in Sudan, which was carefully cultivated by the United States. This brought together Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia and a large number of Sudanese opposition movements. Ethiopia has now moved towards a rapprochement with Sudan, leaving the alliance in tatters. Eritrea has moved close to Libya and talks of joining the Arab League, to the dismay of Israel which has valued links to both Ethiopia and Eritrea, and has tried hard not to take sides. At the same time both Ethiopia and Eritrea have begun to activate each other's dissidents. Ethiopia is cultivating a number of Eritrean groups, including the Kunama and sections of the Afar, and trying to bring together the much divided Eritrean opposition including former Eritrean Liberation Front factions. Eritrea, for its part, is also wooing the Afar, while providing support for Ethiopia's Somali and Oromo opposition movements.

Both Ethiopia and Eritrea now appear intent not only on winning a decisive victory on the battlefield, but also on inflicting serious damage on their opponents. If changing the regimes in Addis Abbaba and Asmara is really part of the strategic aims of the respective belligerents, as their rhetoric suggests, then this conflict will prove even harder to resolve than the fruitless months of diplomacy have hitherto revealed.

See John Young, 'The Tigray People's Liberation Front', in Christopher Clapham (ed.), *African Guerrillas*, James Currey, London, 1998, p. 48.

2 John Young, 'The Tigray and Eritrean Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1996, p. 115.

3 M. Duffield and J. Prendergast, *Without Troops and Tanks: Humanitarian Intervention in Ethiopia and Eritrea*, Red Sea Press, 1994, p.100.

4 *People's Voice*, 1986, Special Issue.

5 J. Abbink, 'Briefing: The Eritrea-Ethiopian Border Dispute', *African Affairs*, Vol. 97, 1998, p. 556.

6 Jean-Louis Peninou, 'The Ethiopian-Eritrean Border Conflict', *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin*, summer 1998.

7 'A war without cause', *Network of Eritrean Professionals in Europe*, London, 1998, pp. 10-11.

8 *Background to and Chronology of Events on the Eritrean Aggression against Ethiopia*, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 June 1998.

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