The Constitution of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)

Adopted at the Second Organisational Congress of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), May 1983
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Our Revolution and the World Situation

Our revolution is taking place at a time when:

- imperialism, rotten to the core and in deep crisis, has reached the verge of collapse.
- the competition and contradiction between Western and Eastern imperialists for control of the world has sharpened.
- either of the Western and Eastern imperialists is trying hard to present itself as the champion of peace, justice and democracy.
- the peoples of the world, desirous of peace and justice, have repeatedly carried out peaceful demonstrations and strikes in opposition to the starvation and anti-peace policies of the two superpowers, who because of self-interest have deprived mankind of peace and are showing growing commitment to the development of weapons of destruction.
- the toiling and unemployed workers of the world have repeatedly demonstrated their opposition.
- the people of the less developed countries, tired of exploitation by imperialists and feudalists and determined to free themselves from them, are waging relentless struggles in different forms.
- our revolution is conducted at a time when the people of Ethiopia, tired of class exploitation, national oppression and fascist brutalities, have demonstrated their readiness to struggle and when the imperialist powers driven by self-interest are competing for domination and control, while the oppressed people of the world are confronting them and their reactionary hirelings.

2. Our People and their Way of Living

The people of Tigray are part of the people of the world that have been bleeding to death through feudo-imperialist exploitation and national domination. The people of Tigray, shackled by a feudo-imperialist order, are among the most backward peoples of the world. 85% of the people live in rural areas and depend for their living on primitive agriculture based on ox-drawn plough. The remaining 15% live in urban areas as students, teachers, doctors, workers, and many of the women live from prostitution, etc.

In addition to the underdeveloped mode of production, the people have also suffered for a long time from Amhara domination. Furthermore, they have suffered since the fascist Derg came to power from fascistic brutalities and genocide. Thus, the enemies of the downtrodden people of Tigray are imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, national domination and fascism.
3. Aims and Objectives of Our Struggle

It is inevitable that the oppression outlined above should give birth to struggle. And indeed the second Woyane (Revolution) of the people of Tigray sparked off on February 18, 1975. The TPLF, which is the direct outcome of the decades of oppression of the people of Tigray and which reflects their aspirations, is the vanguard of the revolution. The revolution which is being led by the TPLF aims to destroy imperialist and feudal relations of production. Thus, the revolution, which is popular and democratic and which is guided by working class ideology, is supported by the workers, peasants and other oppressed classes and is against feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism. Since our people have been victims of national domination, they are also struggling to free themselves from this domination and thereby safeguard their national rights, dignity and the right to self-determination. In addition to the enemies enumerated above, the people of Tigray are opposed to and struggle against the fascist oppression and atrocities that are the very nature of the Derg. Tigray people’s revolution is committed to the total elimination of feudalism, imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and fascism. Its objectives could be summarised as follows:

1. To eliminate national domination and restore the national rights of the Tigrean people.
2. To eliminate imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism.
3. To struggle for justice and progress in the world.

4. The Revolution: Principles and Structures

As stated above, our revolution is a democratic revolution guided by the ideology of the proletariat. As a just and democratic revolution, its structure and mode of operation is based on democratic centralism. All decisions, at all levels, are arrived at through full participation and governed by the decisions of the majority. Members who are against a decision, have the right to table their objection not only during the discussion, but also after the decision has been taken. They can reopen discussion in the subsequent regular meetings and request reconsideration of the issue. However, the decision is binding from the moment it was taken and all have to abide by it until such time as it is reversed. They can neither act contrary to the decision nor voice objection to it outside the proper channels. However, they are entitled to their ideas until they are convinced and no pressure shall be exerted on them to change.

There will be supervision to make sure that the executive organs are implementing decisions made by the members. The executive organs have the obligation to evaluate their work, and report on their activities to the body that appointed them. The lower organs have the right and responsibility to criticise or voice opinion against their higher organs. The higher organs shall put into practice all the directives given to them.

Democratic tradition requires that there should be regular contact between all the members at all levels and not at fixed periods when there is peace and progress or among the members of the higher organs only.
Democracy is a regular companion of all the members, present in decision making, criticism, indeed in their daily life of struggle and not like a public holiday that comes and goes occasionally.

It is only normal that there should be difference of opinion or ideological struggle in daily activities or meetings. At such moments goodwill alone is not adequate. It is imperative to realise that some ideas might reflect class character or they might simply be rooted in ignorance and what is more, that these ideas might be held by many. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to provide a platform for extensive discussion and to try to expose where the mistakes lie and attempt to win support through free debate and full participation of the members. Attacking members who hold mistaken ideas is in fact secondary.

The correct ideas are the result of extensive discussions and of ideological struggle. The majority of the members will be shaped and guided by these ideas and there will be unity of ideas and action. The differences of opinion and action that crop up from time to time will be transformed to a unity of ideas and action through democratic practice. Differences of opinion are resolved and brought to a unity of ideas and action on the basis of existing unity of ideas and action and the tradition of free discussion. Every effort will be put for all members to fully adopt and exercise democratic practices and culture.

Since, in the future, the number of civilian members will be proportional to the number of civilians from the oppressed classes, it will be necessary from now on to further relate the structure and activities of the organisation with that of the mass associations. The rights and duties of all members will be basically equal. Recruitment, rights and implementation of duties will be further deepened. All the members of our organisation, wherever they are, shall have the duty to sacrifice for the just cause and to abide by the rules and regulations of the organisation. According to their responsibilities, they have the right to know anything related to their specific tasks and their organisation. They have the right to criticise and give opinions and to attend or participate in the organisational conferences and congresses. In the eyes of the organisation all are equal. Basically, they have the same rights and duties.
CHAPTER 2

The Organisation

Article 1. Name of the organisation
Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF).

Article 2. The emblem of the organisation
a) The emblem of our organisation has two sheaves of barley on two sides, an upright obelisk in the centre and across the obelisk leaning to the left a hammer, and leaning to the right a Kalashnikov and on top of the obelisk, where the two ends of the barley sheaves meet, is a red star.
b) The barley represents the peasantry, the hammer represents the workers, the Kalashnikov symbolises the ongoing armed struggle, the obelisk represents the history and national struggle and the red star stands for proletarian internationalism.

Article 3. The Flag of the Organisation
a) Our flag is rectangular, the length greater than the width, with a yellow triangle starting from the left hand corner and extending to the centre. The background is red with a golden star in the middle of the red.
b) The yellow symbolises the bright future of the revolution and the golden star stands for workers’ internationalism.
CHAPTER 3

Members of the Organisation

Article 4. Members
a) Members of the TPLF are the fighters (the army) and the members of all duly recognised and related mass associations.

b) Qualification for membership
One becomes a member when he/she:
- accepts the programme of the organisation
- respects the policies and guidelines of the organisation
- is ready to implement his/her duties, with due consideration given to the degree of political consciousness and organisation
- voluntarily joins the organisation.

Article 5. Rights of members
a) Members of the TPLF (collectively) give or withhold candidates for the highest responsibilities.

A TPLF member:
b) Can bring a case against a member or members of the Central Committee.
c) Can send representatives to organs of the Organisation set up by election (Congress, Central Committee, etc).
d) Can be elected to any branch of the TPLF.
e) Has the right to know about the state of the organisation through the proper channels.
f) Has the right to give opinions, to ask questions on decisions taken, or seek explanations in all matters pertaining to the organisation.

Article 6. Responsibilities of Members
a) Has to fulfill the necessary qualities in order to qualify for an office.
b) Has to accept, respect and implement the constitution of the organisation and its programme.
c) Shall show consideration towards the people, comrades and organisation and be ready at all times to perform his/her organisational duties.
CHAPTER 4

The Highest Organs of the Organisation

Article 7. Organisational Congress

a) How it is convened:
   1. The congress is formally conducted once every four years. Elected representatives from the members of the TPLF constitute the Organisational Congress.
   2. Necessary preparation is conducted by a preparatory committee.
   3. An extraordinary Organisational Congress can be called by the majority of the members or by the Central Committee.

b) Duties and Responsibilities
   1. It is the highest organ of the organisation.
   2. It formulates the TPLF’s programme and its general political, economic, military and foreign policy. It passes resolutions and takes stands on various issues, etc.
   3. It has the responsibility of making necessary structural changes within the TPLF.
   4. It reviews the general report on tasks performed between the two congresses.
   5. It elects a committee which sees unresolved cases brought on the Central Committee through the proper channels.
   6. It elects and dismisses the Central Committee.

c) Operation
   1. 85% is the quorum of a regularly convened Congress.
   2. An issue, in a regularly convened Congress, will pass if it gets the support of over 50% of the representatives.
   3. The Central Committee is elected by secret ballot. An election committee is elected by the Congress to supervise the election.

Article 8. Central Committee

a) How it is established:
   1. The Central Committee is made up of members elected by the Congress.
   2. It has a certain number of alternate members.
   3. It is divided into different functional committees — namely, political, military, socio-economic, foreign affairs.

b) Tasks and responsibilities
   1. It draws detailed tasks in order to implement the political, economic and military policies adopted by the
Congress.
2. It clarifies stands and forms of relationship that can be established with countries and organisations.
3. It elects the Secretary General and Vice-Secretary of the Central Committee and the Politbureau.
4. It supervises and reviews the work of the politbureau and all other organs that come directly under it.
5. It promotes alternate members of the Central Committee to full membership of the Central Committee.
6. It can call an extraordinary meeting of the Organisational Congress, provided the call is supported by two-thirds of its members.
7. Any member accused of misconduct can be rejected by a two-thirds vote from his/her Central Committee membership.
8. It can decree, when necessary, new holidays not mentioned in the constitution.

c) How it functions:
1. It will hold regular official meetings.
2. Two-thirds of the members shall constitute a quorum.
3. It can hold an emergency meeting when requested by a third of its members.
4. It divides itself into functional committees.

Article 9. Politbureau

a) How it is established:
The Politbureau shall be composed of members of the Central Committee appointed by the Central Committee.

b) Duties and Responsibilities
1. Implements the political, military, economic and other decisions of the Congress and the Central Committee.
2. Implements agreements and establishes relations with organisations and governments.
3. Gives guidelines and makes adjustments to organs of the organisation.
4. Assigns members of the Central Committee to committees, and chairs the committees through its members.
5. It is the highest body between two meetings of the CC.
6. It is responsible to the Central Committee.

c) How it functions:
1. It shall have (scheduled) regular meetings.
2. Two-thirds of its members shall constitute a quorum.
3. An emergency meeting can be called if requested by one third of its members.
CHAPTER 5

Committees

Article 10. The General Structure of the Committees
1. All committees shall be chaired by a member of the Politbureau.
2. The size and composition of the committees shall be determined by the Politbureau.
3. They shall have an office at organisational and regional levels.
4. When necessary each committee can form a sub-committee to carry out its work.

Article 11. Duties and Responsibilities of Each Committee
1. The Political Committee
   a) Implements the political programmes outlined by the Congress and the CC and in accordance with the guidelines given by the Politbureau.
   b) It gives clarification and explanation to important international, regional and national political issues which arise from time to time.
   c) Disseminates the political programmes and guidelines of the organisation to all members and based on the organisation’s strategy it formulates political tactics which develop with changing situations.
   d) Outlines the basis for promoting and strengthening the mass associations, issues guidelines and supervises their work.
   e) Ensures that the minority nationalities and women have an appropriate role in the revolution and that they are participating accordingly.
   f) Finds ways and means to enhance the linguistic, cultural, and artistic life of our people.

2. Military Committee
   a) Implements all the military programmes enacted by the congress and the CC and in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Politbureau.
   b) Deploys the army in close consultation with the Secretary General and his/her deputy.
   c) Carries out studies on the deployment and capabilities of enemy forces and foils enemy plans.
   d) Conducts research and implements the findings in order to upgrade the combat readiness of the forces.
   e) Makes the necessary adjustments and changes within the forces of the army.
   f) Looks for ways and means of destroying the intelligence
networks of the enemy.

3. Social and Economic Committee
   a) Implements the economic programme approved by the Congress and the CC in line with the directives set out by the Politbureau.
   b) Controls the financial and material resources of the organisation. Finds ways and means of enhancing the economy of the organisation and approves the budgets of the departments of the organisation.
   c) Conducts economic research and undertakes economic projects beneficial to the organisation and the people.
   d) Studies the economic strategy of the enemy and devises ways of undermining it.
   e) Administers all the social services such as medical work, education, settlement, etc.
   f) Plans and implements programmes to aid the victims of the enemy and of natural disasters.
   g) Finds ways to help the needy members of the organisation.

4. Foreign Affairs Committee
   a) Implements the foreign policy formulated by the congress and the CC, in accordance with the directives issued by the Politbureau.
   b) Represents the TPLF abroad and as such seeks political, moral, and material assistance from the friends of our revolution.
   c) Wages an intensive propaganda campaign to explain to the world the objectives, the true cause of our revolution and its unprecedented growth and to expose the true nature of the enemy.
   d) Carries out studies and uses the results for the benefit of the revolution.
   e) It is the responsibility of the Foreign Affairs Committee to centralise and administer all the activities of the organisation outside the country.
CHAPTER 6

The Offices

Article 12. The Office of the Central Committee
a) How it is established:
   1. The secretary and the vice secretary of the organisation, and an administrator make up the members of the office of the Central Committee.
   2. The day-to-day management of the secretariat shall be done by the administrator of the office.
b) Duties and responsibilities of the Office of the Central Committee
   1. Distributes studies which are useful in formulating programmes to the responsible departments.
   2. Communicates decisions and programmes of the Central Committee and the Politbureau to the implementing organs and supervises its implementation.
   3. Receives reports of activities and digests them.
   4. Maintains files and reports.
c) Duties and responsibilities of the General Secretary
   1. Chairs all the meetings of the Central Committee and the Politbureau and calls all regular meetings.
   2. Shall have the casting vote when there is a tie in the votes of the Central Committee or Politbureau.
   3. Is the official representative of the organisation and the Commander-in-Chief of the forces.
   4. Keeps all the secret documents of the organisation.
   5. Centralises the office of the Central Committee.
d) Duties and responsibilities of the Deputy General Secretary
   1. Assists the General Secretary in his/her work and when necessary acts on his/her behalf.
   2. Prepares the agenda for the meeting of the Central Committee and Politbureau, keeps minutes and brings the necessary documents and records to the meetings of the congress, Central Committee and the Politbureau.
   3. Receives important reports of the organisation; keeps, replies to or passes to the relevant departments letters sent from organisations and countries.
   4. Maintains files of the members of the Central Committee.

Article 13. Regional Office of the Central Committee
a) How it is established:
   1. It is made up of the Chairperson of the Regional Central Committee, secretaries of branch committees and an administrator.
   2. The day-to-day administration is carried out by the administrator of the regional office.
3. The Regional Office is made up of all Committee offices and an administrator.

b) **Duties and responsibilities of the Office of the Regional Central Committee**

1. Supervises the implementation of the programmes of the organisation in the region.

2. Receives reports of activities of the region, digests and maintains records.

3. Coordinates and administers the branches of the organisation in the region.

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**Article 14. Office of the Committee**

a) **How it is established**

1. It is composed of the chairperson of the committee and staff members.

2. One of the staff members will be responsible for running the office.

b) **Duties and responsibilities of the Offices:**

1. To conduct the necessary study and research for use in formulating programmes of each committee.

2. To draft directives and pass them to the organs immediately under them.

3. To propose programmes to their respective committees.

4. To plan and conduct educational and training programmes for the benefit of the branches immediately under them.

5. Each Committee records, digests and communicates its overall reports to the office of the Central Committee.
Chapter 7

Official Holidays of the Organisation

Article 15. Holidays Observed at an Organisational Level are:

a) February 18th, the beginning of the armed struggle
b) May 1st, Workers’ Day, May Day
c) March 8th, International Women’s Day
d) September 7th, the beginning of the First Woyane (Revolution)
CHAPTER 8

Amendment of the Constitution

Article 16. With regards to the Amendment of the Constitution

1. This constitution having been approved at the Second Organisational Congress of the TPLF, shall be the highest law of the TPLF and shall come into effect as of May 15, 1983.

2. To amend or change this constitution it is necessary to have two-thirds of the votes of the Organisational Congress.

3. All sections of the organisation, namely the fighters, the militia, the different mass associations through their respective Congresses or Conferences, will draft and approve necessary and suitable by-laws, rules and regulations. They can also amend their by-laws, rules and regulations through the mass procedure.
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE TPLF

ORGANISATIONAL CONGRESS

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

POLITBUREAU

MILITARY COMMITTEE

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICES

OFFICE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

MILITARY CC OFFICE

POLITICAL CC OFFICE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CC OFFICE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS CC OFFICE

REGIONAL BRANCH OFFICES, REGIONS 1, 2, 3

REGIONAL BRANCH OFFICES, REGIONS 1, 2, 3

REGIONAL BRANCH OFFICES, REGIONS 1, 2, 3

REGIONAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICE

COMMITTEE BRANCHES OFFICE