

Paul Maubec



Eritrea towards the final victory

The French reporter Paul Maubec alias Chris Kutschera passed away on August 1st at the age of 79. He was the author of *Erythrée – Eritrea*, a short history of Eritrea written simultaneously in French and English, illustrated by black and white archive photographs and more than 150 colour photographs.

On this occasion we express our deepest condolence to his family and we would like to honor his memory by sharing with our readers the following paragraph that he wrote in his book about Eritrea's final victory.

“The capture of Afabet, in March 1988, marked the beginning of the end for the Ethiopian army. After breaking through the Ethiopian lines on the Nacfa front. The EPLF fighters rushed towards Afabet, the headquarters of the “Nado Command”, the Ethiopian command for northern Eritrea. This offensive culminated in the battle of Atchurum, on March 17, 1988, during which the EPLF guerrillas annihilated a complete Ethiopian armored brigade, captured several thousand soldiers, a hundred and fifty Ethiopian officers, and three Soviet military advisers. On March 20, 1988, an EPLF armoured column entered in Tessenei, evacuated a few hours earlier by the Ethiopian army.

Massawa fell in February 1990. The crisis in the USSR accelerated the decomposition of Mengistu's regime, and in May 1991, after a new defeat of his troops in Decamere, a few kilometers from Asmara, Mengistu fled hastily into exile: a few hours later, on May 24, 1991 EPLF tanks drove into Asmara. Independence was at long last a fact – after thirty years of struggle, the longest war of independence in Africa. It wasn't proclaimed until on May 1993, after a referendum organized under the supervision of the United Nations which was

thus forgiven its complicity in the history of Eritrea's misfortunes. Issayas Afeworki, EPLF Secretary General and the chief of the provisional government, became the first president of the State of Eritrea."

