



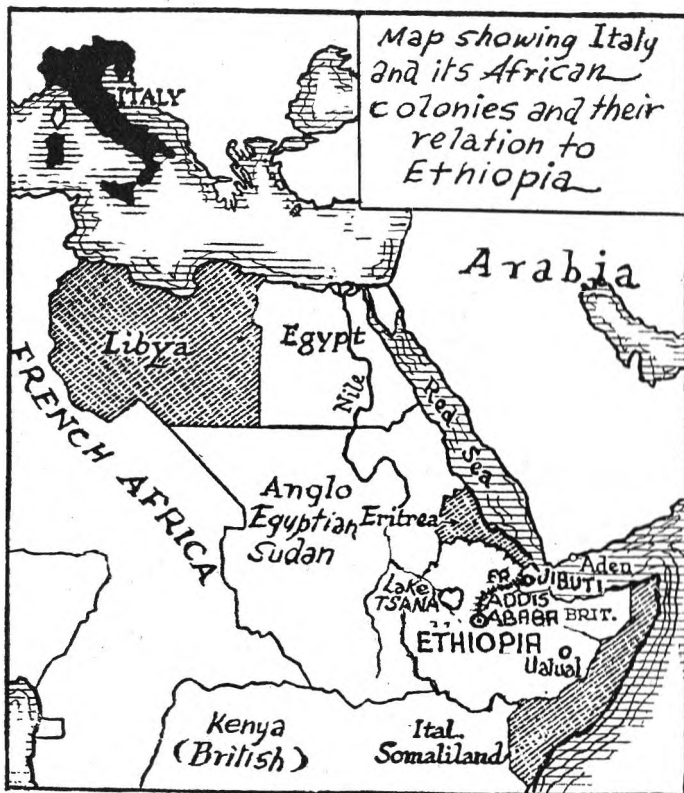
WAR IN AFRICA

**ITALIAN FASCISM PREPARES
TO ENSLAVE ETHIOPIA**

By JAMES W. FORD and HARRY GANNES

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THREATS of Italian fascism to enslave Ethiopia have aroused and moved the American Negro masses more than any other international event in recent history.

Far-away Ethiopia, last independent Negro country of Africa, in its fight to retain its independence, has awakened an inspiring bond of sympathy and fervent support among millions of American Negro people.* Throughout the world, the revolutionary workers and colonial peoples are mobilizing their forces for the defeat of Mussolini's war plans.

So deeply has the desire to assist Ethiopia against Italian fascism seeped into the political consciousness of the American Negro people that in their own struggle for freedom against American imperialist oppression of the Negro people, they have raised high the cry of solidarity with their Ethiopian brothers.

In the Harlem upsurge of March 19, 1935, though fighting against the bitterest poverty and direst misery imposed upon them by the American ruling class, the Negro people expressed their hatred of Italian fascism and its plans for war against their Ethiopian brothers. Italian liquor shops were smashed with cries of, "Down with Mussolini!"

In joint struggles of Negro and white workers in the United States the common task of fighting Mussolini's preparations for a war of plunder against Ethiopia was prominently raised.

Ethiopia, also disparagingly called Abyssinia, near the East Coast of Central Africa, is peopled by ten to fifteen millions of

* On May 8, 1935, Premier J. B. M. Hertzog of the Union of South Africa, in London for the King's Jubilee, proposed, covertly on behalf of the British cabinet, that Liberia be mandated to German fascism. Liberia, also designated as an "independent, native-ruled country of Africa", is in reality a protectorate of Wall Street, more particularly of the Firestone Rubber Corporation.

the Negro and Hamito-Semitic race. Within the 350,000 square miles that comprise the country, there are extremely fertile agrarian regions, capable of producing the most varied tropical products, such as cotton, sugar, coffee and all manner of fruits. In the mountains, the imperialists have discovered rich oil pools, iron, gold, platinum and other mineral deposits which they covet. On the slopes and hillsides cattle grazing is carried on, and the production of cereals and other foodstuffs. Here, too, is an undeveloped market, and here is the valuable source of the Blue Nile, whose waters hold the future of the Sudan cotton fields.

Ethiopia is still in a feudal state, under the rule of powerful native feudal lords. Only the minimum of capitalist concessions and trade have been introduced. The government is ruled over by an emperor, known as Negus Negusi, "King of Kings". From ancient days slavery has existed in Ethiopia, but it is gradually being eliminated. The great mass of people are peasants, herders or handicraftsmen.

In the heyday of colonial expansion in the middle and latter part of the past century, Africa was torn to bits among the imperialist powers. Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and Italy gobbled up 90 per cent of the black continent. Four times the size of Europe, the African continent fell prey to the monopolist capitalist powers of Europe. Only Ethiopia, which had retained its unity, its culture, and its government power for centuries, was able, through heroic and successful battles, to retain its independence.

Italian capitalism, as early as 1885, strove to get its share of Africa. Rear Admiral Caimi landed an army of 1,000 men at Massawa on the Red Sea. Occupying this strong position at the juncture of the Sudan and Ethiopia, the Italian militarists later seized a long strip of territory to the south of Ethiopia, known as Italian Somaliland. From these two vantage points they looked forward to the subjugation of all of Ethiopia. We shall later relate the story of their smashing defeat in their first venture.

Fascism's Plan of Plunder

Today, in the period of the decay of world imperialism, with the crisis undermining capitalist rule in all colonial countries,

Italian fascism, after thirteen years of dictatorship over the Italian masses, now seeks to save its domination at home by new colonial adventures. Fascism sees in plunder, robbery and ravage a means of staving off its doom. It has marked Ethiopia for colonial sacrifice, and has decreed an end to Ethiopian independence. Instead, as we shall see, Italian fascism is hastening its own defeat.

Ethiopia has long been a much-sought-after prize of the leading powers. Efforts to enslave Ethiopia date back to the Portuguese religious and trading missions in the fifteenth century. The Portuguese adventurers were driven from the country like the plague. Before, during, and after the last world war, Ethiopia was put up as booty for the victors of the European slaughter.

Mussolini is now setting the stage for war against Ethiopia, in a final effort to destroy its independence. Fascism wants to consummate what has long been designed. Intricately interwoven with Ethiopia's fate are the complicated European war maneuvers, the rising revolutionary resistance to Mussolini's rule by the Italian toiling masses. The struggle against Mussolini's war plans is being fought not only around the borders of Ethiopia, but by the factory workers in Italy, by the impoverished toilers and peasants ground down under the heel of Italian fascism.

On February 11, 1935, the whole world was startled by a sensational news report from Rome. The fascist dictator had called 250,000 Italian soldiers to the colors. No war had been declared. In all likelihood, no war will be declared. That is not the way the imperialists invade a prospective colony. Japanese imperialism established the main precedent in this regard. Without warning, without any formal declaration of war, without diplomatic fanfare, on September 18, 1931, the Japanese army marched into Mukden, capital of Manchuria. It did not stop marching, slaughtering, robbing, until the 30,000,000 Chinese people in Manchuria, and many millions more in Chahar and Jehol provinces, and in North China felt the stern militarist boot of the Japanese masters on their necks. When American marines invaded Nicaragua, or slaughtered the Negro people of Haiti, war was not declared. "Shoot first," is the colonial slogan of the capitalists, "send diplomatic notes afterwards."

Declaring war is a formality that is being dispensed with.

Troops Stream to Africa

Since that day in February when the Italian workers and peasants were dragged from their hunger-stricken homes and herded into barracks, an increasing stream of Italian transports and gunboats have ferried between the Italian colonies near Ethiopia and Italian ports. From Libya, another African Italian colony, great fleets of bombing planes swarmed over the African land, winging and roaring their way to Eritrea.

But to understand why Italian fascism chooses the present period to make war on Ethiopia, we must understand what is going on in Italy itself. We must see the incentive force at the basis of Italian fascism which inevitably drives it to a criminal war against the Ethiopian people. We must, also, go back somewhat into the lurid history of maneuvering, scheming, plotting of such imperialist powers as France, Britain, Italy, the United States and Japan. Each in turn strove to win the Ethiopian prize for its own profit. Each still plays an important role in the most momentous events now facing Ethiopia—yes, all Africa and Italy as well.

Ironically enough the principal diplomatic and imperialist schemings at the expense of Ethiopia took place over that product so intimately connected with the slavery and exploitation of the American Negro people—cotton.

Cotton was made king in the South of the United States by means of Negro slavery. For the past 15 years the European powers have sought to break the United States' virtual monopoly of raw cotton. For British imperialism, which imports the largest amount of cotton, Ethiopia is the key to its elimination of the United States as a source of cotton. To attain its end, it considers the enslavement of the Negro people of Ethiopia an insignificant and necessary "sin". Italy, too, looks to Ethiopia as an answer to its need for cotton and many other raw materials. Italy in 1931 found that cotton comprised 9.3 per cent of its total imports. In 1933, the percentage was 11.3.

And when with a source for cotton, Italy looks forward to the reputed gold deposits, beyond the dreams of the fabled Mines of Solomon, to the iron, copper, platinum and other minerals—not to speak of that magic substance, oil—the risking of millions of lives is a cheap price to pay indeed, thinks fascism.

Ethiopia, said an Egyptian engineer, is the richest principality in undeveloped minerals in the entire world. Just as fascism robs the Italian people for the profit of the rich capitalists and landlords, so it wants to plunder the Ethiopian people of their natural wealth, resources, and labor. The Ethiopian government has not permitted extensive geological surveys or prospecting. Yet the Italian engineers have learned enough for Mussolini to want war.

The 1906 Treaty

The story of the preparations of the present planned invasion of Ethiopia begins back in 1906. In that year France, Italy and Britain (each unable itself to seize Ethiopia), made a treaty dividing the country into "spheres of influence". While in phrases recognizing the independence of Ethiopia, the treaty forecast the future destruction of Ethiopian unity. Britain was to have exclusive right to edge itself into the Blue Nile and Lake Tsana area to the north of Ethiopia, abutting the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. To France went dominance along the Jibuti-Addis Ababa railway, then under construction. Since Ethiopia had no sea port, the railroad which was to terminate in French Somaliland gave France a powerful weapon against Ethiopia. Italy got the promise of support for the building of a railway through Ethiopia to connect Eritrea, its northern colony, with Italian Somaliland to the south of Ethiopia. Besides, it was granted a sphere of influence for trade from the north of Ethiopia going through the Red Sea via the Italian port of Massawa.

When Italy joined the war on the side of the Allied Powers, the treaty signed in London in 1915, which dealt with the distribution of the German African colonies, secretly assured Italy of its share of African booty at the expense primarily of Ethiopia. Article XIII of this treaty reads:

"In the event of France and Great Britain increasing their colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany, these two powers agree in principle that Italy may claim some adequate compensation, particularly regarding a settlement in her favor of questions relative to the frontiers of the Italian colonies of Eritrea, Somaliland, Libya and of neighboring colonies belonging to France and Britain."

Millions of peoples and their territory are dealt with here as

spoils of the imperialist war, as so much booty and swag. Since both France and Britain after the World War swallowed most of the German African colonies between them, Italy kept on pressing for its share of the plunder. The bitter antagonism between France and Italy which developed after the World War kept Italy from realizing her ambitions. Fascism then began to rush its army and navy for war. The masses were starved so that fascism could construct a huge military machine to force a re-division of the plunder, to win new colonies.

British imperialism, for its own reasons and interests, sought to assist Italy to carry out the aims of the 1915 treaty. And here the land of Dollar Diplomacy enters the Ethiopian scene. Wall Street always knows where profits are in the making.

Britain's Secret Deal

On December 14, 1925, Britain signed a secret treaty with Italy for the mutual destruction of Ethiopia's independence. But one must go beyond the compass of the treaty to see its nefarious significance, to grasp, for example, why President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sent an "observer" to Ethiopia when Mussolini began his war moves. Roosevelt was observing the outcome of a \$20,000,000 construction contract gained by Wall Street.

Sir Ronald Graham, his Britannic Majesty's ambassador to Rome, in 1925 notified Mussolini that Britain would entertain the secret treaty previously suggested by Italy. The treaty provided that Italy would support Britain's project for control of Ethiopia's Lake Tsana. In turn, the British were to assist Italy in obtaining its Eritrea-Somaliland railway, which would cut Ethiopia in half with steel rails.

It is the economic importance of Lake Tsana that involves the United States. Lake Tsana is the source of the Blue Nile which runs through arid regions in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. British imperialism has picked the Sudan for a huge cotton plantation, to cut down its cotton imports from the United States. Under the Gezira Irrigation scheme, put into effect in 1925, Britain was constantly increasing its cotton output in the Sudan.

In 1926, the Sennar Dam was opened 170 miles south of Khartoum, canalizing 300,000 acres of the finest cotton land. Other dams under construction would irrigate 3,000,000 acres.

Control of Lake Tsana would put Britain in the way of freeing herself still more of American cotton supplies.

The Ethiopian government, viewing with alarm the moves of Italy and Britain, began its own maneuvers with American imperialism, trying to pit the chief world imperialist competitors against one another.

Emperor Selassie sent an emissary to President Coolidge to offer friendship—and concessions. Even President Coolidge could appear friendly to a Negro emissary in America's Jim-Crow capital when dollars were to flow into Wall Street and Britain was to be tripped up in its schemes which were aimed at the U.S. Cotton Exchange.

On November 3, 1927, Ethiopia granted to the J. G. White Engineering Co. of Wall Street a concession to build a dam at Lake Tsana. The dam would control the flow of the waters of the Blue Nile for irrigation purposes. The real object of the dam construction was to prevent the overflow of British imperialism into Ethiopia. The White Engineering Co. was to build the dam with its own money, making its profits by selling the water to Britain, paying a royalty to the Ethiopian government. To facilitate Wall Street's deal, the United States government sent a diplomatic minister to Addis Ababa.

The dam project never advanced very far. The British Labor government assisted the British imperialists in blocking the project. The whole matter was laid aside.

Japan Enters

It was at this stage of the imperialist bickerings over Ethiopia that Japanese imperialism entered the field. Japan's most fervent efforts to gain a foothold in Ethiopia took place when Japan was enslaving Manchuria. Japanese imperialism required the money for its army and navy to subjugate the Chinese people. Therefore, it went to all corners of the world. In Ethiopia, the Japanese diplomats tried to convince King Selassie of the value of Japanese friendship. Some trade agreements were made. Talk was rife of an alliance. The basis of this alliance was to be the support for Ethiopia in return for exclusive trade agreements. At one time, the Japanese imperialists even proposed the marriage of one of the Japanese princesses to one of Haile Selassie's royal

house. But the idea was "dropped". Italian imperialism raised a hue and cry against the Japanese menace. But most important of all, British imperialism persuaded the Japanese not to make too great an effort to win the Ethiopian market if it desired its support in the Far East against the Soviet Union and its chief imperialist competitor, the United States. The hullabaloo of Japanese assistance to Ethiopia crumpled like a toy balloon. About the only "benefit" achieved in Ethiopia by contact with Japanese imperialism was the intensified growth of opium, stimulated by the Japanese who were looking for the quickest and easiest way of making money in Ethiopia for its war to enslave more millions of the Chinese people.

The pathway to Mussolini's war against Ethiopia was prepared by the growing conflicts of the European powers, following the world economic crisis, and especially after the rise of Hitler fascism in Germany.

Unable to solve the economic crisis in Europe, the advent of fascism brought war to the fore as the immediate means for an attempted "solution." German fascism declared to the entire world that it was preparing for war to invade the Soviet Union; to seize Soviet Ukraine; to change the Versailles Treaty, involving France; and to win back its African colonies. All of the antagonisms of the European imperialist powers rose to a breaking point. The conflicts between France and Italy lessened, because both of these powers were threatened by Italian fascism.

Only the Soviet Union fought for a policy of peace, against the efforts of Hitler and his allies to plunge the world into a new imperialist war.

Satisfying Mussolini

France, to win Mussolini closer to it, came to a special agreement with Italy concerning Africa. Previously Mussolini had designs on Jugoslavia, which was a French satellite. On January 7, 1935, France and Italy concluded a pact for mutual action in Europe. But in return Italy got huge concessions in Africa—primarily a promise of assistance by both Britain and France in a war for the enslavement of Ethiopia. The full text of this treaty, which was followed by Mussolini's war mobilization orders, was never fully published. Its contents, however, are mainly known.

Under this secret treaty between France and Italy, Italian fascism, faced with an ever-deepening economic and financial crisis and an upsurge of the toiling masses, looked forward to the conquest of Ethiopia. It began to prepare its mighty military machine for war against Ethiopia as a way of "solving" its difficulties and keeping the Italian masses from revolution.

The British, through a secret note by Sir John Simon, British foreign minister, assured Mussolini of full approval for the Italian adventure in Africa. A United Press dispatch from Paris, dated January 5th, 1935, gave some of the details of the Franco-Italian treaty. The dispatch stated:

"Sir John's message, sent yesterday [Jan. 4] signalled to Paris and Rome that Britain has no objections to territorial changes which France is making in Africa to satisfy Italy's demands for territory under the 1915 promise of the former allies to reward Italy for coming into the World War on their side, deserting Austria and Germany."

By the African clause of the Rome agreement, Italy received more particularly, among other concessions: 43,000 square miles of the French Sahara. This included the region inhabited by the Tebu tribe, numbering 200,000 people. Further, Italy received 1,000 square kilometers of territory between French Somaliland and Eritrea (the 20 mile strip referred to previously) bordering Ethiopia. Part interest in the Jibuti-Addis Ababa Railway was given to Italy by turning over 2,500 shares in the railway, and granting her membership in the board of directors. The island of Dumerrah, in the Red Sea, was another concession granted to Italy. And above all, she received a free hand in Ethiopia.

A Free Hand in Ethiopia

A free hand in Ethiopia granted to Italy by France and Britain is of the greatest and most decisive significance. The entrance to the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, is guarded by British and French imperialism. The other end is controlled by the guns of the British slaveholders by means of Aden, British navel and war base. Ethiopia, furthermore, is completely surrounded by Italian, French, and British colonies, so that she is entirely ringed around by precisely those nations who guard her every means of ingress and egress.

The disgraceful slave-market deal between France and Italy affected not only the land of the natives, but the very lives of tens of thousands of inhabitants. In the exchange of imperialist masters, the colonial toilers and peasants had no voice whatever. They were treated as so many slaves, handed over from one exploiter to the other for the extraction of super-profit.

In this fashion the diplomatic maneuvers cleared the way for Italian fascism's war against Ethiopia.

Let us now turn our attention to the conditions in Italy, where Mussolini prepares his armies, drawn from the oppressed Italian workers and peasants. For it is here we can see in greater detail why fascism inevitably drives to war against Ethiopia. It is by examining the conditions in Italy that we can observe who suffers in these bloody preparations for the African adventure. We can see, also, who will be the allies of the Negro people of Ethiopia in their struggle for the defense of their independence.

By the end of 1934 Italian fascism had reached a very critical economic and financial state. Mussolini was heading the country for an economic catastrophe. For example, by the end of January, 1935, the number of unemployed increased by 50,000 in one month. The total, as officially reported, stood at 1,101,711. Mussolini then sought to "solve" the deeper phase of the economic crisis by a new series of wage cuts for the entire toiling population of Italy. A general wage slash of 16 per cent was ordered on wages already lower than at any time since fascism came into power. But still this was of no avail. Even capitalist observers of other countries began to note that Italian fascism was heading for the rocks with the angry waves of class discontent striking against its sides. Hugh Quigley, chief statistical officer of the Central Electricity Board of Great Britain, wrote an article in the June, 1934, issue of *Current History* (published by the *New York Times*). The title of this article speaks volumes: "Fascism Fails in Italy." Mr. Quigley shows that the number of bankruptcies which in 1922, when Mussolini came to power, stood at 1,868, had by 1933 jumped to 9,954. His entire article consists of a mass of facts proving just that fascism had failed economically in Italy. Wages had been dropping for years, while unemployment rose constantly. A conservative estimate, Mr. Quigley said, would be over 2,000,000, which is twice the official estimate.

Conditions Now Worse

Since Mr. Quigley's article was written, however, additional information has come to light emphasizing the alarming state of Italian finances and economy. What is more, the Italian workers and peasants were becoming restless, entering into active combat against the miserable conditions imposed upon them by their fascist rulers.

Due to the drop in exports in 1934-1935, Italian finances reached a very dangerous state. The end of the gold standard and inflation threatened. More money had to be paid out for foreign imports than was received in payment for exports. Gold began to pour out of the country. By the end of 1934, the supply of gold and gold currencies in Italy fell by 1,500,000,000 lire. Concealed inflation was resorted to. Due to heavy war expenditures and the big subsidies paid to the powerful trusts in Italy, the national debt began to rise higher and higher. The British financial magazine, *Economist*, estimated that the Italian national debt amounted to between 152,000,000,000 to 154,000,000,000 lire as against around 100,000,000,000 lire when Mussolini instituted his fascist dictatorship.

The *New York Herald Tribune* of May 20, 1935, pointed out that expenditures for the war preparations around Ethiopia alone up to the end of April had amounted to the startling figure of \$50,964,000, according to Count Paolo Thaon, fascist Finance Minister.

For the great majority of the Italian population this meant a crushing burden. Taxes were increased as heavily as wages were cut. Mussolini took still more drastic measures. All foreign bonds and currencies were ordered registered, so that none could leave the country.

By the end of March, 1935, Mussolini's new trade regulations came into force, virtually throwing an impassable barrier around Italy. Imports were prevented from coming in, unless they were for war purposes, or could not absolutely be dispensed with. The frontiers were practically closed. Imports were reduced from 10 to 35 per cent, which in turn raised the price of goods in Italy to an unbearable height, still further worsening the conditions of the population. Every measure thus taken, induced by the economic crisis of fascism, in turn worsened the economic life of the coun-

try. The vicious circle spun around faster, encircling the Mussolini dictatorship.

In a speech in May, 1934, Mussolini declared to the Italian people that they did not know what capacities they had for enduring greater miseries. He said that humanity was capable of suffering much more than it had ever dreamed of, and the Italian people would have to look forward to years of heavily lowered standards of living so that fascism's war machinery could be built for conquest, as the only way out of the crisis.

"The Enemy Is at Home"

How did the Italian people respond to these conditions? In their answer, as well as by their growing resistance to Mussolini's war plans, we can see the forces in Italy working for the defeat of the fascists' plans for the enslavement of Ethiopia. The battle-front against Mussolini is not only along the borders of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, but as much within the villages, farms and factories of Italy. There the Italian workers and peasants are beginning to understand and act upon the truth that "the enemy is at home".

Never before in its history has the Mussolini government had to face such active mass unrest. The united front pact formed by the Communist and Socialist Parties of Italy mobilized an anti-fascist resistance to all of Mussolini's economic and war measures. Maximalists, anarchists, and Catholics as well as other workers were drawn into this united front. For some time before mobilization for the Ethiopian invasion, the peasants in scores of places began to fight against the higher taxes, against foreclosures, against price-fixing, and against fascist political oppression. Demonstrations were held in the Southern part of Italy especially, at times reaching the proportion of revolts. Outstanding demonstrations took place in Venezia Giulia, Lombardy, Piedmont, as well as in the north of Italy.

Anti-fascist movements sprang up even among intellectuals and middle class elements, as well as among all sections of the toiling population. Confronting this situation, Mussolini decided on trying to divert the masses by his war adventures in Ethiopia.

To distract attention from their own increasingly miserable conditions, Mussolini began to manufacture pretexts for war

against Ethiopia. He beat the chauvinist tom-toms against the Ethiopian people.

Ethiopia then began to play a prominent place in the world news and in the war councils of Italian fascism.

A King Goes Hunting

Early in November, 1934, squatty King Victor Emanuel of Italy went to Italian Somaliland, ostensibly to "hunt wild game". In reality his game was to observe the preparations for the impending war being schemed and planned against Ethiopia.

On November 17, "protests" were made by the fascist government over an alleged attack on the Italian consulate at Gondar, near Lake Tsana, Ethiopia. All sorts of pretexts were in the making once Italian fascism had cast the die.

On November 18, the British Labor Party organ, the *Daily Herald*, reported Italian troop movements to the Ethiopian border. The Italian ambassador at Addis Ababa demanded "reparations" for the alleged attack at Gondar in which one Italian was reported killed and two were reported injured.

This incident was closed to the expressed satisfaction of the government at Rome when on November 27, the Ethiopian government paid 1,450 lire in damages and the governor of Gondar led a troop of picked soldiers who rendered military honors to the Italian flag. The Italian communique at the time stated that the incident was closed "without possibility of repercussions in the existing relations between the two countries". This pretext failed. The Ethiopian government was on its guard.

But later events proved that this incident was just the beginning of a series of deliberately planned provocations of Italian imperialism on Ethiopian territory, preliminary to the major drive against that country.

On December 5, Italian troops moved into Ualual, well inside of Ethiopian territory where the Ethiopian soldiers resisted. Mussolini sent a message of protest to King Haile Selassie, because the Ethiopian troops refused to allow Italian soldiers to march into Ethiopian territory. The matter was taken up in the League of Nations. The Italian government refused to arbitrate.

Ethiopia's Answer

In answering the Italian government's charges of aggression, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Hercui, declared:

“(A)—That there was *Italian aggression* first at Ualual and three days later at Ogaden, in the interior, notably at Ado and Gerlogubi.

“(B)—That Ualual is Ethiopian territory illegally occupied by Italian troops.

“Such are the principal questions to be settled.”

To the very great embarrassment of the Italian representatives in the League of Nations, when the question as to whose territory was being invaded was under discussion, both League of Nations and Italian maps (made long before Mussolini was cooking up his provocative excuses for the subjugation of Ethiopia) *showed that the Italian troops were from 50 to 100 miles within the border of Ethiopia.*

We quote in full the dispatch from Geneva to the *New York Times*, published December 24, 1934, acknowledging this fact:

“Under Italian pressure, the League of Nations has withdrawn from the press room a map of Abyssinia made by the Italian Geographical Institute at Bergano *showing Ualual, where the recent Italian-Abyssinian clash occurred, well within the Abyssinian frontier according to the 1897 treaty.*

“The complaint was that the map was old and took no account of the 1908 modifications of the treaty. The map bore no date.

“There is also in the League library an Italian governmental map of Abyssinia issued by the Italian Colonel office in 1925. *This map took the 1908 treaty changes into consideration, but it too shows Ualual more than 100 miles inside Abyssinia.*

“League officials in a peace-making spirit [!] stressed that neither map has juridical value for the frontiers and place locations on them are all pure paper ones, no lines having yet been drawn in the field. One expert of undoubted neutrality stressed that one essential clue to the subject, namely the 1897 treaty, never had been published, its text being known presumably to only the Abyssinian and Italian governments.”

It was directly after this fiasco in the League of Nations that Mussolini issued his war mobilization order that designated 25,-

000 Italian workers and peasants to report for war service in Ethiopia.

Since that day, not a moment has been lost in preparing for war. Mussolini time and again deliberately dragged negotiations on before the League of Nations. This was done for only one purpose—delay, to allow treacherous Italian fascism time to prepare all its plans for the invasion of Ethiopia. Egyptian laborers were hired under the most despicable slave-contract conditions in the Sudan (with the permission of Britain) to build military roads from Eritrea to the border of Ethiopia. Ethiopian protests were ignored.

On April 14, 1935, the Italian government announced that more than 75,000 skilled workmen would be sent to Italy's East African colonies to supplement the thousands already there. Why? There are no factories there whatever to absorb these unemployed workers. In fact, there are no facilities for them. They were sent to the colonies touching on Ethiopia to be gotten out of Italy where they would be troublesome in the event of war, and to be used in the service of preparing for war.

Ethiopia Stands Firm

Completely surrounded by colonies of all the leading European imperialist powers, having survived the repeated onslaughts by which Africa bit by bit fell victim to capitalist slavery, Ethiopia met Italian fascism's war preparations in the only way they could be met with any hope of success. While arguing and pressing the case of Ethiopia energetically before the League of Nations, King Haile Selassie depended mainly on preparing for a war of defense. In a moving interview, breathing the fighting determination of a Negro people yet unshackled, King Haile Selassie stated vigorously their determination that Ethiopia would be enslaved only over the dead bodies of its fighting men.

Early in April, 1935, while Mussolini's transport ships streamed steadily through Suez and down the Red Sea, while bombing planes massed in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, King Haile Selassie spoke to the few foreign correspondents in Addis Ababa.

“We have tried to negotiate directly with Italy”, he said, “or through an intermediary. Unfortunately, Italy has declined ar-

bitration and has not replied to our proposals. Therefore, we have broken off negotiations and submitted the matter to Geneva."

A few weeks later, Mussolini, busily concerned with the European war maneuvers, permitted his representatives at Geneva to go through the motions of arbitrating, very much like an employer who has not quite got his strikebreaking machine ready. Mussolini was sparring for time. But the Ethiopian government could not live through the history of African conquest and rely on the word of an imperialist power. They remembered American promises of independence to the Philippines, to Nicaragua and Haiti. Keeping in close touch with the World War events, they recalled the British promises to the Arabs, if they fought on the side of the Allies against the Turks. They knew the colonial countries were strewn with imperialist promises and the bones of the native people who put faith in them.

Asked whether he wanted war, Emperor Selassie answered in the double emphatic Ethiopian negative: "*Yellem! Yellem!*" No! No! "We are against war", added one of Selassie's foreign educated advisors.

The Ethiopian people do not want war. They know, however, that only by preparing for a war of defense can they avoid the peace of death and colonial enslavement. Matching Mussolini's moves to bring their country under the domination of Italian imperialism, the Ethiopian government quietly massed 100,000 armed men for border duty. Along the dusty roads of their own country they trudged, while the Italian soldiers were being shipped from their homeland to the soil of Negro people in Africa.

2,000,000 Fighters Are Ready

The Ethiopian armies of 100,000 warriors, marching in the spirit of their countrymen of 1896, are better equipped than were their forebears. It is estimated Ethiopia could muster around 2,000,000 fighters. Emperor Selassie declared even the women would be mobilized into the army to maintain Ethiopia's independence. Though by no means matching the modern equipment of Mussolini's army, they could count on their side wireless apparatus, airplanes, machine-guns, artillery, rifles. Though these weapons are no match for Mussolini's tanks, air fleets, flame

throwers and poison-gas outfits, still they are a hundred-fold more equal to those of the invaders than were the swords and spears of the Ethiopian army of 1896 which cut the enemy to pieces, though the enemy was outfitted with the latest war equipment of that day.

On April 8, 1935, the Associated Press reported what was the biggest consignment of munitions ever imported into Ethiopia. Indicating the gravity of the situation, this act also emphasized the determination of the Ethiopian people to put between themselves and Mussolini's ambition a wall of powder and lead and steel. Emperor Selassie went to the station to inspect this shipment. It consisted of 400 machine-guns, 20,000 rifles and 6,000,000 cartridges. Arms factories in Belgium and Czechoslovakia, for the good gold of Ethiopia, supplied the arms.

Factors for Ethiopian Victory

Many factors are on the side of Ethiopia. (1) Primarily, the growing struggles of the Italian workers and peasants against fascism, which will reach great heights if Mussolini plunges the people into the plunderous war, makes the Italian toilers the greatest ally of the Ethiopian people. (2) The people are unified by national-economic interests of historical continuity. They have a common language, culture and religion. For the most part, though living under a despotism and feudal relations, they have a spirit of independence, some tribes nearer the borders roaming the hills and valleys free. They have an undying hatred against imperialists whose results they see in the rest of Africa. (3) They are fierce and valiant warriors, the Galla horsemen being unsurpassed as fighters. (4) The topography of the country is against the invader. To reach his goal, Mussolini must send his armies over mountainous terrain starting at between 1,600 to 5,000 feet and ranging up to 8,000 feet and over. Addis Ababa itself is 9,900 feet above sea level. For resistance to bombing planes, especially when the Ethiopian villages and cities are not so highly concentrated, and of no great strategic importance, these facts are decisive, as the fighting of the Red Army in China proved. (5) The hot climate is against the fascist armies. Malaria and other tropical diseases are prevalent. Trained in a temperate climate, the Italian armed forces must count on heavily reduced efficiency in Eritrea

and Somaliland. For the Italian workers and peasants, war against the Ethiopians will be a veritable tropical hell. These conditions, Mussolini will find, are not conducive to enforcing discipline among the Italian soldiers, nor for filling them with the illusions of the glory of fascism.

The Ethiopian people can go forward confidently and steadfastly with their preparations to defend their country from Italian fascism. They know they have the most powerful allies in Italy, the oppressed, starved workers and peasants who were already showing great signs of anti-militarist, anti-war, anti-fascist activities. Uppermost in the minds and on the lips of the Ethiopian people was the slogan: "Remember Adowa." Yes, Adowa was a hope and encouragement, a hope made more substantial by the new millions in Italy itself who would suffer by the adventurous war of Mussolini and his fellow Italian cut-throats. Of the glorious battle of Adowa in 1896, an American writer, Joseph Israels, could say in an article in the *New York Sunday Times* of December 23, 1934 ("Abyssinia Encircled by Covetous Powers"):

"This invasion [by Italy] resulted from an imperialistic inter-pretation of a commercial treaty. There was a fast and fierce clash, the battle of Adowa, in which a quarter of a million savage black warriors equipped mainly with spear and shield, slaughtered nearly 40,000 Italians practically in their tracks and in spite of Italian rifles and artillery.

"In order to preserve its trade in northeast Africa, Italy paid the Emperor Menelik heavy indemnity in cash for that ill-starred adventure. But the insult of defeat has rankled in the breasts of Italian militarists these many decades. Fully as strongly has burned the Ethiopian conviction that, having once beaten Europe at her game of war, Abyssinia could do so again."

What Defeat of Fascism Means

The Ethiopian people have the glorious record of having maintained their independence when all of Africa was overrun by the most powerful European imperialist powers. Ethiopia has never in modern history gone into an offensive war. Especially now they are striving for peace, desiring to develop without being crushed and robbed by the imperialist masters of Italy. Their inner development is a matter of their own toiling masses who have not yet advanced to the revolutionary stage of struggle for a higher form

of society. But once enslaved under a powerful imperialist master, not only the Ethiopian people, but the Italian masses would be hurled backwards. Ethiopia fighting for its independence is objectively fighting the battle of the oppressed, imperialist-enslaved masses of Africa. Without victory against Italian fascism there can be no further economic and political advance in Ethiopia.

If Mussolini goes to war against Ethiopia, the fields of Africa must be the burying ground of Italian capitalism and this can be done only by the united action of the Negro masses everywhere in unison with the Italian masses, primarily, the toiling, exploited and colonial masses everywhere, and the workers and anti-imperialist forces in the U.S.A.

What happened in Italy when Mussolini began to send his battleships and army transports to Ethiopia? A wave of indignation swept the country. The womenfolk of the conscripted men flocked to the churches, praying for peace. "Mother of Jesus," they cried, "do not let our men die on the African land. Do not let Mussolini plunge our country into war and sorrow!" This spontaneous alarm at the danger of war, this religious pacifist outburst was buttressed by more powerful and revolutionary actions.

The indignation of the toiling masses of Italy against Mussolini's program of conscripting them for war against the Negro country of Ethiopia is rising steadily. Anti-war demonstrations have taken place in the important industrial centers of Messina and Florence. The workers and peasants massed against the mobilization of two divisions for African service, considerably delaying their departure. In Gemona (Friaul) even the fascist blackshirts showed little enthusiasm for meeting the fate of their forebears in Adowa in 1896. One of the most militant demonstrations took place in Calitanisetta, a town of 50,000 inhabitants, the center of the Sicilian sulphur mining industry.

When a clergyman at one of the churches in Beluno called upon his congregation to collect gifts to be distributed to the troops in the name of Mussolini, a chorus of energetic protest went up. In the city of Naples there was a still more significant demonstration by the soldiers against war. A large detachment of the "Gavignana" division shouted in chorus while marching along the quay: "We don't want any war! Send the fascists, not us!"

It is soldiers such as these, forced to Africa against their will, shouting "Down with war", who will be the best allies of the

Ethiopian people when they turn their guns against the fascist commanders.

Sample Letters

A more intimate picture of what is going on among the workers of Italy in response to Mussolini's war preparations can be gained from letters which come to this country. We quote from one, exemplary of hundreds upon hundreds. It comes from a small town in Venetia and shows the hostility of the Italian masses to fascism's plans for the conquest of Ethiopia. This letter states:

"In our town the sole topic of conversation is war. Although the population, chiefly peasants, is still under the influence of the clergy, and is far from a revolutionary attitude, still it is unanimously opposed to war. Again and again the word may be heard: 'Let the war come, so long as we get the arms in our hands. We know what to use them for!'

"The economic situation worsens steadily. I myself have work two weeks of the month at most."

The stringent and widespread censorship of the Italian fascist government does not permit the full extent of this anti-war movement to be reported at all. Only from the illegal, underground channels of the revolutionary movement in Italy do we learn of these facts. However, there are sufficient facts to show the far-flung upsurge in Italy, the deepgoing mass anger, resentment and resistance to Mussolini's war plans, the most important factor for the Negro masses in Ethiopia and throughout the world for the perspective of the defeat of Italian fascism in its latest war adventures.

The most decisive, clear-sighted, revolutionary role in the struggle against fascism's war plans is that of the heroic Communist Party of Italy. Despite thousands of casualties in the brutal dungeons of Italian fascism, despite its hundreds of martyrs, despite the most difficult conditions of work, it is the underground Communist Party of Italy which is in the forefront in organizing and crystalizing the spontaneous outburst against Mussolini's African war schemes.

The Communist Party of Italy has succeeded in establishing a united front with the Socialist Party of Italy directed against Mussolini's program for the enslavement of Ethiopia. At the very first signs of Italian fascism's preparations for war and provoca-

tions against Ethiopia, the Communist Party of Italy issued a ringing call to the Italian toiling masses for war on fascism, for support of the Ethiopian people against Mussolini, for the defeat of the Italian government and for the victory of the Negro people of Ethiopia—which would also be the victory of the Italian masses over fascism.

Italian C.P. Against Il Duce's Plunder Policy

Entitled, "Against the war on Ethiopia! Down with Fascism!" the appeal of the Communist Party of Italy outlined the tasks of the Italian toilers.

The Communist Party raised the slogan: "Italian imperialism is attacking Ethiopia! Hands off Ethiopia!" It pointed out that Mussolini, in an effort to gain new plunder in the face of the economic crisis in Italy, was following the path of Japan in Manchuria. It called on the Italian masses—

1. To expose the starvation policy of Italian fascism.
2. To fight against providing one cent or one man for the Ethiopian war.
3. To form a united front against war.
4. To all Italian railwaymen, seamen, dock workers, they said: Refuse to load munitions and arms. Refuse to handle war transports to Africa.
5. To the Italian soldiers and sailors they said: Join us in our struggle against war. Form propaganda groups in the barracks and on the ships. If you are sent to Ethiopia in order to fight there, fraternize with the Ethiopian troops.
6. To demand the evacuation of Italian troops from other Italian colonies such as Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland.

"Long live the proletarian revolution," concluded the appeal, "and Soviet Power!"

"Proletarians, toilers of Italy and oppressed peoples of the Italian colonies, unite!"

* * *

Italian fascism's plans for the destruction of Ethiopian independence will have forceful repercussions throughout Africa. The Negro people from Tunis to Capetown groaning under the heavy yoke of imperialist domination, slaves in their own land, beasts of burden for the rich white master, will awaken to the call of battle for independence in Ethiopia. Surely, through the African

land will ring the cry: "All support to Ethiopia! Down with Italian fascism! Down with the rule of imperialism!" In many countries of Africa now the struggles of the people for their freedom are rising. In the forefront, on the eve of Italy's adventure into Ethiopia are the masses of Algeria. Algeria, however, is but the rehearsal of what may come in many African countries if Mussolini strikes against Ethiopia. Fighting for their own freedom against French rule, the Algerian workers and peasants have struck time and again. France is fearful of its continued rule. Revolt in Algeria would spread to all North Africa, to Egypt—perhaps on through the Sudan, setting all Africa afire with the fight for Negro liberty. The *Sunday Express* of London on February 24, 1935, in an article entitled, "France's Empire in Peril," said: "Respect for the French uniform has disappeared. Insults and attacks on French officers are, according to reports of French correspondents, the order of the day.

"The native Algerian troops are no longer reliable. Three weeks ago, at Setif, native troops actually joined the population in a wild orgy of rebellion. . . ."

Other oppressed masses in Africa certainly will follow.

Powerful Allies

Not only in Italy, but throughout the entire world, the revolutionary workers, organized in the Communist Parties, are calling for the united front of all toilers to assist the Ethiopian people against the war plans of Italian fascism. In France, England, the Scandinavian countries, in Latin America, the Communist Parties have called mass demonstrations and meetings demanding that Italian fascism keep its hands off Ethiopia.

In addition to the support rendered by the toilers and soldiers in Italy to the national defensive war of the Ethiopian people, there are also powerful allies among workers and toilers in other parts of the world.

A wave of indignation has swept through the Negro masses in the United States. The Ethiopian people have a long history of struggle and traditions of fine African culture. This together with the national liberation struggle of the Negro people in the U.S.A. against American imperialism, a part of world imperialism, provide strong ties between the Ethiopian people on the continent of Africa and the Negro masses in the western hemisphere.

The moment Mussolini invaded Ethiopia and started his warlike aggressions to destroy the independence of Ethiopia the Provisional League for the Defense of the Ethiopian People was formed by various organizations in Harlem, in New York City, and Mussolini's greedy colonial war of conquest was met with a gigantic protest mass meeting. The response was also impressive throughout the country. The following organizations joined the united front: Ethiopian Enterprise Association, Ethiopian Student Association, New York Division U.N.I.A., the Vanguard, Young Liberators, Cape Palamus Clubs, Gundel Pioneering Syndicate, National Black League of America, Negro Liberator, "Y" Educational Branch, African Patriotic League, Peoples Industrial Association, Henry Lincoln Johnson Lodge (Elks), Phi Delta Philosophical Society, League of Struggle for Negro Rights, Garvey Club, People's Alliance, Harlem Section of the Communist Party, International Labor Defense. The Italian Workers Club sent a communication and delegate favoring the united front. The action of the Negro national reformists on this proposal will be dealt with later.

Harlem Masses Back Ethiopia

A monster mass meeting was planned and held on March 7 in one of the largest Negro churches in Harlem. Over 3,000 people packed the church to the doors and voiced their indignation against the invasion of Ethiopia. Scores of protest telegrams and resolutions were received and read at the meeting. A telegram of protest was sent to the Secretary of State of the U.S.A. with a demand that it be forwarded to Mussolini; and a vigorous protest telegram was sent directly to Mussolini.

A telegram was also sent to the League of Nations office at Geneva, Switzerland, protesting against its inactivity in calling a halt to Mussolini. A communication expressing solidarity was sent to Emperor Haile Selassie.

The Harlem Section of the Communist Party bent every effort to broaden and cement this united front. Members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Garvey Movement) in their martial uniforms mingled with Communists and other workers. The remarks of James W. Ford, representing the Communist Party, on the united front were received with tremendous applause. Ford declared in his opening remarks:

"Fascist Italy, supported by other imperialist nations, wishes to destroy the independence of Ethiopia by an adventurist war. Now is the time for all men and women of African descent and all anti-imperialist forces and all friends and sympathizers of Ethiopian independence to stand together in her defense. The Communist Party promises its full support in this united defense."

Besides outlining the economic and political causes leading to fascism's attack upon Ethiopia, Ford emphasized the tasks to be undertaken in order to develop a broad effective defense of the Ethiopian people.

Harlem occupies an important position in relation to various groups of people struggling against imperialism in the acute and unstable international situation which drives towards war and colonial enslavement.

Besides the nearly half million Negro people in Harlem there are also in this community hundreds of thousands of Cuban and other Latin-American people having bitter hatred against American imperialism. These people are very much interested in, and have rendered aid to the people of Cuba, just as the Negro people are interested in struggling to aid Ethiopia in her struggle for national independence.

The Cuban people, at this moment in a magnificent life-and-death struggle to free their country from the grip of Wall Street and the American capitalists, were supported by a one-hour strike on April 13, in Harlem, involving also the closing of a large number of stores and shops in lower Harlem, in protest against the terror in Cuba and for the release of arrested revolutionary workers.

Repercussions from the struggles of the Cuban and Ethiopian peoples, who are brilliantly resisting the attacks of the imperialists, should inspire the masses in Harlem, raise their class consciousness and arouse them to revolutionary action against American imperialism. The events of March 19 and the one-hour strike on April 13 have indicated what powerful reserves exist in Harlem in the fight against imperialist war, fascism, and against the enslavement of colonial people.

It is necessary, therefore, for the Negro people with their increasing class consciousness and their splendid reactions to the situation in Ethiopia to redouble their efforts to mobilize the widest possible working-class allies and anti-imperialist forces in support of the Ethiopian people.

There are certain sections of the Negro people, however, who look upon the events in Ethiopia as a war of *all* black men against *all* white men, in other words a "race war". This is incorrect! Ethiopia's war is a national defensive war against an imperialist attack for plunder and should and must receive the support of all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces. Upon this basis can be built the united front of all allies of the Ethiopian people.

The Italian workers have no interest in Mussolini's war of conquest, hunger and murder, which Mussolini is trying to plunge them into, hoping to make them forget their misery and hunger. Workers and soldiers have already shown by their resistance to being sent off to Ethiopia that they understand this fact.

Neither have the Italian workers in the U.S.A. any interest in Mussolini's adventures. Many of them have been forced to flee Italy and come here because of their struggle against fascism. Among the Italian workers we can win sympathetic supporters against the invasion of Ethiopia and for the defeat of fascism.

There are, however, fascist supporters of Mussolini in the U.S.A. Mayor LaGuardia, for example, is one. He has been decorated by Mussolini. Edward Corsi, head of the Relief Bureau, is one. There are others like him.

These men are supporters of reaction because they are a part of the ruling class of this country which is interested in establishing a fascist rule against the militant workers here; they are friends of Mussolini and therefore interested in his attempt to bolster up his tottering regime by an adventurist war against Ethiopia. That is why the city administration of New York, which is headed by LaGuardia, did all it could to prevent the anti-fascist protest demonstration of the Provisional League for the Defense of Ethiopia on March 30. We must do all we can in this country to break down this resistance and to build up a strong anti-fascist movement.

Certain Negro leaders, no doubt supported by Japanese imperialist agents, contend that the Japanese imperialists are friends of the Ethiopian people under the false notion created by Japanese agents that Japan is the friend of so-called darker races against white imperialist nations.

Again we must state that the war of the Ethiopian people is an anti-imperialist struggle. We have proved above that Japan's maneuvers in Ethiopia are equally imperialistic, destructive of the independence of colonial people and conducive to war as the other imperialist nations, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany or the United States.

One has only to recall the slaughter of the Chinese people (a colored race) by the Japanese imperialists in 1931, in the invasion of Manchuria, in order to see the fallacy of this darker race theory. Another crushing blow to such an argument is the fact that the Korean and Formosan people (also a colored people) have long been held in bondage by the Japanese imperialists. A final argument is the fact that the Japanese imperialists are crushing the Japanese toilers by an iron militarist-fascist rule in order to further their plunder of China and adventurist war plans against the Soviet Union.

This race theory has great danger in it for Ethiopia as well as the danger of imperialist war. The fact is that the Japanese ruling class maneuvers with the Ethiopian rulers do not lessen but increase the danger of imperialist war. They intensify the conflict among the imperialist powers—all at the expense of Ethiopia—which is the prize over which they fight.

The real friends of the Ethiopian people are the oppressed masses in the colonies and the exploited workers in the capitalist lands, colored and white, and particularly the liberated masses of the Soviet Union. It is these forces who are striking shattering blows against imperialist and colonial world domination. The Japanese toilers particularly gave a brilliant account of themselves during the militarist invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and are today challenging Japanese militarist rule under conditions of the most terrible terror by revolutionary struggles.

The Volunteer Movement is another idea that has wide support among the Negro people. The idea of American Negroes, particularly Negro ex-service men, forming a volunteer army to go to Ethiopia, while very noble and expressing heroic sentiments, is thoroughly impractical. We should not do anything that would hinder the Ethiopian people in their struggle. We want to do everything we can to help them!

The outfitting and transportation of 50,000 American Negro soldiers to Ethiopia, besides requiring a tremendous financial out-

lay, would mean 50,000 more mouths to be fed by the Ethiopian people. That is, provided they could ever reach Ethiopia. Ethiopia, it must never be forgotten, is surrounded by the colonies and war bases of other imperialist powers assisting Italian fascism. British and French imperialism would stop any movement of American Negro volunteers to pass through the Suez Canal, or to enter Ethiopia through the only railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa, or over the inland routes in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan or through British Somaliland. The expedition would be costly, to say the least; would never reach its destination, and would divert energy and funds from assisting the Ethiopian people in a more real and powerful way. What the Ethiopian people need are additional machine guns, tear gas, airplanes, tanks and munitions of war. These things cost money. It would seem, therefore, that the more practical thing to do in this connection would be to send every penny we could raise to help the people of Ethiopia procure these things. The Volunteer Movement can provide for some a very convenient cloak behind which those who wish to talk but do nothing in reality to help Ethiopia, could hide.

The tramping of a hundred thousand feet in the streets of Harlem and in towns and hamlets throughout the country would re-echo like a thunderbolt in the ears of Mussolini and the ruling class of this country as well.

We can flood the Italian Consulates and Embassies with telegrams and resolutions of protest. We can arouse the 20 million Negro people of African descent in the western world in mighty protest actions.

The Communists in the United States must help this development in every way possible. We must broaden the united front movement by involving the Socialist workers and the widest masses of people. We must fight against and energetically expose all trends inside the working class movement that openly or secretly justify Mussolini's war of invasion of Ethiopia.

The united front organization, the American League Against War and Fascism, has an excellent opportunity to broaden the anti-fascist and anti-war movement and render practical support to the Ethiopian people by organizing conferences and mass actions.

Half-heartedness which has expressed itself (even in the Provisional League for the Defense of Ethiopia) must be struggled

against everywhere. Half-heartedness only defeats the building of a broad movement.

We must expose and develop a struggle against all banks, finance capitalists and all those who get rich out of war in the U.S.A. and therefore who will send munitions and other means of war to support Mussolini. The slogan that took like wild-fire among the Negro people in Harlem. "Not a penny to be spent with anyone who sends money to Mussolini" was a very practical one. This slogan, carried further, means "Not a cent in loans, not a shipment of munitions to Mussolini".

A careful watch should be kept at all ports in the U.S.A. for the detection of shipments of munitions to Mussolini. Picketing and demonstrations should be held wherever any such contemplated shipments are discovered. Seamen and dock workers can render very great aid to the defensive war of the Ethiopian people.

The mobilization of the Italian workers in the U.S.A. against fascism and Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia is very important, the more so in view of the efforts of certain people to stir up friction between the Negro people and the Italian workers in the U.S.A. Such developments find fertile ground among certain Negro leaders who hold nationalist views and who fan suspicions by "race war" slogans.

The advanced Italian workers in the U.S.A. should develop agitation and propaganda among the masses of Italian workers in the U.S.A. through their publications and by means of literature, explaining in detail all the issues to them. At the same time efforts should be made by the advanced Negro workers inside the Provisional League for the Defense of the Ethiopian People and among all the Negro people to raise their class consciousness and break down the suspicions which exist among them against the advanced revolutionary white workers.

The Italian Workers Club of New York by telegram and through a delegate offered to come into the united front with the Provisional League for the Defense of Ethiopia. It also invited a representative of the League to speak at the general mass meeting at Star Casino where the Italian workers' daily newspaper, *L'Unita Operaia*, was launched as a daily paper.

Certain Negro leaders in the united front refused to vote on the participation of the Italian workers in the united front, stating that they were willing to work with Negro radicals and Com-

munists but would have nothing to do with white radicals. By the small margin of one vote, the count being 8 to 7, their participation for the time being was overridden.

In view of the activities of the Italian workers in Italy under the leadership of the Communist Party and the willingness of Italian workers in the U.S.A. to work together with Negro people for the defense of Ethiopia, it is now clear that the policies of the extreme nationalists among the Negroes work against the interests of the defense of Ethiopia. These petty-bourgeois nationalist tendencies must be overcome if the real interests of the exploited Negro masses and the Italian workers are to be defended against fascism and war.

The development of activities among the Italian workers of the U.S.A. should be directed towards raising funds to help the Communist Party and revolutionary workers in Italy who are carrying on heroic struggles against Mussolini under most trying conditions.

We in the U.S.A. must more than ever before build up strong anti-imperialist struggles to support the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Hawaii, the Philippines, the West Indies, etc., in their struggle against American imperialism and for their unconditional independence.

* * *

Mussolini relentlessly pursues his objectives of preparing for war against Ethiopia. The press each day tells of new economic difficulties for Italian fascism. The latest cables from Italy also inform us of the increased struggles of the Italian masses against increasing starvation, against Mussolini's war moves.

We cannot lost a moment now in uniting our forces in the United States. Negro and white, exploited Italian workers and farmers, and oppressed American Negro masses, to strike a blow against Italian fascism.

A great task lies before us. Let us not permit our forces to be divided. Let us unitedly give the Ethiopian people and the Italian toilers that help which we can and must give.

Our voices should rise in one united call. To Italian fascism we must say: "Hands off Ethiopia!"

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