

# UNITED AID FOR ETHIOPIA

2368 SEVENTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY  
EDgecombe 4-6420

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DETACH AND MAIL TO ABOVE ADDRESS

I pledge to support the United Aid for Ethiopia.

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I herewith donate \$..... to the cause.

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*Consulate General of Ethiopia*  
75 WATER STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

January 6, 1936.

The United Aid for Ethiopia,  
56-38 West 135th Street,  
New York City.

Attention: Capt. A. L. King.

Dear Mr. King:-

This is to confirm my statement made on Friday evening at the meeting of the various committees who have decided to join and work under the direction of the United Aid for Ethiopia.

This organization (The United Aid for Ethiopia) has the full approval of this Consulate, to solicit funds for Ethiopia, provided it does so under the terms as arranged at the meeting already mentioned, which are:-

1. The United Aid for Ethiopia shall be composed of representatives of all those organizations who wish to join to help Ethiopia.
2. There shall be an executive committee who will conduct the policy of the organization.
3. A Board of Trustees shall be formed to deal with the finance of the organization.
4. All monies received by the organization will be turned over to the Consulate after the expenses for the running of the organization have been deducted.
5. The Board of Trustees are to see that this clause is carried out, and they must be prepared to give, when required, a detailed account of expenditures of the organization, which should not exceed 15%.
6. If any supplies are received, no shipment must be made without the knowledge of the Consulate.

Trusting that these terms will be strictly adhered to, because in this way it is felt that the best and quickest results will be obtained to help Ethiopia, in this her time of dire need.



JOHN H. SHAW  
Imperial Consulate General  
New York City.

*John H. Shaw*

Very truly yours, .

*Lijs Tasfaye Zaphiro*

LIJ TASFAYE ZAPHIRO  
Imperial Ethiopian Legation  
London, England.

## FOREWORD

THE UNITED AID FOR ETHIOPIA is an outgrowth of the splendid work begun by The Provisional Committee For the Defense of Ethiopia which started an intensive campaign of education to arouse Afro-Americans to a sense of the impending attack upon Ethiopia by Italy. Thanks in part to these efforts, the Medical Committee For the Defense of Ethiopia swung into action in July, 1935, and cooperated whole-heartedly with the Provisional Committee. These organizations sent several tons of medical supplies and a hospital unit to Ethiopia.

The National Committee For the Defense of Ethiopia and several other smaller organizations came into existence and pursued their labor with one objective.

Reports of all these activities found their way to the Imperial Ethiopian Legation in London, England, at the very moment when the Ethiopian authorities had decided to send Lij Tassaye Zaphiro to the United States as a special emissary to co-ordinate the activities of the various worthwhile organizations.

Armed with a knowledge of the activities of the various organizations, Mr. Zaphiro, after becoming personally acquainted with the active leaders of the organizations, and after some difficulty, succeeded in co-ordinating these bodies into one unit, "THE UNITED AID FOR ETHIOPIA."

This is composed of officers of the various organizations which are now units of The United Aid. The governing body is made up of an Executive Committee which guides the policies of the organization. New members are added from the various units throughout the country. It has a Board of Trustees of well-known and respected citizens, which is responsible for the disposition of the funds. The National Treasurer is bonded.

The work of The United Aid For Ethiopia may be summarized briefly as follows:

- (1) It is employing every effort to obtain the maximum amount of financial and moral support to aid the brutally maimed women, children, and soldiers of Ethiopia.

(2) It has sent representatives into some of the large cities of the nation to form units of The United Aid for Ethiopia. These men have been warmly received and the financial results from their efforts will soon be apparent. It is making arrangements to send, from time to time, eminent men to place before the public the facts concerning Ethiopia's bitter struggle for existence.

(3) It is the hope of this organization to develop to a high degree in Afro-Americans a keen sense of the ties which bind them to their blood-brothers in Ethiopia.

(4) It is endeavoring to keep constantly before the American public the true situation existing in Ethiopia; this will continue until peace is established.

This booklet is presented as a result of the requests from a number of units throughout the country which desire to have the truth of the terrible situation in Ethiopia at the present time and of the incidents which led to the devastation of the oldest Empire in the world. At the bottom of the whole trouble rests a shameless conflict due to the imperialistic rivalries over this last ancient and independent sovereignty in Africa.

We are indebted in a great measure for the major portion of these data to the researches of the Inter-national Secretariat of the League against Imperialism and for National Independence. The highlights of this shameful exploitation of a peace-loving people are presented up to March, 1936.

We are prayerfully confident that when the reader has perused this booklet, he will unhesitatingly co-operate with THE UNITED AID FOR ETHIOPIA, either as an active worker or as a steady contributor, no matter how small the sum which he can afford until peace is established in Ethiopia.

## WAR IN ETHIOPIA

### I.—THE CONFLICT OF RIVAL IMPERIALISMS

Out of all the war clouds gathering rapidly over the world as a result of the intensified competition for a shrinking world market, that of the approaching invasion of Ethiopia by Italian imperialism looms heavy. For months Italian imperialism, led by the megalomaniac, Mussolini, has poured its troops into East Africa, has rejected arbitration, and in spite of every obstacle, including that of national bankruptcy, has loudly and boastfully proclaimed its intention to conquer by all the horrors of modern warfare the only remaining independent country of Africa.

But the danger lies not only in a war of aggression of Italian Fascism against the integrity and liberty of a weaker and backward country, but also in the probability that such a war would not be localized, and might result in the unleashing of all the armed forces of the rival imperialist Powers in another world war of catastrophic dimensions.

Italy is not the only predatory Power interested in the subjection of Ethiopia. Britain and Japan in particular have economic and political interests in Ethiopia which neither could afford to see jeopardised by Italian domination in East Africa. Furthermore, the preoccupation of Europe in the Italian invasion of Ethiopia might easily provide the opportunity of Hitler Germany either to annex Austria or to commence its march against the Workers' Republic in the East. Ever since the signature of the Pact of Rome in January, 1935, the attitude of France has been complaisant to a degree in the Italian adventure, and this has been dictated not by the desire to see her old enemy entrenched in North-East Africa but by the necessity to secure Italian support against the aggression of Hitler Germany.

But no consideration either at home or abroad seems likely to check Italian Fascism in its headlong rush to imperialist expansion. The necessity to obtain the monopoly of the Ethiopian market, the command of the chromite deposits and other mineral and agricultural resources in which Ethiopia is rich, the opportunity for the profitable investment of capital, the power to rob a large and backward people of the products of its labour, combined with the necessity to side-

track the growing political and economic discontent in Italy by the "glories" of a successful African war, are the driving forces behind the Ethiopian adventure. Moreover, Italian Fascism has now gone so far that it dare not turn back.

Italian Fascism has centered all its hopes and is exhausting all its resources in the Ethiopian campaign. In June last the Budget deficit of the Italian Government was revealed at £40,000,000, but none of the expenses of the Ethiopian expedition had been budgeted, because in the words of the Minister of Finance "the extent of the expenses for the expedition could not yet be determined." This in spite of the fact that the mobilisation of the Italian troops has begun officially in January following the Afdub incident. At the same time it was revealed that the Italian Government had been selling its mobilised foreign holdings in order to pay for imports, and in December last all Italians with foreign holdings were obliged to register them with the Bank of Italy, and were then instructed to deposit them with the bank. As a result of these measures, rumours were spread that Italy was about to abandon the Gold Standard to which she had resolutely clung for seven and a half years; but Mussolini issued a strong denial and characterised all those who believed these rumours as "mental deficient." He had already on several occasions proclaimed the sacrosanct nature of the Gold Standard, and his words to this effect he had caused to be engraved on stone, like the Ten Commandments, at the town of Pesaro. But notwithstanding these solemn declarations, the necessity of purchasing large supplies of coal and war material from abroad, and the refusal of private credits, compelled Italy to acknowledge that she was already heavily in arrears with the exchange which she had already guaranteed. As a result, in spite of Mussolini's stone at Pesaro, the Italian Government, on July 22nd, formally abandoned the Gold Standard owing to "the urgent necessity for procuring means of payment for necessary imports." This means that the 40 per cent. coverage of gold for the Italian currency notes will now be available for the purchase of war material from abroad.

While thus desperately squandering the finances and credits of the country, Italian Fascism seeks to control the discontent of the people by instituting an intensified terror,

by including battalions of Blackshirts with every Italian regiment sent to East Africa, by appealing to patriotism and the glorious traditions of ancient Rome, and by propagating the cult of war. The demagogue, Mussolini, tours the country bawling at his hearers such sentiments as

"War is to man what maternity is to woman."

"Perpetual peace negatives the fundamental virtues of mankind, which are revealed only on the bloodstained battlefield in the full light of the sun."

"We must have arms for ten million men, and sufficient aeroplanes to obscure the sun."

But neither demagogy nor rigid censorship can disguise the rebellious spirit growing among the Italian masses.

Rendered desperate, Mussolini hopes by similar trumpeting to bully his imperialist rivals into acquiescence in his Ethiopian expedition.

In order to protect his rear from a German attack into Austria, he concludes a secret agreement with France at Rome of January 6th, 1935, manoeuvres for the restoration of the Hapsburg, and threatens Hitler with the mobilisation of 8,000,000 men for "the defence of Austria." He declares it to be his intention to leave the League of Nations should that body attempts at British instigation to interfere with his aggressive progress, and he conducts violent press campaigns against British and Japanese imperialism. On the principle that two blacks make a white, he recalls the Japanese invasions of China, and declares that the British Empire was built "on a mountain of bones." To which accusation the British Government have replied comically enough that the British Empire was built before the institution of the League of Nations.

Hitler, whose desire for expansion and for colonies is no less pressing than that of Mussolini, finding himself confronted with the Pact of Rome, between France and Italy, which was followed by the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact on May 2nd, changed his tactics, encouraging Italy in her scheme of conquest in Ethiopia and so indirectly putting pressure on Britain, which drove the wedge a little more deeply between Britain and France.

But it is not a case of Britain and Japan defending the territorial integrity of Ethiopia against the Italian menace. It is a case of thieves falling out.

## II.—IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACIES AGAINST ETHIOPIA

The Empire of Ethiopia forms part of the large plateau of North-East Africa, surrounded on all sides by European colonies. It is deprived of ports, being altogether cut off from its natural coast-line by the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland, and by French and British Somaliland. To the south it is flanked by the British colony of Kenya, and to the west by the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The last independent territory in Africa, it owes its independence to the very mountainous nature of the country and to the sturdy militancy of the inhabitants. It contains at Lake Tsana the headwaters of the Blue Nile, which irrigates the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Egypt. Although largely undeveloped, it is rich in gold, platinum, copper and mica, and its soil produces wheat and cotton. It has a population of about twelve millions, engaged in agriculture, the production of raw cotton, and in the trade of skins. As a religion it professes the Coptic variety of Christianity, and is ruled by an Emperor, whose official titles include those of the Lion of Judah and the Descendent of Solomon. It possesses a standing army of 600,000 men, trained largely by Belgian, and lately by Japanese officers, a munition factory at Addis Ababa, and a small supply of modern arms. It is further able to mobilise more than a million men at short notice, and has the support of mountain tribes excellent in the art of guerilla warfare.

As can be seen from the above, it is a tempting bait for the imperialist powers, hungry for markets and sources of raw material and mineral wealth, and several attempts have been made to reach an agreement between them to portion out the prize into spheres of influence. British imperialism has already considerable interests in the country, controlling the Nile basin at Lake Tsana, on which the irrigation of the plantations of the Sudan depend, and has moreover control of the finances of the country through the Bank of Ethiopia, a subsidiary of the Bank of Egypt. The Maria Theresa dollar, which is the currency of the country, is pegged to sterling. French imperialism controls the only railway, running from the French port of Jibuti to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Japanese imperialism has bought large tracts

of land on which it is cultivating raw cotton to supply the Japanese mills, and has at present practically the monopoly of the Ethiopian market in manufactured goods. Italian imperialism has the least influence in the country, controlling only the administration of the Posts and Telegraphs. But Italy's comparative lack of influence is not through want of trying.

### Early Italian Imperialism in East Africa

Italian imperialism, like that of Germany, suffered under the handicap of entering late into the imperialistic arena. By the time Italian industrial capitalism was firmly in the saddle after the unification of Italy, France and Britain were already in process of dividing the world. Italian capitalism, however, tried to make up for lost time by intensified effort, and concentrated on acquiring Tunis. Already in January, 1880, Bismarck, noting the imperialist aspirations of Italian capitalism, was able to assert: "Italy must not be numbered to-day among the peace-loving, Conservative Powers." Foiled in her attempt on Tunis by a successful French invasion of that country, Italy turned her aggression to the African coast on the Red Sea, and in 1885 annexed Massawa and other places, until by 1888 Italian domination in this district had attained its present coast-line. The conquest of these coast towns, of little value in themselves, was undertaken in order to acquire a base for an attack on the rich fertile plateau of Ethiopia. Her first attempt was unsuccessful. She precipitated a war by invading Ethiopian territory, only to suffer a crushing and humiliating defeat at Doglai in January, 1887. But by no means discouraged she established a protectorate over what is now Italian Somaliland and, seizing the opportunity of a dynastic quarrel that took place on the death of the Emperor John of Ethiopia, supported the cause of Menelek, one of the claimants to the vacant throne. In return for this support, Menelek signed with Italy the infamous Treaty of Ucciali in 1889, which gave Italy the exclusive right to supply arms and loans to Ethiopia, and presented the Province of Asmara to Italy, and in which the Emperor agreed to "avail himself of the Italian Government for any negotiations which he may enter into with other Powers or Governments." The Ethiopians accuse the Italians of sharp practice in regard to this Treaty on the ground that the Italian and French Texts which are binding

do not agree with the Amhoric version which says "that the Emperor may" while the Italian text says "the Emperor shall." The treaty amounted to the establishment of an Italian protectorate over Ethiopia. But Menelek, once firmly on the throne, became more inclined to listen to the whispers of French and British agents, and when the Italian Government ordered the occupation of the Province of Tigre in 1895, he unilaterally denounced the Treaty and mustered the tribesmen. Italy took the offensive, led a large army into Ethiopia which was almost annihilated by the Emperor Menelek at Adowa in March, 1896. It was a deathblow to the hopes of Italian imperialism which by its withdrawal strengthened the British resolve to annex the Sudan.

By the Peace of Addis Ababa in October, 1896, the Treaty of Ucciali was annulled and Ethiopia's complete independence recognised, and the boundary between Ethiopia and the Italian colony of Eritrea agreed. Italy also paid a ransom of £400,000 for the return of Italian prisoners of war.

#### The 1906 Three-Power Treaty

Before the disastrous battle of Adowa, Britain, occupied with Egypt and the Sudan, had recognised almost the whole of Ethiopia as an Italian sphere of influence. But afterwards the British attitude changed. In 1902 British imperialism concluded the Anglo-Ethiopian Boundary Treaty, which gave Britain rights within the recognised Italian sphere, and the Ethiopian Government agreed to recognise the paramount interests of Britain in Lake Tsana and the headwaters of the Nile. In 1906 Italy was forced to sign the tripartite Agreement with Great Britain and France, which guaranteed the independence and integrity of Ethiopia, provided the respective interests of the three powers were observed. It was further agreed in Article III that "In no case shall one of the three governments interfere in any manner whatsoever with Ethiopia except in agreement with the other two." The "interests" of the three Powers were defined as follows:

- (1) The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries . . . without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in para. (2).
- (2) The interests of Italy in Ethiopia (Abyssinia) as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the

Benadir), more especially with reference to the hinterland of her possessions and the territorial connections between them to the west of Addis Ababa.

- (3) The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali coast, the hinterland of this Protectorate, and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the Jibuti-Addis Ababa railway.

In this way were the seeds sown for the future partition of Ethiopia. The tripartite Agreement of 1906 is still in force.

#### The Secret Treaty of London

The frustration of Italian imperialism in North Africa had driven it into an alliance with Germany and Austria against the Entente of France and Britain. On August 4, 1914, the great imperialist War broke out for the redistribution of colonies. Italy let down her allies by not immediately entering the War on their side, and by sitting on the fence, bargaining with both sides on the price of her support. She then completed her betrayal of her partners in the Triple Alliance by entering the War on the side of the Entente against the Central Powers in 1915. The reason for this was revealed by the "Manchester Guardian" on January 18th, 1918.

On that date the "Manchester Guardian" published the complete text of the secret Treaty of London, signed in April, 1915, by which Italy agreed "by all the means at her disposal to conduct the campaign in union with France, Great Britain and Russia," in return for a large share in the distribution of the rewards of victory in the shape of the German, Austrian and Turkish colonies. In addition Italy was given the following undertaking by Britain and France:

"In the event of France and Great Britain increasing their colonial territories in Africa at the expense of Germany, those two Powers agree in principle that Italy may claim some equitable compensation, particularly as regards the settlement in her favour of the questions relating to the frontiers of the Italian colonies of Eritrea, Somaliland and Libya and the neighbouring colonies belonging to France and Great Britain."

In short, it was agreed "in principle" that Italian imperialism should after the War have the frontiers of her East African colonies extended at the expense of Ethiopia. After the War, when the time came for Britain and France to keep their promises, Italy had reason to complain with Bismarck that "To agree in principle is, in the language of diplomacy, to reject in actuality."

#### A Thieves' Agreement Between Italy and Britain

After the War, Great Britain began negotiations with the Ethiopian Government for the concession to carry out works of barrage in Lake Tsana, to make double certain of the headwaters of the Nile and the water supply to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. In November, 1919, the Italian Government offered to support Great Britain in these negotiations provided that Britain would support Italy in her demands of the Ethiopian Government. The proposed basis of agreement was as follows:

- (1) "In view of the predominating interests of Great Britain in respect of the control of the waters of Lake Tsana," Italy would support Great Britain's claim to construct a barrage on Lake Tsana "within the Italian sphere of influence" as defined in the Three-Power Agreement of 1906.
- (2) Italy would also support with the Ethiopian Government the British claim to construct and maintain a motor road between Lake Tsana and the Sudan.
- (3) In return, Great Britain should support the Italian claim to construct and to run a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, running through Ethiopia to the west of Addis Ababa.
- (4) Italy would also claim an exclusive economic influence in the west of Ethiopia, and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway. This claim also to be supported by Great Britain.

Such was the thieves' agreement suggested to British imperialism by Italian imperialism in November, 1919, for the partition of Ethiopia. It will be noticed that the interests of French imperialism were left out of account.

Partly through fear of French displeasure, and partly

because British imperialism thought it could do better on its own, the Italian proposals were rejected by the British Government, on the ground that they violated the tripartite Agreement of 1906 to maintain the status quo in Ethiopia, and because it felt a strong objection "to the idea of allowing a foreign Power to establish any sort of control over the headwaters of rivers so vital to the prosperity and even to the existence of Egypt and the Sudan." (British Note to Italy of December 14th, 1925.)

The negotiations of British imperialism, however, with the Ethiopian Government over Lake Tsana proved abortive. On the other hand the relations with Italy were improved by the cession by Britain of Jubaland to settle the dispute over the boundary between Kenya and Italian Somaliland, and by the Italo-Egyptian Agreement of December, 1925. The British therefore recalled the Italian offer made to it in 1919, and a British Note was dispatched to Italy, accepting the same Italian proposals which it had so firmly rejected in 1919 as violating the provisions of the Three-Power Treaty of 1906. In 1925, however, the British Government reached the conclusion that the Italian proposals were not after all "in contradiction with the stipulations of the London Agreement of the 13th of December, 1906, since the object of that agreement is to maintain the status quo in Ethiopia," and that it would "therefore welcome the Italian support offered provided that it can be accepted without prejudice to those paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan which the Italian Government have not failed to recognise." The British Government therefore accepted "the valued assistance" of the Italian Government in obtaining from the Ethiopian Government the concession on Lake Tsana and the motor road, and in return promised to support Italy in her demands to build a railway through Ethiopian territory, and to recognize the whole of the west of Ethiopia as an Italian sphere of influence. In this way the British Government observed "the principle of friendly co-operation which has proved so valuable in other fields."

The Government of Mussolini received with every manifestation of joy this sudden acceptance by the British Government of the previously rejected Italian proposals, and the two conspirators thereupon agreed to bring simultane-



ous pressure on the Ethiopian Government to extort their respective concessions. On June 9th, 1926, Mr. Bentinck, on behalf of the British Government, and Count Colli on behalf of the Italian Government, each addressed a Note to the Regent and Heir Apparent of Ethiopia, Ras Taffari, to which were cynically appended copies of the correspondence between the British and Italian Governments. The Ethiopian Regent, however, was not to be intimidated, and he replied to both the Italian and British Governments by a curt and dignified rejection. To the British Government he wrote:

"The fact that you have come to an agreement (with Italy) and the fact that you have thought it necessary to give us a joint notification of that agreement, make it clear that your intention is to exert pressure, and this, in our view, at once raises a previous question.

"The British Government had already entered into negotiations with the Ethiopian Government in regard to its proposal, and we had imagined that, whether that proposal was carried into effect or not, the negotiations would have been concluded with us; we should never have suspected that the British Government would come to an agreement with another government regarding our Lake."

This was not the sort of reply which the British and Italian "civilisers" had expected from the ruler of a weak and backward country. But Ras-Taffari went still further and followed up his rejection of the British and Italian Notes by sending a protest to the League of Nations, which Ethiopia had joined in 1923. This protest, couched in the same dignified language, showed clearly that the Ethiopians were under no illusions as to the intentions of Britain and Italy:

"The people of Ethiopia are anxious to do right, and we have every intention of guiding them along the path of improvement and progress; but throughout their history they have seldom met with foreigners who did not desire to possess themselves of Ethiopian territory and to destroy their independence. With God's help, and thanks to the courage of our soldiers, we have always, come what might, stood proud and free upon our native mountains."

[ 12 ]

Faced with this unexpectedly firm stand of the Ethiopian Government, Britain and Italy hastened to deny all charges of attempted coercion. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, went so far as to solemnly declare that Britain and Italy had no intention of dividing Ethiopia economically, nor had they any intention of coercing the Ethiopian Government, adding that "the Ethiopian Government had a perfect right to judge what was in the interest of Ethiopia." But Ras Taffari, in a further communication to the League, disposed of these accusations with the remark:

"Accordingly, the Imperial Government would have felt no apprehension had not the two Powers severally and on the same day brought the agreement officially to its notice. This simultaneous and concerted notification could only be interpreted as the first symptom of the intention to exert pressure which the Imperial Government had from the outset thought it detected in their action."

Thus the Anglo-Italian conspiracy was foiled, and British imperialism, leaving its fellow-conspirator in the lurch, decided to forge its way into Ethiopia on its own. Accordingly, in 1926, the British Government offered Ethiopia a corridor of six hundred square miles of territory through British Somaliland to the port of Zeila. The British Government was so sure that this offer would be accepted that the maps that were published in 1926 marked Zeila as in Ethiopian territory. Nevertheless, the Ethiopian Government rejected the offer with good reason, as is shown when the same offer was made in 1935.

#### The 1928 Italo-Ethiopian Pact

Deserted by Britain, Italian imperialism also decided to play a lone hand in Ethiopia. On August 2nd, 1928, Italy offered a Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration, which was accepted and signed by Ethiopia and Italy. By Article II of this Pact, the Italian and Ethiopian Governments pledged themselves not to take any action detrimental to the independence of the other, which was rather magnanimous on the part of Ethiopia when it is considered that the threat was all on the other side. The most important provision of the Pact in the present circumstances is, however, contained in Article V:

[ 13 ]

"The two governments agree to submit to a procedure of conciliation or arbitration any questions which may arise between them and which it has not been possible to settle by the usual diplomatic means, without having recourse to the force of arms. By common agreement, Notes shall be exchanged choosing arbitrators."

The sincerity of Ethiopia in signing this Pact has been shown by her reliance on its provisions in the present conflict; on the other hand the subsequent conduct of Italy has proved that in signing this Pact with Ethiopia she was merely completing another essay in imperialist duplicity.

#### Ethiopia and the Arms Traffic

In the Three-Power Treaty of 1906, France, Britain and Italy, "having a common interest in the prevention of all disturbances in their respective territories in Ethiopia and on the Red Sea littoral, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean," agreed, without consulting Ethiopia, to strictly limit the importation of arms and ammunition into Ethiopia. The pretext for this agreement was to strike a blow at the slave trade alleged to be still carried on in the primitive regions of Ethiopia. The more probable reason is that the three contracting Governments had also a common interest in preventing the Ethiopian Government from arming the country against their respective encroachments.

In August, 1930, however, this agreement was superseded by a Treaty entered into by Ras Tafari with Britain, France and Italy. The two objects of this Treaty were to enable the Ethiopian Emperor "to obtain all arms and munitions necessary for the defence of his territories from external aggression and for the preservation of internal order therein," and to prevent the acquisition of arms by slave traders, ordinary brigands and other unauthorized buyers. This Treaty was, however, an improvement on the previous position since it enabled Ethiopia to order any quantity of arms from abroad, and only provided that the actual imports into Ethiopia should be allowed only on the sealed and signed order of the Emperor or of his authorized representative.

But to arm and equip a country requires more than permission to do so. It requires the wealth to purchase expen-

sive modern weapons, and Ethiopia is still relatively undeveloped and therefore poor.

#### Italian Imperialism Again in Motion

Beginning in the year 1929, the economic crisis in Italy and the popular dissatisfaction with the Fascist regime became the force behind a new imperialist drive in Africa. Forward policies were begun in Eritrea and Libya. In 1929 Italy occupied the strategic bases in the hinterland of Tripoli, going so far as to seize the oasis of Koufra, which is five days' march from any inhabited place. The question of colonial expansion was openly discussed and the Fascist press began to be larded with sentiments of which that expressed in the official "Corriere d'Italia" in July, 1929, is typical:—

"We have need of rich and fertile lands, and the Cameroon is one of the richest and most fertile lands in the world."

The intensification of the Italian drive in Africa sharpened the opposition of the French, and the normal hostility between the two countries reached dangerous proportions. But the arrival of Hitler to power in Germany changed the situation.

Italy was at first inclined to welcome Hitler as an ally against French imperialism, but the recrudescence of German imperialism in the Balkans, and particularly in Austria, soon revealed that the new German imperialism was as great a menace to the interests of Italian imperialism as it was to those of French imperialism. The climax came with the Nazi putsch in Austria in August, 1934, which resulted in the assassination of the pro-Italian Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss, as a prelude to a seizure of power by the pro-German Nazis. Mussolini replied immediately by mobilising troops and marching them to the Austrian frontier, threatening to occupy Austria if the Nazis should take power. Germany, not yet ready, withdrew, and Hitler was left with the dubious satisfaction of having brought about a reconciliation of the two old enemies, Italian and French imperialisms. It became clear to Italy that it was necessary before embarking on adventures in Africa to secure her rear from a German invasion into Austria, which would destroy not only important Italian interests in that country,

but would bring the great German menace on to the Italian frontier. France also, because of her hostility to and fear of Germany, was only too ready to acquire a powerful ally to help her build the steel chain round Germany, and was ready to negotiate. After a series of delays, caused by the assassinations at Marseilles in November, 1934, the French Foreign Minister, Laval, met Mussolini at Rome on January 6th, 1935.

In the meantime, on the 5th December, 1934, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia began with the conflict between Ethiopian tribesmen and Italian troops at the wells of Walwal, which is at least 60 miles within Ethiopian territory. This incident had been preceded by an alleged attack on the Italian Consulate at Gondar, in the north of Ethiopia, in the previous November. It is to be noticed that Gondar, where the Italian provocation took place is perilously near the vital interests of British imperialism near Lake Tsana.

#### The 1935 Franco-Italian Agreement

On January 7th, 1935, a remarkable agreement was reached between the French Minister, Laval, and the head of the Italian Government, Mussolini, at Rome. To begin with, France, as a token of goodwill, gave Italy 2,500 shares out of the 34,000 shares held by France in the Jibuti-Addis Ababa Railway, and a strip of territory comprising the Tibesti highlands in the Sahara, adjoining the Italian colony of Libya, and another strip of French Somaliland adjoining Eritrea. An agreement was also reached over Franco-Italian disputes concerning their respective spheres of influence in North Africa, and in spite of the denial of Laval to the French Chamber of Commerce, there can be little doubt that French imperialism agreed to leave Italy a free hand in Ethiopia.

In return, Mussolini joined Italy to the French interest in Europe, and the "Manchester Guardian" has revealed that should Germany invade Austria while Italy is engaged in North Africa, it was then agreed that Mussolini should provide troops for the "defence of Austria," and that France would invade Germany. A pretty agreement.

The immediate effect of this agreement in France was a complete volte-face of the capitalist press in favour of the Italian aggression. P. Taittinger, the President of the Colon-

ial Commission of the French Chamber, announced in "La Depeche Coloniale": "Sacrifice for sacrifice, I can see no grave inconvenience in that Ethiopia should pass under the sovereignty of Italy, if the latter guarantees not to touch our colonial vertebrates or the development of our African territories." Sacrifice for sacrifice—at the expense of Ethiopia. The authoritative foreign correspondent of the "Echo de Paris," Pertinax, quotes numerous precedents to justify the Italian aggression against Ethiopia, and assures Italy that the French Government would certainly not "inconvenience" the Government of Rome in its African expedition. He sees, however, one difficulty, and that is in the membership of Ethiopia in the League of Nations, and concludes by the significant statement that Ethiopia should not have been allowed any more than Liberia or China "to cross the threshold of the establishment at Geneva." The League of Nations should be reserved exclusively for the brigand nations.

#### The Attitude of British Imperialism

It has been seen that in 1925 British imperialism was eager to reach an agreement with Italy to partition Ethiopia into Italian and British spheres of influence, and on the failure of this plot, owing to the firm stand taken by the Emperor of Ethiopia, that British imperialism decided to forge ahead on her own by offering Ethiopia a strip of British Somaliland, and by negotiating for concessions in the region of Lake Tsana. The Ethiopian Government, however, stood firm against the British as well as the Italian encroachments.

The Italian aggression taking the form of open preparations for an invasion of Ethiopia, gave British imperialism its opportunity, and it has again put forward its "claims" at a time when Ethiopia is not in a position to refuse. There is some justification in Mussolini's complaint to the effect that he has churned up the waters in order that Britain should net the fish.

Furthermore, British imperialism is profoundly distrustful of Mussolini's intentions. Italian Fascism has shown no desire to come to terms with Britain on the lines of the 1926 agreement, and on the contrary has made it clear that Italy proposes to establish control over the whole of Ethiopia,

leaving the Emperor a few provinces only, to be administered by Italian police. The attitude of British imperialism is one, forgetful of its own duplicity, of demanding honour among thieves. Britain, having taken advantage of the Italian drive to secure her own concessions from the Ethiopian Government, the Egyptian Government having recently voted £E.21,000,000 to cover the construction of a barrage in Lake Tsana, the British Government can afford, in the words of Sir Samuel Hoare in the House of Commons on July 11 "to understand Italy's desire for overseas expansion" provided that such expansion (is on the lines of the 1926 agreement and) does not violate British interests. But the suspicions of the British Foreign Office regarding Mussolini's intentions are stated with clarity in the semi-official "Daily Telegraph" in its issue of July 25th, 1935:

"British interests are believed here to be vitally involved not only in the Nile waters and in other aspects of Ethiopia itself, but in Signor Mussolini's future policy. For it is considered that if the Duce grasps Ethiopia and amalgamates Eritrea and Italian Somaliland he would attempt to realise his vision of re-establishing the Roman-African Empire by joining Ethiopia and Libya via the Sudan and Egypt. Those who hold this view are sure Britain will use every resource to thwart such a scheme and that America will help behind the scenes."

As soon, therefore, as it became clear that Italy had no intention of treating with British imperialism on the terms of British imperialism, but was instead forging ahead with French support, the British Government, although in the process of violating every provision in the Covenant of the League of Nations by negotiating the Anglo-German Naval Pact, became the champion of the League of Nations against Italy's unilateral aggression. In its session on May 20th last, the British Minister, Eden, took Italy to task for going ahead alone in Ethiopia, and demanded that Italy should conduct herself more in accordance with the wishes of the other imperialist Powers. Mussolini promptly replied that he would not tolerate any interference from the League of Nations and that if the League became a nuisance he would follow the example of Germany and Japan and leave it. Thereupon the League, at French insistence, adjourned its discussion on the Ethiopian question until August.

British imperialism therefore went ahead with her counter-preparations to Italy, encouraging the resistance of Ethiopia (strengthening her air force stations in the Sudan and the dispatch of air bombers to Aden) and converting the port of Akaba, on the Red Sea, into a military base. Italy also found cause for complaint in the establishment of an aeroplane base on the Ethiopian frontier of British Somaliland.

The next move of British imperialism was to propose to Mussolini a settlement of the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia by renewing its offer of 1926 of 600 square miles if British Somaliland and the port of Zeila to Ethiopia, to compensate the latter for the territory which it proposed should have been given to Italy in West Ethiopia. The British die-hards were furious at this offer, Lord Beaverbrook demanding that the National Government should abandon its policy of playing "ducks and drakes with the Empire." And Mussolini contemptuously refused the mediation. French imperialism was also upset, and for good reason.

In spite of Mussolini's rejection of the British offer, the British Government proceeded to reveal its real intention by insisting that Ethiopia should accept the offered strip of territory. Thus Ethiopia would obtain a port, Zeila, and a corridor through British Somaliland. By such an arrangement there can be very little doubt that the port of Zeila would take the great bulk of the Ethiopian commerce from the French port of Jibouti, which at present deals with 75 per cent. of the Ethiopian foreign trade. It would then be necessary to build a railway from Zeila to Addis Ababa to carry the goods, which would run in competition with the existing French Jibouti-Addis Ababa railway, and what more natural than that the benevolent British should be given the concession to construct and maintain this railway? The British "mediation" was designed to give British imperialism the monopoly of the Ethiopian foreign trade.

Italy replied with a violent press campaign against Britain, during which Mussolini announced that he "would follow to the letter those (i. e., Britain) who presume to be our schoolmasters," in the methods of building up an empire. Undisturbed by the attack, the British Government goes ahead trying with the very lukewarm French support to utilise the machinery of the League of Nations in order to

bring Italian imperialism to terms, and continues its manoeuvres in East Africa. On July 21st the "Daily Telegraph" announced:

"The Government has decided that it has no grounds for preventing British firms from exporting arms to Ethiopia.

"It is held that to refuse arms export licenses would violate treaty obligations, prejudice the decisions of the League Council, and deny to Ethiopia, which has no arms industry, legitimate preparations for its self-defence."

So far, so good. But it was hardly to be expected that the British armament firms should only supply arms to a weak country whose independence was threatened by a powerful imperialism. The temptation of acquiring huge profits is too great, and licenses are granted also for the export of arms to Italy.

Italy, however, holds the view that arms should be supplied to her alone, and the Turin "Stampa," in its issue of July 23rd, has stated "that the first Italian who is shot with British bullets will die cursing Britains insatiable lust for gain and domination. But Italy will be revenged...."

It is also worth noting that a proposal to close the Suez Canal to Italian troopships, which was mooted in Parliament, not only convulsed Mussolini with rage, but also brought about indignant protests from the shareholders of the Company.

#### The Attitude of Japanese Imperialism

Japanese capitalism is undoubtedly perturbed at the prospect of losing the large and growing market for Japanese goods in Ethiopia by Italian aggression. A considerable amount of Japanese capital has also been invested in cotton lands, etc., in Ethiopia. In consequence the Japanese attitude is one of unqualified hostility to Italian imperialism. In July the Japanese Ambassador at Rome rejoiced Fascist hearts by assuring Mussolini that Japan had no intention of interfering in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, and that Japan had no political interests in Ethiopia. This assurance of the Japanese Ambassador was promptly repudiated by the Japanese Government.

There followed a violent attack on Japan in the Italian press, which raised the ghost of the Yellow Peril. The mouth-

piece of Mussolini, Gayda, declared that "Italy faces not only an intolerable Ethiopian threat but a vast Japanese scheme of expansion." The "Messagero," in its issue of July 22nd, went even further:

"The Japanese believe that the scandalous inactivity of Europe against their gigantic raids on territory, accomplished with refined hypocrisy, and by taking advantage of the weakness of the countries raided, will permit them to trace another cycle of expansion, such as in Africa.

"But Africa is near Italy, a country which champions the white race. The Japanese will for a long time to come sell their false pearls in the slums of all Europe before they succeed in crossing the path of Italy."

Japan, on the other hand, states cynically enough that Japan "acted in self-defence in Manchuria, while the self-styled 'champion of the White Race' is 'plundering' in Ethiopia." It is amusing to note how the various robbers when they fall out accuse each other of theft.

Japan, however, is not content with a wordy press war. The Japanese Emperor made a point of sending his warmest greetings to the Emperor of Ethiopia on the latter's birthday, and the influential and powerful Japanese Fascist Association, "The Black Dragon," which practically controls Japanese policy demanded that the Japanese Government should denounce Italy's armed pressure in Ethiopia and take "adequate measures" to stop the conflict. The Black Dragon Society was responsible for Japan's declaration of war against Russia in 1904.

#### FRANCO - BRITISH PEACE PROPOSAL

Of December 13, 1935

##### Summary of Text

The following statement is a summary of the official text of the Hoare-Laval-Mussolini robber deal which intended to give 150,000 miles of Ethiopian territory to Italy in exchange for 30 miles from the French and Italian imperialists:

The governments of Great Britain and France have agreed to "recommend" that the Ethiopian Government consent to the following "exchange" of territory with Italy.

(a) Tigre; cession to Italy of Eastern Tigre, limited approximately on the South by the Gheva River and on the

West by a line running from North to South, passing between Aksum and Aduwa, Aksum to be Ethiopian and Aduwa Italian.

(b) "Rectification" of the frontiers between the country of Danakil and Eritrea, leaving on the South Aussa and the necessary Eritrean territory to give Ethiopia access to the sea, such as will be defined later on.

(c) "Rectification" of the frontiers between Ogaden and Italian Somaliland, starting from a point at the triple junction between the frontiers of Ethiopia, Kenya and Italian Somaliland. The new frontiers would follow a northeast line, cutting the river Shebeli at Iddidole (just below the 6th parallel), leaving Gorrahei on the east and Ourrandab on the west and rejoining the frontier of British Somaliland at its intersection with the 45th meridian.

"The rights of the tribes of British Somaliland to the use of pastures and water wells situated in this territory is hereby recognized and will be safeguarded by Italy.

(d) "Ethiopia will receive as her property an outlet to the sea. This outlet should be constituted preferably by the cession on the part of Italy of the port of Assab and a strip of territory giving access to this port, bordering on the northern frontier of the French colony on the Somaliland coast."

#### Franco-British Pressure

The British and French governments are actively trying to obtain from the Ethiopian government "guarantees" concerning the execution in the territory acquired by it of the obligations which fall on it concerning slavery and commerce in arms.

The British and French governments will use their influence at Addis Ababa and Geneva to have accepted by the Emperor and consecrated by the League of Nations, the constitution in southern Ethiopia of a zone of "economic expansion" reserved for Italy. The limits of this zone would be on the east a rectified frontier between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, on the north the eighth parallel, on the west the 35th meridian and on the south the frontier between Ethiopia and Kenya.

The interior of this zone would nominally remain a part of Ethiopia but Italy would enjoy exclusive economic rights

which could be demonstrated by a privileged company or other similar organization with a reserve to the rights acquired by natives and foreigners, all property rights to unoccupied land and a monopoly on the exploitation of mines, forests, etc.

Control of the Ethiopian administration in this zone would be exercised under the sovereignty of the Emperor by a plan of assistance fostered by the League of Nations. Italy would take a preponderant but not exclusive part in this service, which will fall under the jurisdiction of one of the principal counselors assigned to the central government.

This proposal was rejected by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and the voice of public opinion the world over forced its abandonment by the League.

#### A Possible Imperialist Compromise

It has been already stated that Italian Fascism having gone so far dare not draw back, without a collapse of the Fascist regime in Italy. On the other hand, faced with the growing difficulties generated by the discontent in the Italian army in East Africa, and the opposition of British and Japanese imperialism, Mussolini may agree to come to terms with the rival imperialisms for the partition of Ethiopia.

Italy is by no means the only enemy of Ethiopian independence. The history of France, Britain and Japan in East Africa, and their present manoeuvres, are sufficient to prove that. A danger greater than the Italian aggression is a joint imperialist invasion of Ethiopia, and it is against this, as well as against the Italian threat, that the international anti-imperialist movement must be on guard. It is therefore all the more urgent that the working class movement should rally to the defence of the national independence of the Ethiopian people by attacking the manoeuvres of its own imperialism as well as that of Italy. It is important that the movement in support of Ethiopia should be linked up with the more general movement against war and Fascism; for it has been already pointed out the invasion of Ethiopia might be the signal for the outbreak of world hostilities. The international anti-imperialist movement has the following basic tasks in connection with the aggression against Ethiopia:—

The hope of Ethiopia lies only in the international work-

ing class movement, which in supporting Ethiopia, is also fighting its own political struggle. The Emperor of Ethiopia is rallying the Ethiopian people on the slogan: "It is better to die as free men than live as slaves." And the Ethiopian people deserve all the support in their struggle against the imperialist designs and brutalities.

At the same time there is every indication that an attack by European forces in Ethiopia would lead to armed uprising in sympathetic support throughout the colonial world. Sympathetic demonstrations in support of Ethiopia have already taken place in India and among the Negro peoples generally.

Unity among the oppressed peoples is growing apace and this factor makes it imperative for the British and French imperialist governments to avert the outbreak of war at almost any cost, not excluding the cession of territory.

Italy with an unbalanced budget, and inflated currency and a huge army of 600,000 unemployed, is on the verge of economic collapse. To divert the attention of her proletariat and peasantry she mobilises 2,000,000 men to despoil Ethiopia, with all the brutal horrors of war and Fascism.

Italy, peeved at the betrayal of the British and French imperialist promises for African colonies as her pound of flesh for entering the Great War of 1914-18, tries to forge ahead alone in Ethiopia, wherein she sees the possibility of growing the £2,000,000 worth of raw cotton which she now imports annually from other countries, and a colony where she will be able to "settle" her emigrants who are now prevented from landing in the United States of America and many other countries.

British imperialism has its own views on the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. As "The Times" leading article on Geneva states: "The British Government have to take into account not merely those general issues which affect her in common with other nations, but also the special interests to which her status in various parts of Africa and indeed in India, gives real importance." ("Times," 31-7-35.)

Amid the rivalries of imperialisms, Ethiopia will be denuded of her national independence, unless the great forces of the workers, peasants and all anti-imperialists throughout the world are mobilised to demand:

[ 24 ]

1. The complete independence of Ethiopia.
2. The granting of licences for the export of arms to Ethiopia.
3. The stoppage of all munitions and financial aid to Italy.
4. The withdrawal of all imperialist armed forces from Egypt, Sudan and British, French and Italian Somaliland.
5. The closing of the Suez Canal to all Italian military transport.
6. Full support of sanctions including oil.

The League of Nations has acted to some slight degree as a buffer to impede the onslaught of the 400,000 Roman legions which accumulated on the borders of Ethiopia, armed with all of the tried and untried machines of war.

Thanks to the undreamt-of ability and diplomacy which were hidden in the brain of the most famous of modern rulers, Haile Selassie, every protocol, article and covenant which were meant only for adornment of the League of Nations, were shrewdly invoked, in every case, at the right time, and with such well thought out presentations, that the small nations of the League were forced to realize that if something were not done to halt the Fascist aggressor, the inflated modern "Caesar", the same fate would overtake them when their great imperialistic neighbors felt inclined to impose their avaricious will upon them. However, the secret promises of help which the large and powerful nations gave their small neighbors and allies proved enough to prevent them from pressing for the application of the fullest possible sanctions, including oil. This may now rebound to their disadvantage on account of the war-like move made by Hitler in re-occupying the demilitarized Rhineland, which threatens the stability of Europe and possibly the world.

They have realized too late that treaties and covenants are only "scraps of paper" to be discarded by the powerful when it suits their convenience.

[ 25 ]

France has been unusually treacherous in her dealings with Ethiopia. In her agreement relating to the use of the Addis Ababa Jibouti railroad which, according to the agreement, may be used also for the transportation of ammunition if Ethiopia should be attacked—characteristic of the actions of the powerful European nations—its use has been denied by the French—thus, increasing the difficulties of Ethiopia to obtain means of self defense. These actions are proof that colored peoples of African descent must shoulder their own responsibilities and fight their battles. In this case, it can be done by helping the last independent colored empire.

The League has apparently lost its maximum effectiveness as an instrument of peace, which could have been exercised to the fullest against an aggressor, and thereby establishing a sufficiently powerful precedent to deal effectively with others.

The whole world stands amazed at, and in admiration of, the heroic, brilliant and unexpected defense and initiative displayed by these crudely armed Ethiopians in their unwavering opposition to an enemy four times their number in population, but a thousand times better armed even as a first class power.

The resistance to the attempt of this powerful nation to impose slavery upon Ethiopia has not only aroused the admiration of the world, but, as graphically stated by an editorial on March 31st, 1936, in the "New York Times," the "future of Ethiopia will be assured not through strength of pressure and propaganda, but by a great pity—which embraces the confusion, the frustration, and the aspiration of civilized mankind at this crisis." Continuing, the editorial says: "It is such a feeling that has been compelled throughout Christendom towards Ethiopia."

If, then, the Ethiopian nation is acting as an inspiration to oppressed and other peoples throughout the world, we pray that the reaction for good upon Afro-Americans will be even greater than the most enthusiastic dreams "THE UNITED AID FOR ETHIOPIA" envisions.