

A cura di Ilario Salucci

**Trotsky, i trotskisti e la
guerra italo-etiopica
(1935-1936)**

**Documenti della Lega Comunista
Internazionalista
(bolscevico-leninista)**

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Dubois	Elfriede Eisler («Ruth Fischer»)
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Santini	Paolo Ravazzoli
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Sigle:

C.A.P.	Commission administrative permanente della Ligue Communiste
C.G.T.	Confédération générale du travail
I.A.G.	Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft
I.B.R.S.U.	International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity
I.C.	Internationale communiste
I.K.D.	Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
I.K.L. (B.-L.)	Internationalen Kommunistischen Liga (Bolschewiki-Leninisten)

I.O.S.	Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste
L.C.I. (B.-L.)	Ligue communiste internationaliste (bolchevik-léniniste)
p.v.	procès-verbal
R.S.A.P.	Revolutionair-Socialistische Arbeiderspartij
S.D.N.	Société des Nations
S.F.I.O.	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière
S.A.P.	Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei
W.P.U.S.	Workers Party of the United States

Archivi:

EP	Trotsky Exile Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts)
N	Nikolaevskij Archive – Series n. 231, Hoover Institution, Stanford University (Stanford, California)
SWP	Socialist Workers Party records 1928-1998, Hoover Institution, Stanford University (Stanford, California)

Introduzione

Questo volume raccoglie la documentazione che mi è stato possibile reperire relativa a come il movimento trotskista ha dibattuto e affrontato la guerra italo-etiopica del 1935-1936. Questa tematica è stata ben poco affrontata a livello storiografico – a mia conoscenza solo un saggio la affronta, non nel suo complesso, ma da un punto di vista specifico, indicato fin dal titolo (Antonio Moscato, Correspondance Trotsky–Leonetti sur la guerre d'Ethiopie, *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, n. 29, mars 1987).

I documenti che ho riunito sono riprodotti in forma «grezza»: nelle lingue originali e senza nessun tipo di apparato critico, salvo specificare i nomi relativi ai vari pseudonimi. Ho corretto gli evidenti errori grammaticali, ma non sono intervenuto su scelte linguistiche dettate dal fatto che non pochi autori scrivevano in lingue che non conoscevano perfettamente, essendo esiliati, o vivendo in una colonia sotto dominio straniero. Purtroppo non sono riuscito a reperire e quindi a inserire in questa raccolta l'unico articolo «nazionale» della stampa trotskista in lingua tedesca (Brn., Die Sanktionen bereiten den Weltkrieg vor, *Unser Wort*, III.11 [63], Anfang November 1935).

Non ho incluso la numerosa documentazione di quegli stessi anni dedicata al tema della «guerra che verrà», ovviamente intrecciata strettamente alla documentazione qui presentata (così, ad es., dell'opuscolo di James Burnham, *War and the Workers*, ho riprodotto solo la parte relativa alla guerra italo-etiopica). Anche questa tematica ha una bibliografia ben limitata – mi limito qui solo a ricordare un vecchio saggio di Pierre Broué: *Les trotskystes et le problème de la guerre. Bilan historiographique*, in: Milza (sous la direction de), *Les Internationales et le problème de la guerre au XX^e siècle*, Università di Milano – École française de Rome, 1987. Un recente (e per altri versi ottimo) libro sul trotskismo statunitense (Paul Le Blanc, Bryan Palmer, Thomas Bias (eds), *US Trotskyism 1928-1965. Part I. Emergence. Left Opposition in the United States*, Brill, 2017; Haymarket, 2019) non

dedica purtroppo nessuno spazio alla politica internazionale e ai dibattiti sulla «guerra che verrà».

Spero che la disponibilità di questa documentazione faciliterà future ricerche storiche.

Ringrazio in modo particolare lo staff dell'International Institute of Social History di Amsterdam, competente, disponibile e gentilissimo. Senza l'eccezionale biblioteca e archivio di questo Istituto, e senza le qualità del suo staff, questo lavoro non sarebbe stato possibile.

Ilario Salucci

Documenti internazionali e italiani

1. J. T. Martin, A New Nerve Center of Imperialist Lust¹

Will war, retarded in Europe, flare up in Eastern Africa? It is around Ethiopia that the great game is now being played, and by this fact, the empire of the Negus finds itself the nerve center of world imperialist lusts.

Only last year, on the heels of the so-called internal disturbances provoked, as will be recalled, by the flight of the ex-emperor Ligi-Yasu, a press campaign of the kind customary to the «civilizing» powers was launched to justify the eventuality of an action in Abyssinia, or more exactly, as we shall see, in Ethiopia.

The present pretext for putting into effect the plans for expansion in Ethiopia (to win over the last corners of the Black Continent to the «civilization» of the imperialist powers), is taken from the series of incidents which recently came to light on the frontier between Abyssinia and *Italian* and *French* Somaliland. Before examining the real causes at the root of these frontier incidents, we deem it worth while and necessary first of all to locate the position of Ethiopia in Eastern Africa.

The imperialist press – particularly the Fascist Italian press – speaks of Ethiopia as a country of brigands and «savages», and consequently unworthy of belonging to the honorable League of Nations, within which, nevertheless, Ethiopia has sat since 1923 on the same plane as the «civilized» powers. In a word, the aim is to deny the Abyssinian empire any political or physical individuality.

At the same time that the government of Addis Abeba is accused of an inability to establish order in the country, the Abyssinian emperor is reproached for having subjected other Ethiopian peoples by force of arms. Reason enough, therefore, why the European imperialist powers, in starting to execute their plan for conquest, should present themselves both as the defenders of the oppressed native peoples and the bearers of the benefits of «civilization» in Ethiopia.

¹ *New International*, May 1935.

I. The Ethiopian Empire: Its Economic and Social Position

What actually is this empire of eastern Africa which is surrounded by so many legends and mysteries?

Ethiopia is a continental state, without a waterway to the sea, and whose center – a virtual fortress – is constituted by an overhanging plateau, with an altitude of a mile and a quarter, with deserts separating it on the East from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and on the South and the West from Kenya and the Sudan Plains.

The economico-social situation of this country would recall, according to some French colonizers, that of Morocco and Tunis before the French occupation; according to the Italian Fascists, that of a mediaeval country of the time of Charlemagne. It seems to us right to assert that Ethiopia, like many other countries, is traversing a phase similar to that experienced by the capitalist states at the dawn of modern times. In this resides the most important oddity of the internal evolution gone through by this country, one which makes it possible to explain the «modernism» with which the present government of the Emperor Haile Selassie is inspired.

From the geographic, natural point of view, Ethiopia makes one think either of the position of Mexico, or of that of an «African Switzerland». Ethiopia's position is that of a tropical country (actually, considerably closer to the Equator than to the Tropics). But by its mountainous structure, it offers us the singularity of the cultures of all climates. Near the sea, in the torrid zone, there are the lowlands, warm and humid, unhealthful, not greatly cultivated or inhabited, the *kolla* almost a desert where the thermometer rises to 114° and even higher. In coming towards the interior, the climate becomes softer; one arrives at the lands of the *voina dega* (a mile to a mile and a half in altitude), an agricultural zone in which vineyards grow and the earth is fertile with leguminous and cereal plants. It is also the coffee zone, the land of origin of that product which has rightly taken its name from the «Kaffa» country.

From the *voina dega*, which is the most populated region for the reasons just mentioned, one passes finally to the cold lands of the *dega*, mountains with rich pasturage where cattle, sheep and horses graze.

Breeding is actually the second occupation of Abyssinia, following agriculture. Animal products of any value include: ivory, wax, wild animal skins, which are the most important articles of export. In the line of imports, cotton, sugar, oil, etc., figure principally.

If it is true that communications and transportation represent the most important index of the degree of development of a country, it must be avowed that Abyssinia is truly still backward. The only railway (486 miles) is the trunk line which unites Djibouti, a French possession, with Addis Abeba, the capital of the empire. Seventy-five percent of Ethiopian traffic flows over this line which is administered by a French corporation and has a stretch of 56 miles running over French territory. An automobile road (suitable for trucking) had been planned and agreed to by the Italo-Abyssinian friendship pact of 1928; but this road, aimed to connect Assab (where port concessions had been granted Abyssinia by Italy) with Dessje, has not yet had the work begun on it. The same fate has been reserved for another project for a railway agreed to between Italy and England, and aimed at connecting the North country with the South, from Massawa, through Addis Abeba, down to Mogdichu. As to roads, in the ordinary sense in which we understand the term, with the exception of a few miles around the capital, Addis Abeba, they simply do not exist. The Abyssinian mule remains the commonest and most practical means of locomotion of the Abyssinian plateau.

But it would be wrong to ignore, in face of this indubitably backward state of affairs, the steps forward taken by Ethiopia especially in the course of the last thirty years.

To the economico-social evolution of the country, corresponds a political evolution of the Abyssinian state, a new stage in which has just been marked by Haile Selassie, the present emperor, by virtue of his essay at a «constitution».

II. The Constitution of Haile Selassie I

Ethiopia is the only native state of Africa, except for Egypt and Liberia. Some 350,000 square miles in area, it is populated by eleven million

inhabitants who belong to 20 different races, speaking at least 16 languages, and having three religions. The most blended, yet most refined and most intelligent of all these tribes are the Abyssinians, who have given the Ethiopian geographical complex its unity and its political organization. Thence the current usage of calling the whole of Ethiopia Abyssinia. But the Ethiopian empire is not merely composed of the Abyssinians; there are the Gallas, cultivators of the South; the Somalis, towards the coast of the Red sea; the Dancalis, etc. The human origin of this whole mixture of tribes remains Hamitic, almost always without any Negroid character, and particularly pure among the Gallas.

Another singularity of Ethiopia: isolated in its mountains, it has remained a Christian country in the midst of Islam, having a native ecclesiastical hierarchy, one of the pillars of the empire. Slavery has been spoken of a good deal; but what remains of the régime of slavery today is quite different from the past: the slave is a part of the family of the master, on the same basis as the latter's children. Upon the death of the master, he inherits a bit of ground and a part of the natural goods, and he is emancipated. The Arabian servants in the French colonies hardly have better conditions. The contingents of slaves who traverse Ethiopia to gain the coast, are, generally, Sudanese Negroes «picked up» in the Sudan and in English Uganda by European «whites», by *civilizers*.

After the death on April 2, 1930, of Zauditu, daughter of Menelik II, the supreme power passed into the hands of Ras Tafari, now emperor under the name of Haile Selassie I. With the advent to power of Ras Tafari, everything changes in Ethiopia. To unify his kingdom; to exploit the country on the European style – that is the program which the new chieftain has assigned himself. All the «civilized» powers sent representatives and gifts to his coronation (November 2, 1930). Mussolini sent an airplane, *Breda 15*. A propaganda brochure announces: «Let Negus Tafari do his work: he will make another Japan out of Ethiopia».

On July 16, 1931, Haile Selassie gave the country a constitution which caused the «civilizers» to smile. Indeed, just as the moment when there is a mounting fury against Parliaments in Europe, Ras Tafari thought of creating

an Ethiopian Parliament! The new constitution decreed the formation of two chambers: of deputies and of senators. The former, provisionally, «and until the people are qualified to elect them themselves», are selected by the local chieftains. The senators are designated by the emperor from the ranks of the dignitaries.

Haile Selassie bought back the old English bank that controlled Ethiopian finances and founded the National Bank of Ethiopia. At the same time, work went on to effect the reorganization of the army. The military organ of the Rome government gives the following data on the military capacity of Ethiopia: in case of war, there not existing any age limits, 30% of the population could be mobilized, so that two million soldiers might be put into the field. But the armament is still primitive: 500,000 rifles, a million side-arms, about 250 machine guns and 180 cannon. Further, the renowned horsemen of the Gallas. In addition, 5 or 6 armored cars. The only cartridge factory is at Addis Abeba, established in 1908 with French machinery. The air force is made up of a collection of the most diverse planes». In brief, the Ethiopian army, according to the Rome paper, is not a regularly organized complex, but an assemblage of armed men, of differing value and effectiveness, held together by personal ties and bonds of dependence.

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that it was these poorly armed and poorly equipped troops who inflicted such severe defeats upon Italian troops at the end of the last century! Will the troops of Mussolini encounter the same fate found by Crispi's troops in the Abyssinian mountains, and is the dictator of Rome heading towards the fate of his Sicilian predecessor? The game is pregnant with consequences. There has been talk of a Belgian mission and of French and Japanese instructors in the army and air force of Ethiopia. One fact is beyond discussion: that the Ethiopia of today is no longer the Ethiopia of 60 years ago. Great steps forward have been taken by this people.

III. The Question of the Frontiers

Surrounded by European possessions, Ethiopia has more than half of its frontiers in common with the British empire, about a third with Italy,

and the rest with France. For the Anglo-Egyptian countries, Abyssinia is the source (Upper Nile) upon which depends British cotton-raising. England seeks to have the trade of Northern Ethiopia flow through the Sudan to Port Sudan, which is equipped for the purpose. France holds Djibouti and the only railway that connects Addis Abeba with the outside world. Italy is installed in Massawa and Assab.

Just as an outlet to the sea is an elementary necessity for Ethiopia, so is the latter a necessity for the states holding the coast (France, England, Italy), because the occupation of the hinterland would multiply tenfold the value of the unproductive colonies which now extend along the sterile coast. For the last thirty years, conventions have been concluded among France, England and Italy seeking to partition the Ethiopian plateau into zones of influence. America too has intervened, and more recently Japan has manifested a special interest in it.

It is not, therefore, in the fixing of the frontiers that the nub of the present conflict must be sought, but in the competition of these various powers in assuring themselves the seizure of Ethiopian resources. Moreover, so far as the question of frontiers alone is concerned, the right is with Ethiopia, which efforts are being made to depict as the aggressor. The accord established between Menelik and the government of Rome on May 16, 1908 with regard to the frontier between Italian Somaliland and the Ethiopian province of Ogaden, says in Art. 4, to which Italian Fascism is appealing for justification of its military action: «From Uwebi-Sabeli, the frontier continues in the northwestern direction along the line adopted by the Italian government in 1897; all the territory along the seaboard belongs to Italy; the territory situated on the other side, towards the interior, remains with Abyssinia»¹. The wells of Wal-Wal and of Wader, by the terms of this

¹ «Dall'Uebi-Scebeli la frontiera si dirige verso nord-est secondo il tracciato accettato dal Governo italiano nel 1897. Tutto il territorio appartenente alle tribù verso la costa rimarrà alla dipendenza dell'Italia; tutto il territorio di Ogaden e tutto quello delle tribù verso l'Ogaden rimarrà alla dipendenza dell'Abissinia». Convenzione tra Italia ed Etiopia per sistemare la frontiera tra i possedimenti italiani della Somalia e le provincie dell'Impero etiopico, 16 maggio 1908 (R. Ministero degli

article belong to Addis Abeba. Thus, if it is a question of aggression, then it is being openly mediated by the government of Rome which aims to annex the wells in question which are indispensable to the Ethiopian frontier tribes for the watering of their stocks. But as usual, it is only a matter of finding a pretext.

IV. Japan's Activity in Ethiopia

Japanese activity in Ethiopia is above all the fact that disturbs the European powers. Recent conventions between the Tokyo and Addis Abeba governments grant important advantages to the interests of Nipponese trade. But much more disquieting is the fact that the period of experimentation in cotton culture, conducted under the direction of Japanese experts, has just been terminated. Measures have been taken to promote Japanese immigration in order to develop this new activity. Installing themselves in Abyssinia, thanks to the exceptional conditions accorded them by the government of that country, the Japanese would be able to develop the cultures indispensable to their cotton industry, and would thereby be able to free themselves in part from the customs threat with which they collide on the part of British trade in India, as well as in England and the Dominions. At the same time, the import of cotton fabrics like *abudjedid*, utilized for the manufacture of the Abyssinian toga (*shanmas*), would be replaced by the home production of this same fabric.

Thus it is that around Ethiopia is unfolding a new phase of the Anglo-Nipponese commercial struggle on the world market. The Japanese seizure of those sources, rich in promise and possibility, represented by the Abyssinian lands, halfway between the Orient and the Occident – there is the fact that disturbs above all else the three powers, France, England and Italy, which, as far back as 1906, sought by their accord the partition of Ethiopia. Have they returned today, in face of the Japanese menace, to a new tripartite accord? And is Italian Fascism merely operating as the instrument to execute these tacit agreements?

Affari Esteri, Trattati e convenzioni fra il Regno d'Italia e gli altri Stati, vol. 20°, Atti conclusi dal 1° gennaio 1908 al 31 dicembre 1909, Roma, 1930, pag. 27).

Ethiopia is acquiring the importance of a new «Eastern question». The operations of Italian Fascism which, with the complicity of France and of England, has undertaken the task of the armed conquest of the Abyssinian lands, will be neither simple nor easy. These operations may arouse the entire Black Continent, especially Egyptian nationalism, which is striving to give leadership to the vast emancipation movement of all the Islamic peoples of Asia and Africa, from the Atlantic to the Indies. The Coptic nationalism of Abyssinia, despite its Christianity, might find powerful allies in this movement, which, moreover, Japan is seeking to convert, as in the Far East, into its own rampart against its European rivals.

The Ethiopian game is pregnant with consequences for the African map and the map of the entire world. Let us recall that the Italo-Turkish war of 1911 was the precursive signal of the world massacre of 1914. Are we now face to face with a similar danger in the Ethiopian conflict? Today, as yesterday, everything will depend upon the strength of the international proletariat.

Paris, February 17, 1935

2. Leonetti, Problèmes et aspects de l'Italie actuelle¹

Après treize ans de pouvoir, Mussolini, qui a fait sa «révolution» pour sauver le capitalisme de l'assaut du prolétariat, seul véritable fossoyeur de la bourgeoisie, découvre soudainement que «le capitalisme a vécu», et que «la crise présente est une crise du système». Naturellement il se hâte d'ajouter que le socialisme aussi a vécu et que seul le «corporativisme» triomphe². En

¹ EP16996. Testo non datato, inedito. Probabilmente destinato a costituire l'ultima sezione del documento (1).

² «Questa crisi che ci attanaglia da quattro anni... è una crisi 'nel' sistema o 'del' sistema? Oggi rispondo: la crisi è penetrata così profondamente nel sistema che è diventata una crisi del sistema... la crisi del sistema capitalistico [...] l'economia corporativa sorge nel momento storico determinato, quando cioè i due fenomeni

quoi consiste-t-il ce «triomphe» du «corporativisme»? Y a-t-il un troisième système entre le capitalisme et le socialisme?

La conception de l'économie corporative n'est que la somme de tous les vieux préjugés et de tous les penchants utopistes de la petite bourgeoisie qui croit pouvoir remplacer la lutte de classe par la collaboration des classes, les antagonismes et les contradictions résultant du régime capitaliste par des «harmonies sociales». A l'opposé du «réformisme social», le fascisme prétend se poser en «arbitre» entre bourgeoisie et prolétariat en supprimant par la violence toute forme «démocratique» de la société, en organisant cette dernière dans une série de corporations sous le contrôle de l'Etat placé «au dessus des classes»¹. Mais de même que la banqueroute du réformisme social a prouvé qu'il n'y a guère de possibilité d'«harmoniser» au sein de la société capitaliste les intérêts des exploités avec les intérêts des exploités, - l'échec de la conception corporative aboutit à la démonstration que la lutte des classes n'est aucunement une invention diabolique des marxistes, et que des deux classes en lutte, l'une, la bourgeoisie, doit succomber; l'autre, le prolétariat, doit triompher.

Quand nous parlons d'échec de l'économie corporative, nous voulons indiquer l'échec de cette utopie petite-bourgeoise qui prétend pouvoir «harmoniser» les antagonismes et les contradictions résultant du mode de production et d'échange capitaliste, sans toucher aux bases sur lesquelles ce mode de production et d'échange est fondé: la propriété privée.

Que Mussolini se voit forcé d'avouer la fin du capitalisme, cela n'est qu'une confirmation que le marxisme a raison de se donner pour tâche de

concomitanti, capitalismo e socialismo, hanno già dato tutto quello che potevano dare» (Mussolini, Discorso per lo Stato corporativo, 14 novembre 1933, in: Opera omnia, vol. 26, pp. 87, 95).

¹ «L'idea corporativa... proclama che il capitalismo, nella sua forma attuale, è il prodotto del liberalismo economico, che questa forma è ormai sorpassata, che il capitalismo necessita di controllo e che fra gli interessi dei datori di lavoro e quelli dei lavoratori, arbitro finale deve assidersi lo Stato»; «la rivoluzione fascista... [ha] ricond[otto] l'autorità nello Stato, l'armonia nelle classi sociali» (Mussolini, Il 1934, 2 gennaio 1934, in: Opera omnia, vol. 26, pp. 135-136; Messaggio alle Casse di risparmio italiane, 31 ottobre 1932, in Opera omnia, vol. 25, pag. 296).

l'enterrer pour faire place au socialisme. Mais quand Mussolini ajoute que le «système corporatif» marque la fin de la dictature du capital, il troque sa position de «commis», avec la position de son «maître». En réalité les choses se présentent bien autrement.

Ce que Mussolini appelle la «fin de la dictature du capital», est pour lui simplement la fin du «libéralisme économique», la mort de l'école de Manchester. Or le Manchesterianisme, l'économie libérale, a perdu son influence sur le capitalisme bien avant l'arrivée de Mussolini au pouvoir c'est à dire, depuis la transformation du capitalisme en impérialisme. La bourgeoisie étant devenue monopoliste, après avoir combattu l'intervention de l'Etat dans l'économie en tant qu'une utopie socialiste; est obligée de plus en plus de solliciter sa protection de l'Etat. La toute puissance économique de l'Etat se développe comme une des conséquences nécessaires du mode capitaliste de production.

A l'origine, le fascisme, s'appuyant sur les couches profondes de la petite bourgeoisie, se développe en se mouvant sur le terrain de la lutte contre l'intervention de l'Etat dans l'économie, contre le régime des monopôles, contre la dictature du grand capital. Mais une fois le prolétariat écrasé, une fois appelé au pouvoir, le fascisme est obligé d'agir comme un instrument docile du grand capital, du capital monopoliste. C'est ce que Mussolini a fait; ce que Hitler fait à son tour.

Ce ne sont donc pas les industriels qui deviennent les mandataires de l'Etat, ainsi que certains croient, c'est l'Etat qui devient une grande entreprise capitaliste. Ainsi que Lénine a démontré dans son ouvrage: «L'impérialisme, dernière phase du capitalisme», ce qu'il y a de changé ce n'est pas la base de l'exploitation, qui demeure capitaliste, mais c'est la forme. L'ancien capitaine d'industrie n'est désormais plus qu'un parasite vivant de ses coupons. La figure de l'industriel, est remplacée par celle du financier. En ce sens la «dictature du capitalisme», la dictature du «capitalisme libéral», fait place à la dictature fasciste, la dictature du capitalisme monopoliste, à l'époque du capitalisme pourrissant.

Parallèlement à cette transformation du capitalisme libéral en capitalisme monopoliste, les masses populaires s'appauvrissent de plus en

plus; les besoins financiers de l'Etat s'accroissent; croît la misère et l'oppression, et en même temps le chaos nationalement et internationalement.

Pas plus que le réformisme, le fascisme s'avère incapable de dominer ce chaos. Au contraire, en accélérant le processus d'accumulation capitaliste, en multipliant le parasitisme et les mesures de répression contre les forces productives sociales dont le développement est devenu incompatible avec le régime capitaliste, il ne fait qu'accroître les déséquilibres sociaux dont les explosions ne seront par suite que plus violentes.

C'est ce qui résulte de l'examen de la situation italienne après treize ans de pouvoir fasciste.

Aux jeunes générations qui n'ont pas connu les temps du socialisme et de la lutte de classes ouverte, Mussolini ne peut plus dire: c'est la faute au socialisme. Il doit s'en prendre «au régime», au «système capitaliste». Mais à toute cette démagogie contredit de manière frappante le fait que le nombre des capitalistes toujours plus restreint ne devient par suite que toujours plus puissant; tandis que la misère des masses populaires s'accroît en raison inverse. Et Mussolini se voit même dans la nécessité de théoriser le «nivellement de l'humanité à un degré plus bas»¹. Mais les masses qui souffrent, les masses qui ont faim, ne peuvent pas se contenter d'une telle perspective. Elles cherchent une issue à leur situation intenable. Mussolini s'efforce d'en procurer une par la guerre déjà ébauchée en Abyssinie. Mais ce fait même nous dit que Mussolini évolue sur un volcan.

¹ «Noi andiamo forse verso un periodo di umanità livellata sopra un tenore più basso» (Mussolini, La situazione economica, 26 maggio 1934, in: Opera omnia, vol. 26, pag. 258).

3. Trotsky au Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 11 juillet 1935¹

On n'accorde pas assez d'attention dans nos sections, et surtout dans la section française, au conflit italo-éthiopien. La question est de la plus haute importance, en elle-même d'abord, et ensuite du point de vue du tournant de l'Internationale communiste. Bien entendu, nous sommes pour la défaite de l'Italie et pour la victoire de l'Éthiopie, et nous devons donc faire tout notre possible pour empêcher, par tous les moyens en notre pouvoir, que d'autres puissances impérialistes soutiennent l'impérialisme italien et en même temps faciliter du mieux que nous pouvons la livraison d'armes, etc., à l'Éthiopie.

Néanmoins, nous devons faire valoir que cette lutte n'est pas dirigée contre le fascisme, mais contre l'impérialisme. Quand c'est de guerre qu'il s'agit, il n'est pas question pour nous de savoir qui est «le meilleur», du Négus ou de Mussolini, mais d'un rapport de forces et du combat d'une nation sous-développée pour sa défense contre l'impérialisme.

4. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), Appel contre le brigandage colonial en Abyssinie²

L'Abyssinie, a prétendu Mussolini, pour justifier son expédition en Afrique orientale, c'est un révolver braqué contre la sûreté de l'Italie. Or,

¹ *Oeuvres* 6:51. Fonte: EP8008; per l'estratto riportato: N352.60.

² *Service de presse de la LCI (B-L)*, 17 juillet 1935, con questo preambolo: «Appel de la LCI (BL) pour une journée internationale de lutte contre la guerre à l'Abyssinie et l'organisation du sabotage envers l'Italie fasciste»; *La Vérité*, n. 245, 21 juillet 1935, con questo preambolo: «Nous publions ci-dessous l'appel que lance le S. I. de la L.C.I. sur la brûlante question du conflit italo-abyssinien». Altre pubblicazioni: For the Boycott of Fascist Italy! – Against Italian Aggression in Ethiopia!, *The New Militant*, Vol. I No. 32, 3 August 1935; Gegen den Ueberfall auf Abissinien!, *Unser Wort. Monatszeitung der IKD*, No. III.9 (61), Anfang September 1935.

c'est le contraire qui est vrai. Mussolini, en accumulant ses troupes aux frontières du plateau éthiopien, braque son revolver contre ces peuples pour s'emparer de leur territoire, en profitant du désarroi général dans lequel vit le monde capitaliste tout entier. Mussolini veut répéter contre l'Abyssinie l'opération qui a réussi au Japon en Extrême-Orient contre le Mandchou-Kouo. Laissera-t-on agir Mussolini impunément comme on a laissé les brigands du Japon agir librement contre le Mandchou-Kouo?

Les effets n'en seraient cette fois que plus graves. On ne peut pas à la longue maintenir une paix qui s'assoit sur des camps de baïonnettes antagonistes. L'heure du dénouement sanglant approche. La guerre de Mussolini contre l'Abyssinie n'en serait que le signal pour les puissances européennes, qui suffoquent dans leurs étaux. Mussolini ne peut plus ni reculer ni retarder son entreprise. Tenailé par des difficultés intérieures sans précédent (chômage, crise financière profonde, appauvrissement extrême des masses paysannes, bouillonnement des jeunes générations, demandant au régime de satisfaire enfin leurs besoins, etc.), Mussolini cherche une issue à ces difficultés insurmontables dans une guerre contre l'Abyssinie. Mais ce pays n'est pas seulement la proie convoitée du fascisme italien. L'Angleterre, la France, le Japon ont aussi leurs convoitises à satisfaire. Et l'Allemagne ne reste pas la dernière à réclamer sa part de butin in en Europe. Les accords navals anglo-allemands d'un côté et ceux de l'Allemagne avec la Pologne de l'autre démontrent que l'Allemagne ne cesse de guetter l'occasion favorable pour allumer l'incendie auquel rien ne manque pour éclater. La direction d'un tel éclatement apparaît d'ores et déjà très évident: elle vise l'U.R.S.S.

On voit ainsi combien il est criminel de répandre l'illusion que la paix peut être assurée par ceux mêmes qui la mettent en danger, par les bandits impérialistes. Lors de l'entrée de l'U.R.S.S. à la Société des Nations, on a cherché à présenter cette entrée comme un moyen de redonner à cet organisme en décomposition du prestige et de la force. Vain espoir. La S.D.N. ne cesse d'être un instrument aux mains des bandits impérialistes luttant les uns contre les autres. Son impuissance en tant qu'instrument de paix, on l'a vue à l'occasion de la guerre du Grand Chaco, à l'occasion de

l'agression contre le Mandchou-Kouo; on la voit maintenant à l'occasion du brigandage italien contre l'Abyssinie.

Les travailleurs n'ont rien à espérer de ceux qui sans cesse conspirent contre la paix. Ceux-ci sont leurs ennemis impérialistes, sans distinction de cocarde. Laval, Mussolini, Hitler et tutti-quant, n'est-il pas significatif que tous ces messieurs se réclament au même titre d'une même volonté de paix?

Nous affirmons une fois de plus aux travailleurs que ceux qui présentent comme pacifique la bourgeoisie de leur propre pays, ceux-là les trompent et les trahissent. Les travailleurs ne peuvent compter que sur leur force pour lutter contre la guerre. Pour être forts, il faut, certes, que les travailleurs soient unis, mais ils ne seront unis qu'à la condition d'avoir rompu avec leur propre bourgeoisie nationale et avec tous les agents de celle-ci dans leurs rangs. Le problème de la lutte contre la guerre c'est, donc, le problème de l'unité révolutionnaire de la classe ouvrière. Si on continue à nourrir les travailleurs des illusions d'un pacifisme qui est en dehors de toute possibilité historique, on ne fera que laisser la voie libre au fascisme et à la guerre.

Pour lutter contre la guerre il ne faut pas non plus attendre demain, il ne faut pas attendre qu'il soit trop tard pour mettre en pratique les menaces dont on remplit les appels et les résolutions votées dans des meetings. On n'arrête pas la guerre par des plaintes déposées par les Barbusses au bureau de la S.D.N.; on n'arrête pas les bandits impérialistes en leur adressant des pétitions et des soupirs. Il faut faire suivre les paroles par des actes. Et c'est ce que nous proposons à toutes les organisations qui sincèrement aspirent à lutter pour la paix.

Mussolini attaque l'Abyssinie. C'est un cas indiscutable de banditisme. Si on laisse encore faire Mussolini, dans les prochains mois nous le verrons passer de la phase de préparation à la phase de guerre combattue. Avec pour conséquence, tout ce que nous avons prédit pour le reste du monde et pour l'Europe, en particulier. Comment l'empêcher? Que peut-on faire?

Sans doute, la classe ouvrière se trouve en Italie réduite à l'impuissance par treize ans de dictature sanglante du fascisme; sans doute

l'hitlérisme en Allemagne a écrasé le plus puissant prolétariat d'Europe; les défaites autrichienne et espagnole s'y sont ajoutées. Mais malgré cela le prolétariat en Europe et dans les autres continents reste une force immense, tandis que l'ennemi impérialiste est déchiré intérieurement par ses contradictions, décomposé par sa pourriture. Le problème c'est de savoir mettre encore à profit le grand potentiel révolutionnaire des ouvriers, en même temps que le désarroi qui se manifeste dans le camp ennemi. Si on laisse à l'ennemi le temps d'agir, on lui laissera aussi le temps de mener à terme ses plans destructeurs.

On ne doit plus renouveler ce qui s'est produit pendant qu'on écrasait nos frères de Vienne et des Asturies. Nous ne devons plus demeurer des spectateurs impassibles et neutres, tandis que les brigands pillent et œuvrent comme en Extrême-Orient sur le Mandchou-Kouo. Chaque pouce de terrain perdu par les travailleurs de n'importe quel pays est perdu pour tous les travailleurs. Or, si la classe ouvrière le veut, elle peut par sa force accomplir encore des prodiges. Travaillons à rendre à la classe ouvrière cette volonté. L'agression fasciste contre le peuple abyssin est le chaînon qu'il est nécessaire aujourd'hui de briser.

Sans tarder, il faut organiser un *boycottage international* de l'Italie fasciste et de ses alliés dans la guerre contre l'Ethiopie. Si nous ne savons pas organiser un tel boycottage, le fascisme italien ne pourra que se moquer, comme il le fait, de nos appels et de nos protestations.

Aucun envoi de soldats et d'armes ne doit être permis contre l'Ethiopie. Tout envoi, tout navire transportant des marchandises de l'Italie ou pour ce pays, doit être arrêté.

Il ne s'agit pas de *proclamer* «ni un sou, ni un homme» pour la guerre de l'impérialisme italien contre l'Ethiopie, il s'agit d'*organiser* la lutte internationale qui doit permettre aux prolétaires d'Italie de se sentir solidaires du prolétariat international et, en sentant cette solidarité, de reprendre la marche vers leur libération.

Ceux qui parlent d'«unité d'action», doivent démontrer par les faits que cette action ils la veulent vraiment. De Londres à Moscou, de Paris à New-York, organisons-la. Pas de temps à perdre en telles ou telles

négociations entre les deux internationales, comme on a fait pendant que les mineurs d'Asturies tombaient les armes à la main. De tous les coins du globe, c'est par une action puissante et générale qu'il faut s'adresser aux prolétaires d'Italie et leur montrer notre ferme volonté de défendre le droit des peuples du continent noir à leur libre disposition. Qu'on entre immédiatement en liaison avec toutes les organisations ouvrières prêtes à une telle lutte. Nous lançons un vibrant appel pour que ce mot d'ordre soit mis en exécution par tout et sans retard.

Une journée internationale de lutte doit être organisée, qui sera le point de convergence et en même temps le point de départ de l'action des travailleurs contre l'agression fasciste italienne envers le peuple abyssin. Qu'on donne cette preuve de volonté d'action, cette preuve concrète du front international des opprimés et des travailleurs contre leur ennemi, l'impérialisme de toute cocarde et la marche du fascisme se trouvera vraiment arrêtée par la force renaissante du prolétariat mondial.

Vive l'internationalisme prolétarien.

A bas l'impérialisme, fauteur de guerres!

Vive la lutte mondiale contre le fascisme!

Contre l'agression italienne envers l'Ethiopie!

Pour le sabotage des civilisateurs en «chemise noire»!

Libération de tous les peuples opprimés du joug des impérialistes!

5. Secrétariat International de la LCI(BL), 22 juillet 1935¹

Guerre d'Abyssinie. Un article de Martin sur la situation en Italie et un article théorique de Parabellum sur les tâches du prolétariat mondial dans ce conflit seront envoyés aux sections². Les sections sont invitées non seulement à publier les appels et les articles, mais aussi à agir dans le sens indiqué dans ces documents.

¹ N373.71. SWP2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

² Si vedano i documenti (6) e (20).

6. J. P. Martin, La situation italienne à la veille de la guerre d'Afrique. Mussolini évolue sur un volcan¹

Il est désormais assez clair qu'aucun «compromis» pourra éviter la guerre de Mussolini à l'Ethiopie. Est-ce pour la manie de grandeur de Mussolini ou pour le fait que le Duce est moins «pacifique» que d'autres hommes du gouvernement? A vrai dire, si l'on considère la nouvelle campagne italienne en Ethiopie du point de vue juridique, si l'on veut prendre au sérieux le prétexte initial, c'est-à-dire les soi-disant incidents de frontière, les offenses au drapeau italien et ainsi de suite, l'entreprise mussolinienne en Afrique ne peut ne pas apparaître comme une aventure folle. On ne dépense pas des milliards, on ne sacrifie pas des centaines de milliers de soldats 4.800 km loin de la mère-patrie pour «l'honneur» du drapeau. La bourgeoisie s'en moque, elle, de tout cela. La réalité est que Mussolini aurait encore retardé l'entrée dans cette voie, si les difficultés de la situation intérieure ne l'eussent pas poussé. Car c'est dans cette situation qu'il faut chercher la cause de la nouvelle campagne italienne en Ethiopie et non pas dans les incidents de Oual-Oual ou dans autre chose.

Mais quand Rome proclame ouvertement qu'elle veut occuper l'Abyssinie, parce que «L'Italie a besoin d'expansion» ce but, qui paraît brutal, n'est indiqué que pour tromper les gens et surtout les masses travailleuses, qui d'ailleurs ne se laissent pas tromper. Voilà quarante ans, à l'époque de Crispi, qu'on disait la même chose: «besoin d'expansion», «sûreté de l'Italie». Depuis on a dépensé des milliards et sacrifiés milliers et milliers d'hommes pour la conquête d'autres terres en Afrique (Lybie). Or, le total d'italiens résidents en Lybie, Erythrée et Somalie n'est que de 50.000 environ (et ce sont pour la plupart des trafiquants), tandis que le nombre

¹ *Service de presse de la LCI (B-L)*, 24 juillet 1935. Altre pubblicazioni: Mussolini on a Volcano – Writer Describes Crisis in Italy on the Eve of the Fascist Adventure in Ethiopia – Mussolini Embarks on Campaign Against Ethiopia to Sidetrack Attention from Poverty and Discontent at Home, *The New Militant*, Volume I No. 35, August 24, 1935; Italien am Vorabend des abessinischen Kriegs, *Bulletin der IKL (B-L)*, n. 4, Ende August 1935; La situation italienne à la veille de la guerre d'Afrique, *Action socialiste révolutionnaire*, 7 septembre 1935.

d'émigrés italiens annuels, avant la guerre, était de 500.000 et même d'un million. La densité de la population (137 pour km²) et l'importance de la main d'œuvre pour l'Italie sont, certes, des problèmes ardu, qui trouvèrent avant la guerre une solution relative dans l'émigration continentale et transocéanique. Actuellement toutes les portes sont fermées et on peut dire que le nombre des expatriés est égalé par celui des rapatriés. (Du 1er janvier au 31 décembre 1934, expatriés: 68.461; rapatriés: 49.827). Peut-on ouvrir «un chemin» à la main d'œuvre surabondant par le pillage des terres abyssines? C'est au moins ce que la presse fasciste veut faire croire pour justifier la guerre de brigandage impérialiste en Afrique orientale. Mais le peuple, comme nous verrons, ne se laisse pas prendre à cette tromperie.

Cependant, la lutte impérialiste de la bourgeoisie italienne revêt un caractère particulier qu'il faut examiner. Pour faire une guerre comme celle que Mussolini vient d'entreprendre il faut des capitaux énormes (des dizaines de milliards); pour «pacifier» et «coloniser» les terres conquises il faut avoir encore des gros capitaux disponibles. Où prendre ces capitaux si l'on tient compte que le revenu annuel italien n'arrive pas à 60 milliards, que la dette publique monte déjà à 152 milliards de lires et que le budget de l'Etat est un déficit croissant! Il faudra avoir recours aux capitaux étrangers, comme dans les guerres passées. Ainsi «le droit d'expansion» que la bourgeoisie italienne revendique au nom de la «jeunesse» (en réalité à cause de sa «vieillesse», étant arrivé trop tard dans le partage du monde) n'est que le droit d'être admise à la curée, faisant une guerre de brigandage pour le compte du capital anglo-russe et français. Le peuple italien ne servirait que de chair à canon pour cette opération de pillage en Afrique.

Mais, qu'on trouve ou non les capitaux étrangers nécessaires pour mener à terme l'occupation de l'Abyssinie entreprise par la bourgeoisie italienne – c'est là une question de répartition des profits entre bandits – ce qui en résulte une fois de plus c'est que la guerre de brigandage que Rome a résolu de faire au Roi des Rois est moins le résultat de «l'expansion» dont l'Italie prétend avoir besoin, que la tentative d'évader à une terrible crise qui tenaille le régime fasciste. Cette crise est celle de toute la société capitaliste

italienne. La nouvelle campagne en Abyssinie est en somme une nouvelle tentative pour prévenir la révolution. Voyons-en attentivement les éléments.

La bourgeoisie italienne est arrivée, comme nous l'avons dit, trop tard dans le partage du monde. L'unité de l'Etat italien s'est faite en 1870 sous l'impulsion de la bourgeoisie industrielle du Nord. Etant donné son poids spécifique trop faible, la bourgeoisie industrielle ne peut s'assurer sa prédominance, le contrôle politique et économique de la vie de la nation, que par des méthodes «autoritaires», voir réactionnaires. La période de Crispi (1887-1896) est celle de la première entreprise en Abyssinie. L'Italie est encore toute bouillonnante dans les villes et dans les campagnes: les paysans pauvres du Midi et les ouvriers des industries naissant dans le Nord s'insurgent contre l'État. Crispi est l'homme «à poigne» de la bourgeoisie. Il réprime «avec énergie» dans le sang toute tentative insurrectionnelle. Mais vient Adoua (1er mars 1896). Deux généraux italiens, 4.600 soldats et officiers italiens y sont tués. D'autres viennent faits prisonniers. Le négus Menelik bat les troupes du jeune impérialisme italien. Crispi doit s'en aller. Cinq ans encore durant, la bourgeoisie cherche à régner par la terreur. Après la répression sanglante des mouvements paysans en Sicile (1893), on arrive à la répression de 1898 à Milan. Mais, à l'aube de 1900 Humbert 1er est tué par l'anarchiste Bresci. Une nouvelle période commence. Le capitalisme est en plein épanouissement. De 1900 à 1910 c'est la période de floraison du réformisme social. La «révolution» est entrée dans la voie de la légalité. Mais pas pour longtemps. Le bloc ouvrier-bourgeois représenté par le bloc réformiste-Giolitti perd son efficacité. Les masses ouvrières et paysannes sont encore une fois dirigées contre l'Etat. Le courant révolutionnaire se renforce et se développe. C'est la période du mussolinisme, de Mussolini, chef «révolutionnaire». La «semaine rouge» (juin 1914) trouve Mussolini à la tête du mouvement insurrectionnel. Mais avec de tels «chefs», le mouvement ne peut qu'échouer. Et il échoua, en effet. Ce fut enfin la guerre. De 1915 à 1918 l'Italie participa au carnage. En 1917 on eut Caporetto et la révolte de Turin contre la guerre. La révolution n'était pas morte. La «victoire» trouva l'Italie en pleine dissolution. Les masses du Nord et du Midi à nouveau

s'insurgeaient contre l'Etat. Pour faute de direction, la révolution fut une fois de plus vaincue. Et vint le fascisme.

Le fascisme attribua la cause de la crise économique et financière aux grèves ouvrières, aux ouvriers la cause des impôts trop lourdes, des prix trop hauts, du malheur des paysans etc. Mais voilà treize ans que le fascisme est au pouvoir. Qu'a-t-il fait? Il a réduit le salaire de l'ouvrier à un niveau plus bas que celui d'avant la guerre; il a développé l'appareil industriel, mais il a par là augmenté la disproportion entre la capacité de production et la possibilité de consommation, rendue beaucoup plus restreinte à cause d'un appauvrissement général de la population. Il a supprimé le droit de grève, mais le désordre dans la production n'a fait que croître en ce temps. En prenant comme point de référence rien que 1929, année où commença la dernière crise, la production était tombée à 70% à la fin de 1934. En beaucoup de branches, particulièrement dans le textile, l'activité des machines était descendue à 40% de leur capacité de rendement. Malgré l'introduction des 40 heures, le chômage était loin d'être résorbé. Encore à la fin de juin, malgré la mobilisation et le travail pour l'Abyssinie, on comptait plus de 700.000 chômeurs.

Si l'on passe dans les campagnes, un ordre du jour voté par la direction (fasciste) du Syndicat des Techniciens agrariens de Trévisie suffit pour établir ce que le fascisme a donné aux paysans:

«1) au point de vue agrarien, une régression évidente dans l'activité productive, particulièrement accentuée dans ces dernières années, et rendue manifeste par une mineure activité culturelle, un emploi diminué de fertilisants, une production inférieure et un appauvrissement du patrimoine en bétail; 2) au point de vue économique, une dépaupérisation croissante et l'endettement des fermiers et métayers d'un côté, de la propriété foncière de l'autre, et du manque du profit de l'étable, quand il n'y a pas perte; 3) au point de vue démographique, une disproportion entre la force-travail des familles des fermiers et l'extension des terres, et un déséquilibre entre le nombre des familles et les propriétés disponibles, qui a porté à 687 les familles du département restées dans terre».

Multipliées par 92 – car 92 sont les départements en Italie – les constatations ci-dessus, donnent un aperçu de la situation réelle et de la misère énorme où est l'Italie agricole. Le paysan qui avait un lopin de terre et qui par peur du «bolchévisme» avait grossi les rangs du fascisme en 1921-1922, dès l'arrivée de Mussolini au pouvoir s'est vu écrasé de toute part. Dépouillé de son lopin de terre il est réduit aujourd'hui à mendier son existence. Il en est de même des petits commerçants et des petits producteurs, aujourd'hui ruinés complètement. Le fascisme a perdu ses appuis sociaux. Mais le problème le plus inquiétant pour le fascisme est le problème de la jeunesse.

Les jeunes générations, élevées dans l'ambiance fasciste, demandent leur droit à la vie. Les jeux, les sports, les fêtes fascistes ne peuvent remplir le ventre. Le jeune qui à la maison, rentrant des manifestations, ne trouve pas de pain et de cigarettes, ce jeune est poussé à demander sa place au soleil. Et inconsciemment il fait de la lutte de classe. La pourriture et le malaise sont arrivés à tel point que Mussolini et ses laquais doivent s'en prendre dans leurs discours au «système», au «capitalisme», «qui a fait son époque». Mais si l'anti-capitalisme sur la bouche de Mussolini n'est que démagogie, les jeunes gens ne s'arrêtent pas aux formes; ils exigent des actes. Et il n'est pas sans importance que dans les rangs mêmes du fascisme, malgré la suppression violente de tout esprit de classe, les tendances anti-capitalistes gagnent toujours du terrain. Aux lieux de déportation arrivent avec des vieux marxistes des jeunes gens qui ont pris au sérieux l'anti-capitalisme des fonctionnaires des corporations. Un esprit nouveau souffle dans la «prison» fasciste. Le jeune diplômé sans travail, le jeune ouvrier et le jeune paysan tenaillé par la recherche d'un morceau de pain, tandis que, dans les pays capitalistes où le fascisme n'est qu'une menace, ils forment le danger de recrutes éventuels pour grossir les rangs de ce fascisme, en Italie, où le fascisme règne depuis 13 ans, ils ne peuvent trouver un débouché à leur malaise et à leur mécontentement que dans la voie de la révolution. La solution guerrière est présentée à cette jeunesse mécontente et agitée comme l'antidote de la révolution. De manière que la bourgeoisie italienne est doublement intéressée à soutenir la campagne italo-éthiopienne: 1) parce

que celle-ci présente une curée possible; et 2) parce qu'elle offre une «soupape de sûreté» pour décharger en Afrique les forces de «révolution» qui de nouveau font sentir leur pression en Italie.

Cependant, le capitalisme lui-même ne cesse pas d'être inquiet de cette solution. Où mènera-t-elle, à la fin? Ne sortiront pas les effets contraires de ceux qu'elle entend? Le profit est la raison d'être du capitaliste. Il arrive maintenant que le capitaliste italien, après treize ans de fascisme, est plein d'inquiétude pour son argent. Ne devait-il lui donner, le fascisme, la paix et la sûreté de ses investissements? Or, il se trouve que le fascisme qu'il a dressé et porté au pouvoir, lui coûte trop cher. Le fascisme s'est fait la part du lion. Que ne dévorera-t-il encore? Toute forme d'investissement de capitaux crée la crainte dans les possesseurs d'argent. La menace d'inflation et de dévaluation, déjà en [...] ¹, rend précaire et incertain tout investissement dans les titres d'Etat et la thésaurisation pure et simple. Par crainte d'une imposition sur le patrimoine on se détourne des investissements dans les immeubles. De même, la menace de taxer les coupons et de rendre nominatifs les titres, rend douteux les investissements de ce genre d'opérations. Le taux de profit des investissements en Italie est d'ailleurs, des plus bas. Un signe très significatif de l'état d'esprit du capitaliste italien, on le trouve dans le fait que de 1928 à 1934 les réserves de la Banque d'Italie sont tombées de 12.106 millions de liras à 5.832 millions. C'est à dire qu'environ 7 milliards ont pris la fuite à l'étranger, avant que des mesures draconiennes ne furent prises pour enrayer la fuite de l'or et des devises. (Dispositions réglant le mouvement des capitaux; défense d'exporter de l'argent en billets de banque ou en chèques; monopole rigoureux du commerce des moyens de paiements, etc.). Également significative est la chute générale des titres d'Etat. L'ex-consolidat 5% converti d'autorité en «Redimible» 3,5%, et qui était à 88 en décembre 1934, est tombé à 77 en avril dernier et il est actuellement à 69!

Faut-il croire par là que la bourgeoisie retire sa confiance à son «agent» fasciste? Sans doute, une crise révolutionnaire ne s'ouvrira pas sans de telles manifestations de panique dans les classes propriétaires.

¹ Parola mancante.

Cependant, nous sommes encore bien loin de là. Les classes bourgeoises n'ont pas oublié 1919/20, elles craignent la révolution prolétarienne, toutefois elles commencent à être aussi mécontentes du fascisme, qui coûte trop cher et sent déjà l'usure. Et cela c'est un symptôme dont il faut tenir compte dans le développement de la situation.

Pour le moment, bourgeoisie et fascisme restent solidairement attachés l'une à l'autre. Malgré toute la solution de la guerre en Abyssinie ouvre un chemin. Mais c'est un chemin qui peut précipiter la catastrophe. Cette éventualité non seulement n'est pas exclue, mais elle se présente même comme très probable.

Même dans l'hypothèse que Mussolini fera une guerre victorieuse et que cette guerre sera la plus courte, de septembre à mars, les résultats ne pourront être que désastreux pour l'impérialisme italien. Le glissement de la lire, déjà commencé, prendra une allure vertigineuse. Même si on travaille en plein dans les industries pour la guerre; même si le paysan recevra le cent pour cent de plus de la vente de ses produits, la dévaluation croissante de la lire, à cause de l'inflation croissante dont on aura besoin pour couvrir les frais de la guerre, finira par créer une situation qui se rapprochera beaucoup de celle de 1919/20 en Italie et de celle de 1923 en Allemagne. Le salaire de l'ouvrier, l'appointement de l'employé, terriblement rogné en treize ans de fascisme, se trouveront complètement incapables de tenir derrière à la hausse fébrile des prix (les opérations de guerre ne sont pas commencées, et déjà les prix des fruits et légumes sont augmentés de 100%). Le paysan aussi, en échange de ses produits, recevra de la monnaie qui se déprécie d'un jour à l'autre. Et après, pour piller les terres abyssines, il faudra imposer en Italie à toute la nation des mesures draconiennes dont la spéculation, protégée par le fascisme, bien plus, abritée dans le fascisme, ne manquera pas de tirer ses profits. Devant les magasins se formeront les fameuses queues connues de la guerre dernière. Les grèves renaîtront. Déjà elles renaissent.

Mais la guerre ne sera ni courte, ni assez simple. L'Abyssinie qui a battu les troupes de Crispi, ne manquera d'opposer aux troupes de

Mussolini une résistance assez rude. Les difficultés d'une guerre comme celle de l'Italie contre l'Éthiopie sont énormes si l'on considère qu'il s'agit de combattre dans un territoire, où le mulet abyssin est le meilleur moyen de locomotion. Donc, il est à prévoir que les répercussions économiques, financières, politiques, sociales de la guerre italo-éthiopienne seront à l'intérieur de l'Italie mille fois plus graves et aiguës.

Si l'on ne considère rien que les premières réactions à la mobilisation de Mussolini, il est à prévoir que l'hostilité du peuple pour la guerre de brigandage en Abyssinie ne cessera pas de devenir plus grande dès que les opérations commenceront.

La presse fasciste s'efforce de faire croire qu'en Italie il y a de l'enthousiasme pour la guerre. Rien n'a jamais été moins vrai. Voici ce qu'un correspondant de l'Italie écrit à un journal de l'émigration (*Nuovo Avanti!* 13 juillet 1935) sur l'état d'esprit des masses en face de la guerre:

«L'enthousiasme manque d'une manière absolue... tant que les rappelés en service demeurent dans les centres de mobilisation italiens, l'opposition à la guerre n'assume pas, en général, des formes de rébellion, exceptés des cas isolés. A Forlì, par exemple (la terre native de Mussolini) les femmes ont cherché d'empêcher le départ des réservistes; on a eu un nombre important de déserteurs, d'ailleurs rattrapés facilement, et aussi quelque opposition violente à la force publique. A Cagliari (où Mussolini s'est porté en personne à tenir un discours) un réserviste s'est suicidé, parce qu'on lui a refusé le permis de visiter sa femme malade. La chambrée s'est mutinée et il a été nécessaire de faire usage de bombes et de gaz lacrymogènes pour avoir raison des mutinés».

«Beaucoup de désertions se sont produites aussi dans le Sud-Tyrol, avec attentats; mais, ici – note le correspondant, il existe un fort mouvement hitlérien, de sorte que ce qui se produit dans cette région doit être examiné autrement.

«Les réservistes rappelés en service, troupes et officiers, montrent des signes plus évidents de rébellion quand ils sont sur le point de partir pour l'Afrique Orientale».

«Un symptôme clair de la nouvelle situation de l'armée italienne est donné par la négligence dans les formes extérieures entre officiers et soldats!! Une grande indiscipline règne parmi les volontaires. La composition chaotique de ces corps, dans lesquels se trouvent confondus individus de chaque âge et de diverse constitution physique, rend plus aigüe l'antagonisme entre armée et milice».

«Les miliciens (fascistes) provoquent un vif ressentiment dans la population par leurs gestes d'indiscipline et de vandalisme».

«On est en train de créer, en outre, un état de vif alerte. Des bruits souvent exagérés courent sur l'état sanitaire des troupes en Afrique. On ne croit pas aux communiqués officiels. Et en réalité, ceux-ci dénoncent des pertes humaines par maladies inférieures aux vraies».

«Cet état d'esprit inquiète le fascisme, qui cherche par tous les moyens de suffoquer les nouvelles et les bruits. Il est défendu de donner toute publicité à un deuil causé par l'entreprise abyssine. A Turin, par exemple, on a fait retirer immédiatement d'un marchand un avis portant l'inscription: 'Fermé pour la mort du fils en Abyssinie'. Les communications de mort sont maintenant laconiques et ainsi conçues: 'On communique que votre fils (ou mari, etc.) est décédé à...' En note, il y a l'avertissement de ne pas donner publicité à la nouvelle»¹.

¹ «L'entusiasmo manca in modo assoluto... Finchè i richiamati rimangono nei centri di mobilitazione italiani, l'opposizione alla guerra non assume in genere forme di ribellione, tranne in casi locali. A Forlì per esempio le donne hanno tentato di impedire la partenza dei richiamati, vi è stato un numero notevole di disertori, ripresi facilmente, e anche qualche opposizione violenta alla forza pubblica. A Cagliari un richiamato si è ucciso, perché gli era stata negata la licenza di andar a trovare la moglie ammalata. La camerata si è ammutinata ed è stato necessario far uso di bombe e di gas lacrimogeni per aver ragione degli ammutinati. Molte diserzioni vi sono anche nell'Alto Adige, con attentati... I richiamati, truppa e ufficiali, mostrano segni più evidenti di ribellione quando stanno per partire per l'Africa Orientale. Un sintomo appariscente della nuova situazione dell'esercito italiano è la trascuratezza formale. Non è raro di veder per le vie soldati non in perfetta regola col vestito e ufficiali che passano senza fare osservazioni. Una grande indisciplina regna tra i volontari. La composizione caotica di questi corpi, in cui sono mescolati individui di ogni età e di diversa costituzione fisica, continua felicemente e inasprisce il dissidio tra esercito e milizia. I militi accampati a *Sora*...

Si le fascisme doit craindre la publicité de quelques morts pour maladie en Afrique, que fera-t-il quand la liste des morts s'allongera une fois les opérations commencées? Car il faut croire que les Abyssins savent eux aussi tuer. Et ils le démontrèrent bien en 1896 à Adoua. Dans les guerres faites par les «démocraties» la presse dite «libre» avait cet avantage sur le fascisme: elle pouvait tromper ses lecteurs qui prêtaient foi à ses mensonges. La presse fasciste est «suspecte»: le peuple ne la lit pas et n'y croit pas. C'est là une infériorité énorme pour le fascisme en guerre. Un communiqué fait dans le but de calmer la population fait naître en elle l'alerte et l'agitation. Ce qui est très significatif pour apprécier l'état existant parmi les masses en Italie: état de méfiance envers le régime fasciste; état de mécontentement qui va jusqu'à s'exprimer par des explosions violentes. Dans la mesure que cet état d'esprit tend à devenir général et actif, il pourra se transformer en un état d'esprit vraiment révolutionnaire. La force du fascisme était constituée surtout par la vis inertiae des masses pulvérisées par la violence et la terreur. Le fascisme est en train lui même de donner par la guerre d'Abyssinie aux masses la possibilité qu'elles avaient perdue depuis longtemps de communiquer entr'elles et de sentir et de vouloir en même temps la même chose: la chute du régime.

Ce qui manque pour préparer, orienter, guider les masses cherchant une autre issue que la solution guerrière du fascisme et du capitalisme, une issue à elles, une issue révolutionnaire, c'est une avant-garde organisée.

provocano vivo risentimento nella popolazione per gesti di indisciplina e di vandalismo. Si sta creando inoltre uno stato di vivo allarme. Corrono voci spesso esagerate sullo stato sanitario delle truppe in Africa. I comunicati ufficiali non sono creduti e in realtà denunciano certamente perdite umane per malattia inferiori al vero. Questo stato d'animo preoccupa il fascismo che tenta in tutti i modi di soffocare le notizie e le voci. È proibito dar pubblicità ad un lutto derivato dall'impresa abissina. A Torino è stato subito fatto ritirare da un negozio un cartello di lutto in cui era scritto: Chiuso per la morte del figlio in Abissinia. Le comunicazioni di morte sono ora laconiche e così concepite: Si comunica che vostro figlio (o marito o altro) è deceduto a... In nota esiste l'avviso di non dar pubblicità alla notizia». (Lo sviluppo della situazione politica italiana alla vigilia della nuova guerra d'Africa. Dall'Italia, *Il Nuovo Avanti*, n. 28, 13 luglio 1935)

Le Parti du prolétariat, le Parti communiste constitué à Livourne en 1921, sous les coups de la réaction fasciste et du stalinisme, est réduit à une impuissance complète. Le Parti socialiste, le vieux parti de Turati, est réduit à l'étranger à un tronçon squelettique. Dans l'émigration, les deux tronçons du parti stalinien et du Parti socialiste italiens ont constitué, par reflet de ce qui se passe en France, un «pacte d'unité d'action». Mais ce «pacte» reste sans importance réelle pour les masses en Italie. Le manque d'une avant-garde organisée, la liquidation politique et organisationnelle du Parti communiste représente sans doute le côté le plus faible de la situation italienne. Laquelle situation ne peut pas, d'autre part, être séparée du reste de la situation internationale.

La tâche des marxistes italiens est aujourd'hui une double et seule tâche: lutter pour la constitution du parti de la révolution prolétarienne italien et international.

Pour aider les masses italiennes à vaincre le fascisme, il faut de toutes nos forces que nous voulons la défaite de l'impérialisme italien en Abyssinie. Cela dépend des masses italiennes à l'intérieur, de l'opposition active et consciente qu'il faut organiser à l'intérieur contre la guerre, mais cela dépend aussi du concours du prolétariat international. Beaucoup même dépend de ce concours.

Sans la victoire de Hitler en Allemagne, Mussolini n'aurait pu entreprendre la guerre aujourd'hui. Une politique ouvrière, une politique révolutionnaire à Londres, à Paris, à Moscou, peut aujourd'hui porter encore un concours immense aux masses italiennes, pour réformer ses bataillons de la révolution mondiale. Mais il est vain d'attendre ce concours des deux Internationales mortes, la seconde et la troisième. Il faut faire appel directement à la classe ouvrière de ces pays. Et c'est seulement au nom de la quatrième Internationale que nous pouvons et que nous devons le faire. De ce fait s'ouvrira un chemin dans le cœur des ouvriers italiens. Il n'est pas sans signification que la seule initiative pour organiser le sabotage international de l'Italie impérialiste et fasciste à l'occurrence de la guerre en Abyssinie est venue des bolcheviks-léninistes. Le drapeau de Lénine porte aujourd'hui pour nom: IVe Internationale.

7. Leonetti à Trotsky, 25 juillet 1935¹

[...] La situation italienne revient au premier plan. Tandis qu'on parle beaucoup de Hitler «principal fauteur de guerre» on oublie que Mussolini fait déjà cette guerre. Les informations qui arrivent de l'intérieur concordent pour dire que la guerre est absolument impopulaire. Pas d'entu[sia]sme du tout. Mussolini doit payer 40-70 lire l'ouvrier qui part pour l'Afrique, tandis que le salaire en Italie est de 8-14 lire. Et pour chaque soldat 5 lire par jour de paye. (Dans la dernière guerre c'était de 14 sous!) La lire glisse. L'inflation est en cours. Les prix augmentent. On se demande où Mussolini prendra l'argent pour cette guerre (20-25 milliards). La population est saignée à blanc. Trouvera-t-il des emprunts à l'étranger? En France? De toute façon, un abîme se prépare. Le fait important est que des signes de résistance ouverte et violente se manifestent un peu partout. J'ai préparé un article² pour notre presse. J'espère que le cam. Ad. l'a déjà transmis à cette heure. Nous avons rédigé un appel³ qui est paru dans la *Vérité* et qui a un peu tardé à cause des difficultés techniques. (Préparation de la «lettre ouverte») Naturellement, ni l'appel, ni l'article suffisent. Il faut mettre au centre international la guerre d'Abyssinie. C'est de cette manière que nous parlerons aux ouvriers italiens, étant donnée les conditions particulières de notre situation.

Le Parti stalinien et le Parti socialiste préparent un «Congrès d'italiens à l'étranger». Ce Congrès ou il ne se tiendra pas ou doit se tenir en cachette et il sera seulement un duplicata de «Amsterdam», formation réduite. Nos forces à nous sont trop faibles pour faire quelque chose par nous mêmes. L'émigration italienne est trop divisée et disparate. Considérez: 1) les bordiguistes (demeurent immobiles); 2) Tasca-Nenni-Modigliani; 3) Santini; 4) Giacomi; 5) Blasco; 6) les maximalistes (Balabanof). Si notre organisation internationale réussit à faire quelque chose – et nous devons y réussir – nous aurons aussi dans le domaine italien des autres possibilités de travail. Ni la

¹ EP2705.

² Si veda il documento (6).

³ Si veda il documento (4).

Seconde, ni la Troisième peuvent vouloir et appliquer le sabotage. Seulement nous, nous sommes complètement libres d'agir.

S'il vous est possible, j'aimerais avoir de vous des conseils et des suggestions. La situation italienne, revient, je répète, en premier plan; elle devient une situation ouverte. [...]

8. Trotsky à Leonetti, 2 août 1935¹

[...] J'espère vous entretenir plus largement sur la question Italie-Ethiopie demain, après-demain. En tous cas, je suis bien heureux que la chose est en marche. [...]

9. Leonetti à Trotsky, 11 août 1935²

[...] A' part, je vous envoie le N. 203 de «Révolution prolétarienne» où sont publiées les «impressions de voyage en Italie» d'un tel I.T.F.³ Je vous signale cet article, parce que l'auteur démontre une bonne connaissance des choses d'Italie. Ses «impressions» correspondent dans l'ensemble à la réalité. [...]

¹ EP8847.

² EP2706.

³ L'articolo è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

10. Trotsky à Leonetti, 19 août 1935¹

[...] Je vous remercie pour le très instructif article de la Révolution Proletarienne. Ce n'est pas exclu du tout que l'Italie entrera la première dans la grande danse, comme elle est entrée la première sur la voie du fascisme. [...]

11. J. P. Martin, Les deux internationales et la guerre contre l'Ethiopie²

Le Comité Exécutif de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste (I.O.S.) a siégé à Bruxelles du 16 au 18 août. Au cours de cette session, il a adopté à l'unanimité sauf une abstention de Alter, représentant du «Bund» de Pologne, une résolution-appel aux travailleurs du monde entier contre l'aventure de Mussolini en Afrique³. «L'I.O.S. ne saurait se résigner à la guerre dans aucun cas, - dit l'appel -, même comme un moyen de délivrance pour le peuple italien». Première sottise: d'abord parce que jamais une guerre impérialiste ne peut devenir «un moyen de délivrance» pour un peuple, si ce peuple n'est pas préparé à transformer une telle guerre en guerre civile, pour le renversement de sa propre bourgeoisie (ce ne sera pas la guerre qui pourra délivrer le peuple du fascisme, mais la révolution); et puis, parce qu'il ne suffit pas de dire «on ne saurait se résigner à la guerre dans aucun cas», mais il faut concrétiser les moyens de lutte pour rendre la guerre impossible. Or, voici ce que l'I.O.S. propose:

1) organiser avant le 4 Septembre «de grandes manifestations de l'opinion publique contre la guerre de Mussolini» pour a) obliger la S.D.N.

¹ EP8848.

² *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 4, 1er Septembre 1935. EP16997. Altre pubblicazioni: Chaining the Workers to Imperialist War Machine, *The New Militant*, Vol. I No. 40, 28 September 1935.

³ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

à prendre, «comme l'art. 11 du Covenant lui en dicte le devoir» (!), les mesures nécessaires pour sauvegarder la paix, éventuellement en fermant le canal de Suez au trafic de guerre italien; b) imposer l'arbitrage à l'Italie;

2) Les partis, Socialistes et Communistes, d'Italie projetant pour la fin de Septembre l'organisation d'un Congrès des Italiens à l'Etranger contre la guerre en Abyssinie, l'I.O.S. se fera représenter à ce Congrès;

3) Si la guerre éclatait quand même «l'I.O.S. exprime l'espoir que la population travailleuse d'Italie parvienne à utiliser les répercussions que provoquera la guerre pour abattre l'ennemi véritable du peuple italien, qui n'est pas à Adis-Abeba, mais à Rome».

Léon Blum, en commentant dans le POPULAIRE du 21 août¹ ces décisions, écrit: «Sur le plan gouvernemental la guerre ne peut plus être arrêtée que par une exacte coordination d'efforts entre la France et l'Angleterre d'une part, et entre la France et la Russie soviétique de l'autre». Seuls les efforts conjugués de la France, de l'Angleterre et de l'U.R.S.S. pourront, d'après le POPULAIRE, empêcher la guerre de l'Italie. Sans attendre la réunion du Conseil de la S.D.N., les trois Puissances mentionnées devraient «offrir à l'Italie une procédure réelle, sincère et entière d'arbitrage». «Si l'Italie l'accepte – poursuit Blum – l'espoir de la paix est rétabli; si elle refuse, elle se désigne et se marque elle-même définitivement comme l'agresseur».

Eh bien, tout ceci s'appelle, pour nous, se jouer de la «paix» et des «travailleurs». L'illusion de l'arbitrage porta en 1914 à la conflagration mondiale. Et après, la S.D.N. n'a même pas été capable d'arbitrer un conflit comme celui du Chaco. Elle ne pourra pas agir autrement vis-à-vis de Mussolini, dont les trois puissances: France, Angleterre, U.R.S.S., cherchent chacune pour son propre compte à se procurer l'appui dans leurs propres compétitions internationales. D'ailleurs, est-ce qu'il est effectivement besoin d'une telle procédure pour désigner en Mussolini l'agresseur? N'est-il pas clair d'ores et déjà que l'impérialisme italien veut s'annexer de nouvelles terres en Afrique? Et pourquoi donc a-t-on tellement attendu pour

¹ L'articolo, apparso il 22 e non il 21 agosto, è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

intervenir contre les nouveaux préparatifs d'attaque de l'impérialisme italien en Afrique? Pourra-t-on faire in extremis (empêcher la guerre) ce qu'on n'a pas fait quand ç'aurait été beaucoup plus facile, c'est-à-dire au commencement des envois de troupes par Mussolini contre l'Ethiopie? Et le Négus, n'en avait-il pas appelé à la S.D.N. dès le 14 janvier 1935, c'est-à-dire il y a huit mois?

Mais supposons pour un moment que l'initiative proposée à la France, l'Angleterre et l'U.R.S.S. se réalise. A quoi mènerait-elle? A prouver ce qu'on connaît déjà et que tout le monde sait: que l'agression part de Rome. Puisqu'il est certain que Mussolini n'acceptera d'arbitrage que si celui-ci est à priori favorable. L'Angleterre et la France, tout en étant rivales et jalouses de l'impérialisme italien, ne pensent nullement à nuire à leur compère à Rome. Et les récentes négociations de Paris ont démontré qu'en matière de concessions, France et Angleterre sont bien disposées à en faire à Mussolini, au détriment du Négus. D'ici au 4 Septembre il n'y aura de changement d'attitude de la part de l'Italie, que si le butin pour elle en apparaît plus grand. Ce serait donc à ce prix qu'on sauverait la paix? Non. Bien au contraire, la démonstration sera faite que la voie est libre aux brigands, pourvu qu'ils aient de l'audace.

Mais d'ici au 4 Septembre on peut croire qu'on ne changera pas le cours des événements auxquels on s'est préparés depuis huit mois sans interruption, avec la complicité évidente de la S.D.N. Et alors? Alors, nous dit-on, on passera aux sanctions, aux mesures de boycottage que la S.D.N. devra décider en application de ses statuts. La C.G.T. française invite même les travailleurs à être prêts à mettre en pratique les mesures de boycottage que Genève décidera. Nous pensons que la S.D.N. ne fera pas avec l'Italie ce qu'elle n'a fait ni avec le Japon, ni avec l'Allemagne qui ont quitté Genève. D'autre part, ni la France, ni l'Angleterre, ni même l'U.R.S.S. ne veulent s'aliéner Rome; étant donné leur orientation politique internationale. Supposons néanmoins que Genève décide réellement les mesures de boycottage contre l'Italie. Est-ce que l'Allemagne voudra appliquer les décisions de Genève? Est-ce que l'Amérique et le Japon les respecteraient? D'autre part, le boycottage décidé par Genève ne saurait empêcher la

marche de Rome sur l'Éthiopie. La fermeture elle-même du canal de Suez deviendrait pratiquement inopérante; car pour la rendre opérante, il faudrait étendre le front de guerre entraînant inévitablement une nouvelle conflagration mondiale. Et France, Angleterre et U.R.S.S., gardiennes du statu quo en Europe, ne veulent pas se priver de la collaboration de l'impérialisme de Rome.

De tout ce qui précède, il découle: de même qu'est inopérante la procédure d'arbitrage, l'agresseur étant d'ores et déjà désigné dans l'impérialisme romain; de même il est vain d'attendre des sanctions que la S.D.N. pourrait décider, un arrêt au cours de la guerre. Au contraire, la guerre, de limitée qu'elle est à l'Éthiopie, deviendrait européenne et mondiale par la volonté même des Puissances soi-disantes «intéressées au maintien de la paix». Ce qui comporterait bien d'autres conséquences qu'une conflagration mondiale provoquée par l'attaque soudaine d'Hitler vers l'Est ou en Europe centrale profitant de la guerre de Mussolini en Éthiopie! L'impuissance de Genève à empêcher la guerre est donc évidente. Genève est impuissante à éviter la guerre tout autant que le capitalisme lui-même. Que faire, alors? L'appel de l'I.O.S. dit à la fin: «En présence de cette défaillance, l'Internationale invite la classe ouvrière à faire tout ce qui est en son pouvoir pour sauver la paix». C'est-à-dire que l'appel de l'I.O.S. se termine en se gardant bien de dire à la classe ouvrière ce qu'il est en son pouvoir de faire. De sorte qu'à la défaillance de la S.D.N. s'ajoute la défaillance de l'I.O.S. laquelle vit et a vécu en tant que son appendice.

Mais, dira-t-on, l'I.O.S. appelle ses Partis à convoquer partout des meetings de protestation contre la guerre de Mussolini. Ce qui est évidemment bon et utile; mais à la condition que la protestation contre la guerre de Mussolini ne serve pas de voile à l'union sacrée des partis socialistes et de leurs organisations dépendantes avec la bourgeoisie de chaque pays; comme c'est très clairement les cas des Labouristes anglais agissant à l'unisson avec les dirigeants du Royal Empire. Certainement il faut que dès ce moment la protestation ouvrière internationale s'organise contre l'impérialisme italien, pour les peuples éthiopiens; mais cette protestation ne sera efficace et profitable à la cause de la paix que si la classe

ouvrière agit en tant que classe autonome et indépendante: non comme un moyen auxiliaire au service de tel ou tel autre impérialisme satisfait ou pas satisfait de ses domaines d'exploitation. Seulement à cette condition la protestation internationale des ouvriers pourra aider la lutte du peuple italien contre le fascisme et faciliter sa délivrance. Toute autre conduite permettant à Mussolini de présenter les ouvriers des autres pays comme les alliés de leur propre Gouvernement capitaliste, ne pourra que faciliter l'œuvre de Rome au lieu de l'empêcher et l'anéantir. Ce qui se produirait si l'exemple des Labouristes anglais agissant en accord avec leur bourgeoisie étant suivi; et si l'on suit l'appel de l'I.O.S. qui veut subordonner l'action du prolétariat international à la S.D.N., d'ailleurs inapte à fonctionner. Pour sauver la paix il ne faut pas se fonder sur l'intervention de Paris ou de Londres; il faut unir les efforts des prolétaires de tous les pays à l'action de l'U.R.S.S. et inversement. Pas d'autre issue possible. Et pour agir dans cette voie, il ne faut pas attendre ni le 4 Septembre, ni que la guerre en Afrique soit allumée. Le boycottage de l'impérialisme italien doit être décidé par les organisations prolétariennes et appliqué internationalement. Ne jamais associer l'action du prolétariat international à la conduite intéressée de tel ou tel autre gouvernement capitaliste. Ceci rendrait l'action du prolétariat international suspecte aux yeux des travailleurs italiens, et par suite peu efficace à la cause de la paix et du renversement de la dictature de Rome.

Il reste bien peu à dire à propos du Komintern. Celui-ci a clôturé son VII^e Congrès sans souffler mot de la guerre en Abyssinie. Le délégué italien, Ercoli, en prononçant son discours à la fin de la discussion sur son rapport relatif au problème de la guerre, lança, à l'adresse des orateurs intervenus au cours de la discussion, plate et servile, l'appel: «Soyons concrets». Pour demeurer «concret», le valet italien a ignoré la menace de guerre et oublié d'envisager les moyens de lutte à l'échelle internationale contre Mussolini, dans le cas très «concret» de la guerre en Afrique.

Le VII^e Congrès du Komintern a confirmé une fois de plus la mort de cet organisme en tant qu'instrument de lutte et de guide de la classe ouvrière mondiale; et par contre, son asservissement complet à la

bureaucratie et à la diplomatie soviétique. Ses mots d'ordre dépendront de l'attitude de cette diplomatie. Et pour maintenant Moscou ne tient nullement à s'aliéner Rome dans le jeu international. Voilà la réalité.

En attendant, le parti socialiste italien et le parti communiste, vivants dans l'émigration, ont pris l'initiative de convoquer un congrès des Italiens à l'Etranger. C'est la mode. Depuis que Staline a dit «nous aimons beaucoup notre pays», tous les partis de Staline ont singé le maître en oubliant tout simplement que, hormis la Russie, les ouvriers doivent encore conquérir «leur pays». Ce congrès des Italiens à l'Etranger, renvoyé de mois en mois, devrait se réunir à fin Septembre, quand Mussolini aura très probablement déjà commencé son action en Ethiopie. Ce congrès des Italiens à l'Etranger, s'il se réunit à la fin, ne sera qu'un congrès de deux organisations, socialiste et communiste, dans l'émigration. Probablement, pour le décor, il y aura un représentant de l'I.O.S. et un représentant français pour le Komintern. Mais le tout se déroulera dans les limites et dans le langage bien connu du Front Populaire. Donc une manifestation de plus, sans suite et sans buts concrets.

Le devoir du prolétariat international n'est pas de se borner à l'heure actuelle à quelque meeting de protestation. Il faut recréer dans l'action les rangs du prolétariat international, en boycottant l'impérialisme italien et ses complices. A cet effet, les efforts conjugués des prolétaires de France, d'Angleterre et de l'U.R.S.S., pourront faire beaucoup. Mais les efforts conjugués des prolétaires, non pas de leurs Gouvernements! La guerre est devenue à nouveau la pierre de touche du véritable internationalisme prolétarien. C'est dans la lutte contre la guerre que les internationalistes sincères se reconnaîtront et que l'idée de la IV^o Internationale prendra sa forme la plus concrète.

21 août 1935

12. Leonetti, Après l'échec de la Conférence de Paris. Que peut-on attendre de Genève afin de conjurer la guerre de Mussolini contre l'Abyssinie?¹

Spes, ultima dea, a répondu M. Guarnaschelli, chef du Bureau des affaires d'Afrique et Levant à Rome, à un journaliste parisien qui lui avait demandé s'il était possible de garder un peu d'espoir dans «un règlement pacifique» du conflit italo-éthiopien. Or, même après l'échec de la Conférence à trois (Laval, Eden, Aloisi) qui vient de se tenir à Paris, il y a encore pas mal de gens que l'espoir en un «règlement pacifique», voir, en un «compromis» n'a pas abandonnés. Mais c'est des gens qui aiment les illusions...

La question est maintenant assez claire. Mussolini veut tout court l'occupation de l'Ethiopie. Oui, la guerre n'est pas «la seule solution», a dit Mussolini; mais à la condition que le Négus capitule sans résistance. Eh, bien, que les Puissances désireuses d'éviter le conflit emploient leur force à plier le Négus, et toute effusion de sang sera évités. Voilà le «règlement pacifique» qu'on envisage à Rome: écraser l'Ethiopie sans un coup de feu. Mais ce serait trop facile pour Mussolini. L'Ethiopie n'a aucune envie d'accepter un tel «règlement» et lui prépare une réception que certainement étonnera le monde pour sa valeur et son courage.

Cependant, pourquoi la France et l'Angleterre, pourquoi la Société des Nations, ont tant attendu pour s'apercevoir que Mussolini préparait sa guerre en Afrique?

Comme l'on sait, l'Abyssinie, dès le 14 décembre de 1934, peu après les incidents fameux de Oual-Oual, avait attiré l'attention de la Société des Nations «sur la gravité de la situation». Le 3 janvier 1935 «en application de l'art. 11 du pacte (de Genève)», le Négus demandait que «toutes les mesures soient prises pour sauvegarder efficacement la paix». Depuis, les notes de Adis-Abéba à Genève n'ont fait que se suivre sans cesse. Et le Conseil de la S.d.N. ayant renvoyé la discussion en janvier et en Avril, et puis en Mai,

¹ EP16998. Fine agosto 1935, destinato al *Service de presse de la LCI (B-L)*, inedito.

décide l'expédient d'une commission d'arbitrage, destinée, comme chacun le sait, à ne pas fonctionner.

Entretemps, Mussolini ne resta pas inactif. Il arrête son plan d'attaque et l'exécute méthodiquement en attendant la saison propice (la fin des pluies) pour commencer les opérations militaires. Dès le mois de mars, il annonce pour l'automne le coup de force. Le plan d'attaque de Mussolini coïncide étrangement avec les accords de Roma avec Laval (7 janvier 1935). N'est-il pas clair que à cette date Laval avait livré l'Ethiopie à Rome? En effet, le 11 Février, immédiatement après le départ de Laval, Mussolini annonçait la mobilisation de deux divisions; la Peloritana et la Gavinana. Quelques jours plus tard, la «Commission suprême de Défense» venait rassemblée à Rome. Le 3 mars, le général Graziani (le bourreau qui a «pacifié» la Lybie), est nommé gouverneur et commandant des troupes de Somalie. Le 28 du même mois, le général De Bono (celui du crime Matteotti) est nommé haut-commissaire pour l'Afrique Orientale. Le 7 mai la mobilisation se poursuit, et c'est le départ de la division Sabauda et des deux premières divisions de chemises noires: Le «23 mars» (date de la fondation des «fasci»), et la «28 Octobre» (date de la «marche sur Rome»). En même temps, le sous-secrétaire aux Colonies, Lessona, déclare que le problème des rapports avec l'Ethiopie doit être résolu «une fois pour toutes». La préparation de guerre de l'Italie se poursuit en tous sens. Dans les usines, on travaille à plein rendement pour la guerre; les soldats sont sans cesse mobilisés; la presse et les discours des fascistes s'efforcent de déterminer un enthousiasme qui n'existe pas. Et nous sommes arrivé maintenant à cette situation: 200 mille hommes sont concentrés aux frontières de l'Ethiopie; tandis qu'on annonce pour la mi-septembre un million d'hommes sous les armes en toute l'Italie.

Or, sans les accords de janvier entre Mussolini et Laval; sans les accords de Stresa entre Mussolini, Laval, Mac Donald, l'Italie aurait-elle poussé si avant ses préparatifs? Il faut croire que Mussolini ne se serait pas engagé dans une telle aventure sans s'être préalablement assuré de la neutralité sinon de l'appui de la France et de l'Angleterre. Pourquoi alors cette «opposition» tardive de l'Angleterre et ce revirement de la France pour

un «règlement pacifique» du différend italo-éthiopien? Est-il possible que Laval ait voulu jouer Mussolini en le poussant en Afrique Orientale pour détourner vers l'Ethiopie la pression que l'Italie pouvait exercer sur les frontières de l'Impérialisme français? Est-il possible que Mac Donald ait donné son consentement à Mussolini par incapacité politique, ce qui aurait conseillé Londres à se donner des gouvernants plus avisés? Quoi qu'il en soit, la situation est arrivée actuellement à ce point:

1) Mussolini ne peut pas reculer devant la solution guerrière pour tenter l'occupation totale de l'Ethiopie. Des raisons de politique intérieure et internationale le poussent à une telle solution;

2) L'Angleterre est forcée de prendre sous sa «protection» l'Abyssinie. Evidemment il n'est aucunement question de l'indépendance de l'Abyssinie ou amour pour la paix. L'Angleterre songe à sauvegarder ses intérêts de puissance impérialiste en Afrique et dans le monde entier;

3) La France (dans l'espèce, Laval) se trouve engagée avec les accords de Rome: mais elle ne veut pas choisir entre l'Italie et l'Angleterre. D'où son rôle de conciliation, à la recherche d'un compromis. Mais la Conférence à trois de Paris vient de prouver que tout compromis est repoussé par Rome laquelle exige une solution totalitaire: l'occupation de l'Ethiopie.

Le 4 Septembre le débat sera porté à nouveau devant le Conseil de la S.d.N. Peu de jours nous séparent de cette date. Mais, que peut-on encore attendre de Genève. La presse parisienne estime que se l'Italie s'obstine dans son attitude, repoussant toute solution «pacifique», «elle sera inévitablement condamné par la Société des Nations». Des sanctions d'ordre économique et financier s'ensuivront. Et la France ne saurait pas ne pas être en faveur de ces sanctions.

Pour nous, cette perspective est peu probable. Ni à Londres ni à Paris on veut «nuire à Mussolini» soutien de la contre-révolution en Europe. Mussolini est sûr et certain de l'impuissance de Genève. Ce qui sortira de Genève sera donc un nouveau communiqué constatant, comme à Paris, l'impossibilité de «trouver une base permettant la solution du conflit». Mussolini aura les mains libres en ouvrant les hostilités aussitôt les pluies cessées (premières semaines d'octobre?). Et les marchands de Canon de

France, d'Angleterre et des autres pays feront leurs affaires comme au cours de la guerre du Chaco, comme en Chine, comme partout.

Evidemment les complications et les conséquences de la campagne de Mussolini en Afrique peuvent être très graves pour l'Europe. Hitler n'est pas tranquille à Berlin; il guette l'occasion propice pour se jeter contre l'Autriche ou pour attaquer à l'Est. Il est fort probable que le chemin de l'Est s'avère plus facile pour Hitler, le Japon aidant en Extrême orient. Voilà pourquoi l'aventure mussolinienne en Afrique intéresse non seulement le prolétariat italien, mais tout le prolétariat international.

A Paris, pour voiler l'échec brutal, on a décidé de poursuivre les tractations «par la voie diplomatique». De cette voie, les prolétaires ne peuvent non plus rien attendre. Même pas des diplomates de l'U.R.S.S. Litvinof, tout en étant président de la S.d.N., n'a pas eu un mot pour condamner l'agression ouverte de l'impérialisme romain. C'est que les diplomates de l'U.R.S.S. ne sont pas entrés à la S.d.N. en tant que forces indépendantes ayant comme tâche de sauvegarder les intérêts fondamentaux de l'Etat ouvrier, donc des opprimés de toute la terre; mais en «valets» des puissances défendant le statu-quo. Leur attitude est déterminée par le souci de ne pas déplaire à ces puissances. Mais en agissant de la sorte, ils servent très mal la cause de l'U.R.S.S. et la cause des peuples opprimés. Attendre de Litvinof une initiative pro-Abyssinie, contre le gouvernement de Rome, est vain. Litvinof et Moscou ne feront pas cela.

Seule l'action internationale du prolétariat peut encore sauvegarder la paix, conjurer une nouvelle conflagration, arrêter la marche fasciste sur l'Ethiopie, aider le prolétariat d'Italie à renverser la dictature des chemises noires. Malheureusement la II^o Internationale ne fait qu'invoquer Genève, un corps sans âme; et le Komintern estime qu'il vaut mieux se taire. Jusqu'à ce moment, le VII^o congrès du Komintern a complètement ignoré la guerre de Mussolini en Afrique. Le scandale prend des positions encore plus honteuses si l'on considère que le rapporteur sur le problème de la guerre est un italien, le monsieur Ercoli.

Pour lutter efficacement contre tout danger de guerre, il faut se libérer de tout esprit social-patriote. On ne peut pas ménager Rome pour

ne pas faire le jeu de Hitler. On pourra battre Hitler si l'on combattra l'impérialisme des Chemises Noires.

Le sabotage de l'Italie fasciste organisé par le prolétariat international; l'aide aux peuples noirs contre Mussolini; ce sont les seules mesures réelles et efficaces. Rien à attendre de Genève. Donc plus d'attente vaine et criminelle. Organisons vite contre l'impérialisme romain et ses complices l'action internationale du prolétariat.

13. van Heijenoort à Lo Duca, 25 août 1935¹

[...] D'ailleurs, étant si bien documenté sur les idées de Monsieur Trotsky, vous ne pouvez avoir aucun doute que dans le conflit menaçant dans l'Afrique de l'Est il se trouve tout à fait du côté de l'Ethiopie contre l'Italie impérialiste et fasciste, et qu'il espère bien dans une victoire militaire des abyssiniens contre Mussolini. [...]

14. Leonetti à Trotsky, 25 août 1935²

25-8-35 Cher camarade,

Je vous écris cette lettre tout à fait à mon titre personnel. C'est à propos du conflit italo-abyssin. Notre manque de presse nous empêche d'être présents et de faire connaître notre point de vue sur les questions du jour. Depuis décembre de l'année passée j'ai écrit pas mal d'articles sur le conflit abyssin, mais la *Vérité* n'a pu publier jusqu'à maintenant que le seul appel de la L.C.I.³ (et encore en lui donnant un relief insignifiant). Or, vous

¹ EP12032.

² EP2707.

³ Si veda il documento (4).

connaissiez les décisions de l'I.O.S. à Bruxelles et la campagne de Blum pour «l'arbitrage» et les «sanctions». Nenni et Modigliani ont repris nos propositions: lutte internationale pour le boycottage, mais en déformant le caractère classiste de nos propositions. Nous ferons paraître cette semaine notre *Bulletin*, pour lequel j'ai écrit l'article ci-joint (1)¹. Mais c'est toujours une chose presque clandestine. Je me permets de vous présenter une suggestion, en laissant à vous naturellement d'en juger la possibilité. Ne serait-il utile (toujours s'il est possible) de donner une interview de vous à la presse, qu'on pourrait faire connaître dans toute le monde, sur les perspectives créées par le conflit italo-abyssin; sur les décisions éventuelles de Genève; sur nos positions vis à vis de deux Int. et ainsi de suite? Je ne vois d'autres moyens pour toucher les millions de gens qui ne lisent pas nos *Bulletins*. Je vous prie de considérer ma proposition tout à fait comme personnelle.

A' part, je vous envoie le nouvel numéro de *Révolution Proletarienne* avec le compte-rendu de Saint-Denis. Que pensez-vous de Valois? Ici, dans les milieux ouvriers, on n'entend que du mal. Je pourrais m'étendre là-dessus, si vous le croyez. Bien à vous

Martin

15. Leonetti à Trotsky, 3 septembre 1935²

[...] Réunion avec Sneevliet. De retour de ses vacances, le cam. Sn. est passé d'ici et nous avons saisi l'occasion pour tenir une réunion d'essi avec lui. Premier point o.d.j.: la question du conflit abyssin. Nous avons envisagé quelques moyens pour rendre plus sensible aux masses nos positions. La *Vérité* continue de se taire et elle devrait faire toutefois de la campagne contre la guerre un des points essentiels de sa lutte (Rous n'est

¹ Si veda il documento (11).

² EP2708.

pas encore revenu des vacances. Ce qui est regrettable à cause du fait de la situation créée à la suite des dernières décisions de la C.A.P.). Le cam. Schmidt¹ en Hollande tâchera de toucher Fimmen² des transports, le 15 sept. des meetings seront convoqués en Hollande; des propositions seront faites à Albarda. [...]

16. Trotsky à Leonetti, 5 septembre 1935³

5 Septembre 1935

Cher cde Martin,

j'ai reçu vos deux articles qui me paraissent très bons⁴. J'ai essayé, par l'intermédiaire du cde Held, de les faire publier dans la presse locale, ce qui Held avait réussi avec votre article précédent. Mais cette fois-ci, il n'a pas eu de succès. Les intérêts internationaux de la presse locale sont bien limités.

Quant à l'interview pour la presse mondiale, l'idée est bonne, mais je ne suis pas sûr, si elle soit réalisable. Il faudrait dire des choses très précises, - trop précises, même pour les agences américaines. On verra.

Notre ami Théodore paraît un peu ensommeillé. Je suppose que c'est le nerf de la guerre qui lui manque? Hélas, nous sommes diablement pauvres.

¹ Petrus Johannes (Piet) Schmidt.

² Eduard Carl (Edo) Fimmen, segretario generale dell'International Transport Workers' Federation.

³ EP8849.

⁴ Si vedano i documenti (11) e (12).

17. Leonetti à Trotsky, 15 septembre 1935¹

[...] En attendant, je me permets de revenir sur la question du conflit italo-abyssin. L'Italie est complètement isolée. Même Hitler ne veut pas s'engager avec Mussolini. Celui-ci vient de perdre déjà moitié de sa campagne en Afrique. L'attitude de la S.D.N. a fini pour créer une situation très difficile pour Rome. Plus que jamais il me semble que la situation italienne revient au premier plan. Si l'idée de l'interview n'est pas réalisable, ne pourriez-vous intervenir sous la forme de «lettre ouverte aux ouvriers italiens» comme vous avez fait en quittant la France? Le 6-7 octobre aura lieu le fameux «Congrès des italiens à l'étranger» organisé par les deux bureaucraties stalinienne et socialiste. Si votre «lettre ouverte» nous arrive à temps, nous pourrions la traduire en italien, l'imprimer en tract et la distribuer soit à ce congrès, soit dans les milieux italiens de France, Suisse, Belgique, Amérique Latine et Amérique du Nord. Je vois là une excellente occasion pour parler aux ouvriers italiens.

L'aventure africaine peut amener la chute de Mussolini comme le Maroc a amené en Espagne la chute de Primo de Rivera. Que faut-il pour éviter à l'Italie la sort de l'Espagne? Un parti révolutionnaire de la classe ouvrière. C'est là la tâche principale. En même temps il nous faudrait stigmatiser l'attitude de la Seconde et de la Troisième internationale dans le conflit italo-abyssin, pleine d'égards pour Mussolini (déclaration de Litvinof à Genève) et d'autre coté faisant le jeu de l'impérialisme anglais, sous prétexte de défendre le «Pacte» et la «paix».

Les staliniens italiens ont donné pour mot d'ordre «A bas les pattes de l'Abyssinie; gouvernement populaire anti-fasciste». Les socialistes aussi disent: «Si la guerre éclate, il faut tourner les armes contre l'ennemi, qui siège à Rome». Mais ils sont pour l'union sacrée en France, en Angleterre et même en Italie, dans le cas que Mussolini se fait l'allié de l'U.R.S.S. contre Hitler. Les autres mouvements (Giustizia et Libertà, etc.) vous les connaissez.

Je me tiens à votre disposition pour toute autre information utile.

¹ EP2709.

18. J. P. Martin, *La guerre en marche. L'Italie et l'Angleterre à Genève face à l'Ethiopie*¹

Aucun doute que nous vivons des heures d'une gravité extrême. La politique de conciliation entre les différentes Puissances capitalistes, s'avère impuissante. Puisque la paix capitaliste n'est autre chose qu'une guerre à l'état latent. Avant de se battre sur les champs de bataille, on se bat dans les usines, dans la préparation militaire, dans la course aux armements. Pendant cette course on peut être vaincus avant de se battre à guerre ouverte. Aujourd'hui, nous sommes arrivés encore une fois à cette étape de l'histoire où ceux qui ne peuvent plus attendre, sont poussés à la solution guerrière. Ici la nette démarcation entre les Puissances capitalistes «pacifiques» - parce que, satisfaites de leur butin précédent peuvent durer - et les Puissances au nombre desquelles est l'Italie, qui, par leurs contradictions intérieures et extérieures, sont poussées à troubler la «paix». C'est pourquoi il n'est pas possible de lutter sincèrement pour la paix véritable si l'on ne comprend pas, si l'on ne fait pas voir clair aux masses travailleuses que la «paix actuelle», c'est-à-dire la paix impérialiste, la paix versaillaise d'où est sortie la Société des nations, est la cause première engendrant toute nouvelle guerre.

Certes, Mussolini veut la guerre, et il la fait déjà. Mais, est-ce par attachement à la paix, à l'indépendance du peuple éthiopien, que l'Angleterre se déclare prête à jeter dans la balance tout le poids de sa puissance? Nul doute que le peuple anglais est sincèrement pour la paix. Il ne veut pas un nouveau carnage. Mais, comment empêcher ce nouveau carnage? En faisant cause commune avec l'impérialisme anglais qui s'abrite derrière la S.D.N. et le visage de la Paix pour masquer son propre visage de rival des bandits italiens? Nous sommes à un moment où ce problème se pose à la classe ouvrière dans toute son intensité.

Mussolini, loin de reculer, a fait savoir une fois de plus qu'il marchera «tout droit». La marche «tout droit» signifie l'ouverture des hostilités à

¹ *Service de presse de la LCI (B-L)*, 18 septembre 1935. EP16574.

courte échéance. D'autre part, Sir Samuel Hoare aurait déclaré aux ministres français présents à Genève, qu'en cas d'hostilités de l'Italie contre l'Ethiopie, le Gouvernement anglais, fort de la quasi-unanimité des consentements de la Société des nations, est résolu à proposer des sanctions. Pour toute réponse, Mussolini a ordonné que dix millions de citoyens italiens seront prochainement mobilisé pour 24 heures de façon foudroyante, au son des cloches, des sirènes et des tambours aux carrefours des villes et des villages. Au renforcement de la flotte de guerre envisagé par l'amirauté anglaise dans la Méditerranée, Rome réplique par des manœuvres de 60 sous-marins entre la Sicile et la Lybie. A la menace de la fermeture du canal de Suez, Rome réplique avec la menace de bloquer Gibraltar. Est-ce donc possible que le conflit entre l'Italie et l'Abyssinie s'élargisse en conflit entre l'Angleterre et l'Italie? Et si une telle éventualité se produit, quelle sera l'attitude des autres Puissances? De toute évidence il est clair que la «petite guerre» en Afrique est en train de devenir le point de départ d'une nouvelle conflagration mondiale. Ce qui confirme encore une fois la thèse que l'application du Pacte de Genève ne signifie pas empêcher la guerre, mais la déchaîner à l'échelle mondiale. Engager le prolétariat à soutenir le Pacte de Genève signifie pratiquement engager le prolétariat dans la voie de 1914. En 1914 aussi, en établissant une distinction entre puissances «démocratiques» et «pacifiques» et puissances «guerrières» (telle l'Allemagne de Guillaume II), on réussit à diviser le prolétariat international et jeter le prolétariat de chaque pays dans les bras de la bourgeoisie nationale. La même chose se produirait aujourd'hui en établissant une distinction entre puissances impérialistes qui veulent «la paix», et les puissances impérialistes qui piétinent cette paix. Le prolétariat ne doit pas se faire prendre à ce piège comme en 1914. Pour aider le prolétariat italien à battre Mussolini; pour aider le peuple abyssin à défendre son sol et son indépendance, le prolétariat d'Angleterre, le prolétariat de France, le prolétariat de tous les pays, ne doivent pas mêler leur voix à celle de leurs Gouvernements, ni confondre leurs moyens d'action avec les moyens de leurs propres exploités.

Certes, le sabotage de l'Italie fasciste est un devoir pour les prolétaires, comme l'aide au peuple abyssin. Mais il n'y a pas seulement des

sanctions à prendre contre l'impérialisme italien. Si les prolétaires d'Angleterre, de France et des autres pays se font complices de leurs Gouvernements qui oppriment les Indes, le Maroc et tas d'autres peuples; s'ils ne luttent pas avec acharnement contre l'impérialisme de leur propre pays, ils ne pourront au fond que faciliter le jeu de Mussolini et d'Hitler qui se poseront en champions des intérêts de leurs propres Nations étranglées dans l'étau des territoires actuels. Ce que le prolétariat international doit entreprendre, c'est une lutte indépendante contre l'impérialisme, le véritable agresseur des peuples opprimés, et son propre ennemi mortel. Le prolétariat d'Angleterre, de France et des autres pays, doit s'employer non pas à obtenir de son propre gouvernement l'application du Pacte de Genève, mais il doit s'employer à démasquer l'hypocrisie pacifiste derrière laquelle s'abrite l'impérialisme de son propre pays. L'application du Pacte de Genève est une nouvelle guerre impérialiste: le prolétariat international doit s'employer à renverser le Gouvernement de son propre pays en luttant pour la libération des peuples opprimés par sa propre bourgeoisie. Sans action révolutionnaire, la lutte pour la paix se réduit à une phrase creuse. C'est pourquoi on ne peut pas lire sans en être indignés ce qu'écrit la PRAVDA de Moscou: «Ce qui est essentiel à l'heure actuelle, c'est que l'Angleterre, en reconnaissant à l'Ethiopie des droits à conserver son indépendance, suit objectivement une ligne sauvegardant les intérêts de la paix et assurant la consolidation du prestige de la S.D.N.» Que de mots, et que de tromperies pour les ouvriers! D'abord il est faux que l'Angleterre reconnait à l'Ethiopie des droits à garder son indépendance. L'Angleterre est prête à marchander avec Rome sur la base du traité tripartite de 1906 entre France, Angleterre et Italie, traité qui envisage le partage de l'Ethiopie. Deuxièmement, parce que les intérêts de la paix ne sont que le masque de l'impérialisme anglais défendant en réalité les intérêts de sa propre domination; troisièmement parce que la Société des Nations ne fera que démontrer une fois de plus son impuissance en tant qu'instrument de paix. Si jamais elle se décide, ce qui est peu probable, à être énergique avec l'Italie, elle ne pourra le faire qu'en détruisant définitivement l'illusion de la Société des Nations comme

instrument pour la solution pacifique des différends entre les Puissances impérialistes.

Les intérêts de la paix, aujourd'hui comme en 1914, peuvent uniquement être sauvegardés par l'action indépendante du prolétariat international contre l'impérialisme de toute cocarde. Le dilemme actuel n'est pas: Pour le Pacte ou Contre le Pacte; mais: Guerre ou Révolution! Impérialisme (dont le fascisme est l'expression du déclin), ou Socialisme!

19. Trotsky à Leonetti, 26 septembre 1935¹

[...] je suis tout à fait prêt d'écrire une lettre aux ouvriers italiens. Mais je crains ne pas pouvoir le faire à temps pour le Congrès.

Je me trouve à l'hôpital et j'y resterai encore quelque temps. En tous cas, nous trouverons maintenant sans difficultés une autre occasion assez propice pour une telle lettre. Si vous me faisiez quelques suggestions, je vous en serais bien reconnaissant. [...]

20. Parabellum, Questions of the Italo-Ethiopian War²

EVERY WAR confronts the revolutionary Marxists with the question of what attitude to take towards it. This distinguishes them in the very first place from the bourgeois or «socialist» pacifists who reject war «as such» and therefore face *every* war quite helplessly. It distinguishes them, further, from the pseudo-radical ideologists of reformism, who promise to reply to *every* war, after it has broken out, with revolution or a general strike, and thereby subserve social-chauvinism, as these promises hold back the proletariat from any real preparation for the war. Finally, the revolutionary

¹ EP8850.

² *The New Internationalist*, October 1935. L'originale tedesco è in EP17020.

Marxists are distinguished from those Marxists who set up the schematic contention that in our epoch there can be no other wars than imperialist wars and therefore the proletariat must come forward actively and in a revolutionary manner against *every* war.

Mussolini is preparing war against Ethiopia. Nobody can dispute that Italy will conduct an imperialist war: it is an attempt to annex a country, to convert it from an independent state into an Italian colony. Whatever the immediate causes may be that drive Mussolini to this war of conquest, that is to say, if it is the internal contradictions of Fascist Italy that have become intolerable and have imposed a military adventure as a distraction, or the mechanics of imperialism alone which are driving towards new conquests in Africa – what is involved is not some peculiarity of the Fascist régime but rather a feature common to all imperialisms: the world must be repartitioned, the imperialist power of third rank which Italy is, is seeking to force an advance in rank through new robberies, by utilizing the imperialist antagonisms of the powers of first and second order.

In such a war, the attitude of the revolutionists of Italy is quite unambiguously prescribed. Defeatism, that is, the work for the defeat of their own government and thereby the preparation for converting the imperialist war into the civil war – there lies the task of the Italian proletariat in the event of war. There is no doubt on that score, and the revolutionary proletariat will be in solidarity on it. As is seen, this task is in no way posed by the fact that a special kind of régime, the Fascist, exists in Italy. The task is posed because Italy pursues an imperialistic policy, and the Fascist régime is only one of the possible state forms of imperialism, which appears likewise in democratic-republican forms and which, in the event of war, must be combatted by revolutionary Marxists with just the same slogans and aims. This – for the purpose of underlining the fact that the superstructure, the state form of sovereign power, the dictatorship of capital in its imperialist phase, is entirely a derived phenomenon and that the basic position of the proletariat in the main questions does not depend upon this derived phenomenon, upon the state form of the capitalist dictatorship.

Already in this second point, there exists no unity with the conception of such «Marxists» who revise Marx and Lenin, in that, like the Stalinists, they invent «good» and «pacifist» imperialists, and «bad», bellicose imperialists who must therefore be fought (whereas the others – which? – are «good» friends). This revision of Leninism is equivalent to a flat betrayal of Marxism, and the practical application of this Stalinist «principle» leads to ordinary social-chauvinism, however much it may be more or less garnished with sophistic phrases. But also with «Marxists» of the stripe of the S.A.P., nothing can be found in common on the question of war, inasmuch as this party, true to its natural history and origin, represents in the question of the attitude towards war two entirely different, mutually incompatible and moreover – both of them – false standpoints. One, set down in the incredibly confused and hollow declaration of this party on the war question, preaches an amorphous, worthless «peace conference» of the bourgeois-pacifist type, of which nobody can say what it is actually to be. It is a hodge-podge of social democratic phrases about disarmament and the general ruinousness of war, and agitational methods such as have been pursued by the Comintern through its auxiliary organizations – all the Alliances, Societies, Committees «against war and Fascism» – with the success which is so well known. The other current in the S.A.P. is that of the «preventive war» of French imperialism against «Fascist Germany». Thus, the same distinction is made here between «good» and bad imperialists that Stalinism makes. This position, despite all the phrases about the «revolution» being made inside the army, in the midst of the war – because, you see, the imperialists are «after all» not sincerely «good» – is only a shabby fig-leaf for ordinary social-chauvinism, for it represents distinctions between the «good» democratic imperialist states and the bad Fascist imperialists. Within the S.A.P., the theoretical representative of this anti-Marxian confusion is none other than Fritz Sternberg, although he himself has apparently published nothing about the war question itself. But his works on imperialism and above all his book *Der Faschismus an der Macht*, with their flat vulgarization of the theoretical errors of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation, and their arrogant «refutations» of Lenin, delivered

with aplomb and without a trace of conviction, and of Lenin's profound theory of imperialism which has been astonishingly and thoroughly confirmed by the events of the last twenty years in all its details – these works of Sternberg, this lamentable eclecticism, form the «foundation» of the political resolutions and contradictions of the S.A.P., so far as it deals with politics in general, and especially with the politics of war.

II.

Now, the Italo-Ethiopian war conflict has two sides. Seen from the Italian side, everything is extraordinarily simple, or everything seems to be extraordinarily simple.

But what the revolutionary proletariat must do is to see and to answer the question of this war, like every war, from the international standpoint. That means: if it is true that the Italian proletariat must strive towards the defeat, the overthrow of its government – a work in which a large part of the bourgeois anti-Fascists will concur with it – and if it is true that it must convert the imperialist war of Italy into a civil war for the overthrow of capitalism, in which only the Leninists will concur in principle with the Italian revolutionary vanguard – if all this is true, then what must be the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat towards Ethiopia?

Here we will find an agreement between the Leninists and quite a number of bourgeois and even imperialist politicians, yet for entirely different reasons and with quite different aims.

In the first place: has Ethiopia any prospect of carrying on this war without losing it immediately? Yes, these prospects exist. They exist, because, first, Italy's strength, in consequence of the colossal contradictions of this Fascist «communality», is a fiction; because the class contradictions within the army cannot, in all likelihood, hold up under any great burdens; because the whole country can be aroused in the shortest period of time by this onerous and risky war. The other reason is: likely though it is that the Ethiopian war can first be localized, there is little prospect of the imperialist big powers leaving Italy a free hand. English imperialism is not interested in letting Italian influence in Africa extend to the Red Sea and in conceding

her power and further lust for expansion out of the Gulf of Aden and the Straits of Bab el Mandeb down to the headwaters of the Nile region; nor will the «selflessness» of the present-day French imperialist seconds of the Italian pirates go so far as to look on while Italy's positions penetrate further into Central Africa.

These are just the international circumstances that make possible Ethiopia's resistance. Precisely these circumstances will also engender an apparent similarity between bourgeois, even imperialist individuals and groups, perhaps even states, and the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, expressing itself in the slogan: Aid for the victory of Ethiopia.

It might be asked: what interest has the international proletariat in the victory of Ethiopia, a backward, feudal, barbaric state? And in fact, this is the question that is put by bourgeois «pacifists», by imperialists who would themselves like to swallow Ethiopia, by allies of Italy. Hasn't Ethiopia even failed to abolish the slave trade? ask righteous English Christians, in whose empire, as is well known, there is no trading in slaves and who have justice triumphing everywhere, in both India and Africa and everywhere else where hundreds of thousands of natives die of hunger or perish in plagues under the British flag or are dispatched into the beyond by good English bombers.

The interest that another imperialism may have in the defeat of Italy need not be examined here. There will be time for that when the war has actually broken out. But the interest that the revolutionary proletariat has in the victory of Ethiopia must be investigated right here and now.

III.

We have put it pretty crassly: in the victory of Ethiopia. Yet that is only the positive formulation of the defeat of Italy. By that is actually already said, in abbreviated form, what is involved. But just because this abbreviation might lead to misunderstanding, to the idea that it is only a question of a general «anti-Fascist» wish, it is necessary to speak in greater detail on this point.

The position of neutrality of the international revolutionary proletariat we dismiss with a wave of the hand: if it is true that the

revolutionary proletariat is for the defeat of Italy, when it is not neutral, then it is for the victory of Ethiopia. If it desires the victory of Ethiopia, then it must help to produce it. This means that it does not remain «neutral», but that it actively intervenes *for* Ethiopia.

Why? Naturally, not because it likes the social structure of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is indeed a backward country. But just because of that, this topical war conflict offers a practical occasion not only for the practical struggle against imperialism but also for the struggle for the theoretical clarification of the war question in a field which does not simply signify the counterposing of two belligerent imperialist state groups.

In one of his especially brilliant works (*Results of the Discussion of the Right of Self-Determination*, October 1916), Lenin accurately examined the question of what distinctions exist – so far as is concerned the question of a «just» war – between the epoch in which Marx wrote and our epoch. He declared that

«... the interests of the emancipation of several great and very great peoples of Europe stand higher than the interests of the movement of emancipation of the small nations»¹

– this, for the purpose of showing why Marx and Engels, before the year 1848, were against the national movement of the Czechs and the Slavs, but in favor of the independence of Poland. This shows, Lenin emphasizes,

«... that Marx and Engels at that time clearly and definitely counterposed ‘entirely reactionary peoples’, who served as Russian advance posts in Europe, to the Germans, Poles and Hungarians. This is a fact and this was indubitably established at that time: in 1848 the revolutionary peoples fought for freedom, whose main enemy was Czarism; the Czechs

¹ «gli interessi dell'emancipazione di alcuni grandi e grandissimi popoli dell'Europa stanno al di sopra degli interessi del movimento di liberazione delle piccole nazioni» (Risultati della discussione sull'autodecisione, in: Lenin, Opere complete, vol. XXII, dicembre 1915 – luglio 1916, Roma, Editori riuniti, 1966, pp. 338-339).

and others, however, were in actuality reactionary peoples and advance posts of Czarism»¹.

This is necessary for the purpose of concrete analysis; the example is supposed to show and does show that it is not at all a question of an abstract or sentimental principle of national «freedom» or independence, but of inserting and subordinating the question of the emancipation of the «great» nations. But a fundamental change has taken place within imperialism:

«A system of a small number of imperialists ‘great powers’ (of which there are five or six) has now been formed, in which each one suppresses other nations, and this suppression serves to retard artificially the overthrow of capitalism and to support artificially the opportunism and social-chauvinism of the world-dominating imperialist nations»².

Thence «results the concrete alteration in the application of these socialist principles: at that time it was applied primarily ‘against Czarism’ (and against the movements of the small nations exploited by it in an anti-democratic direction) and for the revolutionary peoples of the West, who belonged to the great nations. Now it is applied against the united, serried front of the imperialist powers, of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the social-imperialists, in order to utilize all the national movements against imperialism, and in favor of the socialist revolution. The purer is the fight of the proletariat against the common imperialist front, the clearer emerges

¹ «Marx e Engels nel 1848 e 1849... *contrapponevano* allora direttamente e decisamente ‘interi popoli reazionari’ i quali servivano ‘da avamposti russi’ in Europa, ai ‘popoli rivoluzionari’: tedeschi, polacchi, magiari. È un fatto. E questo fatto fu *allora incontestabilmente* stabilito: nel 1848 i popoli rivoluzionari combatterono per la libertà, il cui nemico principale era lo zarismo, mentre i cechi, ecc. erano veramente dei popoli reazionari, degli avamposti dello zarismo» (op. cit., pag. 338)

² «Ora si è formato il sistema di un pugno (da cinque a sei) di ‘grandi’ potenze imperialiste delle quali ognuna opprime altre nazioni, e questa oppressione è uno dei mezzi per ritardare artificialmente la caduta del capitalismo, per sostenere artificialmente l’opportunismo e il social-sciovinismo delle nazioni imperialiste che dominano il mondo» (op. cit., pag. 340).

the international principles: 'a people that oppresses another cannot emancipate itself'¹.

This lengthy quotation offers material for other observations which must, however, be omitted at this point; let us point only to the fact that herein lies the complete rejection of the shameless falsification of Marxism and Leninism which the Stalinists have introduced with their distinctions between two sorts of imperialists.

IV.

Now what connection is there between this observation of Lenin and the Ethiopian question?

As a matter of fact, the connection is clear. Ethiopia has up to now been a more or less independent country. The attempt to annex it encountered (a) a national Ethiopian defense movement which will express itself in a national war which is to that extent a «just» war, quite regardless as to whether the social form of Ethiopia is backward; and (b) the will of Italy to annexation accentuates the antagonisms within the «common imperialist front» of which Lenin speaks; for – this is known from his countless, fundamental works on imperialism and specific war problems – he does not of course employ this term in order to describe a sort of «super-imperialism» but, on the contrary, in order to say: the world is already so partitioned among the imperialist great powers that every non-imperialist nation faces the common front of the imperialist oppressors; but every attempt to divide the world differently among the imperialist robbers, sets

¹ «Di qui il cambiamento concreto nell'*applicazione* di quegli stessi principi socialisti: *allora*, anzitutto, 'contro lo zarismo' (e contro certi movimenti delle piccole nazionalità, utilizzati *da esso* in una direzione antidemocratica), in favore dei popoli rivoluzionari delle grandi nazionalità dell'Occidente; *oggi*, contro il fronte unico livellato delle potenze imperialiste, della borghesia imperialista, dei socialimperialisti, *per utilizzare* ai fini della rivoluzione socialista *tutti* i movimenti nazionali contro l'imperialismo. Quanto più *pura* è ora la lotta del proletariato contro il fronte generale imperialista, tanto più imperioso si fa, evidentemente, il principio internazionalista: 'Un popolo che opprime altri popoli non può esser libero'» (op. cit., pag. 340).

the thieves of this «common front» of robbery against each other, therefore facilitates the task of the international proletariat – the socialist revolution – and by virtue of the rupture of the «common front» of the temporary *status quo* of the last piratical partition of the world among the imperialist robbers, it promotes the revolutionary struggle of the working class.

In a work which is closely connected with what was quoted above, his criticism of the Junius pamphlet of Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin says:

«As a continuation of the national emancipation policy of the colonies, national wars against imperialism will be inevitable. Such wars may lead to the imperialist war of the present imperialist ‘great powers’. But this case may also not occur, and that depends upon many circumstances»¹.

In the case of Ethiopia, it is a question of precisely such a situation, for it is not necessary for this country to be already annexed; it is to be annexed. That such national wars are possible, even inevitable, is not only posited by the theory of Leninism, but it is also shown in practice. But such

«... national wars against the imperialist states are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable and both progressive and revolutionary, even though, of course, their success requires either the unification of the efforts of a vast number of inhabitants of the oppressed countries, or else a specially favorable constellation of the international situation (e.g., the paralyzing of the intervention of the imperialist states as a consequence of their weakness, their wars, their antagonisms, etc.), or the simultaneous uprising of the proletariat in one of the great states against the bourgeoisie (this point, last in our enumeration, is first in desirability and beneficialness from the standpoint of the victory of the proletariat)»².

¹ «Continuazione della politica di liberazione nazionale delle colonie saranno, *necessariamente*, le guerre nazionali da parte di queste *contro* l'imperialismo. Simili guerre *possono* condurre a una guerra imperialista delle attuali ‘grandi’ potenze imperialiste, ma possono anche non condurvi; ciò dipende da molte circostanze» (A proposito dell’opuscolo di Junius, in: Lenin, Opere complete, vol. XXII, dicembre 1915 – luglio 1916, Roma, Editori riuniti, 1966, pag. 309).

² «Guerre nazionali *contro* le potenze imperialiste sono non soltanto possibili e probabili, ma anche inevitabili. Esse sono *progressive e rivoluzionarie*, anche se il loro *successo* dipende o dagli sforzi di un grandissimo numero di abitanti dei paesi

This is precisely the situation in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. It is not, in truth, a question of the Ethiopian slave trade nor of the social structure of this feudal monarchy. It is a question of a situation in which the antagonism of the imperialist great powers is strong, so that an intervention in this war may at first be obviated. The miserable attitude of the leaders of the Third International, if this name is still to be used for the society of Stalin's employees, in this conflict, shows the mongrel's fear of the Stalinist national reformists of the progressive and revolutionary war: just because this Ethiopian war breaks the front of the imperialists, that is, the front of the *status quo* of imperialist robbery, this band of lackeys, which prepared the Seventh Congress of the International founded by Lenin, goes ahead without saying a word about the questions which are agitating the world.

On the other side, the League of Nations reveals itself anew to be what it was from the beginning: a consortium of thieves, but a disunited one. The president of the Council of the League of Nations at the present time, bears the name of Litvinov. This ex-Bolshevik will have to solve the traitor's task of stifling, by means of imperialist chicanery, the progressive, revolutionary war of Ethiopia which will not let itself be annexed (and which, by its resistance, offers the proletariat revolutionary, progressive possibilities; that and only that is why Ethiopia's war is progressive and revolutionary), and of handing over the country to the imperialist robbers.

V.

It can be said without exaggeration that a defeat of Italy and a revolution on the Apennine peninsula can have unforeseeable results. The whole European system of alliances and states would fall apart. The proletariat in Germany, Austria, Spain, on the Balkans, and not least of all

oppressi... o da una concorrenza *particolarmente* favorevole di condizioni internazionali (per esempio, se l'intervento da parte delle potenze imperialiste venisse a trovarsi paralizzato a causa della loro debolezza, delle loro guerre, dei loro antagonismi, ecc.), o dall'insurrezione *simultanea* del proletariato di una delle grandi potenze contro la borghesia (questa possibilità, che abbiamo elencata per ultimo, va messa al primo posto se si parte dal punto di vista della sua desiderabilità e dei vantaggi che può offrire per la vittoria del proletariato)» (op. cit., pag. 311).

in France, would receive an enormous impulsion; the face of Europe would be altered. That lies in the direct class interests of the international proletariat. But still more. A defeat of Italy in Africa, a victory of Ethiopia, might deliver the imperialist bandits a terrific blow in Africa. Should Ethiopia's national war be crowned with success, why shouldn't there be repercussions to this victory of the backward country in the form of uprisings in Egypt, in the large French and English colonies of Central and Eastern Africa, in South Africa? And might not victorious uprisings in Africa be implanted, repeated, and extended in Asia?

Were it only a question of dreams here, then these dreams themselves would be useful, educational, internationalistic. But far more real possibilities are involved than the philistine, the «socialist» philistine included, who always boasts of his *Realpolitik*, allows himself to imagine. The capitalism of our time is far shakier and far more thoroughly doomed to ruin than these «socialists» believe. Even an occasion like the Ethiopian conflict may throw the rotten edifice of imperialism into its death-throes.

That is why it is the elementary duty of the international proletariat to do everything to drive in this direction. This «everything» is, in the concrete case: a goal-conscious, hate-filled campaign against Italian imperialism; prevention of troop transports, and of arms and munitions supplies for Italy; reinforced agitation among the Italian troops; sabotage, if possible and necessary, of Italian war preparations, munitions production, food provisioning. And on the other side: support for arms supplies to Ethiopia (this goes for those who are against arms production and transportation «as such»); unambiguous, loud, fearless propaganda of the justness of this war from the Ethiopian standpoint; tireless denunciation of the League of Nations and its imperialist hypocrisy as well as of the imperialist governments who bargain with Italy; fearless denunciation of the treacherous role of the Second International, and also of the directors of the Third International, who objectively support the allegedly combatted Fascism (we say nothing of imperialism in general, for Stalinism no longer speaks of that at all); denunciation of Stalin's foreign politicians who, for the sake of a dubious «friendship» with Fascist Italy, betray – in this case

too, short-sightedly and opportunistically – the revolutionary perspectives and possibilities which rise out of the war of Italian imperialism for the international proletariat, in order thoughtlessly to counterpose the alleged interests of the U.S.S.R. to the general interests of the international proletariat. And as a consequence, reinforcement of the propaganda for the need to create the Fourth International which applies the Leninist teaching – Marxism – in this concrete case of a war in Africa as in every other case, in the interests of the entire international proletariat.

Paris, september 1935

21. Revolutionary Policy Alone Can Defeat Imperialist War¹

Statement of the third plenum of the National Committee, Workers Party of the U.S., New York, Oct. 4.

1. The armies of Italian Fascism, after months of deliberate preparation, have now launched their attack upon the Ethiopian peoples. Driven by the intolerable strains of internal social and economic contradictions, Mussolini and the Italian bourgeoisie seek a solution in open imperialist aggression against the last of the independent nations of Africa.

2. The outbreak of war in Africa demonstrates that the conflicts of world imperialism have reached the stage of armed struggle for a re-making of boundaries, and a re-division of territories and colonial possessions. Though the Italian campaign in Ethiopia may not lead immediately and directly to a world struggle of the imperialist powers, this delay can prove no more than temporary. **The war in Ethiopia must be understood as the prelude to the new imperialist world war.**

¹ *The New Militant*, vol. 1, n. 41, October 5, 1935. In francese in: *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 6, Décembre 1935.

Expose the Bandit League

3. In the preparation for the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, the League of Nations has once more demonstrated beyond any possible doubt its true role. The League is not in any sense whatever the «defender of peace». It is the legal and hypocritical cover for the maneuvering of the dominant imperialist powers. Since Ethiopia first invoked League assistance on December, 1934, the negotiations have served to permit uninterrupted preparation for the war by Italy, and to deter defensive preparation by Ethiopia. The League has been utilized above all to serve the ends of British imperialism. Behind its cover, the agents of Great Britain, France and Italy have haggled over the price in terms of treaties, guarantees, protection, and territories, which each was willing to pay to preserve its own interests. The threat of League sanctions has been made not to save Ethiopia – which the League report itself offered to sacrifice – but to safeguard British colonial possessions and lines of communication, and to try to close the opening for Germany in Central Europe. The League of Nations is the agency, not of peace, but of imperialist aggression.

The struggle against imperialist war demands the unremitting exposure of the role of the League of Nations.

4. No less than the European powers is U.S. imperialism bound by the iron chain of cause and effect to the events in Africa and to the new world conflict which they herald. The sentimental dream of U.S. isolation, Roosevelt's promises that the U.S. will remain «free and untangled», have no more force than the unctuous phrases of Wilson in 1916. The U.S. will, on the contrary, play the dominant and decisive role in the new imperialist struggle. Behind its pacifist covering, the Roosevelt government is pouring more funds into its war machine than any other nation in the world. Both navy and army are constructed on a purely offensive strategic basis. The U.S. bourgeoisie, waiting and preparing, expects to intervene in the later stages of the world struggle, when the other powers are mutually exhausted, to achieve the world domination of U.S. finance-capital.

The struggle against imperialist war is above all the struggle against U.S. imperialism.

Against Stalinist Betrayal

5. The U.S.S.R. cannot avoid implication in the world conflict. The very life of the workers' state is threatened by the approach of war. A central task of the struggle against imperialist war is the defense of the U.S.S.R. But, in the last analysis, this defense can be based only upon the revolutionary advance of the international proletariat. Stalinist diplomacy, on the contrary, to an ever increasing degree, serves solely to disorient the international proletariat, break up the struggle against imperialist war, and thus undermine the real defense of the U.S.S.R. Basing itself not upon the international working class, but upon military pacts with bourgeois states, upon diplomatic deals, appeals to pacifist and liberal anti-war sentiment, and the maneuvers of the League, Soviet foreign policy promotes the most disastrous illusions in the minds of the workers, and acts in effect to further the interests of French and British imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war requires the constant exposure of the foreign policy of Stalinism.

6. One of the most dangerous illusions fostered by the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, in company with demoralized liberals, reformists, and pacifists of all shades, is the notion that the world is now divided between «peace-loving democratic» nations and «war-loving fascist» nations. This notion is part of the preparation for support of the «peace-loving nations» in the coming war. Marxism rejects and dispels this illusion or any form of it. The idea that there are peace-loving as opposed to war-loving capitalist nations, like the idea that one or another nation is «guilty» in an imperialist war, is at best formalistic ethical sentimentality, not political realism. The causes of war are to be found in the internal structure of world capitalism, operating within all nations. The national state of every capitalist nation, without exception, is the political instrument of the class enemy, the first and implacable enemy of that nation's proletariat. The revolutionary party can make no distinction between «good» and «bad» capitalist states. It is the enemy of every capitalist state, to the death.

7. At the outbreak of the last imperialist war, the Second International revealed its internal degeneration by betraying the working class to the class

enemy, by espousing the cause of national defense and patriotism, by a truce with the bourgeoisie in the interests of «national unity», by going over to social-patriotism and social-chauvinism. Already, before the outbreak of the new war, the leaders of the Socialist and Labour International have announced a repetition of the betrayal, are already preparing to turn over their following to the war-makers. In England, the British Labour Party, by calling for government applied sanctions and the closing of the Suez Canal, once again takes the position of national unity – that is, solidarity with the class enemy – before the war danger, and of fully developed social-patriotism. In France, the leaders of the S.F.I.O. have taken the same position – to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie against «Hitler aggression», and now to «implement the League Covenant» by government sanctions. In August, the Executive Committee of the Socialist and Labour International adopted a program of full-blooded social-patriotism.

The struggle against imperialist war means the struggle against the Second International.

Combat Social Patriotism

8. During the past year, the Communist International has passed from a policy which weakened and disorientated the revolutionary struggle against war to an active espousal of the policies of class truce and social-patriotism. By the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Stalin-Laval communique, the conduct of the Soviet Union in the League during the development of the Ethiopian crisis, and above all by the Seventh Congress of the C. I., the Communist International stands unmasked as the heir of social-democracy's betrayal on the issue of war, announcing itself as ready to do the hangman's job of turning over the proletariat of England, France and the U.S. to their national bourgeoisie in the coming war, in return for paper promises of protection for the borders of the Soviet Union. In England, the Communist party applauds the position of the Labour Party; in France, the Communist party supports enthusiastically the worst betrayals of Blum and Herriot; and throughout the world the Communist International prepares the sacrifice of the working class on the altar of imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war means everywhere the relentless struggle against Stalinism.

9. Throughout the world the only organized forces conducting and advocating the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war are the parties and groupings of the Fourth Internationalists. The Workers Party of the U.S. carries on this struggle in the closest solidarity with its comrades in all countries.

Against the betrayers, the Workers Party rejects every form of social-patriotism and social-chauvinism; it rejects every conception of national unity and national defense; it rejects all ideas of truce with the bourgeois state, democratic or fascist; it exposes the role of the League of Nations as the pawn of the imperialist member states; it rejects the sentimental illusions of pacifists and petty bourgeois liberals; above all it directs its attacks against the enemy at home, against U.S. imperialism.

The Workers Party places no reliance on the «peaceful» intentions of bourgeois-democratic nations, nor upon spineless «united fronts» of liberals, ministers, bourgeois women's clubs and «anti-war» professionals.

Defend Ethiopian People

The Workers Party calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression, for the defense of the U.S.S.R., for unremitting struggle against the coming imperialist war. But for this defense and this struggle, the Workers Party calls at the same time for the sole means by which they can be, in fact, conducted: for the independent and autonomous action of the working class. It is the international working class, especially the Italian working class, together with the oppressed colonial peoples, who are the true allies of the Ethiopian peoples – not «peace-loving» Britain, nor the League of Nations, nor Stalin-Laval, nor Roosevelt, nor their own Christian Emperor and semi-feudal chieftains. It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples, not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states. And likewise for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and the struggle against the approaching world war,

it is only the independent action of the working class together with its allies under its leadership which gives hope to the working and exploited masses – a struggle not in collaboration with the bourgeoisie through the national state, but in ever sharper attack **against** the bourgeoisie and the national state.

The struggle against war is not and cannot be conceived as an «independent» struggle, having a special status above class conflicts. It is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. The struggle against imperialist war means the day by day building of working-class strength, means – not suspension of the class conflict until the war crisis passes – but the intensification of class conflict and the preparation to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the victory of the workers.

More clearly than any other phase of revolutionary activity does the struggle against war attest **the international character of the revolutionary movement**. It is an international struggle and must be conducted in terms of an international strategy, through an integrated international organization. Thus the struggle against war poses, in the most intense form, the central task of the present period: the building of the Fourth International, the dynamic generator to drive forward the revolutionary advance of the working class. Threatening as is the oncoming of the new war, relatively weak numerically as are the forces now ranged against it, there is no reason to despair. Out of the last world war came the first great step of the world revolution. Yet, in 1914, the internationalists were an organized force in only one nation, and the betrayal of social-democracy came to the great mass of the workers as a shock that was unexpected and not prepared for. Today, organized groups of revolutionary internationalists exist in nearly every nation, and are actively forging the parties of the Fourth International; today the Second and Third Internationals have announced their betrayal **beforehand**, and we will thus not be trapped by surprise; and today we have the rich experience and lessons of the past generation to draw from.

The struggle against imperialist war is the struggle for socialism; the struggle for socialism is the struggle for the Fourth International, for the world revolution.

22. Leonetti à Trotsky, 8 octobre 1935¹

8-10-35 Au cam. Crux

Cher camarade,

J'ai reçu hier seulement votre lettre du 26/9². La première chose qui m'a fortement inquiété c'est à nouveau votre état de santé. Nous espérons tous avoir sous peu des nouvelles meilleures à cet égard. Cependant, je vais essayer de mettre sur le papier les «quelques suggestions» qui, peut-être, vous viendront utiles pour la «lettre ouverte aux ouvriers italiens». Je crois que aucune limite doit vous empêcher de dire tout ce qui doit être dit. S'il faudra faire une brochure, nous trouverons les moyens pour l'éditeur, en souscription. L'essentiel c'est de saisir l'occasion pour pouvoir parler une première fois aux ouvriers italiens. Peut-être la situation nous et vous demandera d'autres interventions. Un fait c'est certain et celui est que la situation italienne de fermée qu'elle était est devenue désormais ouverte, mobile, soit pour la situation intérieure, soit pour la situation internationale nouvelle, étant donné le conflit entre l'impérialisme italien et l'impérialisme anglais, qui, jusqu'hier, considérait l'Italie comme un élément d'équilibre et de paix en Europe. D'ailleurs cette même opinion était partagée par les dirigeants de Moscou, qui dans la note envoyée par Litvinof en février passé, à propos des accords de Londres, nommaient l'Italie parmi les «nations pacifiques». Et voilà, il me semble, un premier aspect à éclaircir.

¹ EP2711. In italiano in: L. Trockij – A. Leonetti, Per un nuovo polo rivoluzionario, *Beljagor*, n. 6, novembre 1985.

² Si veda il documento (19).

1 - Qu'y-a-t-il de marxiste dans la division des nations entre «nations pacifiques» et «nations qui veulent la guerre»?

En 1914 c'était pour le droit et la démocratie: la «pax britannica». Et cependant l'Angleterre porta la plus grande responsabilité dans la guerre.

En 1935, c'est le fascisme.

2 - Evidemment, oui, le fascisme c'est la guerre. Mais pourquoi? Mais parce que le fascisme et la guerre sont les manifestations naturelles du même phénomène: le conflit entre le développement des forces productives sociales et la forme bourgeoise de propriété. Pour combattre le fascisme et la guerre, pour défendre la paix il faut d'abord créer un régime de paix, le régime socialiste, abattre le capitalisme, etc. etc.

Les staliniens ont tout brouillé et embrouillé; il faut tout remettre à la place. L'exemple de l'Italie, est tout à fait instructif.

3 - Après 40 ans, la bourgeoisie italienne, duce Mussolini, revient aux origines, sur les ormes de Crispi en Afrique. Voilà ce qui par soi même constitue la défaite la plus éclatante pour les classes dirigeantes de la société italienne. On invoque comme prétexte «le droit d'avoir un peu de place au soleil». En réalité le problème existe. Le peuple italien ne peut pas vivre sur son sol, pauvre et étroit. Avant la guerre, la bourgeoisie italienne trouva une soupape de sureté dans l'émigration de millions de paysans outre Océan. Les millions de paysans émigrés constituaient pour la bourgeoisie un double avantage; la pression démographique diminuait et les envois d'argent en Italie servaient de moyen pour équilibrer en partie le déficit de la balance commerciale.

La guerre de 1914 a tout bouleversé. La contradiction entre «Nation» et «forces productives» est devenue de plus en plus aiguë. La bourgeoisie italienne pour régner a dû faire recours au fascisme. La faible démocratie italienne est morte ignoblement, sans combat. Mais le fascisme, filiation exaspérée du nationalisme, ne pouvait qu'aiguiser tous les antagonismes qui déchirent la nation italienne. D'où sa tentative de revenir en arrière, vers l'Afrique. Dans cette voie: pas d'issue possible. La solution une fois de plus est dans le socialisme. L'impérialisme en déclin ne peut pas remonter le cours de l'histoire.

4 - Il est par conséquent absurde d'opposer la «démocratie anglaise» au «fascisme italien». La lutte c'est une lutte contre deux impérialismes: l'un, pauvre, qui demande sa partie à la curée; l'autre, arrivé, qui est satisfait, «pacifique», pour le statu quo, pour le «droit de son empire».

5 - Mais ne faut-il pas distinguer entre démocratie et fascisme?

Ceux mêmes qui hier encore nous accusaient d'être les alliés des social-fascistes, cherchent à nous peindre aujourd'hui comme «anarcho-sindicalistes» parce que, semble-t-il, nous ne faisons pas de distinction entre le fascisme et la démocratie. Nous touchons ainsi à un autre problème.

6 - Comment lutter pour la démocratie contre le fascisme?

Le fascisme est sorti de la crise de la démocratie bourgeoise. Pour défendre la démocratie il n'y a que la lutte révolutionnaire.

Or, les staliniens italiens qui en 1930 disaient partout qu'en Italie «tout le monde se pose le dilemme fascisme - communisme» sont arrivés aujourd'hui à lutter «pour le rétablissement des libertés bourgeoises», pour le «gouvernement populaire anti-fasciste», pour le «front populaire» avec «Giustizia et Libertà», etc. Hier, ils disaient: rien de semblable à ce qui est arrivé en Espagne peut se produire en Italie; aujourd'hui il se mettent sur la voie du bloc des gauches qui a amené à la perte de la révolution en Espagne.

Justement parce que l'Italie semble entrer dans la voie de l'Espagne, où Primo De Rivera est tombé après la campagne du Maroc, il est nécessaire de mettre les ouvriers italiens en garde contre les dangers qui ont fait naufrager la révolution espagnole.

7 - Le problème des problèmes est celui du Parti. Il faut faire revivre toute la riche expérience du prolétariat italien.

Comment élaborer cette expérience? Il faut constituer un parti prolétarien, regroupant tous les ouvriers révolutionnaires.

Retour à l'Aventino, à la Concentration anti-fasciste, ou front unique prolétarien pour instaurer un gouvernement ouvrier et paysan? Pour cela, il est nécessaire rétablir les enseignements du marxisme.

L'Etat ouvrier a déjà une tradition en Italie: le Conseil d'usine. Il faut renouer la lutte à cette tradition.

La lutte pour la démocratie la plus conséquente contre le fascisme est la lutte pour le socialisme et l'Etat ouvrier, «la démocratie des fabriques».

8 - Le problème de l'Internationale comme aide à la lutte du prolétariat italien: France, Angleterre, Belgique, etc.

9 - L'U.R.S.S. et l'Italie.

10 - Le danger de la guerre mondiale, lié au problème de la révolution en Italie.

11 - La Société des Nations instrument des puissances «alliées», comme centre de la contre-révolution.

Je vais chercher de conclure et en même temps de coordonner un peu mes hâtives suggestions; je les sépare en deux parties:

I. Dans le domaine italien

a) le fascisme est la guerre. Bien sûr. Mais pourquoi? En 1914 c'était la démocratie à faire la guerre. Pourquoi cela? Fascisme et guerre comme conséquence de la crise de la société bourgeoise.

b) juste orientation dans la lutte «pour la paix et la démocratie».

c) contre l'adaptation au fascisme et au nationalisme «nous aimons l'Italie, notre pays» etc. La nation et le socialisme.

d) front populaire anti-fasciste? L'Italie a déjà fait l'expérience du front populaire anti-fasciste: ce fut l'Aventino de Turati et d'Amendola. Ce «front populaire anti-fasciste» fut la liquidation du mouvement populaire anti-fasciste, trahi, trompé, freiné dans la «légalité», ce qui donna la victoire au fascisme. Est-ce qu'on doit répéter cette expérience?

e) front unique prolétarien. Conseils d'usine.

f) et la petite bourgeoisie? (Giustizia et Libertà). Quelle forme d'accords et d'alliance avec elle?

g) gouvernement populaire anti fasciste ou gouvernement ouvrier et paysan?

h) le Parti prolétarien.

II. Dans le domaine extérieur.

a) confiance dans la Société des Nations ou dans l'Internationale prolétarienne?

b) critique de la S.D.N. instrument des puissances impérialistes alliées

c) la participation de l'U.R.S.S. à la S.D.N. peut changer la nature impérialiste de cet organisme?

d) la politique que l'U.R.S.S. devrait faire pour la défense des peuples opprimés et pour la défense du prolétariat italien.

e) devons nous cultiver l'illusion dans le «pacifisme» anglais et français? Critique de la formule Litvinof sur le «système de la paix collective», basée sur le principe de l'indivisibilité de la paix.

f) le problème des sanctions.

g) le rôle indépendant du prolétariat.

h) pour défendre la paix: lutte pour le socialisme, révolution; non la guerre contre l'agresseur: nous sommes pour la révolution et non pour la guerre impérialiste.

i) c'est l'Internationale qu'il nous faut.

A part je vous envoie quelques publications qui pourront aussi être utiles. Bien à vous.

Martin

Le Congrès des italiens se tiendra peut-être en Belgique, clandestinement.

23. Moulin, L'Angleterre et la guerre de sanctions¹

Sur le continent, on incline à sous-estimer l'opposition à la guerre dans la classe ouvrière anglaise. Cependant, le prolétariat anglais, dans son écrasante majorité, ne veut point de la guerre et dans la mesure où l'ouvrier anglais se rend compte que les sanctions efficaces signifieraient la guerre, le mouvement contre les sanctions impérialistes s'amplifie. S'il est vrai que la

¹ *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 5, Octobre 1935. L'articolo è preceduto da questo preambolo: «Le camarade Moulin de la section suisse nous prie d'insérer le suivant article».

S.D.N. est, en Angleterre, beaucoup plus populaire que sur le continent, il n'en est pas moins vrai que l'ouvrier anglais n'est pas du tout enclin à combattre pour un idéal quelconque. De plus, la popularité de la S.D.N. a diminué pendant les dernières semaines: bien des couches qui crurent que la S.D.N. était un instrument pour sauvegarder la paix, se rendent maintenant compte du caractère véritable de la «cuisine des voleurs» et du fait que le système impérialiste n'a pas changé depuis la guerre. Aussi longtemps qu'il n'y a pas de «patrie en danger» comme en 1914 – une alliance germano-italienne changerait la situation – le mouvement anti-sanctionniste a toutes les chances de devenir un facteur de lutte très fort contre la bureaucratie syndicale et le gouvernement national.

On sait que le congrès des trade-unions à Margate et la conférence du Labour Party à Brighton ont tous les deux accepté, à très fortes majorités, des résolutions pro-sanctionnistes (y compris des sanctions militaires)¹. Mais on connaît également le caractère anti-démocratique de la préparation et de la composition de ce congrès, où, pour les grandes trade-unions, quelques délégués bureaucrates disposent de dizaines de milliers de voix. Le Labour Party n'est que l'expression politique des trade-unions. Les sections locales du parti qui représentent un dixième des voix au congrès du même parti ne sont pas beaucoup moins opprimées par la bureaucratie que les syndicats.

Toute la différence – car il y a une légère différence – entre les résolutions des trade-unions et du Labour Party est celle-ci: les syndicats appuient la politique du gouvernement d'une façon inconditionnée, tandis que le soutien du L.P. est subordonné à l'élimination de buts impérialistes du gouvernement national (!) dans l'application des sanctions...

Au contraire, le Parti Communiste, dont les sympathisants au congrès de Margate votaient la résolution de la bureaucratie, déclare que la lutte de classes révolutionnaire exige de demander des sanctions non seulement à la S.D.N. mais à son propre gouvernement impérialiste qui ainsi, sous la pression des masses, peut être amené à jouer une fonction «anti-fasciste». Si

¹ Le due risoluzioni sono riprodotte nell'Appendice.

les staliniens anglais n'ont pas encore eu l'occasion de reconnaître la défense nationale, toujours est-il qu'il déclarent dès maintenant: «Nous ne toléreront pas que les régimes fascistes n'élargissent leurs territoires, ne serait-ce que d'un seul pouce» (H. Pollit dans un discours à Londres). Il est à remarquer que les applaudissements à de telles phrases sont extrêmement faibles. La déception dans les rangs staliniens après le 7^e congrès est d'autant plus grande.

Le congrès des trade-unions a reçu un télégramme cordial de l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge et il a répondu non moins cordialement, sans prendre aucun engagement. Mais Citrine s'est fait inviter par l'URSS pour y obtenir ce qu'un Eden n'a pu parfaire: l'affirmation de l'aide soviétique pour l'impérialisme anglais. Après l'extermination de la «troisième période», le 7^e congrès a, pour l'Angleterre également, ouvert une période de collaboration de classes. Le comité anglo-russe a été une entreprise révolutionnaire en comparaison avec cette nouvelle alliance. Le Conseil de la paix préparé par les staliniens anglais est en réalité un soviet pour la guerre impérialiste.

L'opposition aux sanctions existe du reste, également dans certaines fractions de la classe dominante. Une partie croit que le moment pour la guerre ne soit pas encore venu. Ils veulent faire mûrir l'alliance avec l'Allemagne qui peut être très utile comme allié mais qui est sans intérêt comme adversaire par son manque de colonies et de capitaux étrangers. D'autres ne veulent pas la guerre contre l'Italie puisqu'ils la veulent conserver justement comme allié contre l'Allemagne, ou parce qu'ils craignent la révolution. Les fascistes, entièrement libres dans le choix de leurs mots d'ordre, se font, comme en France, les champions de la paix, et avec un succès encore plus grand, car en France les partis de gauche ne prêchent pas si ouvertement la guerre sainte contre l'Italie que le font les syndicats anglais, reflétant ainsi seulement l'attitude et l'intérêt de leurs bourgeoisies réciproques. La presse réactionnaire anglaise profite largement de l'esprit belliqueux des chefs ouvriers pour les rendre responsables dès maintenant de toutes les conséquences d'une guerre. Ces messieurs savent naturellement très bien que les résolutions des trade-unions émanent du

gouvernement lui-même qui voulait savoir à quel point il peut compter sur l'aristocratie ouvrière.

Mais la victoire de l'impérialisme anglais à Margate et à Brighton (comme à Genève et à Moscou) est beaucoup moins grande qu'on ne le suppose. L'union sacrée est conclue par les chefs, mais les masses refusent de l'accepter. Comme s'exprime cette opposition ouvrière à la guerre? Elle va du pacifisme négatif des socialistes chrétiens et de Lansbury au pacifisme militant de l'aile droite de l'I.L.P. (Maxton), du révolutionnarisme abstrait de la Ligue Socialiste – qui ne cesse de souligner le caractère impérialiste de la S.D.N. («le monde n'est pas organisé pour la paix mais pour la guerre», St. Cripps) et prêche la résistance à la guerre – au révolutionnarisme pratique de la gauche de l'I.L.P. et des syndicats, cette dernière n'étant pourtant nullement organisée. A l'intérieure de l'I.L.P. de gens comme Ellen Wilkinson et Harald Laski prennent des positions nettement anti-impérialistes, mais c'est surtout la Ligue Socialiste, dont l'opposition résolue à la bureaucratie du parti est un fait d'une grande importance. Mais même en ce qui concerne le Labour Party proprement dit, on peut lire chaque jour une démission plus ou moins importante du L.P. Chaque jour, tel syndicat ou telle section du parti prennent des résolutions anti-sanctionnistes pacifistes en général mais parfois révolutionnaires. D'ailleurs le pacifisme ouvrier peut au moment où la bourgeoisie décide la guerre jouer un rôle extrêmement révolutionnaire.

Ceux des journaux sanctionnistes qui publient [...] ¹ des lettres des lecteurs sont contraints de copier bien des lettres anti-sanctionnistes et anti-impérialistes. Et le *New Leader*, l'organe hebdomadaire de l'I.L.P., peut écrire: «Pendant le dernier mois nous avons reçu plus de lettres enthousiastes soutenant le *New Leader* que pendant n'importe quel mois depuis notre existence» (4 octobre). Le 25 septembre un meeting public à Londres convoqué par l'I.L.P. acclama bien plus fortement Fenner Brockway qui parlait sur un ton révolutionnaire, que le pacifiste pur Maxton. Mais l'accueil le plus chaleureux fut donné au camarade nègre James qui

¹ Una parola illeggibile.

parlait au nom du Groupe Marxiste (B.-L.) de l'I.L.P. Le mouvement «no more war» («Plus de guerres!») prêche la résistance à la guerre des sanctions comme à toute guerre et a organisé une conférence contre la défense anti-aérienne, réunissant 500 délégués qui presque tous sont membres d'organisations réformistes. Le conseil des syndicats de Liverpool proteste comme bien d'autres syndicats et groupes du parti travailliste contre la défense anti-aérienne préconisée par le L.P. Dans le pays de Galles, un conseil d'action contre la guerre est créé sur l'initiative de l'I.L.P. Le parti travailliste de l'Irlande septentrionale a voté pour des sanctions ouvrières et contre l'impérialisme. Les syndicats australiens se déclarent contre les sanctions de la S.D.N. D'autres faits indiquent que l'unité de l'Empire britannique est menacée.

Malgré l'attitude anti-impérialiste de l'I.L.P., ce parti n'est pas un parti révolutionnaire, ni par son organisation, ni par sa doctrine. L'utilisation de la crise profonde de l'impérialisme anglais pour la révolution dépend du procès d'organisation d'un parti bolchévik.léniniste anglais. A' nos camarades anglais de tirer les conséquences de la situation, de former un noyau actif et ferme, de travailler dans les masses, d'avoir des mots d'ordres léninistes contre la guerre, de démasquer les deux Internationales «ouvrières», et de créer ainsi les conditions pour le succès des luttes révolutionnaires qui attendent le prolétariat anglais.

Le 8 octobre 1935

24. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 9 octobre 1935¹

Conflit italo-abyssin. Les sanctions et le boycott. Le camarade Moulin critique comme étant centriste le mot d'ordre du boycott appliqué à l'Angleterre, étant donné que le gouvernement anglais recourt aux sanctions. Le mot d'ordre du boycott se confond alors avec les sanctions

¹ SWP2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

impérialistes contre l'Italie. En maintenant le mot d'ordre du boycott, on est obligé de donner une grande quantité d'explications que personne ne comprendra puisque les actions du boycott et les sanctions coïncident en large mesure. Si les sanctions mènent à la guerre, il faut s'opposer à ces sanctions et non pas les favoriser par un prétendu boycott ouvrier de l'Italie. Le cde Moulin ne sait indiquer aucun mot d'ordre actuel pour les pays comme l'Angleterre sauf ceux de la révolution prolétarienne, de la transformation de la guerre (à la suite des sanctions) en guerre civile, en somme tous les mots d'ordre de la lutte de classe.

Cde Moulin a discuté de ces questions avec les cdes anglais. Ils lui ont répondu, alors, qu'il faut lancer le mot d'ordre d'une grève générale limitée; ce qui démontre la faiblesse idéologique du groupe anglais, quelque actif qu'il soit. [...] Le Labour Party perd rapidement son influence. Une démission et une protestation contre la politique pro-sanctionniste suit l'autre. La majorité de la base est opposée à la politique du Congrès de Brighton. Dans ce cas il serait faux d'envisager une entrée collective dans le Labour Party.

Cde Dubois estime juste l'appréciation du travail de nos cdes anglais dans l'ILP donnée par Moulin, mais est en désaccord complet avec son analyse de la situation. Le LP est en plein union sacrée et entraîne la masse du parti et la majorité des travailleurs derrière elle. Il faut même s'attendre à des manifestations pour la guerre de sanctions. [...]

Nous ne pouvons renoncer au mot d'ordre du boycott. Il faut dénoncer le gouvernement, la SDN etc., préconiser des sanctions ouvrières, mener l'action révolutionnaire. Actuellement il est impossible d'empêcher la guerre. Les conseils d'actions préconisés par l'ILP n'ont de valeur que par le canal des trade-unions. Toute action révolutionnaire prolétarienne et indépendante entraînera immédiatement le conflit avec le gouvernement. Nos camarades se cachent trop dans l'ILP.

Martin: Espère que par cette visite les liaisons avec l'Angleterre se fassent plus étroites, ce qui est indispensable au moment actuel du conflit anglo-italien.

Par l'intervention de l'Angleterre la situation a complètement changé, elle devient plus difficile pour Mussolini et plus complexe pour la classe

ouvrière. Les sanctions signifient l'union sacrée si on les soutient. Il est facile en Angleterre de se donner l'allure d'antifasciste en se mettant à la queue de la bourgeoisie. Il est facile en Italie d'être défaitistes puisque même la petite bourgeoisie l'est. Etant contre les sanctions, nous ne sommes pas des fatalistes non plus. Notre ligne générale doit rester: pour l'indépendance de l'Abyssinie, contre l'impérialisme italien. Les cdes anglais ne doivent pas se limiter à saboter celui-ci, mais ont particulièrement la tâche de s'opposer à tout impérialisme, en premier lieu à l'imp. anglais qui est en train de partir en guerre; pour la liberté non pas uniquement des Abyssins mais de tous les peuples coloniaux. Cela leur impose le devoir de saboter dans les ports non seulement les produits et bateaux destinés à l'Italie mais aussi ceux ravitaillant les forces militaires britanniques. En étendant ainsi la lutte, tout danger de se rallier à l'union sacrée sera écarté. Et encore cette lutte sera inévitablement une lutte acharnée contre les social-impérialistes de couleur Labour ou stalinienne. Sans nous illusionner sur l'efficacité d'une grève générale pour empêcher la guerre, nous devons préparer systématiquement le prolétariat à la grève générale insurrectionnelle. Ne pas renoncer au mot d'ordre du boycott mais l'élargir à toute puissance impérialiste partant en guerre. [...]

[Clart:] Quant à l'attitude envers les sanctions, d'accord avec Martin.

[...]

Dubois s'oppose au mot d'ordre préconisé par Martin: Retirez-vous des colonies, il faut aller plus loin: appeler les peuples coloniaux à lutter pour l'indépendance, les soutenir dans la métropole, préconiser le droit aux peuples opprimés de disposer d'eux-mêmes.

**25. Le peuple éthiopien résiste aux envahisseurs fascistes.
Contre les «sanctions» impérialistes! Pour le boycott
ouvrier et la fraternisation des travailleurs sous les armes!¹**

Où en est la guerre italo-éthiopienne, après plus d'une semaine d'opérations militaires?

D'abord, ce sont déjà des milliers de cadavres, qui engraisent les montagnes du Tigré, au nord de l'Abyssinie. Prolétaires italiens, morts comme les soldats que le Cartel fit tuer au Maroc, en 1925, pour les profits du capitalisme... Paysans abyssins, défendant courageusement le sol où les «civilisateurs» viennent installer leur domination... Une fois de plus, la guerre impérialiste, meurtrière, *est déchaînée.*

Première leçon: aucune «déclaration de guerre» n'a précédé les opérations. Après trois mois de préparation méthodique, l'armée italienne d'Erythrée s'est jetée sur Adoua, Adigrat et Axoum, villes principales de la province du Tigré. Les avions ont déversé des tonnes d'explosifs, les mitrailleuses ont crépité. Après 10 jours de combats, le gain de l'armée italienne est mince. Adoua est tombée entre ses mains, mais elle n'a pas encore sérieusement abordé l'intérieur montagneux du pays, et elle n'a pas pu atteindre le gros des forces abyssines.

Au sud, les troupes italiennes de Somalie se sont avancées dans le désert de l'Ogaden et ont trouvé une résistance efficace.

Dès à présent, il est donc clair que la guerre devra se conclure dès à présent sur un compromis imposé par l'Angleterre, ou bien qu'elle se poursuivra pendant des mois et des années, d'une façon acharnée et sanglante. Et dans ce cas, elle ne peut être que l'introductrice du conflit mondial qui couve sous la cendre.

¹ *La Vérité*, n. 249, 11 octobre 1935. Articolo attribuito ad Alfonso Leonetti da Giancarlo Telloi (Per una biografia politica di Alfonso Leonetti, tesi di laurea, Torino, 1983).

Le jeu de l'impérialisme anglais

Le capitalisme anglais a réussi à faire croire à de larges couches de la population britannique que sa résistance aux prétentions de Mussolini en Afrique était purement désintéressée. Tu parles! Les maîtres d'un quart de l'univers, ceux qui ont asservi à coup de canon l'Inde, l'Afrique du Sud, l'Égypte, etc., sont plus réalistes.

En fait, l'Angleterre craint trois conséquences de la guerre déclenchée par le fascisme italien:

1° Elle - craint d'abord que l'Empire d'Afrique Orientale ambitionné par Mussolini ne mette en danger ses possessions d'Égypte, du Soudan, d'Arabie et sa liaison avec les Indes.

2° Elle craint que la guerre d'Abyssinie ne déclenche un mouvement de révolte des populations coloniales dans l'Afrique et dans l'Asie.

3° Elle craint que l'aventure mussolinienne n'ébranle le régime fasciste et n'ouvre ainsi la voie à la renaissance de la classe ouvrière italienne, à la révolution prolétarienne en Europe.

C'est pourquoi Baldwin et Mac Donald, entièrement d'accord avec les chefs du Labour Party, tout en donnant le change par leur prétendue «lutte pour la paix», n'ont qu'un but: *limiter* l'offensive de Mussolini, *empêcher toute véritable lutte nationale de masse* des Ethiopiens contre l'armée italienne, et enfin *partager* avec l'Italie et la France le «gâteau» abyssin — sans éclat.

Les *sanctions* que l'Angleterre et la S.D.N. réclament contre l'Italie n'ont pas d'autre but.

La politique du capitalisme français

L'attitude de Laval à Genève (*dont Herriot, Paul-Boncour et Cie sont d'ailleurs solidaires*) consiste à louvoyer entre l'Angleterre et l'Italie. Laval est lié à Mussolini par les accords de Rome, mais il a besoin de conserver l'amitié de l'Angleterre contre la politique de Hitler. La France, après avoir réglé avec l'Italie les litiges de Tunisie et du Tibesti, lui a laissé les mains libres en Afrique Orientale, lui abandonnant même le quasi-contrôle financier sur le chemin de fer de Djibouti à Addis-Abeba. C'est pourquoi

Laval (et la grande bourgeoisie tout entière) résiste aux «sanctions» préconisées par l'Angleterre.

Bien entendu le «pacifisme» n'a rien à voir dans cette attitude de Laval, appuyée à grands cris par les Ligues fascistes et nationales, pas plus qu'il n'a à voir avec la volonté de sanctions de la bourgeoisie anglaise.

Que disent les organisations ouvrières?

La presse officielle de la 2^e, de la 3^e Internationale, ainsi que des Internationales syndicales, *a en fait emboîté le pas à la politique impérialiste des sanctions*, au nom de la S.D.N.

C'est justement cela qui a permis aux réactionnaires de tous poils de se parer des plumes du paon pacifiste — bien en vain d'ailleurs.

Mais la S.D.N. n'est qu'un lieu de marchandages sordides, qui se concluent toujours par des hécatombes.

C'est pourquoi nous disons à tout le prolétariat: *Nous refusons d'appuyer l'action des gouvernements capitalistes à la S.D.N. Quels que soient leurs intérêts opposés, ils finissent toujours par aboutir au massacre général, c'est-à-dire à la destruction du prolétariat.*

Nous appelons les travailleurs à agir, dans chaque pays, contre leur propre gouvernement bourgeois.

Nous appelons les travailleurs en France à boycotter les envois d'armes et de matériel de toute sorte à l'Italie, sans aucune solidarité avec le gouvernement. Les marins, dockers, cheminots doivent agir dès à présent, par eux-mêmes.

Mais surtout il faut dresser les prolétaires contre le Gouvernement Laval-Herriot. Exigeons des comptes de Laval: *oui ou non* la Banque de France a-t-elle prêté des milliards à Mussolini?

Oui ou non, des dispositions ont-elles été prises pour livrer à Mussolini du charbon?

Si les «sanctions» impérialistes obligeaient les prolétaires armés à s'affronter, nous disons: *fraternisation entre les marins anglais, italiens et français!* Qu'ils tournent leurs canons sur Rome, Paris et Londres, et non sur l'Ethiopie!

A l'action pour arracher les faux nez pacifistes des impérialistes de Rome, de Londres et de Paris!

A l'action pour dresser les prolétaires contre les gouvernements bourgeois, qui organisent tous la guerre!

A l'action pour le soutien des populations abyssines!

A l'action, contre Laval et ses complices!

26. Dubois-Parabellum, Contribution à la discussion sur la guerre en Afrique orientale et les tâches qui en découlent¹

1. Le renversement des coalitions existantes

La phase commençant en 1933 est caractérisée par l'établissement fiévreux de coalitions militaires, secrètes, officielles et clandestines, toutes destinées à la préservation du groupe se coalisant et au maintien, sinon à l'élargissement des possessions actuelles des Etats se coalisant (Allemagne-Pologne-Hongrie, coalition «révisionniste»; coalition France-URSS, coalition statu-quotiste; coalition France-Italie, d'après les accords de Rome, coalition semi-révisionniste et statu-quotiste en même temps; coalition URSS-Tchécoslovaquie-Petite Entente, statu-quotiste; coalition Balkanique, statu-quotiste, coalition URSS-Turquie, à but aussi déterminé).

Tout ce système s'est trouvé renversé par l'entrée de l'Italie en guerre et par le rôle prépondérant de l'Angleterre au sein de la corporation dite Société des Nations.

¹ EP15967. Documento interno alla LCI (BL). Ruth Fischer e Arkadi Maslow scrissero tre «contributi alla discussione»: il primo, e il più breve, datato 12 ottobre 1935, si intitola «Leitsätze zur situation und den Folgen des italianischen Kriegs»; il secondo è quello qui riportato è datato 16 ottobre; il terzo, e il più lungo, datato 25 ottobre si intitola «Der Abessinische Krieg und seine Folge». Sia la prima che la terza versione si suddividono in quattro parti, ugualmente titolate: Das «europäische Gleichgewicht»; Die unbekanntenen Grössen; Die öglichen Folgen des italianischen Konflikts; Die Aufgaben der revolutionären Marxisten. Entrambi i testi sono in EP15968.

En effet – dans toutes les coalitions mentionnées ci-dessus, l'Angleterre ne joua apparemment aucun rôle. La seule coalition *virtuelle* accentuée par l'impérialisme britannique était, jusqu'au moment de la guerre Ethiopeenne la *coalition anglo-allemande* (convention navale). Le contre-poids établi péniblement et très problématiquement par les diplomates russes et français émanait de la conception tout à fait erronée que l'Angleterre serait facilement majorée au sein de la SDN, que l'équilibre européen, quoique pas trop fameux, serait quand même maintenu par les soins des puissances continentales coalisées (France-URSS-Petite Entente-Italie), et que, par ce fait même, la France «resterait» la puissance principale en Europe. Mais la France ne le fut que dans l'imagination de ses chauvins et de ses petits-bourgeois. L'évolution des mois derniers l'a démontré d'une manière tranchante: la seule puissance de premier ordre en Europe, c'est l'impérialisme britannique, et c'est lui qui est, à l'heure actuelle, le maître des destins du monde ancien. Les dirigeants italiens, «forts» du soutien leur promis par Laval à Rome, «forts» encore de leur «amitié» avec l'URSS, exagérant leur propre force navale et aérienne, «forts» encore et en premier lieu du trouble virtuel à causer par l'Allemagne et ses alliés (dont la Hongrie est supposée être le chaînon reliant la coalition germano-polonaise à l'Italie mussolinienne qui s'imaginait de ce fait «indépendante» dans les deux directions), les dirigeants italiens ont commencé «leur» petite guerre par des raisons intrinsèques du fascisme italien, impuissant de résoudre un seul problème de l'économie de la péninsule, et, par suite, belliqueux et grandiloquent à l'avance.

Mais pourquoi l'Angleterre s'est-elle engagée d'une manière inusitée? Il y a trois causes principales. 1) L'équilibre européen n'était depuis 1933 que factice; les coalitions militaires menaçaient d'évoluer non canalisées et de surprendre, un beau jour, la Grande Bretagne qui ne contrôlait guère une seule de ces coalitions mesquines et myopes *caractérisant la faiblesse de tous les impérialismes se coalisant de cette manière* dont les dirigeants opportunistes, estimant dans leur for intérieur, comme tous les opportunistes, le capitalisme inébranlé et inébranlable, se jetant de la coalition allemande, rêvée pendant une douzaine d'années, à la coalition française, mythe et

château énigmatique et par la conception même et en réalité). L'Angleterre ne veut ni ne peut rester dans son isolation splendide; elle *force*, par conséquent, la France à ses côtés, autant qu'il est possible de forcer un partenaire chancelant et désorienté. 2) L'équilibre de l'*Empire Britannique* lui-même n'est que factice. Pour le rétablir, une cause unissant la «nation» était à créer, cause «*idéologique*», car les impérialistes anglais savent mieux que les autres qu'une unité factice ne se soude pas sinon par les moyens raffinés à trouver dans le domaine «moral» si cher à l'opinion publique anglosaxonne et si bien adopté par les hypocrites impérialistes et les impérialistes hypocrites de la plus grande et la plus ancienne puissance capitaliste du monde. 3) Mais la *vraie*, la cause *essentielle* de l'attitude intransigeante de l'Angleterre, c'est le double but manifesté de l'action impérialiste anglaise: a) «nettoyer» la Méditerranée et les grandes voies de l'Afrique et des Indes, détruire par conséquent dans l'œuf les aspirations italiennes et en même temps les espoirs mesquins de la diplomatie lavalienne, sauvegarder l'Afrique colonisée de l'influence produite par une guerre d'une puissance semi-coloniale et de couleur contre l'envahisseur blanc, et encore, *tourner l'action purement impérialiste anglaise en une croisade pour l'indépendance et la liberté*, et s'attacher par ce geste hypocrite les nationalismes coloniaux, en Egypte, en Afrique du Sud, parmi les populations noires de l'Afrique, aux Indes, etc. b) établir, *par une guerre localisée en Méditerranée et préparée savamment*, si cela est nécessaire, *des nouvelles coalitions sous la dominance anglaise, canaliser la saignée au profit de l'impérialisme anglais, s'attacher non seulement la France qui est tournée contre son allié italien, mais encore l'Allemagne, dont la position peut être ébranlée par la défaite italienne, mais qui peut aussi, attachée à l'Angleterre, profiter de la situation récemment créée et à créer par la défaite de l'Italie, parce que cette défaite permet d'établir un nouveau statu quo, un nouveau équilibre, une nouvelle répartition du monde ancien.*

2. Le facteur inconnu

Il serait stupide de calculer *tous* les effets *voulus* par l'impérialisme anglais. Il y a, en premier lieu, une grande inconnue: c'est la *véritable* situation intérieure de l'Empire Britannique. On sait (les marxistes devraient le savoir) qu'impérialisme n'est qu'un synonyme de violence et de guerre. C'est

pourquoi la guerre est surtout imminente pendant ces périodes où les impérialistes parlent trop de leur volonté de sauvegarder la paix. Mais si l'invasion italienne en Abyssinie *peut* menacer les routes Caire-Cap et Londres-Calcutta, cette invasion n'est pas encore faite, et même le maréchal Badoglio ne sait pas s'il y réussira. Ce qui permet de supposer que les impérialistes anglais visent plus loin et qu'il y a des difficultés cachées aux yeux des observateurs profanes, difficultés dans le corps même de l'Empire Britannique. En effet, la lutte valeureuse des dirigeants anglais a déjà diminué certaines de ces difficultés devinées, mais non pas analysées: *l'union sacrée a été établie entre la bourgeoisie anglaise et la classe ouvrière, représentée par le Labour Party et par les Trade Unions*. C'est un grand succès, et c'était la répétition générale pour le cas d'une autre guerre. Il est de même incontestable que le geste hypocrite des impérialistes anglais a dirigé le nationalisme égyptien dans une direction commode pour les impérialistes, que la possibilité de serrer les liens avec les Etats Unis a augmenté, qu'une guerre *facile*, parce que consacrée et soutenue par 52 «nations» et *menée par des forces étrangères* (flotte britannique *et française*, Grecque, peut-être Turque) et par des troupes étrangères – si guerre sera – troupes égyptiennes, arabes, etc.) augmentera prestige et *puissance réelle* de l'Angleterre, tandis qu'elle *diminuera* la puissance réelle de l'Italie, la puissance virtuelle de la France et créera de nouveaux vassaux anglais dans la Méditerranée et transformera la SDN *en instrument de l'impérialisme anglais*. Il semble que les impérialistes anglais *veulent* renverser le régime fasciste en Italie: ils comptent (et à juste raison) qu'un régime libéral rattachera l'Italie à l'Angleterre, que, le cas échéant, l'Italie peut être dépecée (on pourra détacher les colonies africaines, la côte adriatique se trouvant du côté opposé à l'Italie de la péninsule, les îles grecques, même le Trento), on pourra remanier les possessions de cette région intéressant l'Angleterre etc. Il semble aussi que l'impérialisme anglais veut, en même temps établir en France une nouvelle orientation et qu'il compte sur la chute de Laval et sur un gouvernement de «gauche», le même que rêvent les opportunistes de Moscou oubliant que l'Angleterre se trouve

plus proche de la Manche que ne l'est Moscou et que l'Angleterre est plus forte que la Russie soviétique.

Mais il y a encore une facteur inconnue d'un tout autre genre: c'est la possibilité de l'influence d'une *révolution* italienne sur toute l'Europe. Il serait naïf de croire que les impérialistes anglais n'envisagent pas cette possibilité. *Mais il serait stupide de croire que les impérialistes peuvent être des demiurges, des sages disposant du destin du monde selon un plan harmonieux*. Les impérialistes anglais calculent, certes, la possibilité d'une révolution italienne. *Mais ils sont forcés d'agir comme ils le font, et, par conséquent, ils sont obligés de sous-estimer les suites d'une telle révolution*. On a souvent dit: le renversement du fascisme italien, c'est le bolchévisme en Italie. Supposons pour un instant que cela soit juste. Alors, les impérialistes anglais se disent: *tant mieux*: une Italie bolchévique c'est une Italie faible. C'est une Italie *opposée* à l'impérialisme français. C'est une Italie qui ne menace nullement nous, les Anglais; qu'elle soit désagréable aux français, cela ne nous regarde pas, c'est même avantageux *pour nous* car nous serons les plus forts en continuant cette partie de notre jeu, *et cette manière de penser, elle aussi propre à l'impérialisme, est myope, mesquine, et, en fin de compte, stupide*. Tant mieux pour nous, pour la classe ouvrière, pour son avant-garde.

Les suites du renversement du fascisme italien *peuvent* être tellement gigantesques, que *c'est peut-être notre jeu que joue l'impérialisme anglais sans le vouloir et même sans le savoir*, comme, somme toute, le capitalisme est son propre fossoyeur, vérité banale pour tous les *marxistes*, mais oublié par tant de soi-disant marxistes. *Nous*, nous ne sommes pas d'avis que la chute de Mussolini *entraîne* fatalement le bolchévisme en Italie. Pas du tout. Malheureusement, le parti jadis international du communisme, l'Internationale Communiste, n'existe plus: elle n'est plus *internationaliste* (et actuellement elle soutient la SDN, rempart de la «paix»); elle n'est plus communiste (parce qu'elle n'est nullement guidée par les intérêts du prolétariat *international*, mais seulement par les intérêts prétendus et opposés dans la pensée des dirigeants nationaux-réformistes russes aux intérêts internationaux, notamment les intérêts dits du prolétariat russe. Que le fascisme italien sera renversé, nous le croyons, nous l'espérons, cela nous semble même assez proche. Que les

suites de cette chute seraient paisibles, que Mussolini serait remplacé par un Orlando, un Nitti, un don Sturzo ou un homme de paille convoqué par le roi, sans un bouleversement profond, terrible, *révolutionnaire* de toute la société italienne – *nous ne le croyons pas*. Mais ce bouleversement italien, quelles formes aura-t-il? Cela, c'est l'X du calcul impérialiste anglais, sousestimé par les politiciens anglais. Ce qui semble presque certain, c'est que les masses ouvrières, paysannes et les masses déçues de soldats *et des fascistes* italiens se dresseront contre les institutions de la dictature totalitaire, probablement aussi contre la monarchie, peut-être, déjà au commencement, contre le capitalisme, surtout contre le capitalisme *foncier*, et que les répercussions de cette évolution *devront* devenir très importantes, surtout en *Allemagne, en Pologne, en Autriche, en Hongrie, en Yougoslavie*, mais encore en Espagne et en France, et probablement aussi en *Russie Soviétique*. Le grand X dont on a parlé ci-dessus demande une recherche des moyens idoines à influencer cette évolution.

3. Les tâches de la Quatrième Internationale

La tâche *primordiale* de la Quatrième Internationale, c'est la constitution des liaisons internationales elle-même, la démonstration de son existence, quoique embryonnaire, de la proclamation de ce que la classe ouvrière semble avoir oublié: Que c'est seulement la classe ouvrière elle-même, *qui saura libérer et soi-même et le monde opprimé*, que le salut et la liberté ne sont pas à trouver dans une fantôme, soit-il la «Société des Nations», le «socialisme national», le fascisme ou l'Armée Rouge, *Mais que seulement l'action internationale de la classe ouvrière et des peuples coloniaux et la victoire de la révolution prolétarienne, socialiste, créera la paix, la sécurité, le bien-être*. Tout cela est banale pour les *marxistes* – mais où sont-ils, les marxistes? Ainsi, il faut *dénoncer* le plus haut possible la nouvelle trahison de la Deuxième Internationale se plaçant sans réserve derrière l'impérialisme anglais, ne luttant pas pour le peuple semi-colonial et sa liberté, *mais pour la «Société des Nations»*, instrument, à l'heure actuelle, de l'impérialisme anglais, et prêchant les *sanctions impérialistes*, au lieu de dénoncer l'hypocrisie des impérialistes de tous les pays et surtout des impérialistes anglais; il s'entend de même, que les «socialistes»

S.F.I.O. de la France ne dénoncent, eux, non plus, leur gouvernement profasciste que parce qu'il ne soutient pas les impérialistes anglais. *La Troisième Internationale a pris la même position traîtresse.* Pas un mot, dans la presse «communiste» contre la SDN; pas un mot adressé *aux peuples coloniaux souffrant sous le joug brutal de la même Angleterre qui joue le rôle de la protagoniste du droit et de la liberté.*

C'est pourquoi les forces de la Quatrième Internationale, si faibles soient-elles, doivent être dirigée contre le nouveau courant *social-impérialiste.* Les *marxistes* anglais doivent proclamer qu'un peuple oppresseur ne peut pas «libérer» d'autres peuples. *Au contraire:* tant que les ouvriers anglais ne lancent pas des appels aux peuples coloniaux en Afrique, en Asie, en Australie et même en Europe (Irlande) leur disant qu'ils doivent profiter de l'occasion et préparer leur propre libération de la domination britannique, ils se trompent eux-mêmes, comme ils sont trompés par les laquais impérialistes, leurs «chefs», embrassant les pires oppresseurs dans la nouvelle union sacrée.

Mais encore une autre tâche *essentielle* s'impose: il faut proclamer à haute voix *que l'adversaire n'est aucunement si fort qu'il veut le faire croire aux ouvriers.* Il faut proclamer que cette guerre africaine de l'Italie fasciste signale *la fin du fascisme italien;* qu'elle émane de *sa faiblesse* et non pas de sa force. Il faut signaler que la guerre impérialiste cachée sous le nom de sanctions de la SDN démontre de même *la faiblesse* de l'impérialisme, les *fissures profondes* déchirant le corps du monde capitaliste, *malgré l'apparente «unanimité» des conciliabules genevois.* Il faut répéter inlassablement aux ouvriers du monde entier qu'*ils sont de beaucoup plus forts qu'ils ne le pensent, et qu'ils peuvent et doivent utiliser des difficultés des impérialistes à leur propre profit,* mais non pas à celui d'un impérialisme quelconque.

Il faut surtout répéter sans cesse *qu'il n'y a pas ni équilibre stable dans le monde capitaliste actuel ni «époque du fascisme»;* que la chute du fascisme italien démontre d'une façon absolument irréfutable que les «dictatures», les «surhommes», les «Duce», les «führer», les «pilotes» *ne sont que des imbéciles,* que la dictature fasciste ne mène qu'à la même défaite qu'on a subie déjà une fois, que le capitalisme a perdu *son suprême atout,* la «mystique» de la

dictature fasciste, qu'en Allemagne *il y aura répercussion* après la chute de Mussolini, représenté, auparavant, aux masses désorientées allemandes comme une sorte de dieu, qu'il faut, *enfin*, regagner le chemin montré et ouvert en 1917 par la *révolution russe* et abandonné, au détriment terrible de la classe ouvrière et de toute l'humanité opprimée au profit des profiteurs, des exploités, des bandits impérialistes et capitalistes.

4. Les tâches en Italie

L'Italie est, à l'heure actuelle, le chaînon le plus faible du capitalisme mondial. La guerre de Mussolini et la constellation qui s'en est ensuivie, offrent à la classe ouvrière une occasion inattendue et unique. *Mais la condition préalable est que le mouvement révolutionnaire en Italie trouve au moins un petit groupe de révolutionnaires prolétariens, c'est-à-dire léninistes* commençant sa propagande dès maintenant et développant le programme d'action révolutionnaire indépendamment des courants passagers se disant de «front populaire» et brouillant, en vérité, l'action révolutionnaire, en la soumettant au besoins de la bourgeoisie «libérale» et de la petite bourgeoisie «antifasciste» italiennes, d'une part, aux besoins des politiciens nationaux-réformistes russes d'autre.

Il ne faut pas prêcher seulement le *défaitisme révolutionnaire aux troupes italiennes*, leur dire, qu'il faut *fraterniser avec les soldats éthiopiens, mater leurs propres officiers*; il ne faut pas seulement s'adresser à toute la population italienne pour lui faire entendre ce que c'est, le *défaitisme révolutionnaire* et la propagande de la transformation de la guerre impérialiste en guerre civile. Il faut lui dire, que *les terres, dont l'Italie aurait besoin, se trouvent en Italie*, qu'il faut *les prendre*, qu'il faut *exterminer le régime de la grosse propriété foncière privée*, qu'il faut *chasser les seigneurs féodaux, non pas en Ethiopie, mais en Italie. Il faut montrer, que l'esclave existe en Italie*, dans d'autres formes, notamment qu'en Abyssinie, mais qu'il faut *abolir l'esclavage capitaliste et semi-féodal en Italie avant de s'accaparer le rôle civilisateur et libérateur*. Il faut montrer que dès maintenant il faut organiser *dans l'armée des conseils des soldats* (soviets), ainsi qu'en Italie ce ne sera la dictature fasciste qui mène à la victoire, c'est-à-dire à l'abolition des millions des exploités, *mais la démocratie des laborieux*, exerçant une *dictature*

impitoyable pour la répression des hobereaux, des capitalistes, des seigneurs fonciers, par l'intermédiaire des conseils d'ouvriers, paysans et soldats, dans une République libérée et du fascisme et des capitalistes et de la monarchie pourrie. Il faut proclamer la tâche historique du peuple laborieux d'Italie: de montrer au monde, le premier après le peuple russe, comme un peuple écrase ses oppresseurs à l'issue d'une guerre frivolement déclenchée par des aventuriers sanglants et ridicules. Il faut souligner que le peuple italien ne sera pas libéré ni par les canons des navires anglais, ni par le citoyen Vandervelde embrassant les citoyens Modigliani et Nenni, ni par le sieur Rosselli. Il faut dire le plus haut possible qu'il n'est nullement indispensable au peuple italien de refaire l'expérience allemande, avec un gouvernement de sale coalition et une république capitaliste sous un masque socialo-réformiste. Il faut souligner, au contraire que cette expérience allemande a mené l'Allemagne au bagne hitlérien, et que, tout au contraire la victoire des ouvriers et paysans italiens ouvrira de nouveau la voie et aux travailleurs allemands, et à ceux d'Autriche, ainsi qu'aux peuples balkaniques, qu'une révolution victorieuse en Italie modifiera le visage de toute l'Europe, pourra renouveler le cran du prolétariat russe, pourra ouvrir la porte d'une nouvelle époque de l'histoire. Certes, il n'est pas trop vraisemblable qu'une telle transformation en Italie se fasse très vite et très facilement. Il est possible que toute une gamme d'étapes intermédiaires sera à parcourir. Mais ce qui est importante, c'est que dès maintenant la direction de l'évolution la plus favorable soit indiquée, que les méthodes de la lutte vraiment révolutionnaire soient popularisées, que la voix du bolchevisme soit entendue, malgré le déclin du mouvement ouvrier actuel. Le redressement peut être plus proche que cela ne semble. C'est, à l'heure actuelle, en Italie qu'il faut essayer d'appliquer le levier du marxisme avec une perspective internationale.

16 octobre 1935

27. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 16 octobre 1935¹

Le cde Martin propose l'édition d'un numéro spécial du Bulletin Internationale sur le conflit italo-éthiopien à tirer à Amsterdam. Le cde Sneevliet est demandé de donner son avis. Le bulletin se composera comme suit²:

Dubois-Parabellum sur le conflit anglo-italien

Clart sur l'attitude des chefs socialistes et staliniens en France

Nicolle sur la réaction en Allemagne sur le conflit

Martin sur le Congrès italien à Bruxelles

Un article de Trotsky, analytique – en préparation [...]

Dubois suggère un manifeste des BL français et italiens dans la question de la guerre abyssine. On charge Clart de rédiger un projet³. Une séance élargie des cdes du CC français, de Blasco et de Parabellum sera convoquée.

28. Les sanctions tournent au marchandage pour le partage de l'Ethiopie. Seul le prolétariat, par la grève et le boycottage, peut venir en aide au peuple éthiopien⁴

Pendant que des prolétaires italiens et des paysans éthiopiens continuent à se massacrer par dizaines de milliers, on parle de «détente» dans les chancelleries, à Genève et dans la presse capitaliste. Qu'est-ce que cela signifie?

¹ SWP2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

² Il bollettino non venne pubblicato.

³ Si veda il documento (31).

⁴ *La Vérité*, n. 250, 25 octobre 1935. Articolo attribuito ad Alfonso Leonetti da Giancarlo Telloi (Per una biografia politica di Alfonso Leonetti, tesi di laurea, Torino, 1983).

En réalité, la campagne purement militaire de l'Italie n'a pas apporté à Mussolini les résultats escomptés. En fait, après près d'un mois d'opérations, les armées italiennes n'ont occupé que le nord de la province du Tigré, et ont à peine entamé l'Ogaden, par l'occupation de quelques oasis situés dans la région que le Négus était prêt à céder et que Mussolini refusa comme «désert de sable».

Les deux opérations stratégiques principales: l'une qui devait porter les troupes italiennes de la base Adigrad-Adoua-Axoum vers Makkalé et Dessié (en direction d'Addis-Abeba), l'autre qui devait opérer les jonctions des armées italiennes sur le chemin de fer de Djibouti, après l'occupation de Harrar au sud, sont remises à plus tard...

On parle de «pénétration pacifique». Il faut entendre par là une tactique imitée de Lyautey: diviser les tribus, placer certains chefs indigènes sous «la protection» des forces italiennes, puis, soi-disant au nom de ces chefs, écraser les populations récalcitrantes. Tel est le jeu que De Bono entame avec le Ras Sélassié Guxa pour partenaire.

L'attitude du commandement italien est dictée par plusieurs facteurs: maladies parmi les troupes, résistance des Ethiopiens et menace de batailles dispersées dans la région des hauts plateaux (où seule l'aviation peut aider l'infanterie), persistance des menaces militaires anglaises, et enfin, une certaine effervescence qui se manifeste en Italie, même dans les classes bourgeoises qui craignent une «rencontre» avec la Home Fleet...

L'Angleterre vient d'obtenir qu'une division italienne sur trois stationnées en Lybie, et menaçant l'Egypte, soit rappelée, en échange du départ de la Méditerranée de quelques navires anglais.

C'est la le premier signe de marchandages esquissés entre Rome et Londres, et dont l'Abyssinie fera bien entendu les frais.

On parle du démembrement de l'Abyssinie, les régions périphériques passant sous le contrôle italien, la souveraineté formelle du Négus restant «entière» sur le reste du pays qui recevrait un débouché sur la Mer Rouge... Un débouché pour le commerce capitaliste que l'Italie, l'Angleterre et la France imposeraient à l'Abyssinie, alors que ces pays sont eux-mêmes obligés de restreindre et leurs importations et leurs exportations!

Maintenant que l'Angleterre s'apprête à négocier avec Mussolini, toutes les organisations ouvrières qui ont exigé les «sanctions impérialistes» ne savent plus où se tourner. Quel spectacle honteux! Attlee, leader travailliste, répondant à Samuel Hoare qui montrait des «dispositions pacifiques» pour l'Italie, n'osa plus réclamer des «sanctions militaires», comme le Congrès des Trade-Unions l'avait pourtant voté, mais reprocha au ministre de n'avoir pas stoppé Mussolini par des menaces, il y a plus d'un an! L'I.C., l'I.O.S. bafouillent...

L'heure est maintenant de dénoncer les tractations secrètes des impérialistes, à Genève ou ailleurs. A bas la diplomatie pourrie, qu'elle se prétende pacifiste, ou affiche sa volonté belliqueuse! A bas la diplomatie et les traités secrets!

Continuons l'agitation contre les transports de troupes, contre la fabrication des armes, contre les opérations militaires. Dénonçons le rôle odieux de Laval, approuvé, répétons-le, par Herriot aussi bien que par la presse de droite.

Lorsque nous avons dénoncé la politique impérialiste des «sanctions», certains ont dit que nous reprenions les arguments de la droite. Qu'on en juge! Après avoir rempli toute sa fonction, c'est-à-dire enchaîné le prolétariat international à sa politique de brigandages internationaux, la S.D.N. joue maintenant le rôle de paravent dont les prolétaires feront une fois de plus les frais.

29. Appel des bolcheviks-léninistes italiens. Aux prolétaires d'Italie!¹

Beaucoup d'entre vous sont déjà tombés en Afrique. D'autres malheureusement subiront le même sort. On vous a dit qu'il s'agissait, non

¹ *La Vérité*, n. 250, 25 octobre 1935. Probabilmente scritto da Pietro Tresso. Altre pubblicazioni: *To the Soldiers and Youth of Italy! Manifesto of the Italian*

d'une guerre, mais d'une simple expédition, d'une promenade, au terme de laquelle vous auriez de la terre, de la gloire, du bien-être. Que de mensonges!

Voilà quarante ans qu'on disait les mêmes bobards à vos pères. On les répéta en 1911 pendant la guerre de Tripoli et en 1914-1918 pendant la grande guerre, qui coûta à l'Italie seule 600.000 morts. Eh bien, après quarante ans de souffrances, de misères, de privations et de martyrs inouïs, les classes dirigeantes italiennes n'ont d'autre solution pour vous, nos fils, nos frères, chair de notre chair, que de vous envoyer crever de fièvre, de coup de soleil, de soif, près de l'Equateur, contre un peuple qui n'a eu aucun tort vis-à-vis de vous et qui a lui-même à mener une lutte très dure contre une nature inclémente.

Ne dites pas le mot qu'on vous a appris à l'école fasciste: «Me ne frego» (je m'en fous). Vos dirigeants, vos exploiters, ceux qui vous envoient crever en Afrique, eux ils s'en foutent de votre «jeunesse». Mais ils ne se foutent pas de leur gain et de leurs profits. Est-ce vraiment glorieux de s'entretuer pour le gain de ces Messieurs, qui commodément font leurs affaires et mènent leur train fastueux en Italie sur votre peau, sur notre peau!

La bande de meurtriers, d'escrocs, de démagogues, les seuls qui ont à gagner dans une guerre où vous vous faites tuer, disent que l'Italie est trop étroite pour notre peuple et qu'il lui faut une plus grande place au soleil. Mais notre misère ne provient pas de la misère de notre sol, de la pauvreté de notre terre. Prenez l'exemple du plus vaste empire du monde: l'exemple de l'Angleterre, dont on vous parle tant ces jours-ci. Quel est le sort des paysans dans cet empire? Quel est le sort des ouvriers anglais, nos frères? Ils sont des exploités et des malheureux autant que nous. Tout récemment des mineurs du Pays de Galles ont dû rester huit jours au fond de leurs puits et faire la grève de la faim, risquer leur vie pour une augmentation de leur salaire. La cause de notre misère est dans ce régime de vol et d'exploitation

Bolshevik-Leninists, *The New Militant*, Vol. I No. 47, 16 November 1935; Aan de soldaten en de jeugd van Italië. Manifest van de Italiaanse Bolsjewiki-Leninisten, *De Internationale. Socialistisch Maandblad voor Politiek, Wetenschap en Kultuur*, Jaar. 1, December 1935. No. 9. Per le correzioni da apportare a questa versione si vedano i documenti (32) e (35).

fondé sur le système du salaire et qu'on appelle le régime capitaliste. Le «Duce» lui-même, ce vieux démagogue sans scrupules, rompu à tout, a été contraint de proclamer dans ses discours que la cause est *dans le système capitaliste. Mais alors?* Pourquoi le fascisme? Qu'a fait le fascisme? Le système capitaliste est le système fondé sur le vol, sur l'exploitation des travailleurs, *sur la propriété privée.* Et c'est pour défendre ce régime de vol et d'exploitation que Mussolini a prêté son bras à vos exploiters, aux industriels, aux propriétaires terriens, aux banquiers, à ceux qui aujourd'hui vous envoient mourir en Afrique. On vous a trompé, en vous parlant de collaboration et d'égalité entre celui qui travaille et celui qui s'enrichit sur le travail d'autrui. Les corporations sont un mensonge. Il n'y a pas, il ne peut y avoir égalité et collaboration entre exploités et exploiters. Le régime fasciste est le régime des exploiters. Le régime des travailleurs est le régime pour lequel luttent les ouvriers socialistes et communistes, ceux que Mussolini a fait tuer, ceux que le «Duce» fait persécuter, emprisonner, torturer.

Assez de division entre travailleurs.

Unissons-nous, unissez-vous à tout le peuple qui souffre et travaille.

Les armes qu'on vous a données pour tuer de pauvres nègres, des gens malheureux comme nous, *ne les lâchez pas.* L'heure des comptes a sonné pour les ennemis véritables du peuple italien. Ces ennemis ne sont pas à 4.000 kilomètres dans le centre de l'Afrique, ce ne sont pas les peuples éthiopiens; *les ennemis sont chez nous, en Italie;* ce sont les riches, les gros propriétaires fonciers, les banquiers, les gros industriels, tous ceux qui vivent de nos sueurs, les chefs fascistes, le Duce, sa bande d'escrocs et de voleurs; tous les profiteurs de la camarilla royaliste et militariste. *En Italie, et non pas en Abyssinie, il y a du travail, du grand nettoyage à faire.*

Mussolini a dit à ses bandits rivaux qu'il ne faisait pas «collection de désert». Et nous? Et vous? Est-ce que nous devons faire «collection» de balles d'Éthiopiens pour les affairistes d'Italie? Nous voulons «une place au soleil», mais cette place n'est pas en Afrique; c'est en Italie que nous devons la conquérir.

Au lieu de se faire massacrer dans les montagnes arides d'Afrique, nous vous disons: *Cherchez les terres là où elles sont tout près de vous, en Italie. Ce*

n'est pas aux pauvres Abyssins que nous devons prendre leurs terres — qu'ils ne se laisseront d'ailleurs pas prendre. C'est aux nobles comtes ou ducs, aux gros propriétaires d'*Italie* qu'on doit prendre les terres; les terres que *vous*, vos pères travaillent pour que les riches mènent une vie joyeuse dans les grandes villes.

Oui, avant de songer à *libérer* les esclaves d'Abyssinie, il faut songer à abolir son propre esclavage. Ne savez-vous pas que l'esclave abyssin, dans la mesure où cela existe encore, a un grand avantage sur voire esclavage? L'esclave abyssin est nourri et entretenu par son maître. Et nous? Notre vie appartient également à nos maîtres, qui ont le pouvoir de décider de notre sort. Mais quand nous ne sommes plus bons à leur procurer des profits, ils nous jettent à la rue; ils se débarrassent de nous comme on se débarrasse des vieux chiffons. Et c'est bien pour se débarrasser de vous qu'on vous envoie maintenant peupler de cadavres les déserts éthiopiens? Voilà «la belle place au soleil» qu'on vous offre.

Non. On ne peut pas porter la civilisation et la liberté aux autres, si on supporte ce régime d'esclavage et de barbarie qu'est le régime capitaliste, duquel le fascisme s'est constitué le chien de garde.

Jetez à la mer les De Bono, les Ciano, les Graziani, toute cette canaille sanglante; *fraternisez avec les soldats abyssins; revenez d'Afrique et ne quittez pas vos armes.*

Il y a une autre guerre à faire, une guerre plus belle et plus glorieuse, la seule guerre juste, la guerre du peuple travailleur contre ses tyrans, contre ses exploiters, la guerre de libération du peuple italien de la tyrannie capitaliste et l'instauration d'une nouvelle société, la société des travailleurs, la société socialiste.

Soldats et jeunes gens du Piémont, de la Lombardie, de la Romagne, de l'Apulie, des Iles: prenez l'exemple des peuples abyssins, de ces peuples qu'on vous dit «sauvages». Oui, ils vous ont montré qu'ils savent «sauvagement» défendre leur liberté, leur terre, leur indépendance. Faites comme ces sauvages: lutez pour votre liberté; tournez les armes contre vos oppresseurs, lutez pour votre terre, pour votre pain; libérez l'Italie en vous libérant vous-mêmes de la domination capitaliste.

Assez chanté de «Giovinezza», ce chant d'esclavage et de mort. Apprenez «Bandiera Rossa», le chant de vos pères, le chant que effraie vos exploiters, vos ennemis véritables, les généraux, les gros patrons d'usine, les gros propriétaires terriens.

C'est en faisant triompher «Bandiera Rossa» que *vous* triompherez, *vous l'Italie laborieuse*.

En Italie, vous acquerrez les terres. En Italie, vous prendrez *les usines*. Ce qui n'a pas réussi pour vos pères et vos frères en 1919-1920 en raison de la faiblesse et de l'ignorance, en raison de la trahison des chefs, vous le réussirez.

Croyez-vous que vous ne saurez pas gouverner vous-même?

Constituez vos comités d'ouvriers et de paysans, vos comités de soldats. Un gouvernement des comités ouvriers, paysans et soldats saura mieux gouverner qu'un gouvernement composé de toute cette fripouille du Parti fasciste qui vit aux dépens du peuple travailleur pour monter la garde auprès du capital.

A bas le fascisme, le régime des exploiters!

A bas Mussolini, le traître au socialisme, le traître au peuple italien; le pantin des gros banquiers; l'affameur des ouvriers et des paysans pauvres.

A bas la monarchie et sa camarilla.

A BAS LA GUERRE IMPERIALISTE EN AFRIQUE: VIVE LA GUERRE CIVILE EN ITALIE.

Les Bolcheviks-Léninistes Italiens.

30. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 23 octobre 1935¹

Le S.I. constate la nécessité absolue de faire un travail dans le domaine italien. Mais puisque la section italienne pratiquement ne se

¹ SWP2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

compose de deux camarades¹, une aide de la part des autres sections est indispensable. Dubois chargé de rédiger un petit appel pour notre presse². Des listes de souscriptions seront envoyés. [...]

Le cde Martin soumet une déclaration des b.-l. italiens, français, anglais et allemands³. Adopté. Sera inséré dans le Bulletin Internationale.

L'appel aux jeunes et soldats d'Italie paru dans la Vérité⁴ sera envoyé à toutes les sections avec prière de la reproduire.

Le cde Martin suggère un comité de coordination pour le travail italien.

31. La position de la classe ouvrière devant le conflit impérialiste autour de l'Ethiopie. Union sacrée sous le drapeau de la S.D.N. ou lutte de classe révolutionnaire sous le drapeau de l'internationalisme prolétarien?⁵

Déclaration des bolcheviks-léninistes d'Italie, de France, d'Angleterre et d'Allemagne

Dès juillet dernier, le Secrétariat International de la Ligue des Communistes-Internationalistes lançait aux ouvriers de tous les pays cet avertissement:

«On n'arrête pas la guerre par des plaintes déposées au bureau de la S.D.N. Si on laisse encore faire Mussolini, dans les prochains mois nous le verrons passer de la phase de préparation à la phase de guerre effective».

Comme moyen d'action internationale on lançait le mot d'ordre de boycott ouvrier de l'Italie fasciste et de soutien de la lutte des peuples

¹ Alfonso Leonetti e Pietro Tresso.

² Si veda il documento (34).

³ Si veda il documento (31).

⁴ Si veda il documento (29).

⁵ *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 5, Octobre 1935.

Ethiopiens. Les deux Internationales de Moscou et de Bruxelles, celle de Staline et celle de Vandervelde, le ministre de sa majesté le roi de Belgique, se traînant l'une et l'autre à la remorque de la S.D.N. ont, en fait, laissé à Mussolini tout loisir de se préparer à son œuvre de brigandage. Depuis le 3 octobre, la guerre fait ses ravages en Afrique et menace de s'étendre en Europe et au reste du monde.

Mais voilà qu'à des tromperies s'ajoutent des tromperies nouvelles, à des trahisons des trahisons nouvelles.

On comptait hier dans la S.D.N., pour empêcher Mussolini de faire la guerre en Afrique, on compte aujourd'hui dans les «sanctions» de Genève pour l'arrêter. Démasquer les menées de Genève, ouvrir les yeux à tous les travailleurs sur les nouvelles compétitions impérialistes susceptibles d'engendrer une nouvelle boucherie mondiale, telle est la tâche brûlante des partis ouvriers révolutionnaires. On voit une nouvelle fois par l'exemple de l'Italie que la S.D.N. n'est pas à même de résister un seul instant à la pression des intérêts contradictoires des puissances impérialistes. Après le départ de l'Allemagne fasciste et du Japon, la S.D.N. est réduite de plus en plus à une arène de manœuvres des deux impérialismes qui se disputent l'hégémonie sur le continent européen: la France et l'Angleterre. En réalité, le jeu international de la diplomatie secrète se mène hors de Genève et consiste à nouveau dans la recherche d'alliances militaires, derrière le dos et aux dépens des millions de travailleurs de tous les pays. L'Ethiopie n'est qu'un pion dans ce jeu des bandits impérialistes.

On sait que l'Abyssinie, membre de la S.D.N., dès le 3 janvier dernier a demandé à Genève qu'«en application de l'article 11 du pacte, toutes les mesures soient prises pour sauvegarder efficacement la paix». Or, «des mesures de paix» ont consisté, comme on sait, dans la recherche entre les fondés de pouvoir des bandits impérialistes de Rome, Londres et Paris d'«arrangement» pour le partage de l'Ethiopie (voyage d'Eden à Rome, conférence tripartite à Paris, etc...). Les «arrangements» pacifiques étant devenus impossibles, les appétits impérialistes de Rome ayant inquiété les maîtres de Londres, qui dans l'occupation de l'Ethiopie par l'Italie voit

menacée la voie des Indes et la route africaine du Caire au Cap, on en est arrivé à la politique des «sanctions».

Le front de Stresa, où Mussolini avait été proclamé de la bouche de MacDonald le gardien de la paix en Europe – et comme tel salué jusques dans les notes diplomatiques de Litvinov - a été remplacé par Baldwin, successeur de MacDonald, par les accords navals avec l'Allemagne hitlérienne. Par ce seul fait, on voit combien il est faux de faire d'un conflit entre impérialistes pour le partage du monde un conflit entre la démocratie et le fascisme. Pour ce qui concerne la France, avec les accords de Rome du 7 janvier, Mussolini avait obtenu de Laval un blanc-seing en vue de son coup de brigandage en Afrique. (Pour ces accords, Laval a reçu son approbation des chefs socialistes français, ainsi que de Staline à Moscou.) Mais, en définitive Laval a dû accepter de s'incliner devant la politique de Londres. Actuellement, la bourgeoisie italienne se trouve sous le coup des «sanctions» votées par Genève. Si, comme l'a dit le ministre du Foreign Office britannique, Samuel Hoare, les choses ne «s'arrangent» pas rapidement, ce sera «l'arbitrage des armes», c'est-à-dire l'extension de la guerre de l'Afrique en Europe. Ces simples faits suffisent à mettre en garde les ouvriers vis-à-vis de la soi-disant «politique de paix» de la S.D.N.; vis-à-vis de la «politique de sanctions».

La classe ouvrière n'a pas à modeler sa conduite sur celle de ses propres ennemis: ceux-ci cherchent leurs affaires et leurs profits, ne visant qu'à assurer leur domination dans le monde. La classe ouvrière doit avoir une politique indépendante si elle ne veut pas tomber, comment en 1914-1918, victime des pièges impérialistes.

Certes, - et nous l'avons dit les premiers – il faut appliquer des «sanctions» à Rome fasciste et soutenir le peuple éthiopien dans sa lutte contre les impérialismes. Mais c'est à la classe ouvrière que nous faisons appel et que nous continuons à faire appel. Aucune coalition de la classe ouvrière avec les classes bourgeoises. Le fait de se traîner à la remorque de Genève a servi seulement à rendre impossible jusqu'à maintenant l'action internationale du prolétariat contre l'impérialisme romain. Et a servi en outre à troubler énormément la conscience de classe révolutionnaire des

ouvriers, en favorisant l'illusion que la lutte de Genève c'est la lutte pour «le droit et la paix», tandis qu'il s'agit d'une lutte entre brigands qui sont tous également pour le pillage colonial.

S'il est vrai que c'est le fascisme qui prépare et organise la guerre de la manière la plus conséquente, il faut dire aussi que ce qui mène au fascisme et à la guerre c'est la nature réactionnaire, décadente, et de brigandage, du capitalisme contemporain. Sans mettre à nu le caractère hypocrite du pacifisme bourgeois – dont les fascistes aussi se parent – on ne peut pas mobiliser les masses dans la lutte contre la guerre et contre le fascisme.

Sans révolution pas de paix.

Pour œuvrer à la fin rapide de la guerre commencée en Afrique, il ne faut pas associer l'action du prolétariat à celle des bandits impérialistes. Dans cette voie on marche à l'union sacrée, à la répétition de 1914-1918. La tâche du prolétariat dans chaque pays est de lutter contre le crime de s'entretuer au profit du gain capitaliste et de la rivalité impérialiste, est de lutter pour le triomphe de la révolution sociale, pour le renversement de sa propre bourgeoisie.

Oui, nous devons aider les peuples éthiopiens à vaincre l'impérialisme italien. Oui, nous devons aider les prolétaires italiens à se débarrasser du régime fasciste, à transformer la guerre impérialiste d'Afrique en guerre civile contre leurs exploiters. Mais nous, les ouvriers d'Europe et des autres pays, nous ne pouvons porter cette aide efficace aux travailleurs italiens et aux peuples éthiopiens qu'à la condition de combattre toute politique de brigandage colonial, toute politique de vol et d'exploitation capitaliste, qu'à la condition de lutter par les méthodes de nos propres organisations de classe. La victoire du prolétariat français sur la bourgeoisie, le fascisme de son propre pays, sera mille fois plus efficace dans l'aide au prolétariat italien et comme «garantie de la paix» que tous les accords passés par le quai d'Orsay. Toute victoire des ouvriers anglais sur leur propre bourgeoisie donnera aux ouvriers italiens plus d'impulsion dans la lutte contre le fascisme que tous les navires de l'Amirauté britannique dans la Méditerranée.

L'appel à la solidarité des peuples des Indes, de l'Égypte, du Maroc, de tous les peuples opprimés avec les armées éthiopiennes contre les négriers et les esclavagistes capitalistes de toute cocarde, est mille fois plus efficace pour résoudre le problème de la sécurité et de la paix que la méthode qui consiste à en confier le soin aux canons impérialistes.

NON. AUCUNE COALITION DES OUVRIERS AVEC LES
BANDITS IMPÉRIALISTES

ORGANISATION IMMÉDIATE DE L'ACTION
INDEPENDANTE DU PROLETARIAT MONDIAL

CONTRE LA POLITIQUE COLONIALE,
CONTRE L'IMPÉRIALISME,

POUR LA FRATERNISATION DES EXPLOITÉS DE TOUT
LE MONDE AVEC LES PEUPLES OPPRIMÉS DE TOUS LES
CONTINENTS.

Au drapeau hypocrite de la Société des nations opposons celui des
États-Unis Soviétiques d'Europe et du Monde. Devant les deux
Internationales social-impérialistes devenues les Internationales du
mensonge et de la trahison, bâtissons la IV^{ème} Internationale, Parti mondial
de la Révolution sociale.

32. Leonetti à Trotsky, 26 octobre 1935¹

[...] Ci-joint copie de notre déclaration sur les «sanctions». La *Vérité* a publié d'autre part un appel des bl italiens². Seulement que l'appel était adressé aux soldats et jeunes d'Italie et non pas «aux prolétaires d'Italie». Le régime des coquilles continue!!

¹ EP2712.

² Si veda il documento (29).

33. Leonetti à Trotsky, 28 octobre 1935¹

Au cam. L.D. 28 oct. 1935

Cher camarade,

Nous sommes encore aujourd'hui sans vos nouvelles; ce qui nous inquiète énormément. Nous espérons que votre santé n'en soit pas cause. En attendant, je me dois de vous renseigner sur les derniers faits de Théo. Par inspiration de celui-ci, un «Comité de coordination» italien vient de se former, comprenant Giacomi, Blasco, moi et d'autres camarades, parmi lesquelles Dubois et Parabellum.

La première discussion a porté sur «les sanctions» et les «mots d'ordres démocratiques». Sur l'une et l'autre question des divergences sont apparues avec Maslow.

¹èrement. Sommes nous contre les sanctions impérialistes? J'ai dit que nous ne sommes contre pas plus que nous ne sommes pour les sanctions. Les sanctions sont des actes guerriers d'un groupe impérialiste contre d'autres impérialiste. Entre la concurrence de Citroën et d'Agnelli ne nous sommes pour l'un pas plus que nous ne le sommes pour l'autre. Cependant: devons nous soutenir l'armement du Négus contre l'impérialisme italien? Je réponds, oui. Nous devons lutter pour enlever tout embargo sur les armes en destination de l'Ethiopie. Mais cela signifie faire le jeu de l'impérialisme anglais. Cela est aussi vrai. Mais la chose est contradictoire et nous devons dénoncer les buts impérialistes des anglais; le caractère perfide de sa «politique de paix». Encore une question: devons nous appeler en même temps les soldats abyssins à se défaire des cliques féodales? Pouvons-nous le faire? Nous pouvons libérer les abyssins, les aider à s'émanciper, en nous émancipant de l'impérialisme.

Le mot d'ordre central est: révolte des peuples opprimés contre l'impérialisme; révolution internationale.

¹ EP2713.

Par le courrier de hier, j'ai expédié la «déclaration» signés par le b.l. d'Italie, France, etc.¹ Qu'en pensez-vous? Devons-nous encore mieux préciser notre point de vue sur la question?

Sur les mots d'ordre démocratiques j'ai dit: nous avons là dessus toute une longue histoire. Pas la peine de y revenir, au moment qu'il s'agit d'appliquer notre expérience internationale.

Avec les meilleurs souhaits, bien à vous

Martin

34. Support Italian Comrades in Their Struggle Against Fascism and War²

MUSSOLINI must go.

But with Mussolini, ITALIAN CAPITALISM must also go.

OUR ITALIAN COMRADES HAVE CONSTITUTED

a Coordination Committee for the Revolutionary Struggle in Italy.

This Committee of Coordination has issued a manifesto to the Italian soldiers, to the youth, to the Italian mothers, to the workers and peasants that:

ONLY REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

with the aim of overthrowing Italian capitalism can yield any results; that all CLASS COLLABORATION is a betrayal of the working class and that the path of the so-called "popular front" is nothing else than collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The Coordination Committee needs funds:

Everywhere where there are Italians, REAL enemies of Italian Fascism; everywhere where there are revolutionists able to understand the

¹ Si veda il documento (31).

² *The New Militant*, Vol. I No. 48, 23 November 1935.

extreme importance of an Italian revolution – everywhere they are asking for funds for the revolutionary struggle to Italy.

Address messages, letters, donations to:

Walfis, 17 rue de Meaux, Paris XIXs, France.

- The International Secretariat of the International Communist League.

35. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 30 octobre 1935¹

Thèse de Dubois-Parabellum sur la guerre en Abyssinie. Est communiqué aux membres du S.I. [...]

Guerre abyssine et nos tâches. Les sections, et notamment les sections française, anglaise et allemande, sont obligé à publier l'appel qui vient d'être publié dans le Bulletin International no 5². Certains camarades critiquent les formules sur la page 3:

...La victoire du prolétariat français... sera mille fois plus efficace comme «garantie de la paix» que tous les accords... etc.

Ce sont là des tournures de langage et non pas des comparaisons mathématiques.

La thèse de Parabellum-Dubois est envoyé aux membres du S.I. Les camarades sont priés de donner leur avis.

L'appel «aux prolétaires d'Italie» paru dans la Vérité no 250³ est en réalité un appel aux «jeunes et soldats d'Italie». A la fin la rédaction de la Vérité a supprimé le mot d'ordre «Vive la République des Conseils d'ouvriers, de paysans et de soldats d'Italie». Les sections sont priées de publier le texte original. Clart chargé de passer une rectification dans le prochain no. de la Vérité.

¹ SWP2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

² Si veda il documento (31).

³ Si veda il documento (29).

Discussion sur les sanctions.

Martin: Les sanctions, c'est une affaire entre les impérialistes. Nous ne pouvons être ni pour, ni contre les sanctions impérialistes; nous devons les dénoncer et faire appel à l'action autonome du prolétariat. En Italie, s'opposer aux sanctions, signifierait faire chorus avec la presse mussolinienne. Martin présentera un texte. Tous les socialistes et communistes, souhaitant la défaite de Mussolini, sont pour les sanctions. Les BL seuls s'y opposent. Martin regrette que presque partout nos sections ont pris indépendamment position contre les sanctions. La base des sanctions c'est la définition de l'agresseur. Or, nous ne devons céder pas un seul pouce sur ce terrain juridique. Le problème des sanctions est analogue à celui des armements. Nous ne devons pas nous adresser à Lebrun ou à la Banque de France, mais au prolétariat.

Dubois: Les sanctions sont l'œuvre de la Société des Nations, c'est-à-dire des brigands impérialistes alliés. Comme nous sommes contre la SDN nous devons être contre ses actes. Être ni pour ni contre les sanctions signifie semer de la confusion très dangereuse. Comme présenter cette attitude dans des pays comme l'Italie, c'est là une question de tactique à discuter. Force nous est d'être «d'accord» avec Laval, si celui-ci décide par exemple d'interdire le chargement de tel bateau pour l'Italie. Il faut dénoncer le caractère peu efficace des sanctions, s'emparer de la situation créée par la politique des sanctions pour préconiser et réaliser le boycott ouvrier. Le Parti Communiste allemand avait raison de s'opposer à l'occupation de la Ruhr, bien qu'il fût aussi adversaire à l'impérialisme allemande qu'à l'impérialisme française. Dubois voit des dangers graves, si on ne prend pas nettement position contre les sanctions; on serait par exemple dupe de la politique pro-sanctionniste de la France et de l'URSS contre l'Allemagne au moment où celle-ci envahirait la Lituanie. La défaite de l'Italie ne signifierait la défaite du fascisme italien et la victoire du prolétariat italien que si les positions internationales du prolétariat mondiale ne sont pas affaiblies. Cela sera le cas s'il se range du côté de ses impérialismes pour les sanctions. La défaite militaire de l'impérialisme italien pourrait être assurée de cette façon, le régime changera aussi, mais nullement au profit de la classe ouvrière. Être

contre la politique des sanctions ne signifie naturellement pas saboter sa mise en pratique, cela serait de la folie.

Nicolle: La direction allemande a longtemps discuté de cette question. Il y a une certaine analogie avec notre attitude envers le front populaire. Nous n'employons pas comme mot d'ordre: A bas le front populaire!, mais: Chassons les traîtres radicaux du front populaire! C'est pourquoi on ne nous comprendra pas si nous disons: A bas les sanctions! D'autre part nous ne pouvons pas être pour les sanctions qui mènent à la guerre. N'a pas à proposer un mot d'ordre concret. Il faut dénoncer l'inefficace des sanctions, leur caractère charlatanesque, trompeur.

Clart: Le GBL n'a pas discuté cette question parce qu'il n'y avait pas de divergences là-dessus. En France (et en Angleterre) favoriser les sanctions signifie se préparer à et appliquer l'union sacrée. Le GBL est presque le seul à s'y opposer. Le mot d'ordre: A bas les sanctions! n'est pas le plus important des mots d'ordre actuels, mais nécessaire comme barrage à l'union sacrée et au bourrage de crâne, car les sanctions ne signifient pas la paix, mais la guerre. L'analogie avec le front populaire est fautive. Nous n'employons pas le mot d'ordre «A bas le front populaire» (bien que cela soit notre ligne directrice) parce qu'en face des masses il faut éviter des mots d'ordre purement négatifs. Les italiens doivent être aussi contre les sanctions, sans peut-être le prendre comme mot d'ordre. En France et en Angleterre l'opposition aux sanctions est le premier acte de défaitisme révolutionnaire, et l'action du boycottage est le premier pas vers la révolution. Nous sommes par trop habitués aux reproches qu'on nous a toujours faits de faire le jeu de la réaction: en réalisant le boycott, nous faisons justement le contraire (Martin: Il nous faut plutôt un mot d'ordre internationalement valable). Nous sommes contre les armements impérialistes et contre les sanctions impérialistes. De même que nous ne sommes pas pour le sabotage de la guerre, nous ne sommes pas pour le sabotage des sanctions.

Durand: La comparaison avec l'occupation de la Ruhr n'est pas exacte: les ouvriers allemands voulaient défendre la république de Weimar, les italiens veulent abattre leur régime (???) [...]

Le S.I. décide de demander par avion l'avis du cde Crux sur [cette] question.

36. Leonetti à Trotsky, 30 octobre 1935¹

Au cam. L.D.

Cher camarade,

J'ai écrit hier à propos des divergences sur la question des sanctions. Par invitation des camarades d'Essi, je suis chargé de vous récrire, étant donné l'importance que la question prend. La formule «contre les sanctions» n'est pas claire pour les ouvriers italiens – tous farouchement sanctionnistes; mais la formule «pour les sanctions» c'est l'union sacrée en Angleterre. A' mon avis – qui n'est pas celui de Rous et Dubois – nous devons avoir une politique anti-impérialiste, et non pas anti-sanctionniste.

L'autre question urgente nous est posée par les cam. anglais. Devons-nous dire encore «de Labour au pouvoir»? Cette formule aujourd'hui signifie «l'union sacrée», la guerre des «sanctions». Et si non, que dire à la place du «Labour au pouvoir»? Peut-être, «gouvernement ouvrier»? Il s'agit d'une question urgente, étant donné que les élections sont proches. Devons-nous voter pour les candidats du Labour? Des camarades proposent même l'abstention. Ce qui est fausse naturellement.

¹ EP2714.

Excusez la hâte. Sur les autres problèmes les p.v. vous pourrons être utiles.

Bien à vous.

Mart.

30 oct. 1935

37. La classe ouvrière et les «sanctions»¹

Dans notre précédent numéro, nous avons montré que toutes les fameuses «sanctions» de la S.D.N. tournaient au marchandage entre impérialistes – Anglais, Italiens et Français – pour le dépeçage de l’Ethiopie.

Les événements de ces derniers jours nous donnent pleinement raison et laissent penauds ceux qui «exigeaient de la S.D.N. l’application des sanctions».

Baldwin et Mussolini continuent à discuter dans la coulisse, exactement comme Laval le faisait précédemment. Ni les uns ni les autres ne tiennent à voir la guerre en Ethiopie se prolonger en un soulèvement des pays coloniaux, principalement arabes, contre les oppresseurs Français, Anglais et autres.

Ni les uns ni les autres ne tiennent à voir les masses prolétariennes dresser en Italie le drapeau de la révolte contre Mussolini.

Contre les prolétaires dans le pays et les peuples opprimés à l’extérieur, les gouvernements capitalistes constitueront toujours un front unique répressif impitoyable.

C’est pourquoi nous avons toujours dit que les déclamations pacifistes de la S.D.N. et de ses soutiens cachaient tout simplement les appétits de clans impérialistes rivaux.

¹ *La Vérité*, n. 251, 8 novembre 1935.

Dans un manifeste publié par «l'Humanité», l'Internationale Communiste semble s'en apercevoir en constatant que les «mesures» prises par l'I.O.S. «se réduisent à des assurances verbales de soutien de la politique de paix de la Société des Nations et à quelques revendications et vœux à l'adresse de la S.D.N. (principalement en ce qui concerne les sanctions).

«Cette orientation exclusive vers les mesures de la Sociétés des Nations reflète, au fond, la tendance des leaders du parti travailliste anglais, à orienter le mouvement ouvrier international dans le sillage de la politique extérieure du Gouvernement impérialiste anglais...».

Bravo!

Mais alors, pourquoi Thorez écrit-il (Rapport au C.C. du P.C. le 17 octobre)¹: «Cela ne veut pas dire que dans des conditions déterminées, **la menace des sanctions militaires** ne soit pas nécessaire et efficace pour faire reculer l'agresseur et sauvegarder la paix»?

Car enfin, qui pratiquera les sanctions militaires, sinon les gouvernements impérialistes?

Une fois de plus, nous nous prononçons pour une action autonome de la classe ouvrière, et avant tout pour la lutte contre **notre propre impérialisme**. Comme le dit la résolution que nous présentons au Congrès Fédéral de la Seine S.F.I.O., il faut:

Dénoncer les traités et accords militaires, la diplomatie secrète, les charges croissantes du budget de guerre; répudier toute défense nationale dans le régime capitaliste; se refuser à toute subordination à la S.D.N. et à ses sanctions; proclamer dans les masses, dans la jeunesse, dans l'armée, le caractère de plus en plus exterminateur de la guerre moderne, la nécessité d'arracher le pouvoir au capitalisme comme seul moyen d'empêcher la guerre impérialiste; répondre à la guerre – si elle éclatait – par sa transformation systématique en guerre civile; s'organiser sérieusement dans ce but, nationalement et internationalement, pour poursuivre la lutte de classe, sans égard à la défaite de son propre impérialisme; ainsi, la tactique

¹ Gli estratti del rapporto di Thorez relativi alla guerra italo-etiopica sono riprodotti nell'Appendice.

du défaitisme révolutionnaire ne restera pas une phrase creuse, mais donnera des possibilités réelles d'action.

38. Leonetti à Trotsky, 8 novembre 1935¹

Au cam. L.D.

Cher camarade,

Toujours dans l'espoir que tôt ou tard vous trouverez l'occasion de parler aux ouvriers italiens, je vous signale un passage d'un Furini, petit élève d'Ercoli, à la tribune du VII Congrès². Tout au moins, il servira pour mettre à verbal une canaillerie de plus.

Bien cordialement
Martin

8-11-35

P.S. Joint aussi appel «du Congrès des Italiens»³

¹ EP2715.

² L'intervento è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

³ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

39. Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL), 13 novembre 1935¹

Guerre italo-abyssine. Projet de thèse du cde Parabellum. Sera publié en langue allemande comme Bulletin Intérieur².

40. La nuova impresa africana del capitalismo italiano e i compiti del proletariato rivoluzionario³

I – Riconferma della disfatta borghese e necessità della Rivoluzione proletaria

A quarant'anni dalla prima campagna d'Africa, l'Italia si trova di nuovo impegnata sulle orme ingloriose di Crispi in una guerra di rapina contro l'Abissinia.

Dire come si fa nell'appello social-patriota uscito dal Congresso di Bruxelles⁴ che la guerra iniziata in Africa il 3 ottobre «non è la guerra dell'Italia, ma del fascismo», è dire cosa che non serve affatto a chiarire il carattere brigantesco e reazionario della nuova impresa africana della borghesia italiana, mentre è di utilissimo vantaggio invece a questa stessa borghesia per sviare gli operai dai loro compiti di classe e dalla lotta rivoluzionaria.

Infatti: fu «guerra dell'Italia» quella di Crispi in Africa nel 1895-1896?, fu «guerra dell'Italia» quella di Giolitti nel 1911 in Libia?, fu «guerra dell'Italia» quella del 1914-1918 in cui perirono oltre seicentomila uomini? *La nuova impresa africana non è che un anello della catena di sangue forgiata dalle mire imperialiste della reazionaria borghesia italiana.* Attribuire la guerra africana

¹ SWP.2.3. Estratto dal verbale.

² Il Bollettino in lingua tedesca cessò le pubblicazioni con il numero di ottobre 1935. Il progetto di tesi di Maslow deve considerarsi perduto.

³ *Quaderni di critica proletaria*, n. 1, novembre 1935. Attribuito da Palo Casciola a Pietro Tresso (Introduzione alla riedizione di questo testo, *Quaderni Pietro Tresso*, n. 16, edizioni Bi-Elle, 1999).

⁴ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

cominciata il 3 ottobre solo alla «follia di Mussolini»; vedere in questa guerra solo «un delitto del fascismo», il «colpo di forza di un individuo», vuol dire *non vedere* (come Marx faceva osservare a proposito di un altro «dittatore», Napoleone il Piccolo) che in tal modo, anziché diminuire il «duce» di Roma, lo si ingrandisce enormemente, «attribuendogli una forza di iniziativa personale senza esempio nella storia»; vuol dire avvilito «l'Italia» al ruolo di giocattolo nelle mani di un individuo, «pazzo» per giunta.

Per noi, come per ogni rivoluzionario fedele al metodo di Marx, solo «la lotta di classe» in Italia creò delle circostanze ed una situazione tali che permisero a un personaggio «mediocre» e «grottesco» come il «duce» di «far figura di eroe»; solo queste circostanze create dalla *lotta di classe*, permisero al fascismo di installarsi al potere in Italia, e altrove, e di condurre l'Italia nel baratro presente di una nuova avventura africana.

Se si lasciano da parte le classi, la cui lotta riempie tutta la recente e la passata storia d'Italia, i nomi di «Italia» e di «Popolo italiano», diventano solo delle astrazioni, buone solo per il gioco «patriottico» dei vecchi e nuovi servitori della borghesia italiana.

Il compito degli operai rivoluzionari non è di gareggiare con i fascisti nell'*amore per la patria*, ma di dimostrare che le parole del *Manifesto comunista* «i lavoratori non hanno patria», sono oggi più che mai vere. L'ideologia *nazionale* è quella che ha generato il fascismo. E il fascismo a sua volta, ponendo la rivendicazione di «espansione per l'Italia», rivendicando cioè il diritto di opprimere e saccheggiare gli altri popoli, prova che lo Stato *nazionale* è morto, e che l'esigenza dell'*Internazionale* non è una vaga aspirazione sentimentale dei lavoratori, ma una esigenza storica alla quale, per il libero e pacifico sviluppo delle forze produttive sociali, non è possibile sfuggire. È solo «dopo la trasformazione socialista della patria» che i lavoratori possono parlare di «amore» per il «loro» paese; in altri termini: è *la rivoluzione proletaria socialista contro la borghesia, quella che i lavoratori devono amare*.

Perciò noi continuiamo a pensare, con tutti gli operai rivoluzionari, che esistono, non una, ma *due* Italie: l'Italia che lavora, che è oppressa e sfruttata, quella che *fa* la guerra; e l'Italia che sfrutta, che vive sul lavoro

altrui, quella dei *profittatori* della guerra: l'Italia capitalista. Questa Italia, l'Italia *capitalista*, non può più dare al popolo lavoratore se non *guerra, fame e fascismo*. Il fascismo è la guerra, *perché il capitalismo in decomposizione non può più mantenersi all'interno e all'esterno che con dei mezzi di distruzione e di morte*. Ne viene che *la lotta contro il fascismo e la guerra, la lotta per il pane, la pace e la libertà, è necessariamente la lotta rivoluzionaria per l'espropriazione della borghesia e per il socialismo internazionale*.

La nuova guerra d'Africa non fa che riporre all'ordine del giorno, e con forza accresciuta, la *rivoluzione proletaria socialista*.

Nulla prova meglio la necessità della soluzione proletaria socialista, di questo ritorno delle classi dirigenti italiane sulle vie tentate mezzo secolo fa e terminatesi con una prima disfatta. La loro incapacità a risolvere i problemi della società italiana si trova pienamente documentata. In meno di mezzo secolo, è *la quarta volta* che i lavoratori italiani sono chiamati a servire come carne da cannone per il profitto degli sfruttatori capitalisti. E pienamente documentato è d'altra parte l'appello alla classe operaia come nuova classe di governo per la soluzione dei problemi che da quarant'anni si pongono sul tappeto italiano.

Sotto il capitalismo, il cammino dell'Italia in quarant'anni si riassume: da Adua ad Adua; da una guerra di rapina ad una guerra di brigantaggio. Solo la rivoluzione proletaria socialista può aprire all'Italia un avvenire diverso, capace di assicurare a tutto il popolo lavoratore nuovi mezzi di vita e di progresso.

II – Il cammino dell'Italia da Crispi a Mussolini

I problemi che hanno di nuovo condotto l'Italia in Africa, sono in effetti gli stessi che esistevano quarant'anni fa, «duce» Francesco Crispi. La differenza è solo in questo: che questi problemi si sono fatti via via più acuti e profondi.

Giunta sull'arena mondiale assai tardi come classe di governo *nazionale*, la borghesia italiana, economicamente *debole*, per assicurarsi la propria egemonia politica in un paese costituito recentemente a regno unito e formato in maggioranza di contadini e artigiani, ebbe, dall'origine, una

particolare inclinazione per i metodi di governo *autoritario*, vale a dire, per le forme reazionarie. Fu solo in compenso della guerra libica nel 1911, e come antidoto alla lotta di classe, che venne concessa da Giolitti una caricatura di «suffragio universale».

Il primo tentativo di espansione coloniale fatto sotto il regno di Crispi, altro «duce» divenuto da ribelle, cospiratore, mazziniano di sinistra, l'uomo delle classi proprietarie e della monarchia reazionaria, terminò, com'è noto, con il disastro di Adua (1° marzo 1896) dovuto insieme alla impreparazione politica, economica, militare del «giovine» imperialismo italiano. (Giovine perché tardivo.) Il fascismo vuole oggi far credere che anche «per vendicare l'onta di Adua», dopo quarant'anni l'Italia è nuovamente trascinata in una guerra contro l'Abissinia. Nulla però garantisce l'Italia tricolore da una nuova «Adua» più vasta e disastrosa. Ma i lavoratori italiani non devono certo arrestarsi davanti ad una tale eventualità: essi la devono anzi volere e preparare per facilitare insieme e la propria liberazione e la liberazione dei popoli conquistati dall'imperialismo romano.

Già l'Adua del 1896 contribuì potentemente a rafforzare il movimento di ascensione delle classi lavoratrici, indebolendo le forze della reazione all'interno del paese, il cui quadro, dopo un quarto di secolo di unità, era il seguente: una corruzione diffusa nelle classi dirigenti, una borghesia avida e ferocemente reazionaria, epidemie ed estesa criminalità; una miseria estrema delle classi lavoratrici a cui facevano contrasto stridente i piaceri e il lusso sfrenato dei ceti ricchi: banchieri ladri e prevaricatori, alti impiegati ladri, uomini politici ladri, giornalisti ricattatori, una larva di sistema parlamentare deriso per giunta e sprezzato per la sua rapida decadenza in palestra di chiacchiere; masse di contadini e di artigiani rovinati dalle tasse e dall'industria nascente, costrette ad emigrare oltre oceano; un bilancio dello Stato in continuo disavanzo; le casse dei Comuni svuotate. In che cosa, oggi, *il quadro dell'Italia contemporanea* è diverso da quello di mezzo secolo fa? In ciò solamente: che ai mali antichi si sono venuti aggiungendo i nuovi con la soppressione di ogni forma, anche minima, di libertà; con la chiusura di tutte le frontiere alla gente senza lavoro; con l'aumento spaventevole del numero dei parassiti; con l'accrescimento di tutte le forme

di sfruttamento e di oppressione del popolo lavoratore. All'interno, come all'estero, le classi dirigenti italiane non possono più *avanzare* che *marciando indietro*, verso le soluzioni del passato: guerra e reazione.

Ma quante lotte da parte dei lavoratori, quanto sacrificio e quanto martirio!

Le masse, che la politica di rapina e di spoliazione delle classi borghesi affama incessantemente, sono in uno stato permanente di rivolta: dai moti di Sicilia e della Lunigiana (1894) ai moti di Milano (1898), la protesta degli operai mal nutriti, mal pagati, maltrattati, sale continuamente, e continuamente si unisce alla rivolta dei contadini poveri affamati, tendendo a prendere ogni volta la forma di insurrezione contro lo Stato. Le classi proprietarie interrorite, moltiplicano le misure di reazione e di repressione contro le nascenti organizzazioni operaie e contadine. I tribunali militari, il domicilio coatto, lo scioglimento delle organizzazioni socialiste, il cannone contro i cittadini inermi: ecco i frutti della «rivoluzione borghese» italiana, della costituzione dell'Italia in regno unito sotto la dinastia dei Savoia. E già da allora, i capisbirri sono forniti dalle file dei vecchi cospiratori, come Crispi, come Nicotera, entrambi ex ardenti mazziniani, e finiti entrambi in arnesi della polizia monarchica.

Malgrado il terrore, malgrado le feroci misure di repressione, il movimento operaio resta una forza ascendente che si impone. L'uccisione di re Umberto, alla soglia di questo secolo, fa comprendere alle classi dirigenti che *è ora di mutar politica*. L'uomo della nuova politica si chiama Giovanni Giolitti, il quale senza rinunciare alla violenza aperta, specie nelle regioni del Mezzogiorno d'Italia (colonia del Nord industriale), inaugura un periodo di *blocco operaio-borghese*, che prende nel *riformismo* il suo aspetto concreto. D'altra parte, la politica di accordo con i clericali, inaugurata con il famoso Patto Gentiloni, serve alla borghesia industriale e finanziaria per assicurarsi il controllo delle campagne. Le masse operaie e contadine che si muovevano fuori e contro lo Stato borghese, in seguito al duplice apporto del riformismo e del clericalismo alla borghesia, dovevano infine trovarsi *inserite* nella *legalità* e rendere alle classi proprietarie borghesi la pace e la tranquillità di *pompare* l'Italia e il popolo lavoratore italiano. Ma il calcolo si

avvera assolutamente errato. La borghesia deve fare i conti con lo sviluppo crescente della lotta del proletariato. E nel giugno 1914, la «settimana rossa» giunge a provare che le forze rivoluzionarie d'Italia sono più vive che mai.

Sopravviene la guerra mondiale. Dopo momenti di esitazione, la borghesia italiana si decide per l'Intesa.

«Vittoriosa», l'Italia esce dal gran massacro come un paese vinto, in piena crisi di dissoluzione. All'ordine del giorno torna ad iscriversi, e con accresciuta potenza, la rivoluzione proletaria.

La guerra che aveva contribuito a sviluppare enormemente l'apparato industriale, aveva per ciò stesso contribuito enormemente a proletarizzare l'Italia accrescendo enormemente il peso specifico del proletariato urbano. L'«arricchimento» dei contadini durante la guerra ha fatto dire a qualche quasi-marxista che mancavano nel 1919-1920 le condizioni per un blocco operaio e contadino. Ma tutte *le lotte agrarie* del dopo-guerra, sono una netta confutazione di questa tesi. In realtà i contadini, come gli operai, all'uscita dalla guerra, si muovono contro l'oppressione del capitale. E la loro lotta, così come nel 1894-1898, così come nel giugno 1914, tende di nuovo ad assumere la forma di insurrezione contro lo Stato, strumento della loro oppressione e del loro sfruttamento. Un nuovo Stato è quasi in atto: lo Stato operaio. Si tratta di organizzarlo e di farlo trionfare. Ma alla classe operaia fa ancora difetto la *sua* direzione.

E la borghesia trionfa ancora una volta. *E trionfa questa volta col fascismo.*

III – La parabola del fascismo

La borghesia non può più tollerare la «legalità» che essa stessa ha creato. «La legalità la uccide». Essa non può mantenere le riforme e le concessioni che ha dovuto fare nel corso del primo ventennio di questo secolo. D'altra parte il *riformismo* e la *democrazia cristiana* non bastano più ad arginare *le forze della rivoluzione*. Per conservare il proprio potere economico e politico nella fabbrica e nello Stato, la borghesia deve distruggere ogni forma di democrazia, anche la più elementare. E per far passare questa opera di reazione, essa si vale delle circostanze favorevoli create dalle deficienze interne delle organizzazioni operaie da una parte, e dalla crisi dei ceti medi,

urbani e campagnuoli, oscillanti tra la paura della rivoluzione e l'odio contro il grosso capitale. *Il fascismo utilizza queste oscillazioni*, apparendo come il «terzo» fattore tra il proletariato e la borghesia. Ma i suoi colpi non sono diretti che contro il proletariato. E fin dal suo arrivo al potere esso deve mostrarsi per quello che è realmente: *uno strumento del grosso capitale per l'oppressione e la spoliazione delle masse lavoratrici. Da questo momento la crisi del fascismo incomincia.*

I piccoli produttori, i contadini, gli impiegati, tutta la piccola gente che per odio della classe operaia si erano dati in braccio al fascismo, vedendolo al potere e all'opera, cominciano ad accorgersi di aver agito per conto del «re di Prussia», cioè per conto dei grossi capitalisti loro nemici. *Lo sfaldamento sociale del fascismo è in via di sviluppo.* La crisi susseguente al periodo Matteotti (1924-1925) segna il punto culminante di questo sfaldamento. Se il fascismo ne esce ancora salvo, è per l'incapacità in cui la classe operaia — ingannata dall'Aventino — si trova di agire, come forza autonoma e indipendente. Ma questa «vittoria» del fascismo sui resti della democrazia, costituisce pure una sua *disfatta*, perché esso deve evolvere sempre più verso le forme di un regime *totalitario*, o, più propriamente, verso le forme di una *dittatura poliziesco-burocratica* sopprimendo in seno allo stesso Partito fascista e nelle Corporazioni, tutto quanto può ancora lasciare adito alla «critica» o alla «opposizione».

Può sembrar contraddire a ciò il fatto che Mussolini riesce, malgrado tutto, a muovere e a controllare delle grandi organizzazioni di masse come sono quelle «giovanili» specialmente. Ma la contraddizione non esiste. In realtà, *lo Stato fascista «aderisce» alle «masse», che esso inquadra e controlla, nello stesso rapporto fisico di un argine rispetto ad una fiumana che si ingrossa.* Sembra che la massa d'acqua aderisca all'argine: in realtà l'argine non fa che sostenerne *la pressione e l'urto.* Ora, tutti gli indizi lasciano pensare che il fascismo sia giunto ormai al «punto limite» della resistenza. L'argine fascista minaccia di franare sotto la pressione del volume d'acqua che si esercita contro di esso, il volume delle contraddizioni sociali che si sono venute accumulando. *Occorre aprire una valvola di sicurezza.* Di qui l'impresa africana che altrimenti parrebbe veramente una avventura pazzesca.

Sì. Il fascismo, chiamato al letto dell'ammalato capitalista per arrestare il corso della cancrena che lo divora, con la sua politica non ha fatto che contribuire a diffondere l'infezione per tutto l'organismo. Col fascismo, la crisi economica e finanziaria si è accentuata; il conflitto tra le forze produttive che domandano uno sbocco, e le forme borghesi di proprietà e di produzione, si è profondamente acuito.

La guerra in Africa? Ma comunque vada questa guerra non darà né più pane né più lavoro ai milioni di lavoratori che il capitalismo sfrutta. In tal modo il fascismo, il quale doveva essere il *becchino* del socialismo, dopo tredici anni di oppressione e di sfruttamento, diventa suo malgrado strumento della rinascita socialista.

Non si può alla lunga vivere di discorsi, di menzogne e di terrore.

Ai milioni di lavoratori che domandano pane e lavoro, Mussolini addita i campi d'Africa. Ma su questi campi i lavoratori italiani non potranno raccogliere che sofferenza e morte. Inesorabilmente, il fascismo si trova dunque impegnato in una lotta in cui la posta è ancora: capitalismo o socialismo.

IV – Come agire di fronte alla guerra africana. Le parole d'ordine del proletariato rivoluzionario

Basta considerare il carattere borghese della crisi del fascismo e la natura reazionaria, imperialista della nuova guerra africana (guerra provocata dalle condizioni in cui si trova il capitalismo italiano), per rendersi conto di quanto sia assurda e nefasta una politica di separazione della lotta contro il fascismo dalla lotta contro la borghesia; politica che ha trovato la sua espressione nel cosiddetto «Congresso degli italiani», e che ha per parola d'ordine: «Via Mussolini! Pace con l'Etiopia!»

Certo, Mussolini deve essere abbattuto, e il primo dovere che si pone è di operare per la fine immediata delle operazioni in Africa.

Ma *come?* Facendo «appello a tutti gli italiani» senza distinzione di classe, rimettendo cioè a nuovo l'ideologia nazionale della collaborazione delle classi, da cui è uscito il riformismo prima, il fascismo poi? Facendo appello alle «sanzioni» di Ginevra, cioè alla coalizione del proletariato con la

borghesia imperialista degli altri paesi, rivali e concorrenti dell'imperialismo italiano? Fornendo insomma in anticipo *l'assicurazione alla borghesia italiana e internazionale di non far ricorso alla azione rivoluzionaria delle masse lavoratrici?* Poiché a questo si riduce sostanzialmente la politica «sanzionista» del «Congresso degli italiani» a Bruxelles, uno dei cui partecipanti principali, il Partito Socialista, sezione della Seconda Internazionale, per «non puntare sui dadi della guerra», e per «amore dell'Italia», giunge fino a farsi sostenitore di una soluzione di «compromesso» purché «sotto l'egida e sotto il controllo della Società delle Nazioni».

I fatti provano così ancora una volta nella storia che, *fino a quando le organizzazioni restano nelle mani di opportunisti* — si dicano socialisti o comunisti —, tutte le risoluzioni, tutte le promesse di lottare contro la guerra, si riducono a risoluzioni e a promesse senza contenuto.

Come agire allora?

Nel richiamarci per questa azione a Lenin e a Rosa Luxemburg, non obbediamo ad un bisogno intellettualistico, al di fuori della realtà italiana: al contrario, richiamandoci alla tradizione dell'ala rivoluzionaria del movimento operaio internazionale, noi obbediamo precisamente alla esigenza storica imposta dalla situazione del nostro paese e che comanda al proletariato d'Italia di seguire quella grande tradizione. Ricordiamo dunque come, fin dal 1907, Lenin e Rosa Luxemburg indicavano il dovere dei socialisti di fronte alla guerra:

«Se tuttavia una guerra scoppia, i socialisti hanno il dovere di agire per la fine rapida di essa e di utilizzare con tutti i mezzi la crisi economica e politica provocata dalla guerra per risvegliare il popolo e affrettare così la caduta della dominazione capitalista».

Questo scrivevano nel 1907 i rappresentanti del marxismo rivoluzionario, Lenin e Rosa Luxemburg, e dieci anni dopo lo provavano con i loro atti: l'uno facendo trionfare in Russia la rivoluzione socialista; lasciando l'altra la propria vita nelle vie di Berlino per la causa della classe operaia. E a questo insegnamento debbono ispirarsi nella loro azione gli operai rivoluzionari italiani, e cioè: *il dovere principale che si pone nel periodo attuale alle organizzazioni rivoluzionarie del proletariato italiano è di «puntare» sulla crisi economica e politica aperta dalla guerra imperialista in Africa, al fine di trasformare*

questa guerra imperialista in guerra civile in Italia, e affrettare l'espropriazione della borghesia.

Perciò:

1. lotta contro ogni tentativo diretto a distogliere gli operai dai loro compiti di classe e dalla lotta rivoluzionaria contro la borghesia («fronte popolare» con i partiti borghesi, «Congresso degli italiani», ecc.);

2. lotta contro l'infiltrazione in seno alla classe operaia di idee nazionaliste, patriottiche (amore del paese, ecc.);

3. propaganda rivoluzionaria sistematica fra i soldati invitandoli sia a fraternizzare con i combattenti abissini e con i soldati di altri paesi che possono entrare nel conflitto, sia a rivolgere le loro armi contro i loro nemici all'interno del paese in Italia, contro i padroni capitalisti, contro i grossi proprietari terrieri, contro gli arnesi di questi: monarchia, capi militari e fascisti, polizia.

4. lotta per sostituire al Governo borghese fascista, *un Governo proletario socialista.*

Gli argomenti per una tale propaganda e per la lotta rivoluzionaria sono forniti dal fascismo stesso.

Il fascismo dice, particolarmente ai giovani: «Noi non abbiamo abbastanza posto in Italia. Non è colpa nostra se vi mandiamo in Africa a conquistare un posto al sole». Che cosa invece dobbiamo dire noi alle giovani generazioni ignare del socialismo? Noi dobbiamo dire: «Il fascismo ripete oggi quello che i nazionalisti dicono da quarant'anni per giustificare i bassi salari e la spoliazione del popolo lavoratore italiano da parte degli Ansaldo, degli Agnelli, dei signori della Montecatini, e così via. Un posto al sole? Ma è in Italia che noi dobbiamo conquistarcelo. Le terre che noi dobbiamo prendere sono in Italia: sono le terre dei latifondisti fannulloni, le terre che noi coltiviamo per l'opulenza di questi parassiti. *La causa della nostra miseria è nel regime di sfruttamento borghese*, di cui il fascismo si è costituito la guardia fedele. Dunque: *Via dai campi d'Africa! L'Africa agli africani. Trasformazione della guerra imperialista in Africa in guerra civile in Italia per l'espropriazione della borghesia, per la instaurazione della società socialista!*

Questa deve essere la parola d'ordine centrale, questo deve essere *l'orientamento strategico di tutta l'azione rivoluzionaria dell'avanguardia proletaria*. E come primi passi:

1. Fraternizzazione dei combattenti italiani e abissini. *Cessazione immediata delle ostilità*. Smobilitazione.

2. *Scatenamento e rafforzamento di tutte le lotte di masse in Italia* (scioperi, manifestazioni di strada, assalti armati dei Municipi, delle sedi dei fasci, dei circoli padronali, ecc.): a) contro il caro-viveri; b) contro le restrizioni provocate dalle «sanzioni»; c) per l'indennità alle famiglie dei soldati uguale al salario normale di ciascun soldato; d) per l'aumento dei salari e degli stipendi; e) per il miglioramento economico dei salariati agricoli e dei contadini mezzadri e fittavoli; f) contro le imposte (non un soldo alle casse fasciste! *sciopero fiscale!*); g) *per il ripristino di tutte le libertà*: libertà di sciopero, di riunione, di associazione, di stampa; h) per il diritto di *eleggere i propri rappresentanti nella fabbrica, nel sindacato, in tutte le Amministrazioni pubbliche*, comunali e nazionali; i) per il *diritto di voto* uguale, diretto e segreto a

tutti i cittadini d'ambo i sessi a partire dai 18 anni; l) per il controllo della produzione e delle Banche; m) per l'abolizione della Monarchia e del Senato; n) per la Costituente rivoluzionaria repubblicana.

3. Formazione dappertutto dei *Comitati di azione ELETTI* dalle masse di operai, contadini e soldati (embrioni dei Soviet).

Questa politica è chiara e comprensibile. Essa si riassume nel motto di Marx: «*Rivoluzione in permanenza*». È la politica di Lenin e di Trotsky. Cioè: prendere le masse al punto in cui esse si trovano per portarle, via via che il movimento si allarga, alla lotta per il potere, per la *Repubblica dei Consigli degli operai, contadini e soldati d'Italia*. Ciò non può farsi che a due condizioni: 1) piena indipendenza del partito di classe del proletariato; 2) lotta ininterrotta contro i partiti borghesi denunciando ogni loro manovra per sviare gli operai dai loro compiti rivoluzionari.

V – Blocco operaio-borghese (Fronte popolare) o lotta di classe?

L'obiezione principale che viene mossa alla parola d'ordine della trasformazione della guerra imperialista africana in guerra civile per l'espropriazione della borghesia in Italia, è la seguente: «Il fascismo è il nemico n° 1 da abbattere. Perché 'spaventare' con delle parole d'ordine avanzate le classi borghesi che vanno oggi staccandosi dal fascismo?»

La politica della classe rivoluzionaria, il proletariato, non si propone di *conciliarsi le simpatie dei borghesi, ma di raccogliere, di unire tutte le masse oppresse e sfruttate nella lotta CONTRO LA BORGHESIA che le opprime e le sfrutta*. Il marxismo (o comunismo critico) è tanto lontano dall'*ultrasinistrismo* che non fa alcuna distinzione tra democrazia e fascismo, che dall'*opportunismo possibilista*, o realista, il quale consiste a voler conciliare proletari e borghesi, il quale consiste, insomma, a perdere *tutte le possibilità*, anche le migliori, suscettibili di condurre alla vittoria del proletariato; in altre parole: a perdere la rivoluzione e *conservare la realtà borghese*, causa di sfruttamento e di miseria, causa del fascismo. Questa è la ragione per la quale i bolscevichi-leninisti che avversarono e combatterono la teoria funesta e la pratica criminale del Terzo Periodo, si trovano oggi a dover combattere anche la teoria funesta e la pratica «realista» non meno criminale, del blocco operaio-borghese chiamato «Fronte Popolare».

Ancora una volta ricordiamoci della Cina. In Cina, i dirigenti dell'Internazionale Comunista Stalin-Molotof-Bukharin hanno praticato la politica del Fronte popolare facendo entrare il Partito comunista nel Gomindan. Per «non spaventare» l'amico Cian-Kai-Scek, ordine venne dato di frenare la rivoluzione agraria. Quale ne fu il risultato? Lo schiacciamento della rivoluzione cinese.

Ricordiamoci della recente lezione della Spagna. Tanto più utile da ricordare in quanto avvenimenti simili a quelli che si sono prodotti nella Penisola iberica sembrano maturarsi nella Penisola italiana (a parte la forma e i vari rapporti di forze). Fu infatti da un disastro africano (gli scandali del Marocco) che si iniziò la liquidazione della monarchia dei Borboni e della dittatura di De Rivera. Nulla può escludere che le classi dirigenti italiane,

davanti al fallimento dell'impresa africana e alla minaccia della rivoluzione, siano costrette a tentare una manovra del genere di quella riuscita alla borghesia spagnuola quando offrì capro espiatorio alla collera popolare re Alfonso. Quale deve essere il nostro dovere, il dovere dell'avanguardia proletaria? Quello di aiutare la borghesia a compiere la sua manovra, come fecero i socialisti spagnuoli impegnandosi con il «compromiso de honor» (il Patto di San Sebastiano) a sostenere il Governo provvisorio, in realtà, a frenare la rivoluzione nascente? No. I socialisti spagnuoli, dopo la disastrosa esperienza collaborazionista, hanno tentato, tardi, di riscattare il loro passato con la insurrezione di Ottobre. L'insurrezione è stata battuta. «La rivoluzione proletaria non si può improvvisare sotto l'ordine di una direzione bancarottiera: bisogna prepararla con una lotta di classe incessante e implacabile, la quale conquisti alla direzione la fiducia indefettibile del Partito, saldi l'avanguardia a tutta la classe e faccia del proletariato il capo di tutti gli sfruttati delle città e delle campagne» (Appello del SI della Lega comunista internazionale sull'Ottobre spagnuolo). Tuttavia l'appello del Partito socialista spagnuolo all'insurrezione ha avuto questo valore per le masse: di provare una volta di più che fuori della lotta rivoluzionaria non vi è scampo per esse. La coalizione con la borghesia non può preparare ai lavoratori che delle ecatombi. E la ecatombe asturiana fu il frutto della collaborazione socialista con Lerroux. Che cosa però noi vediamo dopo questa esperienza? I comunisti, i funzionari comunisti, quelli che nel momento della ubriacatura «repubblicana» delle folle gridavano: «Abbasso la repubblica!» e rifiutavano ogni azione di fronte unico con i «social-fascisti» (fino alla vigilia del 4 ottobre i comunisti spagnuoli avevano mantenuto la loro ostilità contro le «Alleanze operaie»); dopo la insurrezione di Ottobre, dopo quattro anni e mezzo di esistenza repubblicana, mentre le masse, disilluse dal socialismo parlamentare reclamavano una politica rivoluzionaria, chiamano gli operai ad applaudire Azagna, il capo dell'*Azione repubblicana*, e vanno fino a proporre (a simiglianza di quanto avvenne in tutti gli altri paesi), di rifare con lui l'esperienza dei governi di coalizione (blocco operaio-borghese).

E in Italia? Dopo la caduta di De Rivera, seguita da quella di re Alfonso, pagine e pagine della letteratura staliniana vennero consacrate a spiegare che «niente di simile a quanto era accaduto in Spagna poteva avvenire in Italia». Oggi, questa stessa gente, con la stessa serietà e convinzione, va al Congresso di Bruxelles a bandire la parola d'ordine di «Via Mussolini» giungendo fino a promettere il suo appoggio e la sua collaborazione ad un eventuale «governo popolare», genere Lerroux-Zamora-Prieto. Correggiamo: in realtà i socialisti spagnuoli si mostrarono più esigenti, impegnandosi a dare il loro appoggio *solo* a un Governo repubblicano: mentre gli omenoni dello stalinismo italiano, più giudiziosi e più «ministrables», scartano ogni pregiudiziale repubblicana per non allarmare (per non spaventare) gli antifascisti monarchici e cattolici. Il che è un passo ancora più indietro della defunta Concentrazione Antifascista; un ritorno bello e buono all'Aventino.

Che cosa fu infatti l'Aventino se non una prima edizione del «fronte popolare»? Con la sola differenza che i comunisti, senza mettere mai allora sullo stesso piano Aventino e fascismo, combatterono a quell'epoca le illusioni del «fronte popolare»; mentre oggi la frazione staliniana se ne fa addirittura garante. Quello che l'Aventino ci regalò, è noto: un rafforzamento del fascismo, le leggi eccezionali... Quanto a noi, restiamo ancora oggi dell'opinione che gli operai non devono lasciarsi attirare dagli specchietti aventinisti di vecchia e recente fabbricazione. *Alla politica del fronte popolare neutro, al di sopra delle classi, gli operai debbono opporre la politica del fronte unico leninista.* Ricordiamo qui ancora l'esempio più chiaro di questa politica.

All'epoca della sollevazione di Kornilof (minaccia reazionaria paragonabile al fascismo), la «rivoluzione di Kerenski» (la democrazia) si trova in pericolo. Che fare? Lenin si leva contro coloro che pongono sullo stesso piano Kerenski e Kornilof e non vedono *quello che vi è di cambiato* nella situazione, e contro quelli che vanno «fino a far blocco con i socialisti rivoluzionari, fino a sostenere il Governo di Kerenski»; si leva insomma contro le *due* politiche: del social-fascismo e del fronte popolare, seguite a volta a volta in questi ultimi decenni dagli staliniani.

«Andare fino a far blocco con i socialisti rivoluzionari, fino a sostenere il Governo provvisorio (Kerenski) significa — dice Lenin — far prova di una assoluta mancanza di principi... Come, ci si dirà, bisogna combattere Kornilof? *Ben inteso, tra combattere Kornilof e sostenere Kerenski c'è una differenza, c'è un limite: e questo limite è oltrepassato da certi bolscevichi, cadendo nel 'conciliazionismo'*». E quale tattica indicava Lenin? Porre in primo piano *la guerra attiva* contro Kornilof, *non* il rovesciamento immediato di Kerenski. Ma svelando le oscillazioni e le debolezze di Kerenski nel condurre la guerra contro Kornilof, Lenin apriva la via al rovesciamento di Kerenski e alla rivoluzione proletaria. «Bisogna, diceva Lenin, condurre la guerra contro Kornilof *da rivoluzionari*, trascinando le masse, sollevandole, infiammandole. Ora, Kerenski *ha paura* delle masse, ha paura del popolo». Traduciamo in termini odierni le parole di Lenin. È chiaro che *la guerra contro il fascismo è al primo piano* e che non si tratta di *lotta immediata* per il potere proletario. Ma, ecco il principale, come ha da condursi questa lotta? Non certo mettendosi a rimorchio dei democratici pacifisti: ma da rivoluzionari, «*trascinando le masse, sollevandole, infiammandole*». Fanno questo i partiti staliniani? No. Essi sono oggi sulle posizioni del «conciliazionismo» (fronte popolare), a rimorchio di democratici e pacifisti borghesi. Come questi ultimi, *essi hanno paura* delle masse, cioè della guerra civile (i fatti di Brest e di Tolone insegnano). I comunisti hanno sconfessato gli operai scesi in lotta e hanno attribuito a provocatori (sic!) il loro movimento classista.

Bisogna uscire dal «conciliazionismo», dalla politica senza sesso del fronte popolare e porsi sul terreno della *guerra attiva*, di classe indicata da Lenin, «sollevando, infiammando le masse». Come?

1 - Chiamando in Italia le masse a lottare per gli *obiettivi parziali e generali* da noi indicati innanzi; 2 - dando alle masse una organizzazione di *Comitati di Azione* (embrioni di Soviet), eletti da esse stesse (comitati di operai, contadini, artigiani, *soldati*); 3- stringendo *accordi pratici*, in alto e alla base, per ogni azione rivolta ad armare il popolo e a sollevarlo contro il fascismo; 4 - conservando la *piena indipendenza* dell'avanguardia proletaria (né blocchi, dunque, né cartelli); 5 - esercitando la *critica severa* delle debolezze e delle oscillazioni dei propri *alleati*.

Sono queste le regole tattiche che devono ispirare la politica di fronte unico e di alleanza dell'avanguardia proletaria con le altre formazioni dell'anti-fascismo.

VI – L'atteggiamento del proletariato di fronte alle «sanzioni» della SdN

La lotta dell'imperialismo italiano per l'Abissinia non ha soltanto la sua origine nella crisi interna acutissima del paese. Basta pensare alle complicazioni che essa ha provocato con la Società delle Nazioni per rendersi conto della sua portata internazionale. Anzi, si può dire che il carattere reazionario, *imperialista* della guerra intrapresa dall'Italia in Africa non risulta chiaro ed evidente che alla luce delle competizioni e rivalità dei diversi imperialismi intorno all'Abissinia.

Abbiamo già visto che la borghesia italiana è arrivata assai *tardi* nel mondo; quando già le altre Potenze imperialiste (Francia, Inghilterra) o si erano già spartite buona parte dei diversi continenti o erano in via di estendere i frutti della loro rapina. Per rifarsi del ritardo, la borghesia italiana intraprese la guerra d'Africa di Crispi, l'occupazione della Libia con Giolitti; entrò in seguito nella guerra mondiale. I risultati non hanno però cambiato molto alla situazione dell'Italia rimasta, anche dopo la guerra mondiale, tributaria delle grandi Potenze detentrici delle «chiavi» del mondo. Le stesse promesse fatte a Salandra (trattato di Londra del 1915) per decidere l'Italia a schierarsi con l'Intesa, si verificarono, a guerra terminata, prive di effetto.

Il fascismo, come ha sfruttato le «disillusioni della pace», cerca ora di sfruttare le «illusioni della guerra» condotta, esso dice, per riparare a una «ingiustizia sanguinosa». L'ingiustizia cioè di essere stati «mal serviti» nella spartizione del bottino acquistato con la vittoria sulla Germania. Secondo i calcoli di Roma, l'ora pareva finalmente arrivata per sanare questi «torti». L'avvento di Hitler e il riarmo della Germania, provocando con la rovina completa del sistema di Versailles, una nuova situazione internazionale, aveva fatto nascere nei governanti di Roma la speranza di poter utilizzare questa situazione a proprio profitto mercanteggiando la propria mediazione a volta a volta con Parigi e con Berlino, con Mosca e con Londra. Gli

«accordi di Roma» di Laval (approvati, sia detto incidentalmente, dai socialisti francesi), e il «patto a tre» di Stresa (esaltato da Litvinof come il fronte della pace), parvero avvalorare questi calcoli. I precedenti del Giappone in Mancuria e del Chaco stavano d'altra parte a incoraggiare. Ma, alla prova dei Fatti, *Roma si è completamente sbagliata nei confronti di Londra*. Sulla via dell'Abissinia è sorto un ostacolo che Roma non prevedeva o col quale male aveva fatto i conti: l'ostacolo dell'imperialismo inglese. Le ragioni per spiegare questa resistenza inglese non mancano, anzi, sono molteplici: diffidenza accresciuta di Londra di fronte alla alleanza franco-italiana; necessità per l'impero inglese di conservare la padronanza multidentaria del Mediterraneo che assicura la via delle Indie e dei possessi africani; necessità di politica interna (pressione popolare per «la pace»); necessità di politica coloniale (simulacro di protezione dei popoli deboli contro l'«aggressore»). In breve: l'imperialismo inglese può conseguire rispetto al suo rivale di Roma questo risultato record: l'unione nazionale all'interno (dai conservatori ai laburisti ai comunisti), l'accordo di tutti i paesi rappresentati a Ginevra per condannare l'«aggressore» (l'Italia). E infine, le sanzioni. Ciò che avviene per la prima volta da quando Wilson gettò le basi per la Società di Ginevra.

Qui ora nasce il problema: il proletariato deve rivedere il suo atteggiamento di fronte alla Società delle Nazioni (società dei «briganti imperialisti» secondo gli statuti dell'Internazionale Comunista)? Il proletariato deve sostenere o combattere la mistificazione di Ginevra? Il fatto che l'URSS siede oggi a Ginevra, costrettavi dalla situazione internazionale che gli errori dei suoi dirigenti hanno contribuito a creare, non significa punto che la Società delle Nazioni ha mutato la sua *natura imperialista*. E allora il proletariato rispetto ad essa non cessa di avere il dovere che esso ha di fronte a qualunque Stato o gruppo di imperialisti; cioè *combatterla, non collaborare* con essa. Che fa invece l'Internazionale comunista? Muovendosi cauta sulle orme di Litvinof, l'Internazionale comunista non denuncia più l'atteggiamento servile della Seconda Internazionale «strumento» della Società di Ginevra; essa si limita a dire che l'Internazionale socialista «non si deve accontentare dell'orientamento *esclusivo* verso le

misure della SdN», le sanzioni, ma deve ricordarsi *anche* della lotta operaia». *Anche?* Ma i capi socialisti non dicono nulla di diverso. Jouhaux ha invitato gli operai a tenersi pronti per applicare le sanzioni di Ginevra, prima ancora che queste venissero ufficialmente decise. E agendo in questo modo essi fanno quello che hanno sempre fatto in passato: collaborare con i Governi imperialisti. Se si fa l'una cosa: sostenere le sanzioni dei Governi imperialisti, non si fa, non si può fare l'altra: sviluppare la lotta operaia, *il boicottaggio rivoluzionario*. Le due cose sono inconciliabili. Allo stesso modo che Vandervelde non può conciliare la sua collaborazione al Governo con la lotta operaia, se non *sabotando* la lotta operaia.

Per sviluppare, dunque, la lotta operaia internazionale, il boicottaggio rivoluzionario (che ha sempre la tendenza a culminare nello sciopero generale come fu da noi lo sciopero del 21 luglio a favore della Russia), bisogna non associarsi, ma opporsi alle manovre e mistificazioni imperialiste di Ginevra. Perciò è necessario:

1) combattere la politica di spoliazione e di oppressione coloniale di tutti gli Stati capitalisti;

2) denunciare il carattere imperialista della Società delle Nazioni la quale, anziché «organizzare la pace», secondo il suo ipocrita programma, ha portato il mondo alla soglia di una nuova conflagrazione mondiale;

3) combattere la menzogna della pace sotto il capitalismo (non si può organizzare la pace senza abbattere il capitalismo, senza la trasformazione socialista del mondo);

4) combattere la menzogna di Stati imperialisti «pacifici» e Stati imperialisti «guerrieri». La differenza, se una differenza si vuol stabilire tra Stati imperialisti «pacifici» e Stati imperialisti «guerrieri», sta in ciò: che gli uni vogliono conservare la «pace» del loro bottino, mentre gli altri agognano ad averne una parte. Ma sia gli uni, quelli che vogliono conservare lo statu quo, sia gli altri, che anelano a crearne uno nuovo, preparano la guerra gareggiando nella corsa agli armamenti. (Il primo risultato ottenuto dal sanzionismo «pacifista» da parte dei conservatori inglesi è stato di farsi votare nuovi crediti per nuovi armamenti.)

5) Combattere la menzogna dell'«aggressore». L'aggressore è l'imperialismo che genera il fascismo e la guerra. «*La questione di sapere quale è il gruppo che ha portato il primo colpo o che ha dichiarato per primo la guerra, non ha alcuna importanza per la determinazione della tattica dei socialisti*» nei confronti di ogni guerra imperialista (Tesi del Partito bolscevico russo del 29 marzo 1915). Nelle guerre nazionali dei popoli oppressi contro il giogo di Potenze imperialiste, l'aggressore sta dalla parte dell'oppressore imperialista anche quando l'iniziativa della guerra è presa da quei popoli. (Caso della guerra del Marocco contro la Francia.) La commedia di Ginevra per definire il 5 ottobre l'«aggressore» nell'Italia è servita solo a meglio preparare l'attacco dell'imperialismo romano contro il popolo abissino. E nella misura che il Negus ha permesso e favorito questa commedia, egli si è fatto uno strumento più o meno consapevole del gioco imperialista contro il suo popolo. (Il che naturalmente non muta in niente il sostegno che il proletariato internazionale deve dare al popolo abissino.)

Anche nel caso di guerre intraprese per salvaguardare le conquiste del proletariato al potere, malgrado il carattere *offensivo* che queste guerre presentano, esse non hanno in realtà che un carattere *di difesa*. Poiché il proletariato è, come i popoli oppressi, in *stato permanente di difesa* contro il giogo imperialista, nazionalmente e internazionalmente.

Il proletariato, dunque, non è contro *tutte* le guerre: è contro tutte le guerre il cui carattere reazionario è dato dalle mire imperialiste; quale appunto la guerra di Roma.

6) Combattere la guerra espansionista di Roma, non vuol dire approvare e sostenere i Governi imperialisti sanzionisti. Il proletariato deve sviluppare il *boicottaggio rivoluzionario*, cioè la propria azione indipendente e contro Roma, e contro i Governi imperialisti «sanzionisti». Le sanzioni non sono che misure di guerra di banditi contro altri banditi. I proletari non possono parteggiare per l'un gruppo contro l'altro gruppo di banditi. Il compito dei proletari, quando i banditi si battono, è di trarne profitto per rafforzare la propria lotta di classe.

Ogni vittoria riportata dai proletari francesi e inglesi sulla propria borghesia, aiuterà veramente i proletari italiani ad affrettare la disfatta del fascismo. Noi

potremo dire in casa nostra: guardate ai vostri compagni degli altri paesi; fate come essi fanno; organizzatevi e lottate. Non date nessuna cooperazione alla resistenza contro le sanzioni. Cooperando alla resistenza, voi aiutate i vostri boia. Le sanzioni, come i cannoni, come i gas asfissianti, fanno parte delle armi di guerra. Approfittate delle difficoltà create dalle sanzioni per indebolire e abbattere il Governo di Roma, per finirla con il regime capitalista, generatore della fame, del fascismo, della guerra, per far passare infine la nostra riscossa, la riscossa socialista.

VII – Il problema fondamentale: il partito della classe operaia

Senza partito della rivoluzione le migliori possibilità rivoluzionarie possono essere perdute per la classe operaia. Questo insegnamento, scritto a caratteri di fuoco e di sangue dai proletari italiani nel 1919-1920, ha ricevuto nuove e dolorose dimostrazioni dalle esperienze tedesca, austriaca, spagnuola.

Ora, il Partito Comunista d'Italia, la cui nascita consentiva legittimamente tutte le speranze del proletariato italiano, asservito sempre maggiormente alla burocrazia sovietista (che non può confondersi con la Rivoluzione di Ottobre), è passato attraverso tutte le fasi di degenerazione di marciame politico che hanno colpito a morte la Terza Internazionale guidata da Stalin. Al punto che oggi, come abbiamo visto, questo Partito comunista, che doveva essere il partito della classe rivoluzionaria, è venuto trasformandosi in sostenitore di un Governo di coalizione operaio-borghese sotto l'insegna di «Governo popolare». *La rivoluzione proletaria non può organizzarsi sotto la guida di una direzione bancarottiera.* Oggi più che mai la soluzione del problema strategico fondamentale per preparare e assicurare la vittoria del proletariato in Italia, risiede nella creazione del *Partito della rivoluzione*. Questa esigenza è riconosciuta indirettamente dai capi stessi del Partito Socialista e comunista quando essi pongono il problema *dell'unità organica*. Ciò significa che *i capi socialisti e comunisti riconoscono che i vecchi partiti sono incapaci di assolvere alla funzione di unificare il proletariato e di portarlo al potere.* Ma questo problema, di una portata storica eccezionale, è forse risolvibile con semplici espedienti di organizzazione, mediante *la fusione* dei due partiti

socialista e comunista? Va da sé che si tratta anche di un problema di organizzazione: l'essenziale però è di vedere quali sono i *principi* che si pongono a base di questa organizzazione. Se la «fusione» significa l'amalgama degli errori dei due partiti, socialista e comunista, secondo la comoda teoria che gli errori non avrebbero maggiore importanza del «naso di Cleopatra» nella storia; se per unità si intende una specie di amnistia reciproca delle due burocrazie, staliniana e socialriformista, è evidente che una tale unità non può farsi che a detrimento della classe operaia. Del resto, un tale tipo di unità esiste. Il cosiddetto «patto di unità d'azione» non è altro, in effetti, che la carta di un «Partito unico» in cui i due partiti, socialista e comunista, agiscono come due Federazioni alla base, ma aventi *una direzione unica mista*. Una tale «unità» anziché condurci alla azione, è solo capace di agire da freno di essa. E ben lo si vede in Francia dove il patto di «pacificazione» social-comunista è valso finora soltanto a fare il gioco di Laval il quale ha potuto applicare senza incontrare resistenza di sorta i suoi decreti di fame, mentre lascia ai fascisti (e gli italiani ne sanno per esperienza qualcosa) tutto il campo libero per esercitarsi alla «guerra civile» contro gli operai.

Un'altra conferma della necessità che il problema del Partito sia posto in primo piano, si trova nella corrente che *dall'Italia* si è espressa nella rivista «Politica Socialista» con la formula del «Partito in formazione». In formazione, significa che *la classe operaia manca attualmente del suo partito di classe*, del suo partito di governo. Esistono dei *tronconi*, degli *elementi* dispersi (troppi tronconi, troppo elementi sparsi) i quali racchiudono, ognuno di essi, *una parte viva e importante della ricca esperienza rivoluzionaria dell'avanguardia proletaria italiana*.

Agiscono contro gli interessi della classe operaia e della rivoluzione italiana coloro che si oppongono a *far rivivere questa esperienza creativa in un autentico partito proletario basato sui principi del marxismo rivoluzionario (leninismo) retto da una sana democrazia operaia*. Radunare tutte le forze operaie rivoluzionarie. Lottare per l'unità delle file rivoluzionarie sulla base di una vera politica marxista. L'unità senza una giusta politica marxista è la unità dell'impotenza. L'esempio del Partito socialista italiano nel 1919-1920 lo

ricordi. I proletari italiani non hanno bisogno di rifare questo simulacro di unità: essi hanno bisogno di una unità rivoluzionaria. Perché questa unità sia resa possibile, occorre abbattere tutte le barriere innalzate da anni di menzogne e di calunnie e dagli interessi materiali delle gerarchie burocratizzate. Il Partito della classe operaia sarà vittorioso se è il Partito della verità e del disinteresse rivoluzionario.

Questo Partito della vittoria operaia e socialista non potrà sorgere e formarsi, malgrado tutto, che sotto la bandiera della IV Internazionale, la bandiera del bolscevismo internazionale.

Novembre 1935

41. J. P. Martin, Ce qui est le Bureau de Londres. Les “sapistes” italiens pour les sanctions impérialistes¹

Il y a un vieux dicton: «Dis moi qui tu fréquentes, et je te dirai qui tu es». En d'autres termes: en politique on est responsable non seulement de soi-même, mais aussi de ses propres alliés. Le Bureau de Londres ne peut faire exception à cette règle.

Les maximalistes italiens sont un petit groupe de vieux émigrés, dont la seule tradition consiste dans un verbalisme révolutionnaire, cause principale de la défaite ouvrière en Italie. L'attitude qu'ont pris les maximalistes devant le grave problème des sanctions de Genève ne mériterait donc pas grande attention, s'ils ne constituaient la section italienne du fameux Bureau de Londres, soi-disant «international et internationaliste». Voyons comment son internationalisme se traduit dans la pratique. Car c'est dans la pratique, c'est-à-dire dans l'action, que l'internationalisme véritable se distingue de l'internationalisme en phrases vagues et sentimentales.

¹ *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 6, Décembre 1935. Altre pubblicazioni: *Der Maximalisten, Unser Wort*, IV.3 Februar 1936.

La guerre en Ethiopie, c'est ou cela devrait être pour les prolétaires l'exemple de ce que sera demain la grande guerre. Elle n'est pas une guerre du fascisme, mais une guerre impérialiste. Le fascisme et la guerre ne sont que deux manifestations de la crise capitaliste, de l'impérialisme. Combattre le fascisme et la guerre signifie combattre la cause qui les engendre: l'impérialisme.

Les vieux Partis ouvriers italiens, les partis de la IIème et de la IIIème Internationale, ayant à leur remorque les maximalistes, ont pris l'initiative de convoquer un «Congrès des italiens à l'étranger», d'où est sorti un soi-disant «Comité d'action», dans lequel sont représentés les trois partis mentionnés. La ligne de ce congrès et de ce comité consiste à démontrer que seule la folie de Mussolini est responsable de la guerre en Ethiopie et que par conséquent les sanctions décidées par Genève ne sont pas dirigées contre le peuple italien, mais contre le fascisme. Citons textuellement:

«C'est contre les responsables de la guerre, c'est contre le fascisme agresseur que les sanctions sont appliquées – non contre le peuple italien».

«Les sanctions sont destinées à tuer la guerre infâme et désastreuse dans laquelle le fascisme a jeté l'Italie – non à étrangler économiquement le peuple italien».

«Voilà pourquoi les organisations ouvrières, la population travailleuse de tous les pays... sont partout les plus tenaces et sérieux soutiens des sanctions contre le fascisme agresseur. Ils ont imposé à leur propre gouvernement et à la S.D.N. l'application des sanctions», etc. etc. (Appel signé par le Comité contre la guerre, dont font partie socialistes, communistes et maximalistes; paru dans l'Avanti! maximaliste du 1^{er} décembre 1935)¹.

Que pense le Bureau de Londres, que pense l'I.L.P. de cet audacieux mensonge de leurs amis italiens, d'après lesquels «les organisations ouvrières sont partout les plus tenaces soutiens de sanctions»? Partout? L'I.L.P. aussi? Le S.A.P. aussi? Le parti de Maurin aussi? Partout, il est vrai, les sections de la IIème et de la IIIème Internationale se sont mises à la remorque de la

¹ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

S.D.N. et des gouvernements impérialistes sanctionnistes. Il faut déduire que le Bureau de Londres ou bien partage cette même attitude, en couvrant ses affiliés italiens, ou bien n'est qu'une maison dont l'enseigne pourrait bien être: Dieu pour tous, et chacun pour soi. On peut dire, en général qu'il est les deux choses à la fois.

Quant à notre attitude vis-à-vis des sanctions, elle est connue: dénoncer la comédie sanglante des sanctions, de même que les marxistes ont partout dénoncé la comédie du désarmement. Les sanctions sont comme les gaz, les canons, les avions, de moyens de lutte des impérialistes. Les prolétaires n'ont pas à choisir entre les uns ou les autres. Notre mot d'ordre est: boycottage révolutionnaire. Or, on ne peut pas développer une action indépendante du prolétariat, tant que l'on est à la remorque de la S.D.N. On ne peut pas combiner la grève générale et la collaboration ministérielle de Vandervelde. On ne peut pas non plus combiner la lutte ouvrière internationale et la collaboration de l'Internationale de Staline avec la bourgeoisie impérialiste de Genève. Une attitude est inconciliable avec l'autre.

Ce n'est qu'en développant l'action autonome du prolétariat international que nous pourrions apporter une aide efficace à la lutte du peuple italien et du peuple abyssin contre l'impérialisme fasciste. Nous pouvons dire et nous disons au peuple italien:

- Les sanctions? Oui, elles sont des mesures de guerre de bandits contre d'autres bandits. Mais pour combattre les sanctions, il faut commencer par le nettoyage de sa propre maison: aucune coopération pour résister aux sanctions; mais profitons-en pour abattre nos propres exploiters. Faites comme vos frères font en France, en Angleterre, etc. Organisez-vous, lutez pour vous libérer vous-mêmes. A bas le brigandage colonial. Indépendance de l'Egypte. Indépendance de tous les peuples opprimés.

Tandis que, en se faisant les soutiens des gouvernements impérialistes «sanctionnistes», les organisations ouvrières donnent à Mussolini la possibilité de dire: - voyez ce que font les organisations ouvrières à

l'étranger: elles laissent massacrer sans souffler mot le peuple égyptien, mais elles soutiennent l'impérialisme anglais contre nous, parce que nous demandons un peu plus de place au soleil pour nos fils. - La démagogie fasciste est alimentée et soutenue par la trahison des organisations ouvrières qui sont à la remorque de la S.D.N. Il faut combattre et dénoncer cette trahison pour aider vraiment le peuple italien à battre le fascisme et à s'émanciper.

L'internationalisme prolétarien est incompatible avec toute collaboration avec la bourgeoisie impérialiste. Seule la IV^{ème} Internationale continue la tradition de l'internationalisme prolétarien.

Le 10 décembre 1935

42. Leonetti a Trotsky, 12 décembre 1935¹

A' part je vous envoie notre petite brochure: «La guerre d'Afrique et les tâches du prolétariat italien»². J'espère que vos connaissances d'italien vous permettront de la lire et de nous faire avoir, éventuellement, vos remarques. Mais le but de la présente lettre c'est un autre; c'est de vous entretenir sur l'étape présente du travail de l'essi et de la IV Internationale.

1. Nous sommes arrivés en tant que S.I. à un moment où il nous est possible d'avancer et de progresser seulement dans la mesure que nous devenons la fraction la plus active dans le travail pour la IV. Or, voilà bien de temps que la «lettre ouverte» a été publié. Nous devons, en toute objectivité, reconnaître que si des progrès et des succès importants ont été obtenus (le Congrès de l'Hollande ce n'est pas le moindre) il faut aussi dire que des occasions très favorables ont été négligées pour mettre en avant la IV Internationale. Je cite deux faits seulement: le VII Congrès du Komintern; la guerre de l'Ethiopie. Ni sur l'un, ni sur l'autre, les signataires

¹ EP2716.

² Si veda il documento (40).

de la «Lettre ouverte» ont donné un document quelconque. Des articles, oui; des déclarations; mais la «IV» en tant que centre international n'a pas parlé.

Et pourtant, nous avons là de belles occasions, pour notre lutte contre la «deuxième» et la «troisième» – aussi bien que contre l'I.A.G. En effet, le Bureau de Londres porte la responsabilité pour ses agents italiens, les maximalistes, qui sont à la remorque des socialistes et staliniens italiens, enfoncées dans la mare des «sanctions». (J'ai donné sur cela un article pour notre presse internationale¹). Seulement les b.l. ont pris un attitude correcte vis à vis de la guerre. Mais il faut maintenant en tirer tout le bénéfice pour la «IV». Ce qu'on dit de la guerre, on doit dire du «front populaire». [...] La guerre de l'Ethiopie a prouvé que tant que les organisations ouvrières restent dans les mains d'opportunistes – deuxième, troisième, 2½ (Londres) – pas de lutte possible contre la guerre [...]

43. Leonetti pour le Secrétariat International de la LCI (BL) au RSAP (Hollande) et au WPUS (USA), 6 janvier 1936²

L'attitude des IIème et IIIème Internationales dans la question de la guerre Italo-abyssine a démontré une fois de plus la nécessité pour l'avant-garde prolétarienne mondiale d'avoir sur tous les problèmes de la guerre un point de vue clair et précis. [...]

¹ Si veda il documento (41).

² EP14368.

44. Le Bureau de Londres et la guerre italo-éthiopienne¹

Dans le No 2 (nouvelle série) de janvier 1936 du Bulletin du Bureau International [pour l'Unité révolutionnaire-socialiste], A. F. B. [A. Fenner-Brockway] affirme que

«l'opposition contre les sanctions de la S.d.N. est menée presque dans tous les pays par le parti affilié au B.I.»².

A. F. B. – secrétaire responsable du B.I. – ignore-t-il donc que sa propre «section italienne» (le Parti Maximaliste) a signé avec le Parti Socialiste italien (IIème Internationale) et le Parti Communiste italien (IIIème Internationale) un appel commun dans lequel on demande à la S.d.N. d'étendre les sanctions et explique au peuple italien que «les sanctions» ne sont nullement une arme de lutte de l'impérialisme anglais contre l'impérialisme rival italien, mas un moyen de «paix» (sic!). Si le B.I. connaît de la même façon la vie et la politique des autres sections affiliées à lui, il faut avouer que le B.I. de Londres est vraiment bien renseigné de ce qui se passe dans le mouvement ouvrier des différents pays!

A. F. B. demande des faits. Les voici:

Le Parti Maximaliste italien fait partie intégrante d'un «Comité d'action contre la guerre en Afrique». L'action de ce comité consiste à lancer des appels en faveur de la politique de la S.d.N. N'importe quel échantillon de ces appels suffit à le prouver. Au moment du projet Laval-Hoare, un appel de ce comité (dont font partie les maximalistes) a été lancé en s'adressant «vivement à tous les peuples, 1) afin d'exercer une pression énergique sur leurs propres gouvernements pour que la S.d.N. repousse» un tel projet (Hoare-Laval); 2) afin que «des organisations ouvrières de tous les pays, par l'application des sanctions à tous les produits qui servent à la guerre, en imposent la cessation et empêchent le fascisme de faire croire au peuple trompé que les sanctions soient dirigées contre lui, tandis qu'elles

¹ *Service de presse de la LCI (B-L)*, mai 1936; in forma ridotta in *Bulletin de la LCI (B-L)*, n. 7-8, mai 1936.

² L'articolo è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

servent à arrêter la guerre»¹. (Avanti!, organe des maximalistes italiens du 22 décembre 1935).

Et encore des faits!

Le 12 et 13 octobre 1935, dans la Maison du Peuple de Bruxelles a eu lieu un soi-disant «Congrès des italiens». Les maximalistes italiens sont parmi les préparateurs de ce congrès, dont l'appel² se conclut ainsi:

«Il (le congrès) invoque la solidarité de tous les peuples frères, etc. et à la S.d.N. l'application des sanctions pour faire cesser la guerre».

Ce même congrès (préparé et réalisé avec l'aide des maximalistes) envoie à M. Bénès, président de la S.d.N., un télégramme où il est dit:

«le congrès etc...

constate avec la satisfaction la plus grande que le Conseil de la S.d.N. dans la condamnation de l'agresseur a nettement distingué les responsabilités du gouvernement fasciste de celles du peuple italien;

certain d'interpréter la pensée authentique du peuple italien, le Congrès déclare que c'est le devoir de la S.d.N... d'ériger une barrière insurmontable à la guerre et il s'engage à soutenir les mesures... prises par la S.d.N., etc.

Et toujours des faits:

Le 18 novembre, au moment de l'entrée en vigueur des sanctions décidées par la S.d.N., le fameux Comité élu au Congrès de Bruxelles (dont les maximalistes sont des représentants actifs) a lancé un nouvel appel³, où on peut lire:

«Les sanctions sont destinées à briser la guerre infâme... si elles sont sévèrement et universellement appliquées, elles seront le salut de l'Italie (sic!)».

Que dire encore? Il est vraiment étonnant que le B.I. de Londres ignore ce que font ses propres affiliés.

Bureau de presse du S.I. de la L.C.I. (B.-L.)

¹ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

² L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

³ L'appello è riprodotto nell'Appendice.

45. A Letter from Italy. Nationalist Maniacs Driving Nation Through War into Collapse and Ruin¹

According to a recent dispatch from Italy, Vesuvius is again belching forth flames and the inhabitants of Naples, who live under its shadow, fear an impending eruption. Nothing could be more symbolic of the present state of affairs under Mussolini. The Fascist regime caps a fiery furnace of unrest, which not only exerts tremendous pressure upon it, but may, in the not very far future, explode and blow it to bits.

The Ethiopian Campaign

Mussolini ordered the Ethiopian adventure for two reasons. First, as the beginning of his long-promised campaign to secure the colonial empire that Italian capital was cheated of after the last war. Second, as an outlet for the energies of the unemployed and as a means of diverting the domestic discontent created by the crisis into imperialist channels. Colonial expeditions and foreign wars are time-honored expedients of ruling classes to turn the attention of the masses from their misery. Decaying capitalism, whether of the democratic or fascist variety, can solve the problem of permanent unemployment in only one way: by conscripting the jobless into labor armies as in Germany, C.C.C. camps as in the United States, or into actual fighting forces as in Italy.

To date Il Duce has failed to accomplish either end. Ethiopia is not yet in his clutches. The war in Ethiopia has been in progress for half a year. While foreign military experts disagree as to the extent of the Italian successes, it is clear that the Ethiopians have not been subjugated; Abyssinia remains unconquered. Although the Italian armies have advanced steadily into the interior and scored numerous victories, they have not met the Ethiopians in any decisive engagements nor have they penetrated beyond the dangerous mountain passes into the heart of the country. With the rainy season close at hand, the campaign must come to a halt. At least another year will be necessary before the Fascists can claim Ethiopia as their own.

¹ *The New Militant*, Vol. II No. 13, 4 April 1936.

The Situation at Home

Meanwhile life does not stand still either at home or in the international arena. Far from ameliorating the conditions of the masses, the war has aggravated their sufferings. Patriotic fervor is a poor substitute for bread and clothing. The internal situation grows more acute with every passing day. Storm clouds of dissatisfaction with the apparently hopeless policies of the government are gathering, not only among the workers in the cities and country, but among other classes of the population, extending even into the directing circles.

In order to carry on the war, Mussolini is being compelled to tighten the straitjacket Fascism clamps upon the national economy. First the big banks were put under rigid governmental control; now Il Duce threatens to do the same to the key industries needed for armaments. Italian capitalism is being forced to sacrifice its last measure of freedom to the Fascist state in order to preserve the existing regime, and, above all, its own existence. Finance capital must pay a heavy price for its police protection. That is one reason why it «prefers», if possible, bourgeois democracy. It is cheaper in the long run. Mussolini's recent edicts concerning the nationalization of the banks and of key industries are not in the least steps towards socialism, as bourgeois commentators have claimed. They represent the final flowering of state capitalism, the consummation of the marriage between monopoly capitalism and state power. The whole of Italian economy must be put on a military basis, not only to ensure its perpetuation, but as preparation for the world war ahead. «The wheels of destiny», declared Mussolini, «run fast. The inevitability of the nation's being called on to face another war... must guide all our actions».

According to all reports, the application of sanctions has severely crippled Italian economy. The small industrialists have suffered heavily from the imposition of sanctions. They have been shut out of their foreign markets and find it increasingly difficult to obtain necessary supplies and raw materials.

The Plight of the Masses

The burdens of the war, however, have fallen most heavily upon the working and consuming masses. Even before the war, Italian standards of living were among the lowest of all capitalist countries in Europe. Since the war the cost of living has increased over fifty percent and the end of the process is not yet in sight.

The following letter recently received from an Italian comrade throws a glaring light upon the conditions of the workers. We quote in part:

«In answer to your request for information about the present situation in Italy, and especially life among the industrial workers, I send you the following from my own observations in Naples, an industrial center and the scene of the embarkations for Ethiopia.

«First, a few figures concerning wages and living conditions. As you know, the average wage of the Italian worker under Fascism has been among the lowest in all Europe. With the worker's card obtained by membership in the Fascist syndicate (and without such a card a worker is virtually blacklisted and finds it almost impossible to secure a job), workers are paid a minimum of 13½ cents an hour (reckoning the lire at 8 cents). A skilled worker may earn as much as 22½ cents an hour. However, modern industry does not require many skilled workers, and only about ten percent can be placed in this latter category. The average wage, from the statistics I was able to gather on the spot (official statistics are notoriously unreliable) for an Italian worker may be placed at about 16 cents an hour.

«The average weekly earnings of a factory worker would, then, amount to about \$6.40. Women workers earn from 7½ to 10 cents an hour. Clerical workers, stenographers, etc., from \$16 to \$32 a month. Engineers get from \$64 to \$96 a month. Department heads up to \$112 a month.

«As an instance of the earnings in the upper levels, here is the monthly pay envelope of a shop foreman superintending the work of 40 skilled mechanics. This man is about 45 years old, has been in the service of the same firm for 13 years, and represents a sort of labor aristocracy.

Salary	\$ 70.00
Overtime (about 85 hours this month)	39.00

Total monthly salary	109.00
(from which is deducted):	
Income Tax (8½%)	9.25
Dues to Fascist Syndicate	.40
Total direct taxes	9.65
Net income for month	99.35

«When there is no overtime, his net income falls to \$63 a month.

«Fascist officials proudly point to the fact that Italy was one of the first countries to adopt a forty-hour week. This is, of course, a complete fraud from the worker's standpoint. Since the forty-hour week was instituted without any corresponding increase in hourly pay, it was not wanted by the workers, who find themselves unable to earn enough to support themselves and their families, unless they are "lucky" enough to work many hours overtime. It is nothing but the Fascist version of your Hoover's "share-the-work" program.

«Bearing in mind that the average weekly pay envelope of an industrial worker is \$6.40, let us look at the prevailing prices for the necessities of life. (Since this data was collected, prices have gone up by about 25 percent without any raise in wages.)

Bread (1 pound)	\$.06.3
Macaroni (1 pound)	.09.1
Meat (1 pound)	.47.5
Butter (1 pound)	.51.0
Vegetables (1 pound)	.10.9
Eggs (1 dozen)	.96.0
Milk (1 quart)	.12.0
Coffee (1 pound)	2.80.0
Sugar (1 pound)	.24.0
Oil (1 quart)	.56.0
Cheese (1 pound)	.62.4
Salami (1 pound)	.72.5
Light and Gas (1 month)	4.80.0
Rent (1 month – 2 rooms)	

and kitchenette)

16.00.0

«The daily requirements of a family of five for decent living without amusements or clothing I estimate to be about \$2.18 a day, or \$15.26 a week. With the average income of the wage-earner at \$6.40 for a forty-hour week this family has to do without meat, butter, eggs, wine, coffee, sugar, cheese, salami, or oil. This will give you an idea of the deprivations endured by the workers and their families. I could safely say that over half the inhabitants of Naples are hungry half the time.

«This is by no means all. For five months now, workers have been forbidden to quit their jobs on penalty of losing their syndicate cards. They can however as before be fired at the will of their employers. This system of labor conscription has been given an appearance of equality and a legal covering by the provision that the bosses must first get permission to discharge from the Fascist syndicate, but in my experience I have not known of any cases where permission was refused. It is a mere formality and subterfuge. This has all the advantages of chattel slavery without any of its disadvantages. And the Italian workers are asked to support the war and enlist in the army in order to abolish slavery in Ethiopia!

«Why do the workers endure such intolerable conditions? They cannot for the time being do otherwise. The pervasive system of espionage and the governmental terror make it impossible for them to speak out openly against their oppressors or to strike at them. They bear their burdens with clenched teeth and closed fist.

The Opposition Movement

«So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is almost 110 organized opposition working underground against the regime among the workers. There were a number of small revolutionary groups, organized in groups of five, operating in the utmost secrecy a few years ago. But police agents succeeded in worming their way into them: broke them up; and the revolutionists are now in prison or on the penal islands.

«Many of the older workers remember the occupations of the factories during 1921-22 and retain their Socialist convictions. The younger

generation, however, I regret to report, that has been brought up under the present regime and stuffed with Fascist propaganda, are greatly confused by Mussolini's demagoguery. They have had no Socialist education, are taken in by his anti-capitalist utterances; and more or less believe that the empty fist he waves at the capitalists will be brought down upon them and used to crush them. But they will learn from their own bitter experience what Fascism really is.

«I wish I could convey to you the extent of the espionage system. It is the cement that holds the regime together. Spies are everywhere in the factories, in the restaurants, etc. Agents provocateurs are constantly at work ferreting out opponents of the regime. People are extremely distrustful of one another and especially of strangers.

«The application of sanctions by England has given the government a heaven-sent opportunity to direct the wrath of the masses against England. But this patriotic fervor is beginning to die down, despite the frantic efforts of the Fascists to keep it at white heat. People are beginning to wonder and ask: How long can this last? Where will it end? What are we getting out of it Mussolini's only answer is: tighten your belts and prepare for another and bigger war.

«There are rumors of friction between the army high command and the Fascist party tops. There is no question but that cracks are appearing and widening in all directions within the regime, although as yet they are carefully covered up.

«In my opinion, the critical time will come with the return of the troops from Ethiopia. Mussolini now has over 300,000 men under arms in Africa and a million in Italy. He cannot demobilize them without the greatest dangers to himself. Perhaps, it will not be necessary for him to do so. The new world war is so perilously close».

The prolongation of the Ethiopian campaign, the effects of the economic sanctions, the heavy expenses of the war, the growing discontent among all ranks of the people, the tenseness in the international situation undermine the stability of the Fascist state and drives Mussolini on to increasingly desperate measures. Il Duce's days are

numbered. But «whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad». Into what bloodier adventures will he drag the Italian people before his doom is sealed?

46. Trotsky, On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo. A Letter to an English Comrade¹

Dear Comrade:

It is with great astonishment that I read the report of the conference of the Independent Labour Party in the *New Leader* of April 17, 1936². I really never entertained any illusions about the Pacifist Parliamentarians who run the I.L.P. But their political position and their whole conduct at the conference exceed even those bounds that can usually be expected of them. I am sure that you and your friends have drawn approximately the same conclusions as we have here. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from making several observations.

1. Maxton and the others opine that the Italo-Ethiopian war is «a conflict between two rival dictators». To these politicians it appears that this fact relieves the proletariat of the duty of making a choice between two dictators. They thus define the character of the war by the political *form* of the state, in the course of which they themselves regard this political form in a quite superficial and purely descriptive manner, without taking into consideration the social foundations of both «dictatorships». A dictator can also play a very progressive role in history; for example, Oliver Cromwell,

¹ *The New Internationalist*, June 1936. In francese: *Oeuvres* 9:205-210.

² Il congresso dell'ILP decise di tenere un plebiscito nel partito per decidere la posizione da adottare nei confronti della guerra italo-etiopica, e decise la pubblicazione di un numero speciale della rivista dell'ILP, *Controversy*, per approfondire e ampliare le discussioni avute al congresso. Nell'Appendice è riprodotto integralmente questo numero speciale, apparso nel maggio 1936, eccetto l'intervento di C. L. James, riportato invece nella sezione dei Documenti delle sezioni nazionali.

Robespierre, etc. On the other hand, right in the midst of the English democracy Lloyd George exercised a highly reactionary dictatorship during the war. Should a dictator place himself at the head of the next uprising of the Indian people in order to smash the British yoke – would Maxton then refuse this dictator his support? Yes or no? If not, why does he refuse his support to the Ethiopian «dictator» who is attempting to cast off the Italian yoke?

If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of fascism, the strengthening of imperialism, and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus, however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this.

2. McGovern puts the «poor little Ethiopia» of 1935 on the same level with the «poor little Belgium» of 1914; in both cases it means support of war. Well, «poor little Belgium» has ten million slaves in Africa, whereas the Ethiopian people are fighting in order not to be the slaves of Italy. Belgium was and remains a link of the European imperialist chain. Ethiopia is only a victim of imperialist appetites. Putting the two cases on the same plane is the sheerest nonsense.

On the other hand, to take up the defence of Ethiopia against Italy in no way means to encourage British imperialism to make war. At one time this is just what was very well demonstrated in several articles in the *New Leader*. McGovern's conclusion that it should have been the I.L.P.'s task «to stand aside from quarrels between dictators», is an exemplary model of the spiritual and moral impotence of pacifism.

3. The most shameful thing of all, however, only comes after the voting. After the conference had rejected the scandalous pacifist quackery by a vote of 70 to 57, the tender pacifist Maxton put the revolver of an ultimatum at the breast of the conference and forced a new decision by a vote of 93 to 39. So we see that there are dictators not only in Rome and in Addis Abeba, but also in London. And of the three dictators, I consider most harmful the one who grabs his own party by the throat in the name of

his parliamentary prestige and his pacifist confusion. A party that tolerates such conduct is not a revolutionary party; for if it surrenders (or «postpones») its principled position on a highly important and topical question because of threats of resignation made by Maxton, then at the decisive moment it will never withstand the immeasurably mightier pressure of the bourgeoisie.

4. By an overwhelming majority, the conference forbade the existence of groups inside the party. Good! But in whose name did Maxton put an ultimatum to the conference? In the name of the parliamentary group which regards the party machine as its private property and which actually represents the only faction that should have been sharply beaten into respect for the democratic decisions of the party. A party which dissolves the oppositional groups but lets the ruling clique do as it jolly well pleases is not a revolutionary party. It will not be able to lead the Proletariat to victory.

5. Fenner Brockway's position on this question is a highly instructive example of the political and moral insufficiency of centrism. Fenner Brockway was lucky enough to adopt a correct point of view on an important question, a view that coincides with ours. The difference lies in this, however, that we Marxists really mean the thing seriously. To Fenner Brockway, on the other hand, it is a matter of something «incidental». He believes it is better for the British workers to have Maxton as chairman with a false point of view than to have a correct point of view without Maxton. That is the fate of centrism – to consider the incidental thing serious and the serious thing incidental. That's why centrism should never be taken seriously.

6. On the question of the International, the old confusion was once more approved, despite the obvious bankruptcy of the previous perspective. In any case, nothing more is said about an «invitation» from the Third International. But the centrist doesn't take anything seriously. Even when he now admits that there is no longer a proletarian International, he nevertheless hesitates to build one up. Why? Because he has no principles.

Because he can't have any. For if he but once makes the sober attempt to adopt a principled position on only one important question, he

promptly receives an ultimatum from the right and starts to back down. How can he think of a rounded-out revolutionary program under such circumstances? He then expresses his spiritual and moral helplessness in the form of profound aphorisms, that the new International must come «from the development of socialist movements», that is, from the historical process, which really ought to produce something some day. This dubiously has various ways, however: it has even got to the point of reducing the Lenin International to the level of the Second. Proletarian revolutionists should therefore strike out on their own path, that is, work out the program of the new International and, basing themselves on the *favourable* tendencies of the historical process, help this program gain prevalence.

7. Fenner Brockway, after his lamentable capitulation to Maxton, found his courage again in struggle against the undersigned. He, Brockway, cannot allow a new International to be constructed from «the heights of Oslo». I leave aside the fact that I do not live in Oslo and that, besides, Oslo is not situated on heights. The principles which I defend in common with many thousand comrades bear absolutely no local or geographical character. They are Marxian and international. They are formulated, expounded, and defended in theses, pamphlets, and books. If Fenner Brockway finds these principles to be false, let him put his own up against them. We are always ready to be taught better. But unfortunately Fenner Brockway cannot venture into this field, for he has just turned over to Maxton that oh so paltry parcel of principles. That is why there is nothing left for him to do save to make merry about the «heights of Oslo», wherein he promptly commits a threefold mistake: with respect to my address, to the topography of the Norwegian capital, and, last but not least, to the fundamental principles of international action.

My conclusions? The cause of the I.L.P. seems to me to be hopeless. The thirty-nine delegates who, despite the failure of the Fenner Brockway faction, did not surrender to Maxton's ultimatum must seek ways of

preparing a truly revolutionary party for the British proletariat. It can stand only under the banner of the Fourth International.

Leon Trotsky

April 22, 1936

Documenti delle sezioni nazionali

Workers Party of U.S.

(Doc. 1) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 12, 9 March 1935

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

Italy's Colonial Drive

With French and British acquiescence, Mussolini has found a “safe” outlet for the war spirit rabidly fostered by his constant waving of the sword. Emulating the fable of the wolf and the lamb, Il Duce is not to be placated even by the most extreme and abject concessions on the part of the Abyssinians. He is determined to make Ethiopia part of the Italian colonial empire, in accordance with the secret treaty of 1915 that won Italy to the side of the allies in the World War. Gold and oil (the latter recently discovered) are not the only lures drawing Italian imperialism on. Italy has an unfavorable trade balance contributed to by the need for importing food supplies as well as raw materials. Mussolini hopes that the new African colony will help to correct this chronic condition of Italian trade. Besides Italian economy is in a profound crisis and capitalism knows no other means for solving the economic impasse except to resort to war. Unable to bring about the recovery of a decaying system, fascism is forced to turn outwards beyond the national borders in a desperate attempt to start the wheels of industry going by the creation of the destructive demands of war. The Abyssinians were able to beat off the previous attempt made by Italy to subjugate Ethiopia in the war of 1895. But the modern methods of mass destruction leave the backward negro nation utterly helpless to meet attack by an advanced nation.

(Doc. 2) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 26, 15 June 1935

ITALIANS MUTINY AS MOBILIZATION GIVES NATION JUMP

LONDON (FP). — Present military mobilization in Italy is being accompanied by a great deal of rioting and mutiny, private letters received in London by persons with friends or relatives in the Italian army reveal.

Authentic reports relate that in one town, women rushed into the barracks and attempted to drag their sons away, crying: «We don't want our sons to go to be killed».

In another town, soldiers marching in the streets shouted back at the crowds who cheered them. Their replies were the equivalent of «Yeah, why don't you go and fight? We don't want to».

In other towns streets were absolutely barren and silent as the soldiers march to concentration points.

The German propaganda office is said to have issued instructions to all papers that no mention be made of mutinies during the Italian mobilization.

Italy is betting on the outbreak of war in Europe before she becomes hopelessly involved in the Abyssinian adventure, according to *The Week*, a privately published and circulated newspaper in London noted for its ability in forecasting events.

(Doc. 3) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 28, 6 July 1935

**Italy Prepares Ethiopia Rape, Mussolini Says
Dynamite in Situation May Explode in New World War**

By MARTIN A. GLEE

From official sources, writes the London correspondent of the New York Times, it has been learned that Mussolini has told the British envoy, Sir Anthony Eden, that «nothing could prevent Italy from going to war With Ethiopia in October». Arnaldo Cortesi, writing from Rome, says: «If there was any doubt that hostilities (against Ethiopia) would begin in a couple of months there is none now».

The war against Ethiopia may well turn out to be the precursor of the next world massacre. Let us recall once again that it was the Italo-Turkish war of 1911 which was the precursive signal of the last world war. Italy's designs on Ethiopia are pregnant with dire consequences for the world working class. For it is they who will be called upon to suffer a thousand tortures in a thousand different sections of the globe – when the next world war starts.

To understand more clearly the designs of western imperialism on this primitive kingdom in Africa, it is necessary to go back a bit; to establish the position of Ethiopia on the dark continent and to focus attention on the imperialist powers having a «direct interest» in the matter by virtue of boundaries – Italy, France and England.

In eastern Africa lies the kingdom of Ethiopia, popularly but erroneously referred to as Abyssinia. (Of the many tribes that go to make up the empire of Haile Selasie I, the Abyssinians are the most culturally compact, unified and politically and socially advanced. Hence the usual reference to Abyssinia when one is in reality speaking of all of Ethiopia). It has a population of about 11,000,000 in an area approximating 350,000 square miles. The chief industry is agriculture with breeding taking second place. The exports, the chief articles of which are wax, ivory and animal

skins, do not amount to very much. Imports which amount to about 10,000,000 dollars yearly are made up chiefly of cotton, sugar, oil, etc. Recently it has been discovered that Ethiopia is probably rich in important natural resources such as gold, silver, iron, etc.

But that which has led to conflict in the past and which is most likely a great contributing factor to the present turmoil is the fact that Ethiopia is completely surrounded by «neighbors» without an outlet of its own to the sea and that in its interior lies Lake Tsana from which rises the headwaters of the Blue Nile that water the fertile cotton regions of the British controlled Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. As close as is possible to give boundary lines without a map, Ethiopia is bounded on the North by Eritrea (Italian); on the East by French and British Somaliland; on the South by Italian Somaliland and the west by the Anglo-Egyptian-Sudan. France permits the use of its railroad which is Ethiopia's only connecting link with the sea, running from Addis Ababa to Djibuti, a French possession.

Only the other day England was ready to grant Haile Selassie an outlet to the sea through its Somaliland, in an effort to arbitrate the Italo-Ethiopian differences, but Italy balked.

Britain's Stake

England's concern in the matter, its offer for an outlet to the sea and gratuitous grants of land in Ethiopia proper to Italy – besides its game on the European continent – can be understood only if the strategic importance of imperialist hegemony over the Lake Tsana region is taken into consideration. As stated before, it is from this region that rises the waters which makes of British-controlled territory in Eastern Africa so economically valuable a possession. Pacts and agreements have been in existence for decades and only recently it has been reaffirmed that no dams be constructed in the Lake region which might impair the flow of water to its neighboring territory. The gobbling up of Ethiopia by any, of the imperialist powers involved would give it a strategic importance in the entire of eastern Africa.

The question might well be asked: how is it that, granting its strategic importance, no power has seen fit to conquer this territory? First, it can be answered, it is not so easily conquerable. Or rather it wasn't. Probably with ultramodern instruments of warfare, Ethiopia could be licked. It must be remembered that Italy has already suffered a shameful defeat at the hands of these backward tribesmen at the close of the century.

And secondly, and probably most Important of all, is the need of keeping a black Christian buffer state to counteract the sentiments of the rest of the native Africans who are Mohammedans. It was just this fact that scotched the ambitions of the Mad Mullah, a number of decades ago, who started a movement to drive the Christian imperialists out of Africa. This undoubtedly the powers, particularly that power which has had the most experience in imperialist conquest, Great Britain, has well understood.

Mussolini's Alibi

The so-called cause for the present conflict is the result of a series of border incidents along Eritrea some months ago. Some Italian soldiers were found dead, killed perhaps by Ethiopian soldiers. But the facts already brought out prove that these Italian soldiers were killed sixty miles within the Ethiopian boundaries, which if one were to go in for this aggression and aggressed business, would certainly prove Italy the aggressor.

Italy used this incident, however, as the nub around which to start long desired operations. Anyhow, Il Duce argued, Abyssinia needs civilizing, Italy needs room for its people to expand, a modern power needs colonies and the Italian people need to satisfy a long standing insult to national pride. All of which means Italy wants Ethiopia.

But Italy cannot go it alone. At least for any length of time. Britain and France are directly involved. From a little distance so are Japan and Germany. So far France is pretty well lined up with Italy and has been driven even still closer as the result of the Anglo-German naval treaty which France considered an affront. England's efforts at arbitration have so far proved futile. The League of Nations to which Ethiopia has been constantly appealing has merely put the matter off, arguing benignly, that since war on

a real scale cannot: start until after the rainy season (fall), it would table the matter till then.

Meanwhile Italy has shipped thousands of troops and tons of supplies to Africa. In the past few months Italian troops have been laying roads in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland in preparation for war. France, standing by Italy, has barred ammunition from reaching Addis Ababa, which as we have shown above she could well do.

No Help from Litvinoff

In this connection it might have been expected that one voice in the League of Nations would have spoken up in behalf of the impoverished little nation in colonial Africa – the voice of Maxim Litvinoff who represents the Soviet Union in the League. But not a peep out of him, except to so profusely and slavishly congratulate Sir Anthony Eden for his wise decision to postpone the matter until «after the rainy season» as even to make Sir Anthony blush. In this connection, too, the world is still awaiting the answer to the telegram sent Litvinoff by Mr. Williams, assistant secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The telegram reads as follows:

«Why has Soviet Russia, though you as Foreign Minister and President League Council, remained silent Italian-Ethiopian situation? Has Russia abandoned Its alleged opposition to imperialism and its much publicized defense of weaker peoples? Does your anti-imperialism stop at black nations? Await your reply».

A war against Ethiopia by Italy will not be a purely African affair, or an Italo-Ethiopian affair. Even if it starts thus, it will not end so. Too many imperialist powers have their fingers in the pudding. The liberal jittering that Mussolini, as usual, is only blustering are false and disarming. It may well prove to be a test of how secure is the inner regime of a modern imperialist power since the abject collapse of the Third International. France's backing of Italy, in light of the Franco-Soviet pact, will compromise the Soviet Union in the eyes of the world proletariat unless a resounding call – which

is highly improbable – be issued to the world working class to demand hands off Ethiopia.

England has been drawn closer and closer to Germany in recent days. Hitler's «drang nach osten» may soon take on fearful reality. Japan is consciously contriving one act of provocation after another against the Soviet Union. While occupied in writing this, a late evening paper brings the news that serious skirmishes are already taking place on the Ethiopian front with «heavy casualties» reported. The next world war looms large on the horizon. More than ever must the working class be prepared.

More than ever must we reaffirm the revolutionary slogans: «Turn the imperialist war into civil war, The enemy is in our own country».

(Doc. 4-6) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 29, 13 July 1935

Powers Yield to Italy's Aggression in Ethiopia

II Duce Moves for Conquest in September

'White Man's Burden' Alibi for Fascist Exploitation

By MARTIN A. GLEE

The situation with regard Ethiopia grows more tense daily. Whereas it could be stated a few days ago that Italy's penetration into the kingdom of the Negus would not start until October; today reliable reports have it that operations will more than likely begin a month sooner.

As the usually well-informed Mr. Frederick T. Birchall of the London bureau of the Times puts it:

«The last hope of averting a military attack by Italy upon Ethiopia faded out today». His reference is to the fact that the meeting of the conciliation commission appointed by the League of Nations, broke up when the Italian delegation refused so much as to listen to the statements

of the Ethiopian delegate who insisted on establishing the fact that Ual Ual, the scene of the first clash, was within Ethiopian territory.

II Duce Ready for Action

So far as Italy is concerned the negotiations are over and dead. II Duce is now completely occupied with the strengthening of his forces in Africa, building his army up to about 250,000 (already about 150,000 Italian soldiers are encamped in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland). Moreover, Italy is compelled to prepare a sufficient water supply for drinking purposes, provision its African commissaries with food and medical supplies and continue road improvements for military purposes. For this she is compelled to wait a month or two longer. Besides, the rainy season will not begin subsiding until the early fall.

All of which means that Italy is prepared to strike now. The reply of Washington to the Ethiopian note was grist to Mussolini's mill. The apparent change of front on the part of England, in reconciling herself to the Italian adventure, can possibly be explained by the fact that Italy has assured Great Britain that it will not deflect the waters of Lake Tsana toward its own territory and that it is ready to assume treaty obligations to that effect.

Wants Only a «Crumb»

Italy will probably attempt to connect its colonies bounding Ethiopia on the north and south by building a railroad and highway across the Ethiopian kingdom. This will greatly facilitate Mussolini's «civilizing» invaders reaching the capital, Addis Ababa, and taking complete control. Few more callous exhibitions of imperialistic methods of conquest could be cited unless one were to go back to the Boer War. One of the jingoes for the Italian Fascist press puts it neatly and unhyprocritically when he declares that «justice would require Britain, possessing the world's greatest colonial empire, to stand aside when Italy attempts to obtain a small crumb left over from Britain's gargantuan meal».

The «small crumb» is Ethiopia.

Despite the hypocritical talk of Washington that it expects the matter to be ironed out between the parties involved and that it sees no cause for alarm, Cornelius Van H. Engert, a shrewd expert of U. S. imperialism in the Far East has been shipped from his post in Egypt to become Charge d’Affaires and Consul General at Addis Ababa.

The question of Ethiopia comes up in the next day or two in the House of Commons in London. France is still standing by Italy. Germany and Japan look on with hawk-like attention.

The backward colonial country of Ethiopia stands like a sparrow with clipped wings surrounded by hungry cats on all sides and its one friend whom it has a right to rely on, the Soviet Union, does nothing because of a conservative bureaucracy at its top. Litvinov, in the League of Nations, remains silent!

**Shall Ethiopia Perish?
Against Italian Fascism, Negroes Are Fighting Battle of World
Proletariat**

The devouring flames of war are burning on two continents. In Northern Asia, the troops of Japanese imperialism continue their relentless drive to the west and the south in order to assuage the ruling caste’s rapacious appetite for an empire in Siberia and China. Afraid of bringing to its feet a powerful people’s movement that might mean its own, end, the pitiable Chinese bourgeoisie dampens the ardor of resistance of the masses and retreats precipitately before the Japanese invader.

And now the plains and mountainsides of Ethiopia are being approached as the scene of the Fascist war upon the last of even semi-independent countries on the African continent. Tens of thousands of Mussolini’s troops, equipped with the most modern machinery of warfare, are on the march against the Ethiopians, determined to subdue them as once Eritrea and Somaliland were subdued – to accomplish now with the

Fascist legions what they failed to do in the war upon Abyssinia towards the end of the last century.

The invasion is now generally recognized as inevitable. All talk about conciliation, about a peaceable settlement of the dispute, has been nothing more – it is now clear – than so much verbiage behind which Mussolini was taking all the measures necessary to dispatch to Africa an army which, when it reaches its full strength, will number some 200,000 men. From the Netherlands comes the official announcement that the Italo-Ethiopian Conciliation Commission has finally decided to adjourn its sessions indefinitely, after having met for two weeks, without coming to a conclusion. The whole matter is now referred to... the League of Nations.

And the League of Nations? What is to be expected from this «great instrument for peace»? Approximately the same result that was produced by it in the case of the war in the Gran Chaco; approximately the same result that was produced by it in the case of the appeal of ravished China against the brutal invasion by Japan.

For years the League of Nations has been advertized to the world as the only, «even if not entirely satisfactory» agency for the preservation of world peace. Each time it encountered a situation which brought new discredit upon it, it took care to take some new action which would restore its failing credit in the eyes of the masses. For a time, the assembled imperialist bandits covered their bristling armor with the solemn pledges of the Kellogg Pact which «renounced» aggression as an instrument of national policy. Where is the Kellogg Pact today – the pact to which both Italy and Ethiopia were signatories? A scrap of paper, a fraud, a deception, in other words, it is now what it was originally intended to be.

From its very inception, the League of Nations was given a high credit rating by the acting and would-be socialist ministers of the world. No less powerful a pillar of the Second International than Arthur Henderson, the leader of the British Labor Party, adorned its sessions and set its tone. Now that the Italian imperialists are preparing the brutal rape of a far weaker foe, where are the spokesmen of the Second International, the Messrs. Henderson and Vandervelde and all their political kinfolk? What is their

League of Nations doings, what does it intend to do, and what do they propose it shall do?

A year ago, the Stalinists drove the Soviet Union into the League of Nations. The self-admittedly beloved leader of the world proletariat, Stalin, told Walter Duranty that the League of Nations was at least a little bump in the road that would prevent war and help strengthen the «peace-loving» countries to preserve world order. What is the Stalin-Litvinov section of the League of Nations doing to defend the Ethiopian people from enslavement to the bastard descendants of the Roman emperors? Time was when the voice of the Soviet Union was heard in the most obscure hamlets of the world, ringing with challenge against imperialist aggression, ever vigorously articulate in behalf of the oppressed and exploited peoples, of the hundreds of millions of brown and black and yellow serfs of imperialism. That voice is now stilled! The Stalinist press is filled with delirious joy when it reports that M. Maxim Litvinov is chairman of this or that session of the Council of the League of Nations. It has not yet reported that he has uttered a single vigorous note of protest against the infamous villainies of Mussolini – to say nothing of a criticism of that ally of Fascist Italy in the Ethiopian expedition, France, which is at the same time the ally of the Soviet Union.

Neither Kellogg nor Laval, Henderson nor Litvinov, can cover up the true and quintessential nature of the League of Nations. The «thieves' kitchen of Geneva» remains what it was: an association of imperialist bandits for the preservation of capitalist slavery throughout the world. «Any impromptu activity at Geneva is improbable», writes the New York Times. «The League is in the worst dilemma of its career and sees no way out... Not only have the French and the British abandoned a humble fellow-member of the League to her fate, but the League itself is preparing to renew that policy of postponement and masterly inactivity that left China at Japan's mercy and the conflict in the Chaco to settle itself».

Notwithstanding, the case for Ethiopia is far from hopeless, and the prospects for the Fascist regime far from guaranteed. So far as the latter is concerned, it would be well for this murderous Bonapartist regime which seeks to solve its ever-increasing problems at home by foreign aggression,

to remember Sedan, Port Arthur and... Sadowa. The senseless slaughter of the French masses in 1870 in the hopeless campaign of the little Napoleon to smash Germany led to the uprising of the Parisian masses and the establishment of the immortal Commune. The wanton destruction of tens of thousands of Russian peasants to satisfy the imperialist lust of a degenerate Czar was succeeded by the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905, just as Kerensky's adventures on the western front in 1917 was followed by the great Bolshevik revolution. The present lord of the Palazzo Chigi might well recall at this time the fate of his equally audacious predecessor, the prime minister Crispi, who fell from power and into disgrace when the streets of Italy were filled with embittered soldiers returned from the humiliating defeat of Sadowa and clamoring for the heads of the criminals who had sent them to die on foreign plains.

And when he thinks of Sadowa, let him remember also that this is 1935 and not 1894. Ethiopia is not weaker, but stronger. Even though it is matched against an army of far superior technical strength, its own forces have an infinitely higher morale. They are fighting for their own independence, for their national integrity. And no longer are they armed merely with primitive spears and knives. We do not refer here to the comparatively insignificant fact that the Ethiopians now have a few thousand rifles and some machine guns. They have at their command – if they will but summon them to their aid – the millions upon millions of other natives of the Dark Continent who have produced fabulous wealth for world imperialism. By themselves, the Ethiopians are no match against the Italian forces, backed as they are by the active or passive support of other imperialist powers.

But they have allies. Their allies are the Italian workers and peasants who are under the Fascist lash, but who await only the moment when their taskmasters have encountered such difficulties as will enable the masses to attack them from the rear. Their allies are the workers of the entire world, whose foe is their foe, who have cause to hate and harry imperialism with the same bitterness and vigor as their African brothers. Their allies are the African masses themselves. Before the first Italian shot is fired, the black

and brown masses of the entire continent must be aroused in a sacred war against world imperialism and for their own liberation. When the Bantu in the south and the Berber in the north joins hands and masses rifle and spear with all the other imperialist slaves of Africa, then not only Italy, but France, and England, and Spain and Portugal – all the assassins and exploiters of the African peoples, will have cause to tremble for their empires and to regret the day they aroused the fettered titan.

Therein lies the hope of the Ethiopian people, on whose side we stand together with every honest and conscious working man and woman. Therein, further, is clearly implied our elementary duty. The Washington government has piously and impartially refused to furnish arms to «either side». It is, you see, neutral – that is, it will help neither the heavily armed butcher nor the virtually unarmed victim.

We are not «neutral». Heart and soul we are with the Ethiopian people in their defensive war against the Fascist invader. Heart and soul we are with the Italian masses who have languished for thirteen years in the great prison which the Fascist despots have erected, and from which they are now being conscripted to fight those with whom they have no quarrel, nor can have.

Throughout the length and breadth of the country, in every labor organization, let the voice of the American masses be heard in unmeasured condemnation of the cowardly Fascist butchers, in unmistakable solidarity with the courageous battlers against the enslavement of Ethiopia!

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

The War for Colonies

The general world crisis of capitalism of 1907 produced or rather intensified the fierce life and death struggle for colonies among the advanced imperialist countries. Each country hoped to prolong the

existence of the system of exploitation at home by attaining and exploiting larger controlled markets abroad. Thus the crisis of capitalism was transformed into the first world war in 1914. This war was preceded by «skirmishes» in various parts of the globe, particularly in Africa. In the so-called Moroccan crisis of 1911, the needs of German imperialism forced the Kaiser into the notorious Agadir incident that almost precipitated the war at that time.

Now again the general crisis of capitalism has sharpened all antagonisms and posed more sharply than ever before the contradiction between highly developed productive forces and closely restricted markets. To secure access to new markets the great powers find it necessary to prepare for war, one against the other, so as to break the grip of their rivals on the more desirable colonies. Japan proceeds steadily, as yet unchecked, with plundering of China – and America looks on waiting the opportune moment for intervening. Germany looks first of all to the East of its borders, to the Ukraine and to Central Europe, or the expansion that will save its capitalism from complete decline.

Italy has turned to an African adventure in Ethiopia for its share of plunder. In a general way Mussolini's attack on this African semi-colony may well be compared with the Agadir incident as the prelude to the second world war. It is not enough for fascism to prevent revolution at home with its complete destruction of the capitalist system of exploitation by the proletariat; that represents only the political condition for the continued existence of the bourgeoisie. Fascism knows no other way to solve its economic dilemma than the same methods pursued abroad that it pursues at home. Capitalism cannot exist without resort to plunder and warfare.

Ethiopia and the Powers

Italy did not begin its wolf's leap at Ethiopia without first securing the consent of England and France. All the present sham of British opposition and its «sounding out» the other powers in the League of Nations concerning the application of economic penalties and «sanctions» to put a stop to Italy's further measures, is characterized even in the

capitalist press as so much face-saving for its own masses. Of course it is also intended to wring other concessions from Mussolini for the British lion. What these are will probably not be known for some time. But one can hazard the guess, knowing the direction of English diplomacy at this time, that England is trying to separate Italy from France in order, the better to exert pressure on isolated France to split it away from the Soviet Union. A crusade against the Soviet Union would be least dangerous to England – or so its ruling class supposes – and would enable England to «recover» by becoming the workshop for supplying the needs of a war-torn Europe.

The abrupt and chilling reply of Roosevelt to the appeal of Ethiopia for the application of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris illustrates not merely that this country, under bourgeois rule, is no more interested in peace than any of the other powers, but that it is to the interest of America also not to become involved in complications in Europe and Africa when the ruling class here is forced to concentrate its entire attention on the knotty problem presented by Japanese penetration of China. Furthermore Italy's move at this time is a blow at Japan, just beginning its thrust toward Africa through Ethiopia. American capitalism is therefore somewhat sympathetic towards Mussolini.

Civilizing Ethiopia

The fascist leader, Il Duce, who found it unnecessary to hide his aims and methods when it was a matter of knifing the Italian proletariat, now employs the usual imperialist hypocrisy of carrying civilization to the conquered colony. Mussolini, enslaver of the entire Italian working class and the most hunger-stricken peasantry of Europe, will be the «Abraham Lincoln» of Ethiopia. He will «free» the large number of slaves held in bondage by the exploiting rulers of Abyssinia. He will «free» them from their present masters to place master and slave alike under the yoke of Italian capitalism. That is all that the bourgeoisie can carry to the colonies – a system of exploitation more intense, more cruel and costly in human life than any previous system. It is only the world proletariat that can bring real civilization to the colonies. When the workers throw off the yoke of

capitalism at home, they will at the same time strike off the chains of the colonial peoples. The proletarian revolution will not only destroy the bourgeois exploiters at home, but will aid in the destruction of the colonial ruling classes, feudal or bourgeois. It is as much the task of the workers to accomplish the freedom of the colonial peoples as their own.

(Doc. 7) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 30, 20 July 1935

**Africans Called to the Colors
'Better Die Free Than Live as Slaves,' Sellassie Says**

Tribesmen of all Ethiopia are prepared to drop the ploughshare and seize the sword to drive back the Fascist marauder and preserve the independence of their nation. To a man they responded to the battle cry of Haile Sellassie, who exhorted them with the appeal: «Better die free than live as slaves».

Meanwhile in Italy —

Close to two hundred thousand Italian troops are now in eastern Africa prepared to assume military operations against the legions of Haile Sellassie. Three hundred planes are being dispatched by Mussolini to overcome hazards of desert fighting. Corroding acid to burn the soles off the feet of the Ethiopian soldiers is being turned out in large quantities and shipped to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.

In the meanwhile Emperor Selasie is preparing his troops for the coming struggle which even the most sceptical declare will in all likelihood break out in September. In Europe the three imperialist powers most concerned, Italy, England and France, are busy finding an out for their little institution known as the League of Nations and dubbed by Lenin the «thieves kitchen of Geneva». The «thieves» seem to have come to an agreement and II Duce, it is reported, is preparing to fly to Africa to personally supervise the impending hostilities.

It is quite likely that Mussolini's proposed flight is motivated by more than personal ambition. Reports emanating from Italian territory in east Africa declare that demoralization is setting in among the troops stationed there. The fascist chief undoubtedly reckons that his presence there will help build up a declining morale. But the swamps and mosquitos and the heat may yet prove too much of a match for Mussolini's vocal cords.

Unquestionably England and France would much rather come to an agreement with Italy – even so far as granting it a complete protectorate over Ethiopia is concerned. Hostilities in Africa may prove too costly for both France and England. What these powers fear most is a colonial uprising that may well put an end to their imperialist domination forever.

The forthcoming meeting of the League of Nations is scheduled to take up the Ethiopian question. The attitude of England, France and Italy has already been expressed above. What will M. Litvinoff say – or do?

The unctuous Harry Gannes writing in the Daily Worker complains at the Social-democratic ministers in the Scandinavian cabinets not raising the issue of Ethiopia and taking a firm stand in defense of the people of Abyssinia. Yes, it is correct to demand of those old hands at social-patriotism that they take a stand on this question.

But what about the neophytes of the Stalinist school who have taken to social-patriotism with the zeal of an infidel coming late to Christ? What about the representative of the Soviet bureaucracy in the League of Nations? Haile Sellassie has appealed to him. Has he replied? Yes – his only statement on the Ethiopian question in the League of Imperialist Bandits was lavish praise for Sir Anthony Eden's proposals!

(Doc. 8) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 31, 27 July 1935

United Front on Ethiopia

The decision of the Workers Party to send delegates to a united front conference of New York labor organizations against the imperialist designs

of Mussolini upon the Ethiopian people, is in line with the whole position of our party. We stand pledged to a war to the end against Fascism, in Italy and everywhere else. We are always on the side of a colonial or semicolonial people in their efforts to preserve their independence from violation by any of the rapacious imperialist powers. We are committed firmly to the idea of the united front of all labor organizations in every progressive cause.

We are compelled, however, to register a sharp disagreement with the action of the united front conference, the initiative for which was taken by *La Stampa Libera*, a local Italian socialist newspaper. Our delegates to the conference proposed that an effort be made to broaden its scope and composition by inviting representatives of the Stalinist movement. The members and supporters of the Socialist party present in the united front, voted down our proposition on the grounds that, first, the Stalinists were professional disrupters and disloyal, and second, that their presence in the united front would militate against securing the support for the movement among the trade unions of the city.

The decision of the conference is not only highly regrettable, but it is based upon two entirely erroneous premises.

A united front, while not an all-saving institution which can solve all the problems of the working class, is a tremendous step in advance for the labor movement. That step will be stronger and will lead labor further along a triumphant road, if it is taken by the greatest possible number of labor organizations. In New York City, the Communist party represents many thousands of workers. Whether it represents them well or poorly, is for the moment beside the point, for the same question arises also in connection with the Socialist party. To exclude these workers from the united front, by refusing to have anything to do with the party which formally represents them, is to narrow the united front in an inadmissible manner.

Our attitude towards the Stalinists, their party, their program, their leadership, and their behavior in the general labor movement, is quite well known, and requires no repetition here. Our attitude towards the united front with this organization or that, is not, however, determined by our view of its principles or of the manner in which it proposes to lead the workers

in struggle against their class enemy. If this were to be the basis for the united front, it could never come into existence. The united front is based upon the idea that, however divergent may be the views of various organizations and parties on the final emancipation of the working class and the methods to be employed in attaining it, they are all ready to state their agreement on this or that concrete problem before the working class at a given moment. Such a problem is the defense of the Ethiopian people from the assault of Italian Fascism. Given this fact, it is the duty of every militant worker, and of every labor organization, to declare that on this minimum basis we can all come together and join forces.

The criticism of any united front movement must be directed primarily against those who declare themselves opposed to the inclusion of this or that group in the movement, and not against those who state their willingness to participate. If a party or group has disruptive or anti-working class motives in its declarations in favor of participating in the united front, that will very soon be demonstrated in action. In every case, the masses of the workers will learn by experience who is for a loyal united front of labor and who is against it. For our part, we do not fear the participation of the Stalinists in any united front. We have sufficient confidence in our own movement to believe that when our policies and conduct are contrasted with theirs, we shall not be the losers thereby. Moreover, no organization convinced of the superiority of its program and policies need fear the participation of any political opponent in such a collaboration.

It was precisely such a fear of publicly and honestly having a correct policy counterposed to their policy, that dictated to the Stalinists for a number of years their criminal policy of «social-Fascism» and «united front only from below», that is, no united front at all. It is a similar fear that has brought about the change in this policy and its conversion into the course towards «non-aggression pacts» in the united front, by means of which they seek to avoid the same criticisms that they escaped by excluding all other movements from their «united front» frauds of yesterday.

It does not speak well for the socialists controlling the New York united front in behalf of Ethiopia that they have picked up the not very

odorous policy against which we were compelled to fight so vigorously when it was put forth for years by the Stalinists. Be it advanced or defended by Stalinists or socialists, it is a course that divides the working class and weakens it in the face of its foes. High time it were discarded— for good.

(Doc. 9) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 32, 3 August 1935

Dark Clouds in Italy

Considerable significance may be attached to the report from Rome that the government has issued a decree permitting the Bank of Italy's gold reserve to fall below the statutory 40 percent coverage. The action is «unanimously interpreted in Italy», according to the Times correspondent, «especially in banking and Stock Exchange circles, as the thin end of a devaluation wedge». Of further significance is the fact that such fiscal measures usually taken when a government is exhausted after years of war comes in Italy before the war has even begun!

To this should be added another item in the report to the effect that the Fascist regime now finds itself owing foreign governments the sum of 500,000,000 lire (ap. \$4,000,000), for which it does not have on hand sufficient foreign currency and, payment for which would have to be made by digging into the gold reserves of the Bank of Italy.

If it is borne in mind that the rising debt has been incurred by the increasing purchases of materials abroad for the Italian preparations of war against Ethiopia, and that the impending «devaluation» hits directly at the living standards of the masses in Italy, a clearer picture is presented of the inseparable connection between Mussolini's African adventure and the prospects of mutiny behind the lines – at home!

The living conditions of the workers and peasants of Italy after more than a decade of Fascist sovereignty, are quite different from the glowing idyll depicted by the blackshirted demagogues prior to the march on Rome. Only a few years ago the League of Nations made public data which showed

that the standard of life of the Italian workers was close to if not actually the lowest on the European continent. The bourgeoisie of Italy owes a great debt of gratitude to Mussolini for having saved the profit system from being overthrown by the masses by the simple expedient of reducing the latter to the state of serfs, held under the yoke by the drawn pistol and the naked sabre.

The imminent outbreak of the war against the Ethiopians may, and does mean increased profits for the ruling class, as is already shown by the rise, in one day, of the shares of the largest Italian rayon concern from 401 to 410, of automobile shares from 394 to 401 and of mining shares from 188 to 193. But it means only increased misery and poverty for Italy's toilers. The «devaluation» which is inevitable as a result of the tremendous expenditures that will be required to keep a quarter of a million armed men in the field against the Ethiopians, means only a further rise in the cost of living which, under Fascism, is not going to be compensated by an increase in wages.

Mussolini is thus preparing for himself a defeat on two fronts. The subjugation of the Ethiopian people will not prove to be a simple matter, and will not be accomplished in a day, if at all. Every blow that the dark-skinned warriors deliver to the Fascist conscript army, will be an axe-blow at the legs of Mussolini's throne. Every depreciation of the standard of living of the masses at home will produce such an addition to the accumulated hatred for the regime as will ever more threaten its very existence.

Herein, once more, is shown the community of interests of the Italian masses and the Ethiopian peoples. They have one foe: Italian Fascism. Into this community of solidarity must enter the workers of the entire world. A death-blow to Italian Fascism will mean the beginning of the end of Fascism everywhere. It will restore the self-confidence and the militancy of the labor movement in every land. It will destroy the made pretensions to immortality of the assassins of the people. It will give a tremendous impulsion to the liberating movement the world over.

Ethiopia in the Thieves' Den

The struggle against Mussolini's robber attack on Ethiopia must be continued and intensified. It was, however, made clear at the meeting last week of the Council of the League of Nations that we do not have a case of a dastardly Fascist nation bent on plunder, on the one hand, and a group of noble, democratic capitalist powers seeking to make peace and to protect Ethiopia on the other hand.

France and Italy have pursued their imperialist designs in Africa for decades and specifically moved toward the parcelling out of the control, if not the ownership, of Ethiopia among themselves in 1908. England at the moment appears as the chief obstacle in the way of Italy's aggressive plans, largely because even potential control by Italy over Lake Tsana and the head waters of the blue Nile in Ethiopia would strike a blow at her cotton-growing program in the Sudan, and seriously interfere with other British plans for checkmating the United States and her other rivals. France appears as Italy's «friend» because that serves her interests in building up alliances to combat the effect of the British-German naval agreement, etc., against the day of inevitable war. But France will not for one moment consent to any action by Italy which might adversely affect her own colonial empire in Africa.

For the moment both Great Britain and France would like to prevent the outbreak of a life sized war in Africa because of the repercussions this would have among their own black, brown and yellow subjects, and because they are by no means as yet prepared for that general European or world war which must be the inevitable result of the outbreak of war in any important situation, if not immediately, then after a brief interval of months or years.

The object of delay by imperialist powers cannot possibly be based on peace and on the protection of small nations or colonial peoples. The object can only be to get a breathing space in which to line up their forces

for the next war and in the meantime carry forward the robbery of Ethiopia under the cloak of peace maneuvers and good intentions.

Thus the Council of the League of Nations decided, first, to appoint a fifth member on a commission to arbitrate the Ualual clash between Ethiopian and Italian troops. The commission is, however, net to take up questions of boundaries or the ownership of the territory in question but simply to determine who fired the first shot in the above incident. Second, the Council will meet again on September 4 to discuss the whole situation.

In the meantime no restrictions are placed on Italian war preparations and the negotiations on the really vital matters are to take place between Italy, France and Great Britain with Ethiopia excluded. Italy even abstained from voting on the motion to provide for another session of the League Council in September.

Maxim Litvinov, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, and now president of the League of Nations Council, hailed the announcement of these negotiations as «something the Council has learned with satisfaction». If Hitler Germany, for example, were anywhere today sending military forces thousands of miles away from Germany in preparation for a bare faced attack on a small nation, the Soviet Union would unquestionably have protested. The result of the present policies of the Comintern and of the foreign office of the Soviet Union under Stalinist leadership is that the Soviet Union has uttered no word of protest against the Italian adventure in Ethiopia. The Soviet Union is not «free» to do so long as the interests of its «ally» in the Franco-Soviet pact are for a «friendly» attitude toward Mussolini! The Negroes in the United States, colonial peoples throughout the world, those who enthusiastically join in demonstrations of the League Against War and Fascism against Italy, the Italians who want to see Mussolini's designs foiled and his regime smashed, will do well to take note of this significant fact and to draw the necessary conclusions.

Extend and intensify the struggle against the Fascist robber attack on Ethiopia! For the boycott of Fascist Italy! For the struggle against imperialism on every front!

(Doc. 11) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 34, 17 August 1935

Imperialist Ring Tightens Around Ethiopian Nation

By MARTIN A. GLEE

«You offer us the choice between assassination and suicide. We prefer the latter. At least, then, we shall be able to call out for help». These were virtually the last words spoken at the most recent session of the League of Nations Council, thrown into the teeth of the chairman of the Council, Maxim Litvinoff by the Ethiopian delegate, Jeze. And thus the matter stands to date. The choice offered Ethiopia by the imperialist bandits, aided and abetted by the representative of the Stalin bureaucracy is indeed that of «assassination or suicide». Which road will the kingdom of the Negus take? What can its people do under the circumstances? What solution will the bourgeoisie of France and England offer through its respective intermediaries, Laval and Eden? What solution to the problem of Ethiopia can we, the proletariat, suggest? These are questions which every person conscious of the seriousness of the situation is asking.

Pathetic Plea for Arms

From the viewpoint of his own particular interest, Haile Selassie is justified in demanding, in a special appeal to the League that he be permitted to import arms, to be in some measure prepared for the impending combat which is taking on day by day more the character of a horrifying reality.

Fascist troops are carrying on an unceasing penetration into the Italian territories bordering on Ethiopia. Already valuables are being transported to the French possession off Djibuti from Addis Ababa in fear of a sudden invasion. Considerably outranked in matters of war materials, supplies, etc., it is pathetic to hear Ethiopia's hopeless plea for equal rights to arms from the very people who control them.

As stated in previous issues of the NEW MILITANT, England would like to find an «amicable» solution to the problem. The reason being

that it fears the unleashing of a colonial war that may well put an end to British imperialist oppression in Africa. To a large extent that is the case with France, too. These two powers represent the largest holders of imperialist possessions in Africa. An Italian conflict may put an end to it all.

So Laval and Eden with the consent of Baron Aloisi will endeavor to come to some agreement for the «peaceful» partitioning of Ethiopia, even if they have to resort to the legality of applying treaties never recognized by Ethiopia and since repudiated by all concerned. However, even this effort may fail.

Italy is too far involved already. Some 250,000 troops are cooling their heels – if that were physically possible in arid Eritrea – waiting for orders to strike. Besides it does not seem likely that either France or Britain will grant Mussolini's demands for a political as well as economic protectorate. There is also the possibility that the three powers directly involved will decide to cut up and divide Ethiopia into three parts and thus again show to the world what an instrument for peace is the League of Nations. Maxim Litvinoff will again be able to offer his quack remedies for belligerent powers, the world will again have been made safe for peace and Stalin will rest at ease at the safeguarding of the status quo.

For a Soviet Italy

To a large extent Ethiopia stands with regard to the rest of the world in the same relation as some of the Russo-Asiatic nationalities stood with regard to Russia prior to the October revolution. Just as the Revolution emancipated the primitive, feudal and pre-feudal tribes of outlying Czarist Russia so today the emancipation of the Ethiopian people can be accomplished only by the world revolution. Concretely we mean that a Soviet Italy would be the best guarantor for a free and independent Ethiopia. Combined with a Soviet France and Britain the cultural and revolutionary development of Ethiopia would be absolutely assured.

Hence all our agitation and propaganda should be directed to those ends. While it would be impossible for us to reach the Ethiopian masses with proletarian propaganda, for the simple reason that there is no

proletariat there, we can and must reach the Italian laboring masses. A time limited boycott against Fascist Italy such as was proposed by the International Communist League and printed in a recent Issue of the NEW MILITANT is a concrete application of the task at hand. The boycott must however be so instituted as not to make a negative impression on the Italian proletariat It must be as effective in its message of class solidarity with our Italian brothers as in its defiance of II Duce.

It is important for the international boycott to get under way. Mussolini has made up his mind. The League of Nations, with Litvinoff at its head is only a cover for the international imperialist bandits. It is high time the international working class intervened.

(Doc. 12-13) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 35, 24 August 1935

**Europe Rocks on Brink of New World War
'Thieves Kitchen' Folds Up; Britain Capitulates
Duce Marches Full Speed to War in Africa
Only the International Working Class Can Defeat Him**

By MARTIN A. GLEE

Not since the year 1914 has the world been so close to an armed struggle for imperialist conquest as it is today. The stage is all set. Mussolini is prepared to strike. Nothing will stop him. Late reports record the news that an Italian consul has been shot in Ethiopia. The record of pre-August 4, 1914 is again blaring forth its raucous tunes: War! War! War!

The vain and impossible efforts of the League of Nations to stop war has again been proved to the hilt. The Franco-British-Italian «peace» committee has collapsed. It has been impossible to reconcile the irreconcilable. If Mussolini has not struck till now, it is not because of man-made agencies that has prevented him from so doing, rather it has been nature in the form of drenching rains and muddy trails that has kept II

Duce's belligerency at bay. But now the rainy season in Ethiopia is almost over. In September the rain-soaked clouds will clear. It is then that fascist Italy will attempt its conquest in East Africa.

British Hypocrisy

Here it is necessary to emphasize again that this conflict cannot be localized. Too much imperialist booty is at stake. Too many contending influences are at play. Britain, because it has most to lose from an Italian conquest of Ethiopia, has made every effort to content Mussolini with practically unlimited economic control of most of Ethiopia; but Mussolini wants all. So it is hoping for a speedy solution by Italy before the colonial masses of Africa are aroused and before the Italian masses at home throw off the yoke of Fascism. Hence its hastily convened Cabinet decision to let things remain as they are with the arms embargo against both Italy and Ethiopia standing. Such an embargo can only be an aid to Italy and a blow to Ethiopia. Italy has arms and means of manufacturing more. Ethiopia needs arms, has no means of manufacturing any and so the equilateral embargo is only a piece of Anglo-Saxon fakery disguised under the name of «equal justice for all».

Meanwhile the *Giornale D'Italia*, fascist mouthpiece, has declared that any effort at applying sanctions (penalties for treaty violations) by England will be treated as a declaration of war! French anxiety over the maintenance of the status quo in Europe, entirely favorable to her, accounts for her seeming neutrality with regard to Italy's desire in Africa. England's decision to leave the matter for League action on September 4, was probably due to just such pressure from France.

U. S. «Neutrality»

Italy's decision to act has already had its repercussions here in the United States. The «keep-the-U.S. out-of-war» crowd is going through the same antics as in the years immediately prior to 1917. The U. S. is going to be «neutral» for six months. In reality this «neutrality» is designed to benefit Italy. Neither the wolf nor the lamb shall be aided Is the proud decision.

That is, aided by federal means. For there is nothing in the bill to prevent private banking firms from extending loans nor industrialists from shipping non-warlike materials such as steel, scrap iron, etc. to whoever has the cash or the proper credit.

Under the heading, War Talk Aids Steel, in the Wall Street Section of the New York Times of August 22, we read the following:

«Although the Italo-Ethiopian controversy has managed to disarrange everything else, it appears that it is acting as a steadying influence on the iron and steel markets. The possibilities inherent in a conflict between those two nations have not been lost on those close to the trade. Because of difficulties in financing orders, Italy, formerly one of the heaviest importers of American scrap steel, has been absent from that market lately. However, it is indicated that the Mussolini government will return here for its metals – and with funds to finance its purchases».

No laws on the books of capitalism have as yet been enacted to keep steel manufacturers from selling their product.

War Preparations Everywhere.

Coincident with the events in Europe and East Africa the U. S. military machine is going through the most stupendous maneuvers ever undertaken in peace time. Blue armies equipped with all the accoutrements of modern warfare, ten-wheel tanks, poison gas, radio cars, bombers, etc. are fighting imaginary Red armies in an effort to test the war time strength and capacity of the standing army. Austria is already pledged to stand by Italy and has declared its readiness to stave off an attack by Hitler.

The question of utmost importance is: Can Italy withstand a protracted and long drawn out conflict? Elsewhere in this issue there is an analysis of the internal regime in Italy on the eve of the conflict. The misery of the Italian masses is unparalleled. The hunger belt cannot be squeezed any tighter. Add to that the horrors of war and the Italian masses may yet awaken and take advantage of Mussolini's desperate adventure in Ethiopia and put an end to fascism in Italy forever. But for that more than despair is needed. The masses indeed are desperate. What is needed is guidance and help from the outside world.

The Italian Workers Must Act

The cause of the people of Ethiopia is the cause of the Italian laboring masses. There is no conflict between them. Their goal is the same – liberation from fascism and imperialism. The Italian proletariat is being armed with physical instruments of destruction; to these arms must be added the arms of revolutionary ideology. Let the workers and peasants of Italy learn to use these arms against their own oppressors, their own exploiters – the ruling class of Italy.

It is necessary to show the Italian masses they are not alone; that the international working class will be behind them in their efforts to slough off the fascist scourge. Powerful demonstrations against fascism must be organized to bring this message to the exploited of Italy. In this connection it is necessary to speak out against the shameful manner in which the Socialist party, through its intermediary Valente, has permitted the united front movement against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia to peter out. The efforts of the Communist party on behalf of Ethiopia – setting aside days of prayer, etc. – are too disgusting to be worthy of too much comment here. The spectacle of Negro workers breaking up meetings of working class organizations speaking in the name of communism because of Litvinoff's despicable role in Geneva is Stalinism's contribution to the Italo-Ethiopian dispute.

A mighty united front movement must be set up to stem the fascist march on Ethiopia. The international boycott against fascist Italy must get under way. Time is short. Speed and decision is necessary. To the Italian masses we say: Turn Mussolini's war against Ethiopia into a civil war – the enemy is in your own country.

Shame!

Through the Daily Worker we are informed that Litvinoff, representing the Soviet Union in the League of Nations' Council voted for

the resolution to dismember Ethiopia, based on the 1906 robber treaty between Italy, Britain and France, «not because the Soviet Union approves of this treaty, but because the resolution contained a clause pledging Mussolini not to resort to force while the matter was pending, and thus set up an obstacle – no matter how small – to the fascist war plans».

And how is the world to know, we might ask, that the Soviet Union – or more correctly, the dominant Stalin regime – does not approve of this treaty? Where would be the place to proclaim this fact if not exactly where the last of the independent African republics pleaded its case? But that would not have been possible, says the *Daily Worker* because: «All Council resolutions have to be adopted unanimously». And so, the representative of the Workers' Fatherland joined with the imperialist brigands from the thieves kitchen at Geneva to offer Ethiopia the choice of assassination or suicide.

This closes the first chapter of the recent maneuvers for new imperialist conquests. It unfolded behind the scenes as well as at the front doors of the League of Nations characterized by Lenin as an insurance policy in which the victors mutually guarantee each other their prey. Mussolini replied with an emphatic NO to all the «generous» offers advanced by Litvinoff in his capacity as chairman of the Council. Now Mussolini is about to cast the die opening up the second chapter of actual warfare for the enslavement of Ethiopia.

Through the maneuvers making up this first chapter stands out most glaringly the shameful role played by Stalin's representative at Geneva, equalized only by the revolting hypocrisy of a MacDonald or a Henderson. Litvinoff voted for the resolution based on the imperialist robber treaty at the Council meeting held in July. But did this resolution «set up an obstacle to the Fascist war plans?». Or was Stalin correct when he asserted that «if the League is even the tiniest bump somewhat to slow down the drive toward war and help peace, then we are not against the League?». Obviously, history has again refuted Stalin. The League was not an obstacle and could not be an obstacle. On the contrary, decomposing, due to the impact of imperialist contradictions, the League furnishes today only a cover for the

vile games of bourgeois diplomacy in search for military allies to prepare the new slaughter. Mussolini, adamant in pursuit of his prey, used the League to help break down the competitive resistance of Britain and France. Stalin's representative, covering himself with the glorious name of the workers' fatherland, became a partner to this deceitful game.

This action of Litvinoff is not a mere incident for history to note and pass on to the order of the day. It must be understood as one link in a whole chain of policies pursued by the present day leaders of the Soviet Union. And it is fraught with dangers and treachery. Naturally this system of politics can have nothing in common with the example of the first victorious proletarian revolution, that still lives in the memory of the masses. In Lenin's time no doubt could ever be possible of the fact that the workers' republic, and that alone, championed the right of self-determination of small nations. Toward the brigands of imperialism the Soviet Union maintained an attitude of implacable hostility and it proclaimed this attitude in words and deeds.

Lenin had no objection to accepting potatoes and arms from the imperialist brigands when the Soviet Union was in need so long as this furthered the cause of the world revolution. In general there could be no objection to any endeavors of the Soviet government to utilize the antagonisms in the camp of the imperialists or even to make certain concessions of expediency. But the fundamental objective must remain the furthering of the proletarian revolution. For Stalinism this fundamental objective no longer exists. It has turned Lenin's formulae into political solidarity with the brigands of imperialism.

From the very beginning of the chain of events that have characterized the Stalinist foreign policy of the Soviet Union we sounded the alarm. The reliance on pacts with the bourgeoisie and the entry into the League of Nations could only arouse false hopes in the working masses. New illusions of reformism replaced the revolutionary objectives and served only to disarm the proletariat. From that position there was only a short distance to the final approval of the national defense of French imperialism as expressed in the Franco-Soviet pact. Viewed in this light the actions of

Litvinoff at Geneva with regard to the planned fascist plunder of Ethiopia, become entirely clear. This action was in perfect harmony with the foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy which is also the actual leadership of the Comintern. From the position of revolutionary internationalism characteristic of Lenin's time has now emerged the servile social patriotism of Stalin.

Now the war danger is advancing with seven league boots. This remains the life and death question for the masses of the people everywhere. It is the crucial test for all groupings and tendencies within the working class. The empty chatter about the League of Nations being an obstacle to fascist war plans has been blasted to the skies. Only the application of revolutionary methods of struggle against war can be of real significance.

It is necessary to draw a line and draw it sharply. Between the treacherous policy of solidarity and unanimity with the League Council coupled with alliances for national defense on the one hand and the Marxist position on the other, no compromise is possible. For Marxists the slogan remains: the enemy is in our own country. War is inherent in capitalism and the struggle against war is unthinkable without the struggle against one's own imperialism.

Of course, the Soviet Union is threatened in this developing war situation. But it would be an idle dream to place any hopes for its defense on the diplomatic games at Geneva or on military alliances with bourgeois powers. At the first opportunity these powers will strike their own most favorable military alliances and turn with full fury upon the Soviet Union.

As war approaches we sound the alarm once again. We emphasize: There can be no compromise between the policy of national defense and the position of struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by revolutionary assault. The former can lead only to a repetition of the shameful betrayal of 1914. The real struggle against war must proceed in implacable antagonism to all these forms of social patriotism and against the purveyors of these bourgeois illusions, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists.

(Doc. 14) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 36, 31 August 1935

Imperialist Carnage Awaits Mussolini's Raid on Ethiopia
POWERS READY
Boycott of Imperialist Italy Must Begin Now

International diplomacy is spinning its last threads in the web of imperialist intrigue around the kingdom of Ethiopia. While «neutrality» was being guaranteed effecting both Italy and Ethiopia, II Duce kept laying in war supplies and purchasing the raw materials necessary for the manufacture of arms and munitions. Boatloads of Italian troops are keeping up a steady traffic on the way to East Africa.

More than one quarter of a million men are now camped in the territories bordering on Ethiopia. Only the military command: ready, aim, fire, is needed to set off a conflagration that must inevitably bring all of humanity into a new world carnage.

In the meanwhile, Haile Selasie, king of the Negus, is mobilizing – if it could be called that – 750,000 men to stand off the Imperialist invasion.

Britain is sending war ships to the Suez Canal, Malta and other outlying naval stations in the war zone.

And Laval, with typical French polish and sophistication has unearthed a pretty euphemism for Mussolini's imperialist war of invasion, calling it a «colonial expedition».

Britain's Game

The greatest factor which has so far kept II Duce from his desired goal has unquestionably been the attitude of Great Britain. As stated previously in these columns England has too much to lose from a complete domination of Ethiopia by Italy. England wants absolute control for herself of the Lake Tsana region, source of the cotton wealth in the British controlled Egyptian Sudan.

France, too, would prefer a «peaceful» slicing apart of Ethiopia with each of the imperialist powers concerned getting «equitable» portions. Ethiopia remaining «nominally independent».

And so the League of Nations is to meet again on September 4. There France will endeavor to get Italy to see the broad, humanitarian way out of the conflict, by taking as much of Ethiopia «peacefully» as she could possibly get by war. For is not France a peace-loving country? It is Stalin has so declared it. And Herriot shall represent France in the debates on this question. Litvinoff will gain a worthy ally. For is not Herriot «a sincere friend of the Soviet Union?» So Stalin has stated. The imperialist spiders are waiting, aided and abetted by Stalin and Litvinoff who to this day have not uttered so much as a word either of warning to Italy or encouragement to Ethiopia.

But it is necessary to speak out. This is not going to be a war against Fascism. Rather it will be a war against imperialism. And as such the defense of Ethiopia, its people and independence is the elementary duty of the international working class. What is involved at the present moment is not an evaluation of the merits or demerits of Haile Salasie and his regime; what is important is that Ethiopia is a weak and backward nation which has a right in having its national independence safeguarded. That being the case everything possible must be done to see that Mussolini is defeated in his adventure.

A defeat for Italy would be of tremendous value in undermining the hold of reaction on the masses of Italy. A victory for Ethiopia would be a clarion call to all the oppressed natives and colonials in Africa to rid themselves of the yoke of foreign imperialism.

Workers in industry supplying materials for Italy must be brought into the struggle on the side of Ethiopia. The methods of strike, sabotage and boycott must be resorted to in an effort to cripple Mussolini's war machine.

Let the workers of all countries understand that a blow at Italian imperialism is a blow to reaction at home!

(Doc. 15) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 37, 7 September 1935

**Mussolini Spars for Time in League Palavers
Litvinov Talk Veils Powers Bandit Deals
Shies away from Internal Regime of Fascist Italy**

With Italy sparring for time and the League of Nations sessions contributing greatly in the shadow-play of appealing to «public opinion», the final dress rehearsals are being completed before II Duce marches his fascist hordes into the kingdom of Ethiopia.

The recent session of the League was convened primarily at the behest of British and French imperialism to make one more effort at a «peaceful» rather than military partition of Ethiopia.

The positions of England and France had been made clear before. England desiring «peace» for fear of its African colonies. France ready to back Italy so long as some guarantee could be given it of the status quo remaining undisturbed in Europe.

The «surprise» of the first day's session in Geneva was not the Italian delegate's demonstrative departure, nor even the plain spoken words of the Ethiopian representative, Jeze, but rather the speech of Maxim Litvinoff, the first spoken words of the representative of the Stalin bureaucracy to the League of Imperialist Bandits. «...I am bound to declare, with regret», declared Litvinoff, «with regret (!) my inability to agree with the attitude which the representatives of Italy wishes to adopt».

Diplomacy for Whom?

Diplomatic language you say, but whose diplomacy? The diplomacy of imperialism or that of the proletarian state?

Again: «I have to make a statement upon a question which does not directly affect the interests of my country but which may have the gravest consequences for the whole of international life (!), for the fate of the League of Nations (how touching!) and consequently, sooner or later for our own country».

First things first as they say. Since when has the fate of the Soviet state been linked up with the fate of the Thieves Kitchen of Geneva? It is nothing but a slander to the masses of Soviet Russia to link their fate with that of black reaction.

And still more: «I am certain that there is no one here who feels in sympathy with the internal regime of Ethiopia as described in the documents submitted to us».

What about the internal regime of Italy about which Jeze had at least a few words to say? Yes, «comrade» Litvinoff, how about the internal regime of castor oil Italy!

«Izvestia» has something to say about that. In an editorial on September 6 it declares: «In its estimate of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict Soviet public opinion (read Soviet bureaucracy) does not consider Italy's internal regime». No, not Italy's internal regime, that might offend a «friendly» nation, but let us by all means judge backward Ethiopia's internal regime. What a disgusting spectacle. Rather had Litvinoff not spoken at all than have once again dirtied the names Soviet and Communism.

How Long Now?

Concluding the Italo-Ethiopian item on the agenda a committee of five was appointed to sift the matter once more and again try to find a «peaceful» solution. Italy did not object too strenuously to such a committee. Reports from East Africa have it that the rainy season is unduly prolonged this year.

French pressure must have counted considerably, too, in finally determining Italy's delegates to abstain on the proposal for a committee of five. It is likely that Laval, in private conversation, had insisted that the continued backing of Mussolini might prove embarrassing at home if Italy were intent to break then and there.

It is also quite likely that France will suggest that Italy be granted economic control over Ethiopia, with the right to establish what will amount to virtually a military protectorate.

But the traffic through the Suez Canal is dotted with boatloads of troops from which the flags of Italian fascism fly ominously in the breeze.

(Doc. 16) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 38, 14 September 1935

**Form Unholy Alliance at Geneva
For New Imperialist World War
Stalinists Hail Laval Argument
'Sanctions' Pleas Conceal Jockeying for War Positions**

Laval's speech in support of England's position against Italy in the Ethiopian dispute marks a new stage in the unholy alliance of Franco-British imperialisms, the Popular Front in France and the Second and Third Internationals. The pacifist gestures of Roosevelt both in regard to «neutrality» and the invocation of the Kellogg Pact are on a par with similar acts of his worthy predecessor, the peace-loving President Wilson.

The French minister, who on January 7, 1935 had struck a bargain with Mussolini understood to give the latter a free hand in Ethiopia, astounded the diplomatic world by proclaiming at the League of Nations Council meeting:

«France is faithful to the League covenant. She cannot fail in her obligations... I rejoice with my country [over Sir Samuel Hoare's speech], which understands the full necessity of close collaboration with Great Britain for defense of peace and safeguarding Europe».

This cementing of the Franco-British alliance recently, seriously threatened because of the Anglo-German naval agreement which officially recognized and sanctioned German rearmament, is hailed on all sides as a victory for peace.

«Sanctions» against Italy – economic and military measures – are implied in the speech of Laval. The Second International, the Third International and the International Federation of Trade Unions have urged

sanctions against Italy. The president of the British Trade Union Congress recently declared:

«There are formidable powers of coercion to be applied in the economic sanctions of the League. They are clearly stated in Article XVI of the Covenant. They constitute a compound group of economic, financial, and military measures...»

«It is a grave responsibility to counsel measures which may cause war. But what is the alternative, from the trade union standpoint, to this policy? War is a certainty, anyway, unless Italy is restrained» (British New Leader, September 6, 1935).

In a word, the British trade union leaders are ready to support the British imperialists to declare war.

The French Socialist and Communist parties add their voices to this imperialist front by calling upon the British Labour party for common international action in agreement with the program of Franco-British imperialisms. Among the demands of these social-imperialists is: «The closing of the Suez Canal to all Italian military transport».

By whom? Obviously by the anti-Italian imperialist powers. And the war among the imperialists which will follow will be loyally supported by these hysterical and treacherous «friends of peace».

Confidence in Pierre Laval and Sir Samuel Hoare to prevent war in Ethiopia or a world war, is preparation for a new world betrayal of the working class. The immediate interests of each imperialist power are constantly changing, leading to new alignments. France, which wants “peace” in Europe – since for the time being it is satisfied with its conquests on the continent after the last war – fears that the recent Italo-German mutual recognition of one another’s «needs» means a threat to France; and that therefore a more solid alliance with Great Britain is imperative. At the same time she fears that regardless of Mussolini’s promises last January, Italian aggression in Ethiopia will be extended, in view of the renewed Italo-German alliance, into French colonial possessions in Africa.

British imperialism is similarly afraid of Mussolini’s encroachments on its colonies in Africa.

And what of Ethiopia, the pawn in the imperialist game? The independence of this small country of less than 11 million people, living under semi-feudal conditions, has in the last decades been dependent on the conflicts among the imperialist powers themselves. Even this tenuous independence is now threatened by Mussolini.

If Mussolini is to be repelled it can be accomplished only by international working class action. The quarrel between France and England against Italy is a conflict of imperialist powers; war between them is imperialist war, regardless of the immediate cause. To support imperialist «sanctions» against Italy is to pledge support for this imperialist war which will go far beyond a «defense of independent Ethiopia».

The genuine independence of Ethiopia requires arousing the colonial masses of Africa against their predatory masters, the French, English and Italian imperialists and an active movement of solidarity by the workers in the advanced countries. Such a movement will also have its effect on the masses in the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialist America who are oppressed under the iron heel of Wall Street.

The task of the workers of the United States is to expose the hypocrisy of the Roosevelt government in its «neutrality» position, to get the railroad men, longshoremen and seamen to refuse to handle any munitions, arms or foodstuffs going to Italy. Means must be found to give material aid to the Ethiopian people in the struggle for independence.

The slogan of «Boycott Goods for Fascist Italy» has been launched by the International Communist League. Everything in our power must be done to arouse the masses for the revolutionary struggle in defense of the Ethiopian people and against imperialist war.

This is possible only by an uncompromising struggle against those in the ranks of the labor movement who wittingly or unwittingly aid in the deception of the masses as to the aims of French and British imperialism and prepare for a new world slaughter and betrayal. In every working class organization, the militant voice of fraternity with the Ethiopian people should be raised.

(Doc. 17-18) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 39, 21 September 1935

The 'Thieves Kitchen' and Workers Policy in War

Reformists and liberals of all shades and varieties are fond of calling Marxists «sectarians», «dogmatists», fantastic «extremists». This is the way in which jelly-backed individuals always describe those who have principles and who take them seriously. It is a verbal cover that reformists use to hide their own cowardly refusal to face facts and draw conclusions.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the question of war. Reformists are grievously «offended» when Marxists are not merely scornful of every form of pacifism but fight mercilessly against it. «So many good people», the reformists complain, «are honestly and sincerely against war; we must all join with them and if enough of us genuinely wish for peace, then peace will surely come». But Marxists have an inconvenient habit of looking beneath men's wishes and hopes to the material reality underlying them. Consequently they reply that pacifism, far from being a force against war, in practice aids the war-makers; they describe pacifism as the hypocritical front for imperialism, a means whereby, under the pretense of opposition to «war in general», this particular war – whichever it may be – is made morally respectable.

Lenin's Analysis of the League of Nations

In a similar manner, reformists objected to the Marxist analysis of the League of Nations. «The League», said the reformists, «may not be perfect. But it represents a great step forward. It symbolizes the desire of the peoples for peace, after the carnage of the Great War. We must aid in strengthening it». Alas, once again the Marxists spoiled the party. No, they declared, the League is not an agency for peace. On the contrary, it is only a ganging up of the imperialist robbers. Its purposes, its real purposes, are; (1) To make an imperialist united front against the post-war threat of international proletarian revolution; (2) To enforce the Versailles Treaty, and ensure the hegemony of France on the European continent; (3) To protect the colonial

empire of Great Britain and to prevent any attempt by Germany to regain its colonies; and (4) to provide a legal and moral coloration for the next war which the dominant imperialist powers undertake.

This analysis of the League, made by Lenin at its foundation, holds as firmly today as ever. The only alteration is to realize that the League is becoming outworn even for these purposes. The issues of proletarian revolution, preservation of France's continental position, and prevention of German colonial recovery, have been intensified to a point that takes them outside the League orbit. Nevertheless, the League has still its role to perform. Before it is thrown into the discard, it can still be used triumphantly for purpose (4): to provide a legal and moral coloration for the next war which the dominant imperialist powers undertake.

Crime of Stalinism

Herein rests one of the great historical crimes of Stalinism. The League can fulfill this function effectively, a function that strikes to the very heart of the working class, solely because of the Soviet Union's entry. Hopelessly discredited by the withdrawal of Japan and Germany, by the miserable showing in the Manchurian and Chaco affairs, the League has been kept actively alive only because of the prestige and new blood pumped into it by Stalin. Litvinov, in the League, speaks with the voice of the Workers' State, but his words are the words of the British Lion.

Whoever doubts this, let him review the facts.

Why does Great Britain try to preserve «peace»? Why does she object to Mussolini's campaign in Ethiopia? One glance at the map gives the answers. (1) Italian rule over Ethiopia would threaten the sources of the Blue Nile, and thus put Egypt at the mercy of Italy. (2) Italian expansion in Northeast Africa threatens the Suez Canal, the route to Britain's colonies – «the life line of the Empire». (3) Increasing Italian strength in the Mediterranean, together with the development of air fighting, have already placed in jeopardy the British route from Gibraltar to Port Said. Malta, for example, is already helpless. (4) A serious conflict between Europeans and native Africans would promote unrest or even rebellion on the part of the

natives throughout the British colonies. (5) Great Britain would likewise enjoy sharing in the exploitation of Ethiopia. Two further reasons, of a somewhat different kind, must be added: (6) Great Britain fears the repercussions on the European proletariat of the possible failure of Mussolini to conquer quickly. Such failure might well prove a mighty impulse in awakening revolutionary consciousness. (7) The National Government, faced with an election in the near future, wishes to consolidate England Internally around slogans of «national unity» before the war danger, against the chance of a Labour parliamentary victory.

This is what the high-minded public talk of British statesmen boils down to. And they know it; and so do the diplomats of every other nation.

Imperialist Bargains

The present League session is, then, seeking a «solution» of the Ethiopian question. That is to say, it is seeking a deal that will reconcile these requirements on the part of Great Britain with, first, France's need to get British guarantees against German aggression on the Continent, and, second, the drive of pent-up Italian capital for an outlet together with Mussolini's desperate necessity for consolidating his rotting internal regime.

But whether or not the «solution» is found, the fundamental issues are not altered in the slightest. War will be not stopped, but merely postponed, and postponed for a short time only. The solution will be not a triumph for the peace-loving League, but an imperialist maneuver of the most brazen and reactionary kind. Its sole purpose will be to strengthen temporarily the lines of the world imperialist forces.

Working Class «Sanctions»

The elementary duty of Marxists is clear beyond argument. It is for them to sound the alarm against all the machinations of the imperialist powers. It is for them to expose every facet of the war danger. And this means not merely to fulminate against the tyrant Mussolini, and to beg the League to step in to save the world. It means to expose every step of the League's robber course. It means not to call on «peace-loving Great Britain»

to close the Suez Canal and apply sanctions – but to reveal the rottenness of British imperialist policy beneath the mush-mouthed peace talk.

It means to call on the international working class, the only force against war, to apply its own sanctions, to make its own boycotts, to voice its own material and ideological solidarity with the Ethiopian masses – rejecting all talk of «national unity», all pretense that a capitalist nation is ever or will ever be «peace-loving»; and to call on the working class at the same time, not to cease its own class struggle before the war danger, but to intensify a thousand-fold the revolutionary fight at home.

And is it to explain this – these elementary working-class principles that Litvinov uses the public forum of the League meetings, and that the C. I. uses its press throughout the world. The direct opposite is true. Litvinov speaks in the League as the stooge of Hoare and Eden. Even in phrasing, nothing distinguishes his remarks from those of the agents of British imperialism.

Policy of Betrayal

And what of the sections of the C. I.? Do they «make up» for Litvinov's diplomatic necessities? Quite the contrary. In Sept. 18th's Daily Worker the Communist party calls on Great Britain «to close the Suez Canal»; it appeals (on the front page) «For united action of» – the international working class? How naive, comrade, to suspect that Stalin still has his eyes even partly turned toward the international working class. No – «the united front of all nations to prevent war on Ethiopia». So thoroughly has the Communist party now gone from the Third Period rejection of the united front, that united fronts are to made – with the political instruments of the class enemy. In Great Britain, the Communist party calling for sanctions applied by the government, supports thus the building up of national unity and lays the full basis for acceptance of imperialist war on the part of Great Britain as (shades of the United States in 1917!) a war to prevent war.

Workers, this is the witness of betrayal. Before it is too late, reject capitulation. Turn from «national unity», take your eyes off the «national

governments» of «peace-loving nations», tear the mask from the League, and drive from your ranks the social-patriots who make ready to give you up to the war makers.

There is only one force against imperialist war: the international proletariat. There is only one solution for war: the international revolution.

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

Destruction Threatens Robber League

The League of Nations was organized by the victorious Allies after the first World War to safeguard their plunder against the attacks of the defeated powers. Its function as the «organizer of peace» was to maintain the *status quo*, to guarantee to the imperialists their colonial possessions and the right to exploit the colonial peoples. The attempt by Mussolini to seize Ethiopia is a threat to the very existence of the robbers' League precisely because it ends the truce, threatens the *status quo*, and reopens all the antagonistic issues temporarily «settled» by the first World War. Rearmament and realignments of the advanced capitalist nations are the preparations for the assault by each against all for a new division of the earth. One after the other, each great power that is forced by its internal economic crisis to seek desperately for a solution by outward expansion, quits the League in order to be free to act without hindrance. First it was Japan in order to plunder China, then Germany to rearm for expansion to the East, and now Italy for the swallowing of Ethiopia. Not even the bourgeois press tries to foster any illusion that France or Great Britain is in the least concerned about the fate of the Ethiopian people. Each of these powers, with a tremendous colonial empire, is acutely aware that the «deprived» states aim to capture part of the plunder it took earlier. It is the fear of the deep repercussions of Mussolini's adventure that causes England

and France to threaten Italy with sanctions to force a compromise without war. But the very threat is driving Italy out of the League.

Attitude of British Labor

The Ethiopian crisis is a class issue of fundamental significance. It becomes the test of the working class movement in all countries. For in face of the threat of the second World War, the working class must once more take a stand on the question of defense of the national capitalist state in an imperialist war. The answer of the British Labor Party and of the official labor movement is a shameful betrayal of the proletariat. The demand of the official labor leader for the support of the League of Nations in the applications of sanctions, means not the support of the Ethiopian people against Italian aggression, but the support of English imperialism against Italian. To suppose that the League of Nations could act in the interest of the exploited peoples, is to place confidence in the English capitalists. Where is there any demand that the English ruling class give up British Somaliland, or India or Egypt? How is it that no voice is raised by the «official» movement against the small war just started in India, against the mere punitive expedition into the territory of the Mohmands in the Northern native states? It is by such fakes as the support of «sanctions» that the leaders of British labor tie the workers to the bourgeoisie, enlist them for national defense and for the support of English imperialism.

True there is a small minority of «left socialists» like Cripps who warn the workers against putting their heads in a noose by supporting sanctions and who point to British imperialism. But these elements organize no real mass movement against British imperialism and its role in the next World War. The Bolshevik-Leninists of England, who understand the need for rallying the masses against the enemy at home, who set forth clearly the steps necessary to convert imperialist war into civil war, are too meager a force as yet to exert much influence. They have before them the tremendous task of building the revolutionary party.

Effect on British General Elections

The betrayal of the working class by the Labor Party in its class collaborationist attitude on the war danger plays directly into the hands of the ruling class in the coming general elections. By covering the national capitalists with the cloak of national defense and the supposed desire for peace, the Labor Party leads the workers to believe that in the national emergency the bourgeoisie may be trusted with the power. If it is all right to conduct a war, if necessary, the masses will prefer to leave things in the hands of those who are more experienced in such matters. By showing this readiness for civil peace in case of war the Labor Party aids the bourgeois campaign of patriotism. It furthers, whether it likes it or not, the armament propaganda, for sanctions mean the need for force to back them up and force might just as well be as effective as possible. Thus the Labor Party is helping to defeat itself in the coming elections. The masses will prefer to give support to the masters directly rather than to their lackeys in the labor movement.

(Doc. 19-20) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 40, 28 September 1935

Zero Hour Sounds for New World War League Votes Application of Sanctions Traitor Internationals Paralyze Independent Action of Workers

As the League of Nations Council decides to invoke sanctions against Italy should the negotiations between Great Britain, France and Mussolini fail to reach a solution on Ethiopia mutually satisfactory to the imperialist robbers, the traitorous Socialist and Stalinist internationals are mobilizing the workers for support of the anti-Italian imperialists.

Even more boldly than the official diplomats, these internationals which speak in the name of the working class, demand sanctions against

Italy, that is, call upon the imperialist governments of France and England to declare war against imperialist Italy.

Great Britain and France have not yet given up attempts to come to an agreement with Mussolini. Their interest is not the independence of Ethiopia, for not only are they oppressing millions of colonial people throughout the world, including Africa, but they have already offered Italy control of Ethiopia. They are interested in defending their own imperialist possessions in Africa.

France hesitates over the prospect of withdrawing its troops from the continent and leaving itself open to an attack from Hitler. English diplomats are already speaking of sanctions as a threat against Italian aggression in Ethiopia only if it is a prelude to an attack on its own colonies in Africa. In a word, not only are England and France motivated on purely imperialist grounds but any action which they may take, including war against Italy would be an imperialist action.

New Social-Patriotic Betrayal

In the midst of this dispute among the imperialist powers, the joint conference of the Second International and its trade union adjunct, the International Federation of Trade Unions, held early this month, decided to put pressure on the League of Nations so «that the Covenant, the whole Covenant, be now Applied, including the sanctions provided for in the Covenant».

And if this policy is accepted by the League of imperialist powers, the social-patriotic betrayal of 1914 will be repeated – this time the working class is informed of the plan even before the war breaks out:

«The two Internationals, conscious of their duties towards peace, are ready to fulfill them in their entirety, and confidently assure the League of the wholehearted support of the workers, both women and men, they represent, in any measures it may take for the effective application of whatever sanctions may be necessary against the aggressor».

Nothing could be clearer than this open pledge of social-patriotism!

Comintern «Welcomes» Decision

«The Communist International welcomes this decision», brazenly states the letter of that organization to the Second International (Daily Worker, Sept. 26, 1935). What is needed according to the new comrades-in-arms of the Vandeveldes, Blums and Bauers is «an international movement against war of such power that the League of Nations would be compelled to undertake really effective action against the aggressor of Italian fascism and German fascism under its pressure».

«Pressure» on the imperialist League of Nations to declare war against Italy and Germany! Acclaiming the decision of the Socialist International to support the League «in any measures it may take for effective application» of sanctions! Could social-patriotism be more open and brazen!

What is needed is the complete independence of the working class from their imperialist masters. The boycott of shipments of goods and munitions to Fascist Italy and the supplying of material aid to the Ethiopian people must be the action of the working class itself.

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

Anglo-Japanese Alliance

What is of greater importance to both the Soviet Union and to U.S. imperialism, there are rumors of a revival of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Speculation concerning the mission of the English economist Leith-Ross in the Far East centers on this interpretation. With the naval race in full swing as the result of the scrapping of the Washington naval truce, the English find themselves more exposed than ever to attack in and from the Far East. The Italian threat to the Mediterranean line of communications that is like a sacred cow to British imperialism, only serves the more to emphasize England's weakness at the far end of these communications in Singapore. An alliance with Japan would serve to check the threat of the latter to build

a canal through Siam that would «short-circuit» Singapore and shorten the route to India by two or three days. Japan would be given assurances against America and would police the Far East for the interests of both imperialists. Japan could then feel free to launch her attack finally against the Soviet Union. The resumption of this Far Eastern alliance would be in line with England's policy with respect to Germany; that is, of encouraging Hitler to expand eastwards at the expense of the Soviet Union.

Revolutionary Action Against Imperialist War

All these machinations of the imperialist robbers are directly and violently opposed to the vital interests of the world proletariat. This is the manner in which the bourgeoisie propose to maintain the system of exploitation, against the physical and economic well-being of the working class. The organizer and leader of the British Labor Party, Herbert Morrison, defending his betrayal of the working class by the support of British imperialism, says: «We are not interested in the struggles of rival imperialists and we are not going to be drawn into them». Such an ostrich policy places the workers in chains and hands them over to imperialist slaughter. On the contrary, we are vitally interested to oppose by revolutionary means all the machinations of all imperialists.

(Doc. 21) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 41, 5 October 1935

WAR FLAMES SWEEP ETHIOPIA

**Imperialist Robbers Bomb Helpless Natives as Second and Third Internationals Betray Proletariat Into New Slaughter
Remember 1914! Down With Imperialist War!**

Both Int'ls for League War Moves

Even as the first blood has been shed on the mountainous plateaus of Ethiopia, the two Internationals of betrayal, the Second and the Third,

hasten to conclude the last terms of their pact with the bourgeoisie... they seek to surpass even the capitalists in their anxiety to push the workers whom they pretend to represent, into a new and bloodier slaughter. Both the Socialist and Communist parties of Britain demand – demand – that their government apply sanctions against Italy... they can hardly wait for the blood bath.

The British Labor Party, the hope and glory of the Second International now that the German Social Democracy has been led into the pit, has just voted for war, twenty to one! George Lansbury, the aged pacifist leader of the Labor Party rose at the congress and said: «I cannot believe – nay it is impossible to believe – that there should be anyone in this assembly who could uphold the opinion that there could be a pretext – even that of counterattacking – to throw bombs and deadly gas on the women and children of another race».

«I cannot see any difference between massacre organized by the League of Nations and massacre organized by the nations individually».

A Song and a Vote

Says the New York Post: «Thunderous applause and spontaneous shouts of «For he's a jolly good Fellow' greeted the seventy-six year old leader». Immediately afterwards the assembly voted twenty to one to support League Sanctions against Italy – to support the present agent of British imperialism, the League of Nations, in any measures it may take... not pledging to support, but urging the League to «take action». Thus lightly these jolly good fellows of socialism cheer the sentiments of pacifism in their ranks and then vote to send their workers off to the slaughter in the defense of British robber imperialism. Incredible hypocrisy, worse than capitalist, socialist hypocrisy. The moldy Second International rises out of its grave to grasp another million mass of workers and carry them down into blood and mire... a vampire international.

And the Third International? Its efforts are just as energetic in the service of the British bourgeoisie – but more ludicrous, if there can be anything ludicrous in this monster betrayal.

We take the line from the Daily Worker question box for October 2:

«The aim of the communists in the present situation in Africa is to preserve peace [!]... the communists urge the working class parties and organizations to FORCE their capitalist governments to act collectively through the League against Italy, even to the point of applying sanctions, closing the Suez Canal, etc. [Etc.! In that little etc. is contained the word war... no more than an etc. to the degenerates of Stalinism]... the capitalist governments are not anxious to use sanctions; The British government has repeatedly offered to carve up Ethiopia with Mussolini... but the pressure of the English workers has driven the English government to the point where they may apply sanctions... [!!!]».

The Stalinists are not even willing to vouchsafe Lansbury a «jolly good fellow» before they order the workers out to the butchery. «The pressure of the English workers has driven the British government to the point where it may»... defend its colonial loot against Italy's infringements by sanctions, etc! The degenerates of Stalinism boast that they are forcing the British government into imperialist war!

Before the last war the Second International at least kept up appearances and spoke against war until the very last moment. But in these times the two Internationals don't wait for war to betray the workers, they urge the capitalists on. They can't wait for the debacle, they can't wait to send their workers out to die, they can't wait to revel in the blood of millions of «women and children of another race»... and workers of all races.

Bombs Rain on African Mud Hovels

The Ethiopian butchery begins with the corpses of hundreds of native men, women and children torn to pieces by bombs rained down on the helpless and poverty stricken hovels of Adigiat and Adowa. The great civilizing mission of the modern Caesar begins with his Italian son-in-law dropping T.N.T. from planes on the uncivilized natives to give them a first lesson in the amenities of capitalist culture. And the torn and broken bodies

of the first victims in this senseless war, killed in cold blood without chance of reply, are the first lessons in civilization.

With machine guns, artillery, tanks, and airplanes the «courageous» Italian generals advance against a practically unarmed horde of natives swarming to the defense of those rights for which thousands of Chinese, thousands of Indians, of Mohammedans, of Boers, of Africans, have given up their lives in the last century – the right of national peoples to live outside the crushing yoke of British, French, Italian, and American imperialism.

The first reports indicate that the Ethiopians are retreating before the Italian advance, concentrating around the town of Adowa, scene of one of the only successful stands against an all-embracing imperialist civilization in the history of the last century, in 1898 – to make another attempt to beat off the Italian Fascist vampires.

The outcome of the war does not depend upon the fortune of individual battles but upon the staying power of the Ethiopians. If they can keep the field, constantly harass the Italian army, retreat without engaging in hopeless battles, split the Italian army and fight it in pieces, they can exhaust not only the army, but more important the Italian nation and the Fascist regime, which embarked on this war, in the first place, as a last resort to bolster a tottering economy and an explosive political situation.

(Doc. 22-26) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 42, 12 October 1935

**GENEVA GAMBLES WITH WAR
VOTE ON SANCTIONS LINES UP LEAGUE NATIONS
TO DEFEND BRITISH COLONIAL THIEVERY**

Fate of Ethiopia To Be Decided in European Arena

There have been no large battles in Ethiopia to date. The Africans are following a policy of hatching and waiting, retiring before the Italians, to draw them on from Adowa into the more dangerous mountain country,

and to postpone any decisive battles until the outcome of the international maneuvers centering around the war are known. It is in the latter sphere, the international, that the real battles are now being fought.

The League vote last week for sanctions against Mussolini was a great victory for England. Reluctant as some of the fifty odd nations may have been, nevertheless they were all driven into line, including the other great League power, France, which is torn between a desire to please England as an ally against Hitler and a desire not to outrage Mussolini who, more than an ally, is a market, especially for war supplies.

It is significant that the only three nations who did not support the League sanctions were Austria, Hungary and Albania, all more or less under Italian influence, the latter no more than a vassal state of Mussolini.

The New York Times has to say of sanctions: «With ‘Proposal No. 1’ the League of Nations began this afternoon applying sanctions against the Italian government. This sanction, number one in history, applies to Italy alone, precisely the same arms embargo the U. S. proclaimed against both Italy and Ethiopia»...

The full meaning of the whole «sanctions» game is revealed in the phrase «number one in history». Sanctions are merely war preparations disguised under a fancy name. Why should an embargo be called «number one in history?». Didn't the same British government declare an embargo against the U.S. in 1812? Didn't the Northern government declare an embargo (sanctions) against the South during the Civil War? Didn't the Germans try to «sanction» the British Isles with submarines during the World War?

Sanctions will not necessarily lead directly to war – no more than any preparations necessarily lead directly to war. There are sanctions and sanctions. While the Czechoslovakian Stalinists openly call for military sanctions, the League, under French influence seems at present inclined to go easy on Mussolini, confining itself to less provocative measures.

Meanwhile in all the countries concerned, especially in Britain, politicians are hastening to unify the country for war around the «peaceful» sanctions question. In Britain the parliament has been called early «in

compliance with the request of the Labor opposition in view of British participation in sanctions against Italy... Inasmuch as sanctions have already been endorsed by the Labor Party and have the backing of the Conservatives and the public as represented by 11,000,000 voters in a popular referendum (a peace referendum!!!) there is no possibility of any material opposition».

As the last war was fought to make the world safe for democracy, this will be fought to make it safe for sanctions. Sanctions, which are really no more than war preparations. Diplomatic, economic, then military sanctions. And when the first shot is fired and the first soldier killed the war of sanctions becomes a war in fact. Another imperialist holocaust brought on, as was the last, by imperialist powers protesting their interest in peace right up to the last moment.

There is only one way to defend Ethiopia, and that way leads not through Imperialist sanctions that lead ever nearer war, but through sanctions of the international working class: demonstrations, boycotts and embargoes.

TREACHERY CASTS A SHADOW BEFORE

Every Edition of Daily Worker Sinks Deeper into Social Patriotic Swamp

By DAN EASTMAN

Turn the imperialist war into civil war! That was the slogan of Lenin. Turn the Italo-Ethiopian war into a general imperialist war! That is the slogan of Stalin.

Consider the Daily Worker for the seven crucial days of the outbreak of the Ethiopian war:

On October 1, T. Repard writes an article on «Social Democratic Befuddlement on the Sanctions Question», from which we quote:

«Reformist theory never flounders about so helplessly as when it is confronted with a genuinely pressing immediate issue. Yesterday it was the Franco-Soviet pact. Today it is the question of sanctions against Mussolini».

Reformist theory, in truth, flounders about helplessly when it is confronted with bourgeois demands. The attitude of the Stalinist press is sufficient proof of the helplessness and treachery inherent in reformism, which has become the theoretical basis of Stalinist policy.

M. Repard quotes Sir Stafford Cripps of the British Labor Party: «How are the imperialistic people who seized Transvaal in 1900 by force to reply to Mussolini when he tries to seize Ethiopia by force in 1935?». A communist would ask Cripps why he goes so far back in history, why he leaves immediate issues out and delves back to Transvaal, why he doesn't ask how the British government that is daily, even now, murdering natives in South Africa, Indians in British India, Chinese in China, is to reply to Mussolini's murder of Ethiopians in Ethiopia. But what is the answer of M. Repard:

«Using» the Imperialists

«The only revolutionary (!) position to adopt... is to use imperialist England against imperialist Italy for all she is worth... and use imperialist Italy for all she is worth against imperialist England, if we ever get the chance. – England... finds it necessary... to play the dangerous game of sanctions which the working class can utilize to its own ends now against Italy but very soon perhaps against England herself».

Can it be that M. Repard is not sure? What about this «if we ever get a chance» and this little «perhaps»? M. Repard tries to console the British workers, «Look here», he says in effect, «we are handing you over to your imperialist government now, but maybe later we shall in return be able to hand the Italian workers over to their imperialist government». One good betrayal deserves another. «Perhaps» the British workers, dragooned into the British army in a war of «sanctions» against Italy, can console themselves that the same «comrade» Repard will later dragoon the Italian workers into the Italian army.

October 2: A worker writes to the Daily Worker «Question Box» to ask: «Does this (sanctions) not mean that they (the communists, Stalinists) support British imperialism in its struggle against Mussolini?» Yes it does, comrade, but not for the Daily Worker, now busy building up the British imperialist army. The «Question Box» answers, «The pressure of English workers has driven the English government to the point where they may apply sanctions... The support of sanctions against Italy does not mean supporting British imperialism». No? Why not? The British government, anxious to preserve its spoils, is ready not only to invoke sanctions against Mussolini, but to engage in a war with Mussolini (Or is the British navy in the Mediterranean on a pleasure cruise?). The working class supports the British government in sanctions (economic) against Mussolini. What is the next step? The British working class supports the British government in sanctions (military, war!) against Mussolini. What is this? This is the betrayal of the working class into the hands of their enemy to the death, the imperialist capitalists. «This», says the Daily Worker smugly, «sets a valuable precedent»... In point of truth, the precedent was set on August 4, 1914.

Litvinov's Role

October 3: An article on page 3 entitled «The Soviet Union Alone Fought Against Imperialist War at Geneva». How? «On April 17, the Council of the League adopted a resolution condemning Germany, then as now, openly rearming at a break' neck speed... The Soviet delegate (Litvinov) at that time foresaw that the league was setting a very important precedent which could be later applied to Mussolini... On April 18 the New York Times described Litvinov's action at Geneva as follows:

«... He raised the point that the proposed measures against the unilateral denunciation of treaties were applied only to European countries... He wanted the Committee left free to propose measures for other than European countries.»

«That is why it was no surprise that on September 5 at the Council of the League Maxim Litvinov rose to defend Ethiopia».

What can be said for this filthy hypocrisy? Ethiopia applied to the League in December, 1934. For more than eight months the delegate of the Soviet Union to the League «fought against imperialist war» and defended Ethiopia by making a slight change in a resolution calculated to enable him to protest against the Ethiopian outrage months «later» whenever his French ally, Laval, thought it necessary. Not once during those whole eight months did Litvinoff so much as mention Ethiopia by name, to say nothing of fighting imperialist war and defending colonial peoples. And the Stalinist delvers, obliged to find some action to bear out the title of their article can find nothing more than a quotation from the N. Y. Times (How does it happen that comrade Litvinoff's intransigent struggle for peace and the defense of Ethiopia did not find its way into the Daily Worker?) to the effect that he amended a resolution so that it might include Ethiopia... and still did not once mention Ethiopia by name, although her protests had been sent to the League four months before.

On September 5 France decided to take measures against Mussolini... and Litvinov, agent of Stalin, who has now become the agent of Laval, rose to protest in the League. This' was «no surprise» to the Stalinists who had followed Litvinov's eight month's battle against the invasion of Ethiopia, a battle consisting of a one line amendment to a resolution last April, with such breath taking interest that they had completely neglected to mention it in the Daily Worker.

Sanctions and British Labor

October 4: Like a criminal returning to the scene of his crime, the Stalinists return to the question of sanctions. Not content with the somewhat clumsy treachery of M. Repard, they employ the services of a certain R. Bishop to explain away the fact that Stalin's International has become the puppet of imperialism. An article on page 6 treats of «The, Line-up of British Labor on Mussolini's War Moves»:

«Fenner Brockway, the leader of the Independent (Left Socialist) Labor Party says that the only sanctions that matter are 'working class sanctions', that the working class cannot demand that the National

government should apply sanctions, as to do so would be to align the working class with the National government».

«The I.L.P. leadership has been stating that the Communist Party line means lining up with the National Government. This misrepresentation of facts (what misrepresentation?) was dealt with very effectively by Harry Pollitt (leader of the British C.P.). He said the National government ‘is seeking to preserve its vital imperialist interests on the one hand, and to cover this up by pretending to be a defender of peace on the other. Unless the fight for the independence of Ethiopia is accompanied by the most convincing exposure of the responsibility of the National government for the present tense international situation, a position can easily result which the National government will turn to its benefit at the coming election. The line of the Labor Party unfortunately helps the National government in this respect».

Covering Up the Tracks

This quotation, and this quotation alone, which is given in full, is said by the Stalinist, Bishop, to deal «very effectively with Brockway’s (perfectly correct) misrepresentation of facts». Where? How? What has Pollitt to say on the question of sanctions? Only that the C.P. is prepared to «expose» the National government while supporting it in the application of sanctions, that is, handing the workers over to the service of British imperialism to be slaughtered in war.

Pollitt’s «effective» answer boils down to a very effective exposure of the degenerate aims of Stalinism. Sell the workers to the imperialist government, send the workers into a new world war, that’s all right, but be sure to cover up the tracks by criticizing the National government.

October 5: Harry Gannes takes up the question of sanctions:

«With war raging, the line-up for and against sanctions has become crystal clear».

«All the Fascist nations... are lined up solidly against sanctions. In Britain and France the Fascist Mosleys and de la Roques are bitterly against

sanctions. Confused elements in the labor movement play into the hands of these forces».

«On behalf of real collective effective sanctions are: The Soviet Union... the growing united forces of the world labor movement».

Playing the Fascists' Game

Harry Gannes makes of his own betrayal an argument for further betrayal. Because the Socialist Internationals have betrayed the workers into supporting the sanction policy of their imperialist governments Gannes is able to say that the labor movement is for sanctions. Perhaps Mr. Gannes has not read the New York Herald-Tribune which only the other day commented upon the situation in France. For the first time in history, said that reactionary paper, the parties of the Left are for war, and the parties of the Right, the Fascists, opposed to war. The latter are capitalizing on the peace sentiments of the people. The Stalinists are not only selling the workers out to imperialism, but they are playing directly into the hands of the Fascists! By their persistently false and fruitless policies the Stalinists drive disillusioned workers to Fascism... but this is a startlingly clear example, almost unparalleled in the history of Stalinism. The Fascists are able to put on a «peace» front and win over workers directly from the «sanction» front of the Stalinists. This Harry Gannes considers a victory for Stalinism. Workers who oppose this policy are «confused», they don't understand why Harry Gannes is for imperialist war.

October 6: The Daily Worker goes into a veritable frenzy of League of Nations patriotism. Headlines of page one read: «Sanctions Are Demanded Against Italy; U.S.S.R. Bars Imperialist Deal Says Pravda», «British Communist Leader Presses for Sanctions». And a front page report of a Fascist rally in Paris states:

«Shouting, 'We don't want to be League of Nations Soldiers,' the Fascists marched through the streets in military formation». There is something for the Stalinists to wax indignant over. Imagine, the Fascists are opposed to becoming soldiers of the League of Nations! Not the C.P. Their

slogan is «Every Stalinist a soldier of the League Of Nations!» Or rather, «Every worker», for recruiting sergeants never go to war.

Page 7: The Daily Worker overcomes the hesitations of another worker, who writes to ask: «Does not the support of sanctions by the Communists result in their helping British imperialism at the expense of Italian imperialism?» Answer: Yes, of course. But that isn't the way the Daily Worker answers:

«This does not mean that Communists support British imperialism... Communists have no illusions about the 'peacefulness' of British imperialism. They continue to press for the imposition of sanctions to save Ethiopia, but at the same time they expose the imperialist aims of the British ruling class», etc., etc. Everything but a direct answer to the question. But how the Stalinists are going to expose the government they are supporting they do not reveal. If they do expose British imperialism they expose themselves; if they don't, they simply grease the ways for the labor movement into the army. Which they are doing.

«Forcing» the Imperialists

On the last page is a streamer editorial of which the headline is sufficient: «League Must Be Forced to Act Against Mussolini's Robber War». Typical. Everywhere the Stalinists speak of forcing; the British government is forced to protect its colonies, the French government is forced to protect the Versailles Treaty, the League of Nations is to be forced to protect the interests of its dominant member imperialists. A pathetic attempt to cover up their treachery. They propagate the absurd lie that the workers are fighting against the imperialists on the question of sanctions! In a few more months they will demand that the workers force their way into the imperialist army! And this is no fantasy. In France they demand the removal of «Fascist» elements from the army staff! What is the next step? Stalinists will force their way into the positions vacated by the «Fascists».

October 7: An editorial on sanctions, another one. Can it be that the «monolithic» party is not swallowing sanctions as readily as it swallowed the Stalin-Laval communique?

«Ethiopia has put the question of sanctions squarely on the order of the day at the League of Nations.

«Ethiopia, whose people are being slaughtered by the Fascist invaders, seems to have a different conception of its interests than certain people who persist in condemning sanctions».

A Prophetic Editorial

The «certain people» above are the followers of Lenin who resolutely oppose all imperialist war. There is something prophetic about this editorial; merely change the names a bit and you get an editorial from the Daily Worker a few months from now. Germany has invaded France (or vice versa):

France has put the question of war squarely on the order of the day before the American people.

France whose people are being slaughtered by the Fascist invaders seems to have a different conception of its interests than certain people who persist in condemning war.

The editorial continues:

«Does it make sense to say that Ethiopia can fight so valiantly on its own soil and at the same time surrender to the imperialists at Geneva? When the opponents of sanctions claim that sanctions bolster imperialism it just doesn't make sense».

The Communist Party has now reached the stage of bankruptcy in which it takes its line from the Emperor of Abyssinia. If the Emperor supports sanctions why shouldn't we? says the Daily Worker. The last line of the editorial reads: «And Ethiopia, directly involved in the struggle, by her actions supports the policy of the Communist Party». (!!)

So the party of the proletariat, in the greatest industrial country of the world, in the last stages of capitalist decay, is happy to announce that its line is endorsed by the feudal Emperor of Ethiopia, in the most backward semi-nomadic state of the world, barely on the threshold of civilization in any form. What an endorsement! That proves the line is right!

Shaking Hands with Green

Coming events cast their shadows before. On October 8, after seven days of preparing the workers for war, preparing them by examples from foreign lands, the Daily Worker comes home. A front page article on the A. F. of L. convention begins with a significant bulletin:

«Washington, Oct. 7. – As William Green, President of the A. F. of L. finished his convention speech in which he advocated sanctions against Italy in the name of the convention, Samuel R. Salomanick, trade union organizer of the New York Committee Against War and Fascism, who was seated on the platform with Green, stepped forward and congratulated Green in the name of the League.»

Think it over, Stalinist workers. Are you ready to be voluntary cannon fodder of American imperialism in the impending world war? That is the real question put squarely before you by the treacherous policy of Stalinism.

South Africa 4th Int'n'lists Back Ethiopia Police Reply with Arrests and Repressions of Workers

Cape Town, August 2, 1935

To Editor of NEW MILITANT:

Dear Comrade,

I am sending you a special report this week because the situation in South Africa is changing rapidly. A wave of reaction is sweeping over the country. The Fusion Government, agents of British imperialism and the Chamber of Mines, is determined to crush the left-wing movement.

A few weeks ago, comrades Roux and Ngedlane of the Communist Party were arrested and sentenced to four months imprisonment in connection with a leaflet they issued on the occasion of the royal jubilee of King George V. The charge was *«lese majeste»*. Last week, two more members of the Communist Party, comrades Gomas and Mina Gool were arrested on the same charge. Their case will come upon September 3, and there is no doubt that a salutary sentence will be imposed.

Now, the iron heel of the capitalist state is descending on the Fourth Internationalists. On Sunday, August 19, three members of the Communist League of S.A., comrades G.H. Gool, J. Pick, and C. van Gelderen addressed a meeting of over two hundred workers at Langa Native Location on the proposed Native Bills. They were accompanied by comrades J. Gool and L. Solomon, who distributed literature to the audience. At the back of the hall sat six plain clothes detectives, two police sergeants and two native policemen. The forces of reaction were quite evidently prepared for any emergency.

The three speakers dealt at length with the Native Bills. They pointed out that it was a deliberate attempt to deprive the Cape Native of his long cherished franchise, and urged the strongest resistance against the bills. All three speakers stressed that the fight should not only be against the present bills, but that it should go further and press for the extension of the franchise to all sections of the people. Comrade van Gelderen also dealt with the pending Italian attack on Abyssinia, and urged working class action to prevent the despatch of goods from South African ports to Italian troops.

Two resolutions were submitted to the meeting:

1. That this mass meeting of Langa workers unanimously rejects the proposed Native Bills, which aim to deprive the Cape natives of their franchise, almost the only privilege left to them, and further pledges itself by every means in its power to struggle for the extension of the franchise to the Northern Provinces.

2. That this meeting of Langa workers unanimously pledges itself to support Abyssinia, the only remaining independent African state, against the proposed assault by Italian imperialism, and further pledges itself to do everything in its power to prevent the despatch of goods from Union ports to Italian troops in East Africa.

Both these resolutions were adopted with great enthusiasm by the meeting.

Questions followed, in which the workers expressed keen interest in the program of the Communist League.

When the five comrades were about to leave the location, they were charged with entering the location without a permit, and were warned that a summons would be issued against them.

Notwithstanding the close attention now being paid to them by the police and the Criminal Investigation Department, the comrades intend continuing their propaganda in the location. A mass meeting on the Abyssinian question has been called for the following Sunday.

The reactionary persecutions of the Fusion Government will not prevent the growth of the revolutionary movement in South Africa. The forces of the state cannot prevent the irresistible growth of the movement for the Fourth International.

With Revolutionary Greetings,
For the Fourth International,
CHARLES VAN GELDEREN.

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

Britain Prepares...

The imperialist nation with the greatest colonial empire naturally has the most to lose in the attempt by lesser powers to redivide the world, and reallocate the raw materials and the markets that mean life and death to modern capitalism. By its invasion of Ethiopia Italy has served notice that the time has come for the posing of this question once more in Europe, as well as in the entire world. The preparations that were being made for the inevitable world war have been tremendously accelerated by this event. Not only has there been a dizzying speeding up of the production and stocking of munitions and the raw materials that enter into their making, but the diplomatic preparations in the maneuvering for alliances have been given a staccato tempo. Eden for England, Goering for Germany, Beck for Poland hasten from capital to capital seeking the best bargains in the holocaust each

is helping to prepare. Baldwin announces that England's previous preparations have been mere play compared to what is to come, for Britain is about «to rearm in earnest». This imperialist rearmament is cloaked under the hypocrisy of defending peace. The «sanctions» of the League of Nations is in reality the sanctioning of this rearmament for keeping the exploited colonial peoples under the brutal heel of British imperialism. The robber League of Nations now becomes the instrument par excellence for creating the illusions of «right and justice», for justifying social patriotism, for binding the working class hand and foot and delivering them helpless into the bloody, hands of the bourgeois ruling class. The propaganda for justifying imperialist war is made to center around the League of Nations and its «sanctions».

Stalinism Aids the Bourgeoisie...

Why shouldn't Baldwin use the arguments of justification presented to him by Stalin? What better method could he adopt than this for fooling the proletariat? Baldwin tells the British workers that England is preparing for war «not only because of Italy's present defiance, but because of the challenge which all dictatorships have thrown down to the free, peoples of Europe». This is the poisonous propaganda of the Comintern taken up, as was only to be expected, by those whom it will benefit. This is the attitude that motivates the «People's Front», the vicious distortion of the united front that makes of it an instrument not of the revolutionary proletariat, but of class collaboration and truce with one's own bourgeoisie. Stalinism helps the capitalists in the so-called democratic countries to send their workers willingly to the slaughter. Meantime the British ruling class propose, purely in the interests of democracy, no doubt, to take all precautions against the workers at home. Their first proposal is to concentrate government power in the hands of their most direct and most reactionary representatives, rather than to permit any less reliable indirect representative, even one like MacDonald who has proved his faithfulness to the national bourgeoisie, to remain in control. Hence the rulers are now choosing their own time for parliamentary elections so as to crushingly defeat the Labor Party on the

issue of war and patriotism. In this vital struggle the Labor Party has capitulated in advance by its anti-revolutionary stand on sanctions, the League of Nations and war. This stand may please the Stalinists but it can only arouse the bitterest indignation in the heart of every revolutionary worker who cannot but see in it the course of betrayal that was followed similarly by the Second International in 1914.

The Enemy at Home...

The Labor Party, just as the Second International, points to the enemy abroad and helps to divert the attention of the proletariat from its main enemy, the English capitalists. In imperialist war the capitalist class is driven by necessity to extend the sphere of its exploitation for the very purpose of preserving the system of capitalist exploitation at home. Success of the bourgeoisie in such a war means its success in fastening ever stronger chains on the working class at home. The effort of the English workers to free themselves from capitalist exploitation means also the effort to free their colonial brothers under the heel of the same enemy. The effort of colonial peoples to secure or to maintain national independence is at the same time a blow struck at the enemy of the workers at home, a strengthening of the workers and a weakening of the capitalist exploiters. Thus the best way to help free the colonial peoples under the domination of imperialism, is to strike at the imperialist masters in one's own country. The Ethiopian people must be defended not only against Italian imperialism, but against English imperialism as well, which intends soon to send in its own troops to seize the Lake Tana region. In short, the fight against imperialism is an international struggle in which each section of the proletariat must fight against its own bourgeoisie.

Mass Meeting
Unite Against Imperialist War
DEFEND THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE

WORKERS!

Imperialist Italy is conducting a robber war against the Ethiopian people.

The Ethiopians are fighting, arms in hand, for the right of national self-determination; for freedom from imperialist control.

Roosevelt, like his predecessor Wilson, speaks about «neutrality» while he goes full speed ahead with the greatest military program the United States government has ever had!

The League of Nations, imperialist instrument of France and England, has decided to invoke «sanctions», penalties against Italy.

Imperialist sanctions cannot defend the Ethiopian people or prevent a new world war.

Sanctions is only the preparations for the new international conflagration.

Both the Socialist and Stalinist Internationals defend the policy of imperialist sanctions. Both have pledged themselves to support the capitalist governments in this policy. This means support to the new imperialist war.

The social-patriotic course of social democracy in 1914-1918 is now the policy of the Socialist and Stalinist parties!

Organize against imperialist war! Defend the Ethiopian people! Rally against social patriotism! Help forge the instruments for the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war and capitalism, the Workers Party and the Fourth International!

Speaker:

MAURICE SPECTOR

Sunday, October 20 – 8 p.m.

IRVING PLAZA, Irving Place and 15th Street

Auspices: Workers Party, New York District, 55 East 11th Street

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WAR CENTER SHIFTS TO EUROPE

Britain - Italy Threaten War for Control of The Mediterranean

**France Caught Between Two Fires; Germany Waits Opening;
Italo British War Looms**

The flare-up in Ethiopia is rapidly taking on the proportions of a world conflagration. Inside of less than a month the smokescreen behind the colonial «incident» has cleared up and the real contenders in the struggle have become fully revealed. It is now evident that we are confronted not merely with a case of national rape but with a major inter-imperialist struggle.

Great Britain and Italy are at each other's throats in a fight for control of the Mediterranean.

Fascist Italy at last embarked upon the conquest of the much heralded new Roman Empire. For more than one reason, Il Duce's decision is irrevocable. The Mediterranean is the indispensable gateway to empire. British imperialism, in control of the Mediterranean for generations, must maintain control of the route to her plundered possessions in India, Australia and Far East as a matter of self-preservation.

Faced with a national economy declining to ever new lows and the first symptoms of internal rebellion, the Fascist dictatorship has grasped at the Ethiopian adventure with the frenzy of a drowning man grabbing for a straw. That the blackshirts were not unaware of the impending clash with the British colossus is evidenced by the fact that from the first day of the invasion the entire Italian press has been conducting a systematic agitation against England, largely as a protective measure to stiffen the backbone of their own hosts in preparation for the worst eventuality.

England Acts Rapidly

The cagy statesmen at Downing Street have likewise worked overtime to check the desperate offensive of the Fascist upstarts. Without any serious opposition they have cloaked their campaign for imperial self-preservation with the moral authority of the League of Nations. They have even involved France – for whom, as the major beneficiary of the Versailles system, Italy is just as important an ally as England – in a policy of sanctions against Mussolini carried through with such speed and sweep as to leave the diplomats of the Quai D’Orsay in an extremely embarrassing position. They have countered Mussolini’s invasion and the troop movements of the Fascist General Staff with the complete militarization of Egypt and their other colonial possessions in Africa and with the greatest naval concentration in the Mediterranean since the last world war. The battle lines between the two imperialist powers have been drawn. Both sides are prepared to plunge wildly into the new holocaust.

The French imperialists, whose whole system of security hinges today upon the task of bringing about an Italo-British rapprochement, have been left floundering in the midst of an internal crisis. Rome has rejected any and all suggestions of retreat. The British have refused Laval’s mediation in the naval conflict. The French bourgeoisie is thrown into a terrific turmoil by the diplomatic dilemma. The cabinet of M. Laval is due for a fall in the midst of the strife between the pro-British and the pro-Fascist factions.

The rest of the European nations are drawn into the same vortex of conflicting currents. Nazi Germany maintains a «neutrality» that has its eye peeled for the prospects of entering the fray with an attack in the direction of its formidable Eastern neighbor. Japan is threatening a new offensive in the Far East. It is only a matter of time before all of Europe will be sucked up by the struggle.

Where Are the Pacts

The Irony of the whole situation is best reflected by the fate of the various «Pacts». There is the «Pact of the Four», to which both England and

Italy are signatories. Now null and void. There is the Anglo-French Entente. And there is the French-Italian Pact. Either one or the other is due for the scrapheap shortly. Then there is the Franco-Soviet Pact. In the light of the other experiences what value can any realist attach to it?

The fate of Europe is at stake.

The Soviet Union is in danger.

It is only a matter of time before the waves of war will reach our shores.

The most recent experiences confirm more than ever the realism and the correctness of the Marxist policy for the working class. The whole course of events dictates to the workers:

An immutable distrust of the imperialist governments, their «peace pacts», their League of Nations, their «sanctions».

A determined struggle against imperialist war by the only means possible – by the revolutionary defeat of the imperialist governments.

A consistent fight against the agents of the imperialists in the ranks of labor – the social-patriots of all stripes.

Partners in Social-Patriotic Betrayal

The Stalinists find yeoman support in their battle for sanctions in the New Leader, New York organ of the Old Guard Socialists. The New Leader, an old hand at reformism, gives a much clearer theoretical and practical explanation of the sanctions policy than the novice Daily Worker. It is in the New Leader that the real basis, purpose, and effect of the sanctions policy is made all too clear. We quote from the issue of October 12:

«With the exception of small extremist groups who take the Trotskyist position that the Socialist parties and labor must reject any cooperation with democratic governments and the League of Nations in its efforts to curb Fascist Italy, organized labor throughout the world through its political and economic organizations has taken a determined stand in

favor of sanctions and armed resistance, if need be, to the war policies of Mussolini and Hitler, placing itself squarely behind the League»...

«Only small groups of utopian isolationists, embracing the Trotskyist position... fail to see the issue in this light».

Here is a clear and unashamed exposition of the social democratic position on war, manifested at present in support of government sanctions. Before we deal with it in detail it is important to note: The social democratic betrayers who have moved not one inch from the traitors' role of 1914, now at the approach of a new 1914, distinguish themselves in this fundamental question only from «the small extremist Trotskyists».

A military writer once remarked that «war is merely the continuation of politics by other means». Add to that the dictum that «Politics is merely the extension of economics on another plane», and you have the basis for a Marxian analysis of the war question.

In the period of imperialism, the present period, the economies of the various capitalist nations are in constant conflict in their efforts to expand. No matter what political form they may take these economic conflicts never cease for a moment. Now they take the form of a «peaceful» struggle for markets, now a diplomatic struggle, now a warlike struggle. Politics is merely the outward form of this struggle which, change as it may, cannot do away with the struggle.

War is one of the political forms of this struggle. War is not some exceptional phenomena, it is simply the logical outcome («the extension») of the struggle. In the imperialist epoch war is almost unceasing; sometimes in the form of mere diplomatic threats, sometimes in the form of economic boycotts, sometimes as colonial expeditions, sometimes as open large scale war.

The treachery of both the Stalinists and the social democrats begins when they regard, war as some extraordinary event, some political phenomena apart from and exceptional to the ordinary run of politics.

The New Leader article continues under the head «Sanctions Do Not Mean War». This is precisely the thesis of the Stalinists who, like the

Socialists, are obliged to cover up their first concrete step toward the support of imperialist war behind a denial of its existence.

The Socialists are as hard pressed to prove that sanctions do not mean war as the Stalinists. To quote:

«Sir Norman Angell, winner of the Nobel Peace prize, replied to the objection that sanctions mean war with the words: ‘Sanctions do not mean war – they insure peace’».

Further on: «The Joint Anti-war Committee of the Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions... declared it was even more obvious today that only the energetic policy of collective security demanded by the two internationals in their resolution of September 6 can still preserve peace».

The article continues with a list. The American Federation of Labor, the New Zealand Federation, the Japanese Federation, all approve the sanctions policy of the League. But nowhere is there one single argument to show why sanctions do not mean war!

There are no arguments. All the Socialist ghouls of the dead Second International can do is to point with pride to the extent of their betrayal and gloat. But gloating does not make treachery any the less treachery.

The article concludes:

«Those who oppose the policy of the Labor and Socialist International in this crucial matter and who seek to interfere with the application of this policy by urging opposition to the stand of the League of Nations and advocating revolution in democratic countries when they may be confronted with the necessity of taking up arms against the fascist dictatorships are, whether they know it or not, doing the work of Mussolini and Hitler».

This is in complete agreement with the Stalinists, who have stated that the French workers would be traitors if they made their revolution in the midst of a Franco-German war.

The basis of this line in both cases is the same. It lies in this case in the failure of the social democrats to combat fascism... their policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie having crippled the workers and handed

them over to the fascists, the social democrats, instead of purging their movement of compromise, pass even further over into the camp of the bourgeoisie and appeal to the democratic bourgeois governments to overthrow the fascist bourgeois governments.

The fact that the very democratic governments they are appealing to are already themselves tottering on the edge of fascism seems to make no impression on the social democratic dunderheads. That they appeal to the enemy of the working class, the bourgeoisie, to perform the tasks that the working class alone can perform, is an index of their bankruptcy.

The Stalinists have to be a little more cautious about their approach to social-patriotism, to the support of the bourgeois government in its imperialist war moves. They conceal their social patriotism behind an even greater fog of phrases, misstatements and equivocations. But the direction of the movement is the same. It is safe to say that unless some earlier catastrophe overtakes them the Stalinists will line up 100 percent with the social democrats and the bourgeois governments, of the democratic countries at least (and of the fascist countries which are allied with the governments which the Stalinists consider most democratic), in the next war.

Take the issue of the Daily Worker of October 8: On the front page in a box we find the following slogans: «Withdraw the Italian Troops from Ethiopia! For Collective Economic Sanctions! No Arms to Italy! No Embargo on Arms to Ethiopia! Close the Suez Canall»

During the Russian revolution the Bolsheviks appealed to foreign soldiers to withdraw and throw down their arms – but they did not appeal as an enemy power, but as a workers' government, as a deadly enemy not of the soldiers, but of their officers and their bourgeoisie. They appealed to the foreign soldiers not to desert a cause, but to enter the service of a higher cause. This propaganda was effective.

Today the Stalinists appeal to the Italian workers to withdraw, but at the same time they support the bourgeois governments of enemy powers (by appeals to enemy governments to apply sanctions)! Their propaganda falls upon the ears of the Italian soldiers with exactly the same effect of

propaganda from the British government directly! And it is just as easy for the Italian officers to dispose of it as enemy propaganda. That is why the correct slogan for withdrawal in juxtaposition with the incorrect slogan for sanctions, military and economic, from Great Britain and the League, becomes perfectly useless. Unless you follow a true and complete internationalist line no amount of phrase mongering can have any effect. The Stalinists may think they are pretty smart supporting the democratic British government and calling for the overthrow of the Fascist Italian government... but actually, they are reduced to complete and bankrupt ineffectuality.

On the last page a streamer editorial concludes with the words: «All peace loving people and opponents of war should demand that Roosevelt follow up his latest proclamation by calling a special session of congress to amend»... etc., etc.

Recall once more that war is not caused by the evil intention of single capitalists; it is the inevitable law of a functioning capitalist economy. The imperialist capitalist economy is driven to expand; this expansion drive is reflected in a political drive for markets; this political drive is always more or less belligerent, and may at any moment break out into open warfare, which is only an «extension» of «peacetime» politics.

Now what sense is there in this appeal to «all peace loving people?» None. As a matter of fact, almost every man in the country, with the exception of a few adventurers, is a peace lover. Ask an army general, a president, a senator, a bank head – they are all peace lovers by their own admission. But they are supporters of the capitalist regime, hence they are forced to support the wars which are its living manifestation. The Daily Worker by appealing to all peace loving people is simply confusing the issue, which is not between peace lovers and war lovers (show me an avowed war lover) but between capitalists and proletarians; between supporters of the capitalist regime and its incessant open and concealed warfare and enemies of the capitalist regime and its warfare. When the Daily Worker appeals to peace lovers to stop war it is appealing to capitalists, to army generals, government figures, fascists (for they profess to love peace too!) to

overthrow the capitalist regime! For that is the only way peace lovers or anybody else will ever stop war.

Like the social democrats the Stalinists appeal to the capitalist government to stop war. The British Labor Party is ready to support «our government» in its efforts to maintain peace. The Stalinists are ready, indeed they call upon Roosevelt and congress, to support capitalist measures to «stop» war.

Now it is possible that a capitalist government may stop open war for a short period... but only because that government does not consider the time ripe for war. For instance: it is conceivable that Roosevelt, like Wilson, might keep us out of the war for a year or two... but only in order better to prepare for the war when it comes.

The treachery of the social democrats and the Stalinists lies not in the fact that Roosevelt can't stop war for a year or so, but in the fact that they teach the workers not to rely upon themselves who, as enemies of the capitalist system can alone really put a stop to war, but upon Roosevelt, Congress, and a host of peace lovers who only love peace as long as peace lasts. The majority of so-called peace lovers, love capitalism infinitely more than they love peace, hence they can never be relied upon to put a stop to the wars that are the natural manifestation of capitalism in action. When war comes the whole mob of peace lovers become just as ardent war lovers... and the workers whom the Daily Worker and the New Leader have taught to look to these peace lovers are easily led into the maelstrom.

October 9 – From an article by Marguerite Young of the Daily Worker Washington bureau: «Secretary of State Hull's announcement today that the United States has warned Rome not to bomb or injure American lives or property in case of military operations at Addis Ababa was received today as another indication that mass antiwar sentiment is finding its mark in the Roosevelt administration».

Here we have the same misdirection of the workers' attention away from their own struggle against war to the maneuvers of the capitalists in preparation for war. This is an especially brazen example; brazen or stupid, it is hard to say. So anxious are the Stalinist lackeys to register a victory for

their treacherous war policy that they seize upon the slightest incident and magnify it all out of proportion. Secretary of State Hull, it seems almost superfluous to remark, it only following the ordinary diplomatic procedure in warning Rome not to damage American imperialist lives and property in Ethiopia. Last week we remarked on the «forcing» policy of the Daily Worker, whereby they will soon be forcing themselves into an imperialist army. This week we have another example... the Daily Worker has forced the Secretary of State of an imperialist government to protect its imperialist property!

Where does all this lead? It leads the Daily Worker to an eventual campaign of forcing the United States into a war with Italy (or Germany, or Japan, or any other power that threatens the Soviet Union). The Stalinists have stated that they are ready to support wars of democratic states against fascist states (Stalin-Laval pact, «defend the remnants of bourgeois democracy», etc.). It is possible merely to support war. During the last war the centrist Socialists of the brand of Kautsky and MacDonald may be said merely to have supported the war. They did not campaign actively for war, at times they even criticized it, but they did not campaign against the war.

The Stalinists indicate their intention not merely to support the war, but to actively campaign for it! Up to the last minute before the last war the future centrist socialists took a revolutionary position on war. But the Stalinists, already before the war, are forcing the question. If any value can be placed on the pre-war comparison of the Kautskys with the pre-war position of the Stalinists we must conclude that the latter are preparing for a recruiting campaign unrivaled in the history of socialism, even surpassing the efforts of capitalist recruiting agents! What else is to be concluded from the vain boast of having forced the Secretary of State, the very leader of all the forces of reactionary imperialism, to protect American imperialist property?

October 11 – An editorial on sanctions: «Now the A. F. of L. can add its might and weight for such action (sanctions) – by endorsing the resolution before it, urging the Roosevelt government to act with the League of Nations on collective economic sanctions».

The Stalinists encourage the A. F. of L. to follow the same treacherous path – support the Roosevelt government, they advise. It is just possible that this advice will ultimately filter down to the ranks and have some influence on the membership. If the «red» Stalinists support the «peace» moves of the government there must be something to the government peace policy. Indeed if there were any opposition to support of the Roosevelt government in the ranks, the rotten bureaucracy could use the Stalinists as an example to force support of the government.

It is in just this situation that the stupidity of the argument of some Stalinists, who still have a grain of class consciousness left, becomes evident. We will support the government now, they say, but when it turns in another direction, toward war with the Soviet Union, we will oppose it.

This the Stalinists consider to be another smart trick, like their policy of supporting the British imperialist government and at the same time calling for insurrection in the Italian army. It is just as treacherous. For by advising the workers to support their bureaucracy and their government the Stalinists bring those workers under the leadership of that bureaucracy and that government – they teach the workers to look up to and rely on that bureaucracy and government.

And when in the future these extra smart Stalinists decide to change their line again they will find that the workers no longer are under their influence... the workers will be under the influence of the bureaucracy and the government, under the «influence» of the officers in the army.

Not only do the Stalinists advise the workers to support the Roosevelt government, but they advise them to support the League of Nations. The League of Nations is no more than the sum of its parts, i it is an association of international robber imperialists. If one imperialist government is a reactionary force, how reactionary is a league of fifty-two capitalist governments? The League is the International Burglars' Union, no more, no less. It has not changed one whit since the day Lenin called it «the Thieves Kitchen of Geneva».

N.Y. Mass Meet on War Crisis

In response to the grave danger of a new imperialist war flowing from the League of Nations policy of sanctions and the need for solidarity with the Ethiopian people against Italy's robber war, the New York District of the Workers Party has called a mass rally for Sunday evening, October 20, at Irving Plaza Hall, Irving Place and 15th Street.

Maurice Spector, former member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and one of the pioneers of the present movement for the Fourth International, will be the main speaker.

(Doc. 30-31) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 44, 26 October 1935

'People's Peace Parades' Today, Preparedness Parades Tomorrow

The leaflet issued under the auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism to advertize the People's Parade for Peace, the latest Stalinist sideshow, for some reason bears the motto: «Remember Woodrow Wilson... Remember 1917!». It would be more in the interests of peace to have the slogan read «Remember Wilson... Remember 1916!». For the Wilson who in 1917 was marching in Preparedness and mobilization parades, was in 1916 marching in «People's Parades for Peace»!!

When the Second International in 1914 made its last minute declaration of support for the bourgeois governments that were embarking on war, Lenin immediately proclaimed the death of the Second International and started to build the Third although the forces at his disposal were infinitesimal, a few hundred in Russia, and a few scores at the most in the other capitalist nations. From those few hundreds a revolution sprang in less than three years, and in five the whole of Europe tottered on the brink of proletarian revolution.

Lenin, as a revolutionary realist knew that there was only one way to put a stop to war; he knew that no mere masses, no matter how great, no mere demonstrations, no peace parades, no petitions and pledges, no matter how long and impressive, could stop war. He knew that only the proletarian revolution could stop the war – and he said so, even if he could find only a few hundred to agree with him at first.

Everybody «Opposes» War Now

Now the self-advertized leaders of the wreckage of Lenin's International, the Stalinists, may still believe that only proletarian revolution can put a stop to war – but if they believe it they are careful to conceal their belief. They take everything but a serious and realistic attitude toward war; they call on capitalist governments to stop war (sanctions), on combinations of capitalist governments to stop war (the League of Nations), on social democrats who have already once proved their inability to stop war (the British Labor Party, the French S. P., etc.), on Christian and church organizations, on reactionary trade unionists, they call upon everyone but the revolutionary proletariat – they call upon all those who turned against and persecuted Lenin in 1914 for his stand against war and for the struggle or revolution.

The Daily Worker of October 19 informs us that a great «People's March for Peace» is scheduled for the 26th under, among others, the auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism. This People's March for Peace has the «backing of A. F. of L. leaders» the Daily Worker is happy to announce. And it proudly prints a picture of Francis Gorman, the man who sold out the textile strike, as one of the backers.

Onward Christian Soldiers

Lenin stopped war with a revolution; the Daily Worker is going to stop it with a parade up Fifth Avenue. And where is the parade going to march to? What is the objective of the People? How is this demonstration to stop war? Not a word. It seems that all good Christians, pacifists, legionaires, Odd Fellows, etc., are going to march up to Columbus Circle

where they will hear speakers, and then go home satisfied that the cause of peace is secure – until the day war breaks out. What a travesty of revolutionary Marxism!

The article continues with a quotation from the appeal of the Peace Parade Committee:

«The League of Nations did not prevent Japan from devastating Manchuria and North China. The League of Nations did not prevent Mussolini from unleashing the mad dogs of war. The neutrality resolution passed by Congress is not a guarantee of our security... We solemnly declare to you that no League of Nations, no neutrality proclamations will secure peace and prevent world war».

All this is true enough. But we can as solemnly declare that People's Parades for Peace will never prevent another world war. On the last page of the same issue of the Daily worker we find an editorial:

«To support League of Nations sanctions against Italy and to fail to take concrete measures to carry out sanctions in this country by stopping all trade with Italy is to indulge in little more than a noble gesture». (!!!)

What kind of light-mindedness is this? On page two the Daily Worker justly remarks that the League can never prevent war; on page eight it editorializes for support of the very League which can never prevent war! Draw you own conclusions.

The «Church Militant»

October 20: Another advance notice of the People's Parade for Peace. «Walter Higgins, commander of the Marsh McLaughlin Post 5 of the United American War Veterans, said: "I will be glad to participate in the march"».

«The Rev. William Lloyd Imes, Negro pastor, said: "The St. James Presbyterian Church approves the march"».

«The Porto Rican National Organization, the Mella Club, the Chile Club and other local organizations endorsed the March».

On the last page an editorial chortles: «On Friday the voice of Dr. Samuel Trexler at the Third Lutheran World Convention was raised in

defense of peace. All friends of peace will hail Dr. Trexler's courageous statement».

The only peace lovers missing from this list are the Pope and Hitler. As for all the reverends, who appear in increasing numbers at every new Stalinist demonstration: The Church has been opposed to war in peacetime for two thousand years and has never succeeded in stopping one. It remained for the Stalinists to discover after two thousand years that the Church is a force for peace to be «hailed by all friends of peace».

October 21: The People's Parade of Peace is being worked up into a regular parade of the people's betrayers. The Daily Worker headlines the fact that «35 A. F. of L. Leaders Sign Proclamation Against War» issued by the People's Peace Parade Committee. The 35 leaders whom the Daily Worker celebrates include such eminent labor fakers as Dillon, Gorman, Hochman, Murray, Kennedy (Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania), etc., etc. These are the sterling friends of peace to whom the Daily Worker delegates the struggle for peace. As if to paint up their treachery, they quote from the proclamation signed by the fakers: «This war has begun. We, organized labor of America, are opposed to war. As far back as 1914 our former President Samuel Gompers said that "Labor has nothing to gain and everything to lose by war"».

The Real Gompers

«As far back as» is the catch. For, like every other big shot peace time friend of peace, Gompers supported the war when it came with all his might and main. He ran up and down the country lining up the rank and file in the A. F. of L. for the war and for the army. And with him went how many of the present signers of the proclamation of peace?

October 22: The Daily Worker prints in full an appeal from Waldo McNutt, chairman of the American Youth Congress, who concludes: «We call upon our parents, our friends, our leaders in government and all sincere opponents of war to rally now to march for peace», etc.

What has happened to the class struggle? Where is the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie? What has happened to Lenin's thesis that

the only way to stop war is to intensify the class struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie? All have disappeared in a common class mélange of Stalinist workers, ministers, parents, governmental leaders, trade union fakers, war veterans, and so on.

The People's Parade for Peace is a great illusion. Its members are not friends of peace but political demagogues who capitalize now on the peace sentiment and soon on the war sentiment. The parade up Fifth Avenue is but an echo of the parades before the last war, and a forecast of the next war, when many of the stalwarts of peace who march under peace banners today will march under the banners of war, and lead behind them the very workers whom the Stalinists are turning over to them today.

There is only one way to stop war. If the capitalist state is not overthrown the war cannot be stopped. It is the duty of the proletarian party to maintain a class line under every circumstance, war or peace. And if its ranks are small, if it cannot parade with thousands of «peace lovers» up Fifth Avenue, if it cannot rally the ministers, and government officials, and trade union bureaucrats, it can hold together on a principled line, the only line that will ultimately lead to the overthrow of the whole capitalist system and sweep away all the ministers, fakers, demagogues, politicians and... Stalinists who are its main support today.

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

The Division of Ethiopia

The imperialist robbers have evidently reached agreement on the proper share of the «white man's burden» that each is to bear in Ethiopia. The inordinate ambitions of fascist Rome have yielded, in part to the never satisfied hunger of the British lion. The Lake Tana region of Ethiopia has been recognized by Mussolini as sacrosanct to English capitalism. The English can pursue their vast project in the Sudan and Egypt for the building

of a cotton empire which shall render Great Britain free from all dependence on the United States as a source of this precious raw material. The success of this enterprise depends on absolute control of the waters that give fertility to the land, the waters that flow from Lake Tana into the Blue Nile. This was one of the major interests that Britain felt to be threatened by the Italian thrust into Ethiopia. While the gestures at Geneva continue out of sheer inertia and in order to present some sort of facade for a structure that has long since crumbled, the real imperialist «solution» involving arrangements among Italy, France and England has been achieved. The spoils having been divided, the growls of the English lion will subside. English diplomacy will now devote itself, as it has been preparing to do since the start of the present crisis, to casting all blame on France for the failure to stop the seizure of Ethiopia by the Italian army. This propaganda will also serve to merge into justification of a more and, more outright diplomacy of alliances in Europe. Already the writers are coining the phrase that will carry the gullible masses over to the new state of affairs. There will be not a League of Nations but Leagues of Nations. England will enter into such leagues to guarantee the peace in Western Europe, but not in Eastern Europe where «there will never be peace unless the nations there are left to work out their own salvation», as Sidebotham writes in the London **Times**. How hypocritical this is can be seen in the methods adopted by English capitalism to leave alone Russia and the East of Europe. The British navy is being expanded at breakneck speed, the armaments and munitions plants belch smoke night and day. At the same time England aids Germany materially and diplomatically in its preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union. Everywhere on the continent England is planning carefully for the new and inevitable world war.

Forces in British Labor

The Brighton Congress of the Labor Party in England adopted a resolution on the war crisis as shameful as any of those adopted by the social democratic parties in 1914. This social-patriotic betrayal of labor through supporting the application of «sanctions» by the ruling class, puts to the test

every real militant worker in England. A confused movement of opposition has developed against the misleaders who entice the working class into the steel trap set by imperialism. This oppositional movement is strung out ideologically speaking from the crassest kind of Christian pacifism to the clearest-cut revolutionary Marxism. The Socialist League under the leadership of Sir Stafford Cripps is not entirely pacifist as might seem at first sight. In its ranks there is developing a real current, a centrist current, of left socialism moving towards Marxism. If this League sticks to its guns, the very struggle against the Labor Party bureaucrats will push it further to the left. At Brighton there were signs of the possibility that the Socialist League might be expelled from the party. This would undoubtedly raise the question of fusion with the Independent Labor Party. The latter is the only party that has taken a clear-cut revolutionary position against sanctions and against British imperialism, despite its ideological shortcomings on Marxist principles. This very stand means the further drawing away of the I.L.P. from the Comintern with its social-patriotic program. Under the circumstances, by the very defense of its present course, the I.L.P. tends to throw off the clinging remnants of Stalinism and to begin to move more rapidly to the left. The Bolshevik-Leninists in this party, small as are their forces, begin to exert considerable ideological influence and to lend their aid in clarifying the international position of the I.L.P. Should the Socialist League be expelled and join with the I.L.P., its first influence would very likely tend to strengthen the centrists in the I.L.P. But the impetus given to the entire movement of the working class by a unification of militants, would lend prestige to the revolutionary vanguard in their fight to secure the adoption of a revolutionary Marxist program, that of the Fourth International. A unified party of this nature could not affiliate with either the Second or the Third International – by virtue of the very origin, of its being, since it would come into existence through opposition to the course of both these organizations of reformism. Hence the question of the Fourth International, whether Cripps and other centrists like it or no, would become a vital issue. Thus there is the bare possibility of far-reaching

consequences for the English workers in the present struggle for and against sanctions.

(Doc. 32-36) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 45, 2 November 1935

INSPIRED!

Il Duce Colors Hearst Stories on Ethiopia

Readers of the Hearst press, 28 newspapers with a total daily circulation of 5,500,000, and other newspapers carrying the Hearstowned International News Photo Service, are being daily fed photographs of the Ethiopian war, none of which are taken by American photographers, but are supplied to Hearst by Mussolini's official picture agency, Luce! Editors have to rely on the Italian firm's word that the pictures are bona fide.

This is the most obvious example of the way in which Fascist propaganda about the war is being fed to the American masses. But it is only part of the story. Mussolini has made special arrangements to accommodate the Hearst, United Press and, Associated Press correspondents directly behind the Italian lines. This is in order to secure «eyewitness stories», which carry more plausibility than the usual dispatches. But all correspondents' reports must travel the regular military wireless route, with censorship at Asmara and then again at Rome. Nothing gets through this filter except stories satisfactory to the Fascists.

An example of the usefulness to the Fascists of so-called eyewitness stories is the A. P. dispatch sent by Andrué Berding, who is being accommodated by high officers of the Italian Army. According to this lackey, on a 26 hour visit to the northern front, he found the natives not only already accustomed to the Fascist occupation, but that «Scores of Ethiopians gave the Fascist salute» and «Young Ethiopians already were calling out Buon Giorno».

Unfortunately, the lack of adequate communications and the difficulties of coverage from the Ethiopian side have so far made it impossible to counteract the Fascist propaganda by more accurate news.

WHO FINANCES ITALY'S WAR? How Big Business Provides Loans to Mussolini

(Reprinted from the British «New Leader», Organ of the I.L.P.)

Speculation has been very active in European capitals recently about the possible source of funds to keep the Italian war machine going. Will France furnish Italy the money to fight a war in Abyssinia? It is extremely improbable that the Laval government, pledged to economy and the security of the franc, will permit any loans. But there is another power in the French Republic from which Italy can obtain funds.

Observers have been wondering why certain French newspapers have shown such an exaggerated friendliness towards Italy. This friendliness cannot be entirely attributed to outright subsidizing of French journalists by the Italian government (it is common gossip that there have been large quantities of Italian money going around the Paris publishing world). A better explanation can be found in the enormous influence certain portions of French industry have on the press.

Loans to Industry

If the French banks, so the story goes, cannot lend directly to the Italian government, there is nothing to prevent them from offering loans to French industry. And, the latter are in no way forbidden to assist Italian industry. It is a roundabout way, but, for that matter, no less effective.

This is how this reported scheme will work.

French industries will invest their funds in Italian industry. The Italian government, which has a very thorough control over Italian industry, will convert those francs into lira: and utilize them for the purchase of the

raw materials, which Italy so sadly lacks, from foreign countries. It is very simple, and works just as well as a direct loan.

There have been some indications which support this story.

At the time of the Stresa Conference, a delegation of French bankers and industrialists, led by Ernest Mercier (one of the subsidizers of Colonel de la Rocque's Fascist Croix de Feu), were escorted on a tour through Italian industrial plants under the guidance of Count Volpi, the great Italian capitalist who has profited heavily from his connections with the Fascist government. As a climax, this delegation was received in Stresa by the Duce himself.

Another straw in the wind.

Money from War

Late in July, the «Echo de Paris», a newspaper with Fascist sympathies, which has shown a marked friendliness to Italy, published an article signed by the editor on the state of Italian finances. The article painted a very rosy picture of Italian finances and industry. But there was one very significant sentence in it: «It is probable that Italy must sooner or later make a bid, under one form or another, for foreign credit». The «under one form or another» was obviously the Duce's bid, through his principal spokesman in the French press, for the sort of circuitous financing described, above.

Whether the Laval government will allow such a deal to be made remains to be seen. But deal or no deal, there is little doubt that French industry stands to make money from war and preparation for war in Italy. For important French firms are closely connected already by investment in Italy.

M. Albert Galicier, for instance.

M. Galicier is one of the directors of the great Italian trust Montecatini, whose chemical works profit from the sale of explosives. He is also director of Haut Fourneaux, Forges et aciéries de Denain et d'Anzin, affiliated with the Comité des Forges, and having as vice-president M. Leopold Pralan, vice-president of the Comité des Forges. This firm of

Denain and Anzin make special steels for war vessels and other steel products for military purposes.

There is another director of Montecatini, M. Paul Ernest Picard, also director of the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, one of the great credit establishments in Paris. M. Picard is also a director of Forges et chantiers de la Méditerranée, which makes armaments.

Explosives Fay

The lines run the other way, also – Italy into France. Montecatini is interested in the subsidiaries of the great French chemical trust of Kuhlmann and in another French chemical firm, La Société des Phosphates Tunisiens et des Engrais et Produits Chimiques.

The French financial paper, «Information», August 1, gives a brilliant picture of the place Montecatini holds in Italy, especially in war time:

«The explosives branch is prospering. Besides receiving the ordinary orders, it is a secret to no one that the present outlook of the exterior politics of Italy is provoking additional orders which are not confined only to explosives. It is certain that, under the present circumstances, Montecatini will find their importance increasing, especially since Montecatini tends, more and more, to satisfy all Italian industrial needs».

While the French business men are profiting from these war preparations, it is interesting to find the Germans are not absent either from the fertile field of Montecatini.

Germany's Part

The I. G. Farbenindustrie, the enormous German chemical trust, long ago leased patents to and acquired shares in the Italian trust. And now we find that, according to «Information», a banking group, at the head of which is the Dresdener Bank, obtained, a short time ago, a block of Montecatini shares amounting to about 500 million lira, par value. Knowledge of this fact should throw light on the German attitude, which is undisguisedly hopeful for an Abyssinian war. Thus while German arms have

been sold to the Abyssinians, German industry has been Investing in the Italian munitions business.

And Britain?

It is well known that Britain's export trade with Italy is larger than that of other countries. Even without this trade, there are British investments in Italy, prominent among which is the branch of the armaments firm of Vickers, called Vickers Terni.

Participation of British industry in the profits of war in Italy may provide one explanation why the «big business» press in London has been so friendly towards Italy.

Why the National Government of Great Britain Is Prepared to Embark on a War with Italy

(Reprinted from the British «New Leader», organ of the I.L.P.)

The British Government claims to be opposing Italy because of love of the League Covenant and of the rights of small nations. No worker can believe this. The British Government showed no love for the Covenant when Japan defied it, and there is no government in the world which has more outraged the rights of small nations. The real motive of the National Government is to defend the interests of British capitalism and imperialism.

More than once we have pointed out in these columns the strategical importance of Abyssinia for British Imperialism. The importance of Abyssinia from the point of view of the immediate interests of British capitalism is not so well known.

British Empire in Africa

Since the World War the British Empire in East and Central Africa has become a co-ordinated and connected whole. The inclusion of the German colonies made an «all-red» route from North to South of Africa.

The British Empire now stretches from Cairo to the Cape. This British Empire in Africa is pierced only by the independent state of Abyssinia, which is like an island in British territory. British imperialists are obviously not going to allow another capitalist power to take possession of that island!

How Capitalism Has Grown

But it is not merely a matter of the unity of the British Empire in Africa. It is also a matter of its value for British capitalists. It is doubtful whether any part of the British Empire has yielded to British capitalism such an increase of profits as British Africa since the World War.

We give some striking figures in proof of this. Take, first, the increase in the total trade of Africa (of which, of course, British capitalists control the major part). The following table indicates the enormous expansion of Africa as a source of profit-making:—

Total Trade of Africa

1913	£320 millions
1924	£450 millions
1928	£580 millions

Precious Articles from Africa

It is often not realized how important Africa is in the production of many of the most precious articles. Our next table shows African production compared with world production of four most valuable articles:

Article Production	World	African
Gold (million ozs.)	19.5	11.0
Diamonds (mill, kar.)	7.2	7.2
Nitrates (1,000 tons)	10.0	5.2
Chrom ore (1,000 tons)	570.0	335.0

Increase of Gold from Africa

There has been a tremendous increase in gold production, as the following table shows:

Gold Export	1929	1933
Tanganyika	10,536 ozs.	32,516 ozs.
S.W. Africa.	570 ozs.	919 ozs.
	1931	1933
Uganda	71 ozs.	1,216 ozs.
Sierra Leone	6,650 ozs.	15,604 ozs.

The total exports of Kenya and Uganda have expanded from the annual average value of £1.17 million between 1910-14 to £4.32 million in 1931.

Threat to British Owners of Cotton Fields

The importance of Abyssinia to British capitalists because it contains the headwaters of the Blue Nile, which irrigates the British owned cotton fields of the Sudan, has often been pointed out. But the significance of this is not always realized. Seventy-six percent of the value of the exports from the Sudan is due to cotton, and 58 percent of the total crop is grown in the Gezira, which is fertilized by the Blue Nile.

Before 1926, when the dam of the Blue Nile was constructed, the Gezira depended on a scanty and seasonal rainfall, and was little better than a desert. Now every year more of it is being put under cultivation. British Capitalists are not going to permit another capitalist power to control a water supply which, if cut off, would retransform the Gezira into a desert and, in effect, expropriate the British shareholders!

Two British companies are mainly interested in the Sudan – the Sudan Construction and Equipment Company, Ltd. (capital, 1934, £0.4 million) and the Sudan Plant Syndicate (capital, 1925, £0.6 million; 1934, £2.3 million).

Big Increase of British Investments

British Africa has also increased greatly in value as an area for British Investments. Here are examples of how the opportunities for British shareholders have increased. The following capital, according to the

London Stock Exchange «Ten Years' Record», 1935, has been invested since 1925:

Investments Since 1925

In millions

Gold Coast Govt. Securities	£5.7
South African Govt. Securities	£42.0
N. Rhodesia Govt. Securities	£2.4
S. Rhodesia Govt. Securities	£4.2
Nyasaland Govt. Securities	£2.0
Tanganyika Govt. Securities	£5.5
Rhodesia Railway	£13.8
Nyasaland Railway	£0.8
African Trade Corporation	£3.5
Diamond Mines of S.W. Africa	£6.4
West Rand Consols	£2.3
Rand Selection	£3.4

These are twelve examples out of hundreds of shares dealt with on the London Stock Exchange. They total £92.0 millions! One other example: in four years £25 millions of British capital were invested in North Rhodesian mines.

Africans Become Wage-Slaves for British Capitalists

Since the World War tens of thousands of Africans have become the wage-slaves of British capitalist concerns. Here are the figures showing the increase in Kenya only:

1912	12,000
1920	90,000
1923	129,000
1927	185,000

Has Slavery in British Empire Been Abolished?

Why this expansion in Africa? One of the reasons is that the wages are extremely low – if one dare speak of them as wages. The price of labor

in Kenya is ten shillings a week. This is why British capitalists invest money there. They can make greater profits. The low wages in the British Empire in Africa help to cause unemployment in Britain and to under-cut British working class standards.

The question is sometimes asked: Why have not the Abyssinian people revolted against the system of slavery? It is because they see little difference between slavery in Abyssina and wage-slavery and forced labor in the neighboring British colonies where Africans are supposed to be free.

The land is taken from the Africans, who are only allowed to possess it in reserved territories. The result is that they are forced to go and labor for British capitalists.

The British Government also forces the Africans to labor for particular periods in the year on government schemes of work. The governor of Uganda stated in 1922 that «at present but a small proportion of the unskilled labor employed by governmental departments is voluntary».

The position of the Africans has been described as follows by an authoritative writer:

«White colonization and white industry mean that the black man loses the freedom to move in his own country, is made to work for the white man either by undisguised forced labor or by the corvee or by taxation, which he can only pay by hiring himself out year after year. It means sweating in the field for the profit of the white, sweating in the mines where he is paid a tith of what a white man earns for the same work. Above all, it means losing his lands; a peasant people torn from the land in which his spiritual life is rooted must perish». (White, «The Abyssinian Dispute», page 65.)

But Why Should British Workers Be Killed?

The facts given in this article show the importance of British capitalist interests in Africa and indicate why our British capitalist government is prepared to go to the extent even of war to defend those interests against the threat of Italian capitalist and imperialist interests.

But why should the lives of the British workers be sacrificed for profits of British capitalists?

March of Events

By JACK WEBER

Who Will Disarm the Fascists?

Nothing paralyzes the revolutionary activity of the advanced workers in any country so much as sabotage and treachery from within its own ranks. French social democracy and Stalinism are both engaged in creating and fostering the most harmful illusions in the ranks of the French proletariat. The success of their treachery can lead only to the victory of fascism. On a par with the social patriotic support of French militarism and imperialism, under the guise of «defense of the Soviet Union», by the support of the Franco-Soviet military alliance, is the sowing of the illusion by the «Popular Front» that the capitalist government can be made to disarm the fascist bands hired by finance capital. As a quid pro quo for their support of a «democratic» government, the Stalinists have been demanding that the government agree to disarm the fascists. Laval now «yields» to this so-called pressure from the «left» (as the capitalist press puts it) and announces that the Mobile Guards or special police are to be reenforced and given the immediate task of disarming the Croix de Feu and other private armies. No doubt the cretins who trust in the imperialist government which is ceaselessly preparing for war, to preserve peace, will hail this «decision» of Laval as a victory. In reality the workers should be aroused to the fraud that will be perpetrated by Laval to assist the fascists and strike a blow at the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. For under his fake promise, Laval will proceed to take strong measures against the armed workers, against the incipient workers' militia organized to defend the proletariat from fascist attack. The Laval government corresponds in its functions with that of Giolitti-Bonomi in Italy and Bruening-Schleicher-von Papen in Germany. It is the transition form between democracy and fascism. In this transition the fascist bands are created by finance capital and aided and strengthened by the support of the police and the army. With the direct connivance of leaders in the «democratic» government, of course.

The Policy of Laval

Laval was placed in power by the financial oligarchy in complete control of the Bank of France. This capstone of French imperialism ousted Flandin when he refused to obey the dictates of the bankers – the Rothschild interests, the de Wendels, etc. – in the matter of deflation. Laval was placed in power because he was the willing tool of the big bankers in the carrying out of an economic policy which – *by decree* – unloads the entire crisis on the backs of the workers, the small functionaries and the exploited peasants. The same de Wendel who heads the armaments trust and heavy industry (*Comité des Forges*), who directly finances de la Rocque, the would-be Hitler of France, entrusted the reins of the bourgeois government to Laval. Will any worker take seriously the word of Laval that he will act to disarm the bands created and supported by the same master whose orders are law to Laval – and are in actuality translated into laws by decree?

But perhaps it is not Laval who will really disarm the fascists, but a better friend of the workers, Herriot for example. Or better still one who advocates the People's Front like Daladier. The Stalinists, for the sake of Soviet diplomacy, perverted the united front with the French Socialists into a crass form of class collaboration for the preservation of bourgeois democracy. The united front became the social-patriotic People's Front with the inclusion of the directly bourgeois Radical Socialist Party of Herriot and Daladier. We are witnessing the ripening of the fruit of this People's Front. The Stalinists and Socialists make all possible concessions to the petty bourgeois Radicals, including a complete reliance on parliamentarism. The Radical Socialists, in turn, give support to the direct representatives of big business, to Laval. Herriot prevented a split in the Radical Socialist congress that has just been concluded over the question of supporting the government by decree of Laval. Daladier conducted an apparent fight for the People's Front against such support but was «persuaded» to yield to the patriotic Herriot. Daladier does not want to split his party. Thus the entire course of the Stalinists is clearly revealed as playing into the hands of the imperialists. The further end of the chain of class collaboration in which the

working class links are forged by the Socialist and Stalinist betrayers, rests firmly in the grip of the de Wendels.

The workers must learn that this is the inevitable result of a course of class collaboration, that they remain completely at the mercy of the big bankers. Only by pursuing a clear-cut revolutionary policy of the working class can the workers attain their own ends. Not the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie, but the armed forces of the workers can disarm the fascists. The answer to Laval's fraud must be the more rapid arming of the workers and the building of the workers' militia.

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

Question: Why is it not correct for the Communist Party of Great Britain to support sanctions against Italy since a defeat of Italy will hasten the overthrow of Fascism?

Answer: To advocate that sanctions, applied by His Majesty's government in imperialist interests, be given the support of the British workers means to advocate support by the latter of an imperialist policy, and correspondingly, the renunciation of any attempt to struggle for the overthrow of English capitalism. If this policy is proposed for the purpose, pretended at least, of hastening the overthrow of Italian imperialism, then the advocates of such a policy are maintaining that between the two imperialisms, Italian fascism and British «democracy», the latter is the lesser evil.

The Italian chauvinist can, with equal justice, reply: «Italian, and not British imperialism, is the lesser evil since the latter exploits several hundreds of millions of people; Mussolini, less than a hundred million. The material conditions of British colonials, e.g. India, is worse than that of the Italian masses under fascism. Victory in Ethiopia, followed by complete Italian control over the Mediterranean, Suez, etc., will smash the British

empire, giving the British colonials a chance to assert their independence, and the revolution will be hastened in Great Britain. For revolutionary reasons, therefore, it is necessary to support the policy of Mussolini».

The reasoning can be carried to its logical conclusion: if, as a result of Imperialist war, capitalism will be overthrown in those countries which are defeated, then it is necessary that the workers support imperialist war, and in each country conduct it as vigorously as possible so that the opposing capitalism will be all the more speedily destroyed.

Since the arguments are equally strong in all countries, acceptance of them by the workers internationally means the end of the struggle for the overthrow of their respective capitalisms. Who then will remain to overthrow the capitalists of the defeated countries?

What is false in the entire argument is the contention, a version of the «spontaneity» theory, that a victory by one Imperialist power over another necessarily means a victorious proletarian revolution in the nations controlled by the latter. A military defeat and the exhaustion of a country's economy through war weakens the grip of the exploiters, but, unless parties, free from the poison of chauvinism, and capable of leading the workers to victory, exist, these objective conditions can only result in increased misery for the toilers. This is borne out by the whole history of postwar Europe. Czarist Russia had the Bolshevik party of Lenin, and therefore a successful proletarian revolution, but it was one of the «victorious» allies. In the «vanquished» as well as some of the «victorious» countries, the class struggle, lacking the proper revolutionary leadership, led to fascism, e.g. Germany, Hungary, Italy.

A military defeat for Italy may mean the end of the Mussolini regime but this is not necessarily synonymous with a workers' victory. Those who draw an equation sign between the two, in the absence of a revolutionary party in Italy, are assuming that Italian capitalism cannot find new forms and methods to enslave the toilers; that the latter cannot sink to lower levels than fascism has already brought them, so that the revolution will come about automatically. There is nothing to justify such a conclusion: The

standard of living of the Italian masses is the lowest in Europe but is not yet even the lowest in the world.

Because there is no revolutionary party today in Italy, the most pernicious idea that could be advanced is the concept that the Italian revolution can be hastened by eradicating the revolutionary activity of the workers outside of Italy, i.e., in the nations applying sanctions. It is precisely because the conditions of fascism have virtually stamped out revolutionary ideology from the minds of the Italian workers, that it is only a revolutionary shock from outside that country which can, in the immediate future at least, again point out the way to them. Just as Marxism does not evolve out of the class struggle itself but is brought to the working class, so must it be brought to the Italian workers. Today the main stream of such knowledge lies outside of Italy.

Supporting the imperialists who are applying sanctions, therefore, is one of the surest methods of making it next to Impossible for the Italian workers to arrive at Marxism, and in the final analysis of setting the world revolution back for decades. The surest way of aiding the Italian revolution is the Leninist way: The enemy is at home; turn the Imperialist war into civil war.

(Doc. 37) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 46, 9 November 1935

WHAT ARE SANCTIONS?

«Collective Effort for Peace» or Imperialist Battle for Empire?

By Arne Swabeck

Fifty-two nations, including the Soviet Union, have voted to enforce sanctions, under the League of Nations covenant, against Fascist Italy. Liberals, pacifists and labor organizations, with but few exceptions throughout the world, support sanctions. A similar position is taken by the Second and the Third Internationals. In unison, both of these Internationals

have become aggressive supporters of Sanctions ever since this ingenious device was invented by the capitalist statesmen at Geneva.

The fateful days of 1914 had for their rallying cry the «defense of the fatherland». Is history now repeating itself. Are not issues of similarly fateful consequences to the future of the whole of humanity joined-up in this rallying cry of 1935 – the cry of sanctions?

What will sanctions mean when actually enforced? Are they to be purely financial and economic or are they to be military? Is it true that the sanctions to be invoked by the League of Nations represent the collective efforts of these nations to punish an aggressor and to stop war, or do they mean the extension of the war in Ethiopia on a far more colossal scale. This is the first and most essential question that confronts the working class.

For an answer it is necessary to examine at least the most outstanding factors involved.

The Causes of War

It has been said – and correctly so – that war is the continuation of politics by military means. Imperialist wars arise from the constant struggle between the powers for increased rations in world economy. All imperialist powers today feel the consequences of the economic crisis. The vast expansion of their productive forces presses them onward inexorably and irresistibly in the struggle for new markets and new colonial fields where they can tap the sources of raw materials, invest surplus capital and extract new and greater profits. On every continent they are openly advancing for new conquests. Owing to the severe defeats which the workers have suffered under Fascist onslaughts, the imperialist gamblers feel free to engage in a continuation of the conflict for increased economic rations by military means.

It is, of course, not the particular aggressor attitude of one or the other of these powers that produces war. This merely expresses a readiness to strike out for new territories. Fascist Italy has embarked on its course of expansion at the expense of the last of the independent African states. But in a world already divided into colonies and spheres of influence such a

course must inevitably become a struggle for redivision of markets, involving in the first instance those powers having the greatest possessions. And so, in this case, Fascist Italy came into direct conflict with the British Empire.

Britain and Italy

These two imperialist powers, Britain and Italy, are the major adversaries in the present war situation and in no case can the clash be considered a conflict of democracy *versus* dictatorship, as it is presented today. They are typical of a power pressing forward in the struggle for expansion and a power seeking to maintain its present possessions. On the one side is Fascist Italy, caught in its inability to stem the tide of its own internal economic and political contradictions, desperately seeking an outlet through the restoration of Caesar's empire. On the other side is the existing British Empire on which the sun never sets.

Britain had centuries to consolidate her position. Tapping vast resources all over the world, deriving countless profits from the sweat and blood of millions of subjected peoples, she enjoyed a privileged imperialist position and could not tolerate any rivals. Her diplomats scored easy victories – with the British navy standing by. Now she is hard pressed throughout the world; the diplomatic victories have become questionable; elements of decay are apparent and expressed even in the reactionary attitude of the bureaucratic leaders of her official labor movement in support of sanctions, not merely out of pacifist motivations, but in solidarity with the continued oppression of the millions of colonial peoples by the imperialist masters. 7,287,937 square miles containing a population of 446,191,000 is the extent of these possessions, dominion and colonial, that touch every continent. What is popularly called the imperial life line, begins at Gibraltar and extends through the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to the Indian Ocean. All along this line the British navy must remain supreme if the imperial possessions are to be retained unchallenged.

Not Ethiopia – the British Empire

The British rulers are not concerned with the independence of Ethiopia. Only too often have they proceeded with fire and sword to crush the independence of other native peoples. No, their sole concern is the preservation of their own far flung colonial empire. That Ethiopia's independence could be sacrificed easily enough was shown by the action of the League of Nations Council last summer. By a unanimous vote of all of its members, including the Soviet Union, a resolution was adopted to dismember Ethiopia on the basis of the robber treaty of 1906 between Italy, Britain and France. But Mussolini truculently rejected this offer inasmuch as he wanted possession of Ethiopia for Fascist Italy alone.

Indirectly this spells danger to the British Empire through the prospects of uprisings by the millions of peoples it now holds in subjection. But much more directly, this threatens to cut the imperial life line. Fascist Italy is building fortifications in Eritrea, on the coast of the Red Sea, and it is aiming for naval and aerial supremacy in the Mediterranean. This is the most immediate issue around which the war clouds are thickening today and the main motivating force behind the swift action of Britain for sanctions at Geneva.

The Many-Sided Danger of War

Obviously the League of Nations has not in the least, and could not in the least, serve to remove, or even to diminish, the causes of imperialist war. Organized as an instrument to ensure the spoils of the victors in the last war, and to maintain their hegemony, its numerous disarmament conferences served as a screen behind which all the capitalist powers, without exception, managed to perfect their armaments. New issues of conflict between these victors were, of course, inevitable. Japan some time ago embarked on its conquest of Manchuria, to extend its domination over China, and is now a constant threat to the borders of the Soviet Union. Fascist Germany is rearming feverishly in preparation for the time when its cruel regime can no longer bridge the gap of its internal contradictions; it will endeavor to find an outlet by means of new conquests. The imperialists

of the United States have proclaimed neutrality while engaging in ever more extensive naval maneuvers in the Pacific with an eye to a future establishment of a base in China, in order to raise the question of possession of India at the next historical stage.

On the battlefields of Ethiopia war has become a reality. The guns of the highly mechanized Fascist armies are spitting fire in the campaign to ravage and subjugate the native population. The capitalist powers in the League of Nations proclaim their peaceful intentions while all of them are arming to the teeth; some of them in order to use the first opportunity to spring to like conquests and others in order to defend their present possessions to the end. There may yet be an intermission before the general conflagration; but in any event the war that has already started in Ethiopia is only a prelude to the much greater catastrophe now in preparation under the rallying cry of sanctions.

«Good-Intentioned» Treachery

Only on this background can the question of sanctions be properly understood. And yet in this situation the Stalinist party, through the **Daily Worker**, informs us that; «The next step must be punishment of the guilty – sanctions». It exhorts; «All opponents of war and Fascism should support this policy and demand that the League of Nations bar all trade with Italy and close the Suez Canal».

In the thieves jargon of diplomacy, sanctions, in their ultimate implication, mean war. Mussolini said so. Stanley Baldwin repeats it, although much less boldly, and with many disguising hypocritical trimmings. Nevertheless the leaders of the British Labor Party demand sanctions. And Harry Pollitt, the leader of the British Stalinist party, in a recent address before a London district conference of the party, formulated his demands upon the British government as follows:

«But we also demand the closing of the Suez Canal, and the carrying out of the Covenant of the League of Nations, because we believe that all these measures can prevent Mussolini going to war, and we must utilize the

present contradictions in the capitalist world, and force economic and military sanctions, if necessary».

We may grant that Pollitt has other intentions than Stanley Baldwin, but the way to hell is paved with good intentions. Pollitt together with the leaders of the British Labor Party may criticize the National government; each in his own way, but this can only be incidental to the decisive issue of sanctions. And let it be noted, it is the League of Nations, and with it the British government, that are in this case called upon to close the Suez Canal and to enforce sanctions, «economic and military». Consequently the government is to be supported on this decisive issue. Behind this rallying cry of sanctions the British worker is being led into united support of the Tory government – the real enemy of the workers. To this enemy is to be entrusted the guarantee of peace.

Democracy Versus Dictatorship?

While at this time particularly the League of Nations should be exposed for what it is and the mask of hypocrisy torn off from the face of the imperialists, old illusions in the League are being strengthened and a new confidence of the workers in the Tory government is being built up. A new national union is being created with the connivance of Labor Party and Stalinist leaders which, regardless of intentions, can lead only to war for the maintenance of the British imperial possessions.

Britain is today in the center of the war developments but it is not alone; nor is the position taken by the British Stalinists an exception. We are informed by the **Daily Worker**, for instance, that the C.P. of Czechoslovakia on October 7 cabled the League of Nations demanding «the immediate application of effective economic and military sanctions against Italy». Here is a voice from another «democratic» country which the Comintern has declared as its policy to defend against Fascism. But it is not the voice of the revolutionary workers. Can anyone conceive of Czechoslovakia, or Britain, or the United States, or any other capitalist democratic country, really going to war to defend the democratic rights of the people against Fascism? Need there be any doubt that the war they will

wage will be for imperialist issues? And we might add, is it not more likely that when the war actually breaks out that serious efforts will be made by the capitalist rulers of these countries to transform them into Fascist states?

For the Stalinist parties the support of sanctions is not an accident; nor can it be regarded as just another mistake. It is a part of a whole system of policies which, once such a course is embarked upon, could lead to no other results. This system of policies proceeds consistently from reliance on pacts and treaties between the Soviet Union and the capitalist powers, instead of reliance on the proletarian revolution, to support of the League of Nations and to support of the capitalist governments in carrying out sanctions. In turn sanctions becomes the deceptive device for the mobilization of the masses for imperialist war.

Shall It Be 1914 Again?

What we have before us in this question is imperialist sanctions, for imperialist ends, and not working class action to prevent war. The two are not complementary, as the new-baked defenders of the remnants of bourgeois democracy would have us believe. These two are opposite poles. It is therefore necessary to emphasize that not only are issues, as fateful in their consequences to the future of the whole of humanity, joined up in this question of sanctions as was the case of the rallying cry of the «defense of the fatherland»; but also to add, that another historic betrayal is in preparation, and this time on a far more colossal scale. In 1914, national unity within the imperialist powers and the plunging of millions into the bloody battlefield was preceded by the treason of social democracy. Today the demand for sanctions can lead only to restoration of national unity behind the capitalist governments to plunge the masses into another and far more terrible conflagration – a repetition of the betrayal of 1914 – this time, however, participated in by the social democrats and the Stalinists jointly.

Still it remains as true as ever that only working class action can prevent war. Liebknecht warned that the enemy is at home; and, in this respect nothing has changed since. Therefore the duty of the revolutionists

is clear. It is the irreconcilable struggle to overthrow capitalism as the only way to do away with imperialist war.

(Doc. 38-39) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 47, 16 November 1935

**S. Africa Comrades Fight War
Arrested for Active Support of Boycott against Italy
BULLETIN**

Five members of the Lenin Club of South Africa, adherents of the Fourth International, have been arrested and are now facing trial. They spoke on the question of the Native Bills. The charges have not yet been enunciated. Since the meeting was orderly, it appears they may be tried for sedition.

CAPETOWN, South Africa. – The Italo-Abyssinian conflict continues to be the most important issue facing the South African proletariat. Because of our situation we are directly affected by any conflict on the African continent. All our propaganda at present is therefor centered around this question.

Undoubtedly the South African workers and especially the native and colored workers are prepared in a militant fashion to demonstrate their solidarity with the Ethiopian people. Recently the Stevedores and Dock Workers Union of Capetown passed a resolution to refuse to handle any goods destined for Italian East Africa. The Communist League immediately issued a special edition of the Workers Voice in support of the dock workers. A thousand of these were distributed free in the working class areas. Ours was the first organization to come out in support of the dockers' action.

The workers of Luderitz took similar action and refused to load any Italian vessel. The police immediately offered them the alternative of going back to work or arrest. The majority of the workers went back but a number

preferred to go to prison. The Communist League sent the following telegram to the Luderitz workers:

«Communist League congratulates you on magnificent stand. Condemn police action».

We are preparing for an organized protest against the terrorist action of the police.

Sabotage Workers Action

In face of the militant mood of the workers, the stand taken by the so-called working class parties is indicative of the demoralizing influence which these parties have on the South African workers' movement. The South African Labor Party has not uttered one word on the matter. The Communist Party, like the Stalinists everywhere, is preparing to lead the workers on the road of social-patriotism. Recently the Stalinist controlled League Against War and Fascism, held a «united front» conference in the Cathedral Hall. Neither the Communist League or the Lenin Club received invitations, but several individual comrades were invited to be present. Among organizations present were the Young Men's Christian Association and several churches. The speakers from the platform included a Bishop and several leading Stalinists. All the speakers were full of praise for the League of Nations, and called upon the capitalist government of South Africa – which one of the Stalinists referred to as «our» government – to instruct its representatives at Geneva to vote for sanctions against Italy. The lengthy resolution which was placed before the conference was pacifist to the core. When one of our comrades attempted to speak in order to expose the reformist nature of the resolution and to move a counter-resolution calling for an organized boycott of Fascist Italy, he was refused a hearing. Through a sympathetic trade union delegate, we succeeded in placing our resolution before the conference, but the chairman, when putting it to the vote coupled it with the Stalinist resolution, notwithstanding the protest of the mover.

The content of our resolution was as follows:

«That this conference pledges itself to organize an international boycott of Fascist Italy and will do everything in its power to prevent the handling, of Italian goods or the loading of Italian boats. To this end, it will carry on propaganda among working class organizations and especially among the workers engaged in transport».

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

M. Z., NEWARK – Question: Is there any difference between supporting sanctions «only to the extent required by British imperialism» and sanctions «forced upon these imperialist governments who want them only as a threat, and carried out over the head of the capitalist state apparatus, by independent united-front class actions (strikes, demonstrations, active boycotts, picketing, etc.)»? The Daily Worker (see Harry Gannes' column) of Oct. 16, 1935, makes this distinction.

Answer: Just as they distinguish between the nations of peace-loving, democratic and of war-seeking, fascist capitalisms; between fake and genuine labor parties; so do the Stalinists now attempt to cover their crimes, this time on the war question. There are, if you please, bad sanctions, i.e., those which the imperialists wish to apply, and good sanctions, i.e., those which the Stalinists would «force» them to apply.

If British imperialism wants sanctions «only as a threat» against Italy, whereas the worthies of the Third International would «force» His Majesty to take more drastic action, then it is quite clear that the Stalinists, even though they motivate their course by claiming a desire to defend Ethiopia, are demanding an IMMEDIATE imperialist war at the same time that they credit British imperialism with wanting peace. Unfortunately for the Stalinist contention, however. British imperialism is already FORCED to strike an effective blow at the Italian bandits in order to prevent the latter from taking the rich British colonial empire and exploiting it for the benefit of Italian,

instead of English, finance-capital; in order to prevent Mussolini from reducing Great Britain to the place of a third rate power. If England confines itself, for the present, to economic sanctions, it is because she has everything to gain by delaying military operations. The deeper the Italian army penetrates Ethiopia, the more difficult does the situation become for Mussolini; it is even possible that the Ethiopians may score military victories. Time permits Great Britain to strengthen her armaments in the Mediterranean and some thing which the British Admiralty has neglected to do, develop a naval strategy for these waters. The delay which the British are utilizing, therefore, is as much a part of military and naval strategy as the correct allocation of battleships, so that the sanctions of Stanley Baldwin are quite as effective as any which Harry Gannes and Co. would, if they could, «force» on him. Downing Street, it appears is not quite as illogical in its methods of defending the interests of British imperialism as are the Stalinists.

Stupid as the latter's policy may be, however, they call on the workers to «force» it on the imperialists by strikes, etc. «over the head of the capitalist state apparatus». Stupidity is here multiplied by insanity. Will the British workers be called to strike against the handling of goods destined for Italy when such goods are not being shipped because of orders from the British government? Will the Stalinists call on the British workers to boycott goods which are not being sold, such sale being already forbidden? How is it possible, except on the pages of the Daily Worker, to support sanctions by calling political strikes against the government applying them? Sanctions are of a military, as well as of an economic character. For the British workers to enforce military sanctions «over the head of the capitalist state apparatus», power must have first passed into the hands of the proletariat. How is it possible for the proletariat to have the state power and at the same time be «putting pressure» on the imperialists to apply sanctions? Only God, be he in heaven, or in the Kremlin can solve the insane riddles and contradictions which the scribes of the Daily Worker generate in justification of their betrayals.

The essence of the whole matter, of course, is that there is no difference between the sanctions of Stanley Baldwin and those which the Stalinists would «enforce». Stalin has subordinated the policies of the Communist parties to the Stalin-Laval pact, i.e., to the interests of French imperialism. The latter supports sanctions so the Stalinists internationally are doing the same.

(Doc. 40) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 49, 30 November 1935

How They Ache for War!

Editor's Note: How the Stalintern is out-Baldwining Baldwin and becoming the most rabid advocate of military sanctions, i.e., imperialist war, is revealed in the quotation below from the Journal de Moscou, French equivalent of the Moscow Daily News – one of the many Stalinist stooge periodicals.

MOSCOW, Nov. 1.—Steps to make possible military sanctions must be taken by the League of Nations, the Journal de Moscou, French language newspaper here, declared tonight.

The sanctions already voted against Italy will help the League's prestige by showing that it is prepared to act, the newspaper said. But economic and financial penalties never can stop a war.

«The first experiment of the League will allow us to conclude that economic sanctions alone never can succeed in guaranteeing peace», it stated, «and that it will be impossible in the future in analogous cases to limit ourselves to economic sanctions, as is foreseen in Article XVI, Paragraph 2 (of the Covenant) treating of military sanctions».

«It will suffice to study especially this paragraph and at the proper time create the conditions necessary to apply it rapidly in case of need».

If the sanctions already voted are not energetically applied they will only have a harmful effect, the paper declared.

(Doc. 41) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 50, 14 December 1935

Answer the fascist War Mongers; All out Dec. 14!

New York anti-Fascists are called upon to demonstrate before Madison Square Garden Saturday, Dec. 14 at 7 P.M. against the openly proclaimed threat of Mussolini's American agents to arouse sympathy for his highway-robbery in Ethiopia and to terrorize all Italo-American and American opponents of the Italian Fascist murder regime.

This demonstration is being organized by the Italian-American Committee Against War and Fascism, a united front body. The Workers Party is participating in the demonstration and all its members are requested to be there.

Following are excerpts from the leaflet issued by the committee which gives more detailed information.

«The Italian Fascists are going to meet in Madison Square Garden this Saturday night, Dec. 14 for the purpose of glorifying Mussolini's aggression of Ethiopia and to raise funds to enable the Black Shirt hordes to deprive the peaceful Ethiopians of their independence».

«High American officials, such as Supreme Court Justices Salvatore Cotillo, Ferdinand Pecora, General Sessions Justice John Freschi and others, are to be found among those who will «Heil» tyrant Mussolini in Madison Square Garden».

«This Fascist rally was decided upon at a dinner in the Ricciardi Italian Restaurant, on the evening of Friday, Nov. 15, 1935».

«Supreme Court Justices Salvatore Cotillo and Ferdinand Pecora participated».

«The purpose of the Madison Square Garden rally, as the Fascist daily 'Il Progresso ItaloAmericano' informed us in its issue of Nov. 17 is as follows: "To once more demonstrate that the hearts of the Italo-Americans beat with the heart of the far away Motherland and that each and every national who resides in this Motherland of adoption is ready to give all within his power to help Italy fight the brutal International Coalition led by

England with the utmost resistance and give a chance to the Italian soldiers who are now in Africa to write another epic page of glory in the history of civilization”».

«The Fascist sheet further stated: “When the Grand Officer of the Crown of Italy, Mr. Pope, began speaking to explain the purpose of this gathering, the throng which packed the Hall of Ricciardi’s Restaurant, which was decorated with flags of the two Nations, the colors which are in the heart of every Italo-American, an impetuous and lasting applause broke out. This stirring applause manifested the spontaneous promise of those present to enthusiastically contribute to the success of the Madison Square Rally, which also must be a warning to those who want to deny Italy her holy and sacred right to live. It must also serve to show that the five million Italian Americans who live in the United States are ready to sacrifice themselves on the altar of their great Motherland and will respond as the Consul General has said with a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye”».

Everybody out.

Give the Fascist vermin the answer they deserve.

(Doc. 42) The New Militant, Vol. I No. 51, 21 December 1935

Sanctions End in Scandal

LEAGUE POWERS PLAN PARTITION OF ETHIOPIA

ANGUISHED wails were sent up by pacifists, liberals, social democrats and Stalinists throughout the world last week over the proposal for giving about half of Ethiopia to Italy, which Sir Samuel Hoare, British Foreign Minister, and Premier Laval of France advanced as a basis for peace negotiations between the Fascist aggressor and the last of the independent nations of Africa, fighting to escape just such partition. The League of Nations had been «betrayed» especially by the Baldwin cabinet in Great Britain. The «honor» of Britain had been sullied. This was no way to break

into the preparations for the celebration of Christmas, and more of the same kind.

If the Hoare-Laval proposals teach the muddle-heads, and what is more important, the workers, who have been led into confusion by them, something about the true role of the League of Nations, the real character of the modern capitalist state and the anti-working class character of the policy of dependence on the League of Nations which has been followed by the bureaucrats in control of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, Messrs. Hoare and Laval will indeed have rendered a service!

The League of Nations was never anything but a tool by which certain great powers, especially France and Great Britain, carried out their imperialist designs, an idealistic screen behind which their war preparations could go on. For months after Haile Selassie first appealed to the League against Italian aggression, the League machinery served precisely this function of a screen behind which Italy poured troops into Africa and accumulated supplies for a war. At one point in these negotiations France and Great Britain advanced proposals which in principle were no different from the present ones though offering Italy much less territory than now. The full application of League sanctions, as the NEW MILITANT pointed out, meant imperialist war against Italy. If now the great powers have decided that they are not ready for a general showdown and that therefore the Italo-Ethiopian conflict must somehow be stopped, how else will it be composed except on such terms as the imperialist powers may agree on among themselves? And what should be the function of the League except to give a cover of legality and idealism to this «settlement»? This will still be the underlying truth of the matter even if the Hoare-Laval proposals should be considerably modified or even shelved altogether for the time being.

It is nevertheless quite evident that the plans of the French and British governments, whatever they may have been, did not work with the smoothness which the respective cabinets would undoubtedly have liked. The fact that such abrupt maneuvers are necessary is in itself an indication of how acute the imperialist tensions are at present. Some new threat may have developed from an unexpected quarter about which we shall learn as

the plot of the great drama develops. It may well be also that certain «statesmen» have become involved in a particularly juicy bit of intrigue which will not see the light until the workers gain control of some capitalist government and give its secret documents to the world, as Lenin and Trotsky did in Russia in 1917.

The main factors in the situation are sufficiently clear. The application of oil sanctions to Italy might produce an «incident» which would lead to open warfare between Italy and England; but England is none too certain just how prompt and efficient French support would be in such a case. Probably a general conflagration would then be well high inevitable and the powers are probably not ready to face that. Whether or not Stanley, Baldwin deliberately maneuvered to outsmart the Labor Party in the recent elections over the issue of sanctions and League support, the fact is that the National government is in power again, that need of British Imperialists has been met, and the government can now turn with more freedom to guard British interests at the most vital points in disregard of «peace sentiment». Possibly the steady progress of Japan in China requires the release of British ships from the Mediterranean.

The recent revolt in Egypt which compelled the British government to restore the constitution of 1923, giving at least a semblance of independence to that country, is only one of many indications that England and France may face serious situations with their colonial possessions and other dependencies if the disturbance does not soon die down. Another ominous (for all Imperialists) specter is raised by the fact that the Italian campaign in Ethiopia, what with transport and other difficulties, is not proceeding too smoothly. What dangerous thoughts its collapse would put into the heads of «backward peoples»! In Italy, too, the pinch of sanctions and war expenditures are being felt, and unrest is mounting.

Should Mussolini fall, who and what is to succeed the Fascist regime in Italy? Complications which might flow from that eventuality might shake the entire, European capitalist structure. In particular the French Right has probably made it clear to Laval that it will not accept this eventuality without bitter opposition. It is no surprise, therefore, to read coincidentally with the

announcement of the Hoare-Laval proposals that diplomatic conversations aimed at an agreement between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, are under way. From their own point of view these powers might do worse than come to an understanding among themselves, and to quiet things in Western Europe so as to leave themselves free to carry out their imperialist policies in Asia and Africa and against the Soviet Union.

To the Workers Party the recent developments did not constitute a shocking surprise, a miracle for which there is no explanation, a case perhaps of a bad attack of flu on the eve of a badly needed vacation in Switzerland causing Sir Samuel Hoare to make a regrettable personal mistake. Our policy remains the same:

Exposure of the role of the League of Nations!

Opposition to League sanctions!

Against imperialist war measures!

Defense of Ethiopia and resistance against Italy by the independent action of the working class and its allies!

Struggle against imperialist war by building the movement for the overthrow of capitalism!

Defense of the Soviet Union through building the Fourth International!

(Doc. 43) The New Militant, Vol. II No. 12, 28 March 1936

**After Five Months of Sanctions
Its Effect upon the Italo-Ethiopian War, the Great Powers and
the Workers**

By John West

One of the crucial issues of the present war crisis has been the problem of so-called «sanctions». Sanctions, moreover, are not merely a question for theoretical analysis. Sanctions are being tested also by

experience: during nearly five months they have been in operation against an «aggressor». In the light of the experience of these five months, therefore, I wish to test the analysis we have made of the problem of sanctions, and the position which we hold with respect to them.

The first point to make clear is that the sanctions which I am discussing – namely, the real sanctions which have really been in operation during these months – are in actuality certain economic, financial and commercial measures carried out by certain national states: Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and various of their satellites. This point may seem either so trivial or so obvious as to be hardly worth making. In fact, however, it is crucial. The reason why it must be understood is that these measures are usually referred to not as they really are but as «League of Nations sanctions». From this it is concluded that they differ fundamentally from measures carried out by national states, that they are collective acts of collective body which aims to uphold world stability and world peace.

The truth is that the idea of «League sanctions» is a mere legal fiction. The League of Nations is not a sovereign political unit nor an economic unit. It has no citizens nor army nor navy nor industries nor trade nor finance (other than the unimportant Bank for International Settlements, which to some extent it controls). Consequently there are no sanctions which the League could put into effect, no matter how desirous it might be of doing so. Sanctions, as defined in the League Covenant, can be put into effect only by sovereign political states. The only reality they can even conceivably have is as acts of sovereign political states.

It is this basic fact which determines the attitude of the various tendencies within the working class toward sanctions. Revolutionary Marxists are opposed to sanctions, because they are on all occasions opposed to bourgeois national states; the strategy of Marxists aims always toward the overthrow of bourgeois states. The social-patriots, on the other hand, favor sanctions, because at bottom the social-patriots rest on bourgeois national states, and rely on collaboration with them. The social-patriots of the standard social variety, here as in every other crucial issue, function as the agents of the bourgeois bureaucracy within the working

class. The new-style Stalinist social-patriots function within the working class as agents of the class enemy through an indirect route. These latter, committed to the building of socialism in one country, are consequently led to aid in maintenance of the status quo internationally – to enable socialism to be built «without interruption» – and thus must collaborate with and rely on the bourgeois states to whose immediate interest such maintenance is or seems to Stalin to be. In both cases, social-patriotism in general, and support of sanctions in particular, means nothing other than alliance with the class enemy.

Let us examine briefly what has happened in the case of sanctions, since their invocation in November:

Most of the nations belonging to the League have put into effect certain measures relating to their trade with Italy. These measures have included prohibitions on the export to Italy of a number of materials and products related to the carrying on of war (implements of war, horses, trucks, etc.); and also certain restrictions on granting loans and credits to Italy. The United States, also, though not a member of the League, has carried out certain sanctions: the prohibition of the export of certain implements of war, as provided in the Neutrality Act; and restrictions on loans and credit, through the Johnson Act.

It is to be remarked that all these nations, including the Soviet Union, have been very zealous in sticking to the letter of the law on sanctions. They have been careful not to step over the bounds of «collective action» by extending sanctions to anything not specifically agreed upon – to, for example, oil.

Italy, on her side, however, has gone a little further, and has expanded the reign of sanctions by instituting what she has called «counter-sanctions»: restriction of imports, prohibition of the sale of certain products from sanctionist nations, freezing of credits and other financial restrictions to prevent payment to these nations, etc.

What has been the effect of these measures?

First, it will require no argument to prove that their effect on the conduct of the Italian military campaign in Ethiopia has been zero. There is

no indication that they have affected the campaign in the slightest. From a military point of view, Ethiopia has fared neither better nor worse than if sanctions had never been thought of. As means of stopping the war or of saving ravaged Ethiopia, sanctions have accomplished nothing.

Sanctions seem to have had some effect in adding to Italy's economic and financial burdens internally, in cutting down supplies of certain goods and in raising prices. How great a percentage of such dislocation can be traced to sanctions, however, and how much to what would have occurred in any case under the given circumstances, without sanctions, it is difficult to estimate. Certain economic and financial difficulties have also followed with the sanctions-invoking countries. Indeed, it is probable that sanctions have been as burdensome to Great Britain and France as to Italy.

This, then, is the sum of the effects of sanctions as pretended instruments for stopping war and maintaining peace. This does not, however, complete the story of the effect of sanctions.

National Unity

The outstanding effect of the policy of sanctions has been: to aid in bringing to a new high point national unity within both the sanctions-invoking nations and Italy. The united support of sanctions by the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie together with the leadership of the dominant working class parties and organizations has meant in practice a coalition between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The crucial result of sanctions, thus, from the point of view of the working class, has been the weakening of the position of the working class, a shift in the relationship of forces in favor of the bourgeoisie, a setback to the revolutionary struggle.

In Italy, the policy of sanctions has played neatly into the hands of Mussolini. He has been able to direct the resentment of the masses away from the enemy at home, away from himself, the Fascist state and Italian finance-capital, to the «enemy abroad» – to the sanctionist nations and particularly to Great Britain. Thus the process of conscious class differentiation in Italy, which might well have gone on at a rapid rate during

this period, has had substituted for it a merging into patriotic support of the nation – that is, support of the class enemy.

Of even more importance, in the long run, is the degree to which sanctions have aided in accomplishing national unity within France and Great Britain (the same process has of course occurred within the lesser nations). In Great Britain, support of sanctions by the Labour Party and the Communist Party identified these parties with the Conservative Party on the war question, which has been, of course, the decisive question. It was this which made possible the sweeping victory of Baldwin in the November General Elections – since, with the same policy on the crucial question, the Labour Party could not furnish effective opposition. It is this, moreover, which is enabling Baldwin to carry through his armament program with hardly a voice raised loudly, and none convincingly, against it.

The same developments have occurred in France. Laval, Sarraut, the Peoples Front, all united for the League and for sanctions – and, of course, with suitable «modifications». And the effect has been to reunite France to a degree which would have seemed unimaginable a year ago. At that time, France was making rapidly ready, through a division into the two great class armies, for the struggle for power. The internal crisis in France has not of course been solved in favor of the bourgeoisie by the unification achieved with the help of the pro-sanctionst policy of the People's Front. But the process of class differentiation has during these five months been setback heavily. The temporary weakening of the Croix de Feu and the Fascists generally, pointed to with such smug complacency by the Stalinists as proof of the great «victories» of the People's Front, in actuality demonstrates just the opposite. The Fascists have retired a little precisely because the policy of the People's Front has so weakened the position of the working class that it does not so imminently threaten the foundations of bourgeois rule. Consequently, in France, the attempt at a Fascist coup can be further postponed. Finance-capital does not call in the Fascists until it has to; if it can maintain itself securely with the aid of the working class parties, so much the better and less troublesome.

Likewise, as in England, the pro-sanctions policy in France has made meaningless any opposition to the increased armament measures and speeded militarization. And it has played a great part in making the masses ready to defend, with full patriotic fervour, French finance-capital against Hitler. Humanité and Populaire outdo Flandin in their denunciation of the re-militarization of the Rhineland. And, quite naturally, they fail to notice that Flandin represents the class enemy at home – since their policy and Flandin’s are fundamentally identical.

Independent Action

Secondly, the pro-sanctions policy has sabotaged any effective independent working-class actions against the war. With their customary hypocrisy and cynicism, the Stalinist spokesmen inform us that they are for both governmental and working-class «sanctions»; and that the latter are more «basic». The C.I. «criticized» at length the British Labour Party because it advocated only governmental sanctions and neglected working-class actions. But this is only rhetoric, only phrases to temper the social-patriotic wind. Governmental sanctions and independent working-class «sanctions» do not supplement each other, as the Stalinists pretend, but contradict each other. The reason is easy to understand. Supporting governmental sanctions is supporting the government; independent working-class actions are necessarily directed against the government (the representative of the opposing class) and its policies. You cannot simultaneously fight with and against the government. You can pretend to do so, in words, as the Stalinists do; but the logic of facts, not phrases, governs your actions. And, as the last five months proves, the logic of facts prevented those who stood for governmental sanctions from organizing any significant working-class actions. The contradiction is somewhat obscured in the Italy-Ethiopian conflict, where the working class is on the side of one of the contestants and against the other. It would be glaringly obvious in the more important case of a conflict between two or more imperialist nations (e.g., France and Germany), where correct working-class actions would have to be directed

equally against all the contesting states, including the home government, but where any governmental sanctions would be directed against only one side.

To carry out working-class actions would have meant a consistent policy against the government, against the national state. Such a policy, though under the given conditions it too would doubtless have been unable to bring about peace and stop Italy's campaign, on the other hand would have acted in a manner just the opposite of the pro-sanctions policy in its influence on the relationship of class forces: however unsuccessful it might have been «practically», it would have promoted the class differentiation, strengthened the independent struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, and hindered the building up of national unity. It would have provided the basis for agitation to dispel and not to consolidate illusions. In short, it would have been the foundation for revolutionary, and not for social-patriotic strategy.

Weapon of Peace?

«What went wrong with sanctions?» the confused but sincere believer in sanctions asks himself, after reviewing the results of the pro-sanctions policy. «Why didn't they work better?»

If we begin reasoning from the belief that sanctions are a «weapon of peace», a «means for enforcing peace», then there is only one way to answer these questions. We must conclude that sanctions went wrong, that they didn't work, because they weren't strong enough, because the policy of sanctions was not sufficiently vigorously and extensively enforced. This is in fact the conclusion which the pro-sanctionists reach in trying to explain why sanctions have not worked in the Italian affair.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that this is correct, and let us imagine that sanctions had been enforced to the limit by the League nations. What would have followed from this? To be thoroughly «effective», sanctions would have had to include embargoes on virtually every import to and export from Italy. But such embargoes would have had to apply to goods to and from non-sanctions applying nations in order to accomplish their purpose. Thus, they could have been enforced only by a military and naval

blockade (what diplomats have been calling «military sanctions»). But a military and naval blockade is an act of war, and must necessarily have led to armed retaliation by Italy, since the life of Italy as a nation would have been at stake, as well as retaliation by the non-sanctionist nations, whose sovereignty would be threatened by the blockade.

We see, therefore, that a «fully effective» sanctions policy would – in this case as in any other – mean nothing else than war. The «peace policy» of sanctions turns out to be a war policy. The belief that sanctions are a means for enforcing peace thus puts us into a flat contradiction: peace can be genuinely enforced only by war. The reason for this is, of course, that the original belief – that any belief which leads to a contradiction – is false. Sanctions are not a means for enforcing peace.

The only case in which this contradiction could be avoided would be if the interests of all nations in the world except the so-called «aggressor» (here Italy) were in harmony. Then it might be possible to organize an unbroken front of embargoes against the «aggressor»; and the «aggressor», alone against the entire world, might well have to accede to world pressure without a fight. But this is not and cannot be true of the capitalist world, in which the interests of various nations and groups of nations are continuously in conflict. This might be the case in a World Federation of Socialist Republics; and «sanctions» might indeed be a means for enforcing peace if by chance threatened by a member of such a Federation. That, however, is a question not for the present but for the future.

To believe that sanctions are a means for enforcing peace leads, then, to a contradiction. It makes it impossible for us to understand sanctions in their true role, to interpret what actually has happened during the past five months, to explain the realities of world politics. It leaves it inexplicable why sanctions of a sort were applied in the case of Italy, but not in the case of Bolivia-Paraguay or of Japan in Manchuria, in both of which at least as good «legal» grounds existed for applying them. It leaves unintelligible the anti-sanctionist position of Great Britain now in the Rhineland dispute. With respect to «peace», Great Britain has had the same outlook during all four of these occurrences – and yet only in one did she advocate sanctions.

The Real Meaning

To explain the role of sanctions intelligibly, we must first understand what they are. And if we understand this, we know that they are not means for enforcing peace, but simply instruments of the policies of the national governments which invoked them, or consider invoking them. We judge and explain them, therefore, in the light of the whole policies of the given governments. For Great Britain and France, for example, they are part of the imperialist policies of two imperialist governments – that is, part of two war policies. For the Soviet Union, they are part of the world policy of Stalinism – of socialism in one country, preservation of the international status quo, and preparation for defense of the Soviet Union by alliance with capitalist states.

To understand sanctions in this manner – that is, as they are, not as pacifists and social-patriots dream of them – makes explicable what has actually happened, and the contacts that have arisen.

In the Chaco War, the policies of France and Great Britain did not require any flirtation with sanctions. Indeed, Great Britain preferred that the Chaco War should continue, since Royal-Dutch-Shell had an important stake in the victory of Paraguay. Sanctions were therefore never mentioned. Likewise in the case of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Here was a perfect legal instance for the application of sanctions. But France, and particularly Great Britain, saw nothing to be gained from the use of such a risky weapon. Their imperialist interests were not immediately and directly affected to a sufficient degree. They consequently decided that the best «means for enforcing peace» at that time was to do nothing openly, to carry on diplomatic negotiations and financial transactions behind the scenes, and to strengthen the fortifications at Hongkong and Singapore. They left it to the United States Secretary of State, Stimson, to express «world indignation against the aggressor» by his blundering and meaningless «non-recognition policy».

But the Italian preparations for the conquest of Ethiopia placed both France and Great Britain in dilemmas. If Italy, acting alone, won undisputed sway over Ethiopia, she would threaten the British Empire lines of

communication, the headwaters of the Nile and Egypt. On the other hand, if Ethiopia defeated the Italian legions or even resisted too strongly, there would be repercussions adverse to the British rulers among the native populations of the British colonies. Consequently, what Great Britain wanted in the Ethiopian matter was «neither peace nor war». She needed a deal – a deal which would have given Italy what Italy could not do without, but would not involve too much fighting, and would leave Ethiopia not unrestrictedly under Italian rule, but in part at least under a more «international» control – that is, a control which would not put the British lines of communication and the Nile too easily at Italy's mercy. Naturally, Great Britain was not concerned over the fate of the Ethiopians.

Great Britain, for the past year, has consistently aimed toward such an end. Through the League, an offer along these lines was made to Italy last summer – but this offer could not satisfy Mussolini's internal requirements. He needed a war. A half-way and muddled sanctions policy was adopted after the fighting started, in order to keep the dispute within an international framework. Then the Hoare-Laval proposal revived the summer plan; its announcement was premature, but it paved the way. Now, reports indicate that the Rhineland crisis will be utilized to clean up sanctions, and fix the whole Ethiopian question up in a Franco-British-Italian compromise.

France's dilemma was equally puzzling. She was quite willing for Mussolini to go ahead, since her own interests were not affected, and had told him so in the early part of 1935. But France also wished to keep the friendship of Great Britain and the League procedure, as useful instruments against the eventualities of Hitler's policy. France was forced, therefore, to go along part way with Great Britain in the Ethiopian question. But her influence was exerted chiefly to aid the projected deal, and to keep the application of sanctions from getting too extensive or serious. Flandin now is jumping the gun, and in his March 20 speech to the Chamber has hailed the early cancelling of sanctions.

The Soviet Union pursued the only «consistent» sanctions policy. Frantically striving to maintain the status quo as long as possible, and to

prepare for war with Hitler, it put its money on the League, and on friendship, with France and Great Britain. Thus, for public purposes, it spoke most loudly of all, for the League, and in favor of peace and international security; and meanwhile played in actuality the sanctions game as the compromise between France and Great Britain decided. During the past two months, the Stalinist press has conveniently allowed the question of sanctions to slip out of sight, in deference to France's wishes, and in order to get through the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact. Litvinov is now in a position to allow the whole matter, with a suitable rhetorical flourish, to be dropped. After all, what are 11,000,000 savages compared to a military alliance with French imperialism? We cannot allow utopian ideals to stand in the way of realistic defense of the Workers' Fatherland.

Meanwhile, as Selden, The Times London correspondent, remarked a few days ago, Ethiopia, in the face of the new complications, like Moses in the bullrushes, has been forgotten by all but God.

In this manner has the policy of sanctions served the cause of peace and the defense of the oppressed. Imperialism has made its sacrifices, but has not gone unrewarded. Great Britain would have preferred no trouble at all. However, since trouble could not be altogether avoided, Great Britain has been able to keep strings on Italy, and has laid the basis for a settlement within an international framework which will not be too threatening to imperial interests. Meanwhile British troops have cleared up awkward resulting situations in India and Egypt (Litvinov somehow forgot to suggest sanctions against Great Britain for its treatment of the Egyptian students and the border tribes in India). France, by throwing first oil and then political monkey wrenches into the sanctions machinery, has managed to keep friendly with Italy while at the same time not breaking with Great Britain. If she has been having certain difficulties in Syria, we must observe that she has the mission of preserving peace within her own dominions as well as in Ethiopia. Litvinov has kept in the good graces of his imperialist colleagues, built up sentiment against Germany, and secured the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact. If, in the affair, Soviet diplomacy has acted almost exclusively as the pawn first of British and then of French

imperialism, we must remember that it is only Trotskyites and such-like counter-revolutionists who believe that the dictatorship should put its reliance on the international proletariat and the extension of the October revolution. The realists of the Kremlin know that the choice now is not between socialism and capitalism but between democratic imperialism and fascist imperialism – and that we had better take the former and like it, even if it leads next month to the latter.

Imperialism has found the policy of sanctions useful enough for one stage of its deepening game. And in that stage, the policy of sanctions has served imperialism sufficiently well. It is, after all, only the position of the international working class that the policy of sanctions has injured. And this would hardly be of central concern to the imperialists themselves or to their social-patriotic agents, who must more rapidly make ready to turn the workers over to the war machine.

But the stage in which sanctions have been useful is dropping behind. The re-militarization of the Rhineland calls for new answers to new problems. The naked bones of the entire League structure stand more rudely revealed by the gesture of the Nazi troops. France complains over England's treachery in refusing sanctions now when she forced France into them against Italy. Litvinov indignantly protests the violation of the sanctity of treaties (alas, the morals of imperialism!). And Great Britain desperately maneuvers to maintain the precarious balance a little longer, before the clouds burst wide open.

(Doc. 44) The New Militant, Vol. II No. 15, 18 April 1936

**Woe to the Vanquished – Mussolini Slogan
Fascist Army Overruns Ethiopia
Two Internationals Reveal Bankruptcy Once Again**

With the capture of Dessye and the announcement by the Italian forces in Africa of plans of a three-day march at the end of which it is

expected to take the capital city of Addis Ababa, the main immediate objective of the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia seems to be definitely assured.

The occupation of the capital which now appears inevitable will undoubtedly be a severe moral blow to the defenders, and little more will be left to the courageous Ethiopians save the continuance of sporadic guerrilla warfare to prevent the Italians from completing the subjugation of this last of the «independent» lands of Africa.

At Geneva, meanwhile, the Italian representatives, haughtily exuberant with victory, have laid down the victor's peace terms in accordance with the old Roman war-cry which is the shibboleth of all modern imperialist pirates: «Woe to the vanquished!» From the intimated terms, it is clear that the Italians plan simply to convert Ethiopia into a colony, to humiliate her to the depths and to inflict such penalties upon her for her fight for independence as will constitute the maximum guarantee against the future resumption of the struggle against the invaders.

The Fascists are bluntly contemptuous not only of Ethiopia but also of the great «guarantor of peace», the League of Nations. Mussolini's representatives, demonstratively ignoring the League, insist upon negotiating exclusively with Ethiopian representatives, without even the presence of League representatives, and in a locality ostentatiously removed from the League seat, Geneva. As a «concession», it is reported from Geneva, Italy may «permit a League observer to be present at the direct negotiations on the condition that he remained silent and took no part in them. That would be tantamount to the League's blessing them in blank» (N.Y. Times 4-17).

The pathetic protests of the Ethiopian delegates to the League are, of course, entirely unavailing, as was to be expected. Since October 1935, when by quasi-unanimous vote the League Council labelled Italy the «aggressor», the pacifists of all colors and kidney, from the French Radicals through the Second International to the Third International have been singing the praises of the League of Nations as an instrument of peace and the protector of small nations whose independence was in jeopardy. From both Brussels and Moscow came blasts of drug fumes calculated to put the

independent working class movement to sleep with the consolidation that the League, by virtue of sanctions, would take care of everything.

The League bandits, however, were preoccupied with all the considerations in the world save that of the independence of Ethiopia. While Mussolini's modern and infinitely superior war machine has inexorably crushed the woefully inadequately equipped Ethiopian forces, the rival imperialist powers in the League jockeyed about to improve their own respective world positions.

Indeed, without the active support of the independent international working class, the isolated struggle of the Ethiopians was doomed in advance. To expect tribesmen by themselves to triumph over a modern, industrially-backed imperialist army, is preposterous. But it is precisely the working class movement which failed of its obligations. More exactly, the Second and Third Internationals, with all their braggart manifestoes and bluster and bluff, once more disclosed their utter bankruptcy.

They collapsed in Germany, in Austria, in the Saar, in Spain. And now, in face of one of the most shameless imperialist aggressions in our time, impudently conceived and insolently executed, the two old Internationals have once more failed. The tragedy of the whole Italo-Ethiopian struggle lies in the fact that in point of simple fact the working class movement did not react to strike even those simple blows at the Italian Fascists which they were in a position to deal.

Sanctions and the Coming War

By Maurice SPECTOR

«... In the last imperialist war, the Allies made use of the slogan, "Fight Against Prussian Militarism" while the Central Empires used the slogan, "Fight Against Tsarism"; both sides used the respective slogans to mobilize the masses for war. In a future war between Italy and France or Yugo-Slavia, the same purpose will be served by the slogan, "Fight Against Reactionary Fascism", for the bourgeoisie of the latter countries will take advantage of the anti-Fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war».

– *Resolution on War, Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, 1928.*

I.

THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN war throws into sharp relief the basic issues of the Marxist struggle against imperialism and social-chauvinism. After the German catastrophe established Hitler, the Marxists declared that the cup of poison brewed by the Stalinist doctrine of national-Bolshevism was filled to the brim; the capitulation of the German Communist party was the death of the Comintern. Less «subjective» critics of Stalinism countered that our judgment was precipitate and premature. They required still further evidence of bankruptcy. For some people, apparently nothing short of a police confession, and sworn affidavits taken before a duly accredited commissioner, would suffice. The Marxists know no other tests than those applied by Lenin. The Second International collapsed when it turned disloyal to its anti-imperialist pledge of 1912; the German social democracy turned traitor when it joined with the general staff, the government and the bourgeoisie. One difference between the situation two decades ago and

today is that even Lenin did not completely recognize how inevitably the opportunism of peace-time would develop into the chauvinism of the war. The Third International does not even wait for the actual outbreak of world war; it unmistakably flaunts its social-patriotism and class treason against the background of the Italo-Ethiopian struggle. The bitter antagonists of the past, the Second and Third Internationals, embrace on a common platform of mobilizing the masses in support of the League of Nations, «collective security» and governmental sanctions against the «aggressor». A writer in the Old Guard *New Leader* registers his heart-felt satisfaction at «the isolation of the small extremist groups who take the Trotskyist position...» i.e., those who oppose the League of Nations and sanctions as instruments of imperialist policy. One is strongly reminded of the days when those eminently «successful» statesmen of socialism, the Eberts and Scheidemanns, the Hendersons and Livals, poured withering contempt on «the fellows without home and country», Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht.

II.

There was no mobilization of the League of Nations and the Royal British Navy when imperialist Japan annexed Manchuria; no intervention in the spirit of Grotius, Immanuel Kant and Woodrow Wilson, when Paraguay and Bolivia, both members of the League, warred desperately in the Chaco. Nor was the sonorous Covenant invoked to prevent the earlier Greco-Turkish war that ended in the sack of Smyrna or when insurgent Polish militarists seized Vilna. The League calmly contemplated its navel as the French occupied the Ruhr, and the government of Alfonso suppressed Abd-El-Krim. The democratic Third Republic of Laval-Herriot and their similars mercilessly crushed the Syrians; parliamentary Britain coerced India, bombarded Alexandria, and dispatched the 1927 expedition to Shanghai. But not the faintest suggestion of sanctions ruffled Geneva. For all this happened within the precincts of the Thieves' Kitchen.

But the Italian eruption is part of the new chapter in international relations, the prologue of a second world war. The status quo of Versailles has been undermined with accelerated speed by the development of the world economic crisis. The war of 1914-18 could not eliminate its own cause; only the European revolution could have done that. The gigantic increase of the powers of production had exploded against the limitations of national sovereignty. But the Peace of Versailles proceeded to Balkanize Europe, at a time when the economic sceptre passed to America, the rise of the Soviet Union challenged capitalism, and Japanese imperialism contested Asia. In these circumstances European peace and stability could never be more than relatively brief interludes. Economic chaos, mass unemployment, middle class ruination, peasant impoverishment resumed their sway. Parliamentary democracy, the political expression of capitalist progress, could no longer confine the class antagonisms of capitalist decay. Fascism captivates the middle classes with promises to restore order, control capitalism, and develop national self-sufficiency. But capitalist planning fails as dismally as the World Economic Conference. «National self-sufficiency», which results in progressively reduced standards of living, proves a necessary means of rearmament in the renewed struggle for the repartitioning of the world market. Armaments, on which expenditures are three or four times their magnitude of 1914, are the only industry that flourishes.

But to describe the ensuing struggle in terms of democracy versus Fascism is radically false. This much the Sixth Congress of the Comintern which, in 1928 was not yet completely «liberated» from Leninist tradition, still acknowledged. «In the last imperialist war», ran its war resolution, «the Allies made use of the slogan, “Fight Against Prussian Militarism” while the Central Empires used the slogan, “Fight Against Tsarism”; both sides used the respective slogans to mobilize the masses for war. In a future war between Italy and France or Yugo-Slavia, the same purpose will be served by the slogan, “Fight Against Reactionary Fascism”, for the bourgeoisie in the latter countries will take advantage of the anti-Fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war». The major emphasis of both

the Second and Third Internationals today is a complete denial of this indubitably correct position. Those who completely failed to distinguish between Fascism and social democracy in the struggle against Hitler (Stalin's theory that they were «twins») and those who failed to organize militant working class resistance to Fascism (like Otto Bauer) now call on the capitalist «democratic» states like England and France to win their battles for them. Dimitroff of the Comintern and Adler of the LSI vie with each other mightily to save the «remnants of bourgeois democracy».

The strategy of both Internationals is based on the support of the «peace-loving», satiated, and hence defensive capitalist powers, against the lean and hungry Fascist aggressors. This point of view is frequently crystallized in the formula, «Fascism Means War». The Stalinist writer, Strachey, explains the Fascist tendency to the «extreme of imperialism» and «extreme of bellicosity» as due (1) to the destruction of the home market by cutting of wages and raising of prices, and (2) the consequent drive on the foreign market on pain of complete collapse. The slightest reflection suggests that there is no essential difference between this Fascist policy and that of the National government in England or the Herriot-Laval government in France. Inasmuch as it refuses to accept the status quo, Fascism intensifies the inner conflicts of capitalism and sharpens the war danger. But what is of paramount consideration in the struggle against both Fascism and war is to realize that both spring from the existence of capitalism.

Imperialist war has its inception in the struggle of the monopolies for the market. The proletariat cannot afford to distinguish between «aggressor» and «non-aggressor» trusts, syndicates, cartels, consortiums, etc., and as little between the capitalist states which are the general executive committees of these predatory interests. To support the «system of collective security» is equivalent to supporting the balance of power of the pre-war epoch, or in other words, it is to call on the working class to bleed for the present distribution of the world markets, of colonies, mandates and spheres of influence. It is to enlist in defense of one or the other of two rival imperialist camps. The democratic forms of certain imperialist states like France or

Great Britain can no more justify giving them support than it would justify the German workers supporting the Nazi regime. In any future conflict «constitutional» and «authoritarian» states will be found mixed up. Even now it is clear that without the complicity of England, it would have been impossible for Nazi Germany to rearm. Even now negotiations persist for a Franco-German rapprochement. Even now Schacht is reported to have disclosed to French and British bankers the Nazi desire for expansion in the Baltic and Soviet Ukraine.

Neither the argument of democracy, nor the argument of the «aggressor» are new. In 1912 the Basle manifesto already rejected these specious ideas, «declaring that the coming war could not be justified by even the slightest pretext of being in the interests of the people», and pointing out that the war would be the product of capitalist imperialism, «of the policy of conquests pursued by both groups of belligerents, both the Austro-German and Anglo-French-Russian group». Which did not prevent the Socialist parties on both sides later discovering that ideals and not investment were the prime movers of «their» governments. The bourgeoisie is no longer capable of waging a «progressive» war, such as in the period of national state unification against aristocracy and feudalism. In the imperialist epoch, the bourgeoisie, confronted in all countries by the problems of the general crisis of capitalism, strives for a solution by the sharper exploitation of the proletariat and the subjection of the «backward races». To summon the working class to support any policy leading to national unity or national defense under capitalism is to be an accessory of imperialism. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia is an example of undisguised imperialist aggression, but the Italian conflict with England is no meaningless struggle between «the principles of the Covenant and imperialist aggression»; it is a collision of rival imperialisms, with the more powerful in temporary command of the League machinery.

III.

The Italian Fascist dictatorship has become steadily more involved in internal economic and social contradictions. Italian economy rests on a very narrow basis; Italy is an importer of coal, cotton, iron, raw wool and vegetable fibres. It is one of the principal grievances of the Italian bourgeoisie that the price they got at Versailles for betraying the Triple Alliance was practically an insult. Despite the utmost restrictions of imports, the adverse trade balance for the first half of this year was approximately 1.4 billion lire, the total for 1934. The budgetary deficit for 1933-34 was nearly seven billion lire. Treasury bonds can no longer be issued at a favorable rate of interest, and postal savings notes which formerly could be cashed at sight no longer find takers. Trade restrictions throughout the world make it difficult for Italy to export. Public works and reclamation no longer suffice to keep unemployment down, and the safety-valve of the United States labor market is not now available. The worsening economic situation has stirred up the latent reserves of class antagonism and Mussolini has realized that Fascism will be in danger unless it extends its markets. Or as the Fascist journalist Gayda put it: «We must define the year 13 of the Fascist era as the year of the last stages of Fascist concentration and the beginning of the international struggle for affirmation of her right to life and power». The puffed-up verbiage of this statement cannot conceal the real meaning.

The Tripartite Treaty of 1906 between Great Britain, Italy and France, ostensibly guaranteeing Ethiopia's territorial integrity, was a preliminary agreement to partition the country at the first favorable opportunity. What saved the last independent African state at the time was the balance of imperial interests. England was anxious to halt the German advance. Though defeated at Adowa in her direct attempt at conquest, Italy was accorded a sphere of influence practically covering the whole of Ethiopia. By the secret Treaty of London, on the strength of which Italy sided with the Allies, France and England agreed that should they themselves increase their African colonies at the expense of Germany, and

that Italy would be accorded compensation. The war ended with England, France and Belgium adding one million square miles to their African holdings. All the Italian diplomats got was a good cry. In 1926 a series of colonial uprisings induced England to agree to support the Italian claim for a railway concession connecting Eritrea and Somaliland, running west of Addis Ababa, in return for recognition of England's right to carry out works on a motor road from Lake Tana to the Sudan and works on a barrage on that lake. Getting wind of this, the unfortunate Ethiopian government protested to both signatories and in a rider to Great Britain pathetically added: «We should never have suspected that the British government would come to an agreement with another government regarding our lake». The League of Nations blandly promised the Negus that it would take cognizance of his protest and the matter was smoothed over. Ras Tafari proceeded, however, to negotiate with the J.G. White Engineering Corporation of New York with a view to having the Lake Tana dam built by American interests, and invited the United States to re-open its legation in Addis Ababa.

But the agreement with Great Britain did not bring any practical results and Italy began pressing forward, against the resistance of the Negus, independently. Italy began plainly preparing for invasion, and the necessary «incident» at Walwal found 200,000 Italian troops mobilized for the autumn campaign. As at Fashoda at the end of the last century in her African rivalry with France, Britain's attitude suddenly hardened. Italy's expansion in Ethiopia would endanger British control of the head-waters of the Nile, of strategic importance for the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and no less menace British control of the Red Sea, predominance in the Mediterranean and the whole chain of imperial communications. The development of the Italian air and naval forces, accompanied by Italian talk of «mare Nostrum», pointed an obvious challenge. The Baldwin-Hoare government decided that this was the most opportune moment in years to take a stand against further attrition of the Empire. British control in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and India were at stake. Not for the first time, the British mobilized not only their fleets but the whole moral order and the world of ideals. What could be

more edifying than the abrupt conversion to the Covenant of Winston Churchill. The lesson of the crisis, states the former Lord of the Admiralty, is that Britain must have secure and lasting control of the Mediterranean; the British fleet will enable the League of Nations to give Britain secure and lasting control of the Mediterranean. England becomes the League's most devoted proponent of sanctions to «punish the guilty aggressor».

IV.

The pro-sanctions policy of the Second and Third Internationals came as a veritable god-send to British imperialism. The War Office and Admiralty are able to execute their plans to increase enormously their armaments in an atmosphere of «national unity». In 1933 the Labor party declared that it would «take no part in war and resist it with the whole force of the labor movement». In 1935 the Labor party demands military sanctions. As for the Communist party – its leader, Pollitt, calls upon the British navy to close the Suez Canal! When recently the Edinburgh Trades Council passed a resolution supporting the League in all measures «short of war» (i.e., «military sanctions») the communists supported an amendment to delete the qualification «short of war». But if you want the government to close the Suez Canal you must also vote the naval appropriations for that purpose. If you want the government to apply military as well as economic sanctions, you must support the government's armament program. You may feebly protest that it does not follow. The masses, subject to the tremendous pressure of bourgeois as well as social-patriotic propaganda, see it in that light. The chauvinism of the Labor party actually facilitates the National government's return to power. The sorry spectacle of the Labor party in the present elections is a repetition of the fate of social-patriotism and class collaboration in every crucial election. Lloyd George won the post-war election on the slogan, «Hang the Kaiser». The Labor party complained. But it had supported Lloyd George in the prosecution of the imperialist war. The Labor government was turned out when the Tories raised the fake Zinoviev letter issue. The Labor party complained; but it had been

administering capitalism! The Tories turned the second Labor government out by conjuring up a grave financial crisis; but the Laborites themselves had been preparing wage cuts. In the present crisis, Garvin of the Observer, a leading Tory weekly, jeers at the Labor party, «the incredible advocates of both disarmament and defiance, of both feebleness and challenge, of both weakness and war... The main body of Labor opinion has surrendered to a sheer stampede of jingoism... They have clamored for sanctions, blockade and war».

The resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern which we cited above contains this additional injunction: «The first duty of the communists in the fight against the imperialist war is to tear down the screen by which the bourgeoisie conceals their preparations for war and the real state of affairs from the masses of workers... This duty implies above all, a determined political and ideological struggle against pacifism». Official pacifism especially is singled out (League of Nations, Locarno, disarmament conferences, etc.). The Stalinists have completely forgotten this «directive» but it is the none less sound for that. Their support of sanctions is part and parcel of their participation with the social democrats in the treacherous front of «Official Pacifism». «Sanctions» (which have nothing in common with the international workers' boycott, a form of mass action) are the instrumentality of imperialist policy, of the powers that dominate the «League». That is the League which Lenin described as a «Thieves' Kitchen», and the Soviet government characterized it in 1923 as «a coalition of certain states endeavoring to usurp power over other states, and masking their attempts on the rights and independence of other nations by a false appearance of groundless legality in the form of mandates... a pseudo-international body... a mere mask to conceal from the masses the aggressive aims of the imperialistic policy of the great powers or their vassals». «The League of Nations», declares the 1928 resolution of the Comintern, «was founded nine years ago as an imperialist alliance in defense of the robber peace of Versailles, and for the suppression of the revolutionary movement of the world...» Apparently England and France only became «satiated» in the last few years.

Identifying the policy of a Soviet state in circumstances of capitalist encirclement with the policy of a working class struggling for power, the Stalinists and social democrats plead that the workers must take advantage of the imperialist antagonisms. Of course, but the methods are quite different. The Soviet state is compelled to manoeuvre between the capitalist states, to conclude pacts and alliances. Even then the limits of the concessions and agreements are the basic principles of the proletarian dictatorship. Anything that concedes these is betrayal. The struggle for peace is a legitimate and necessary aspiration of the Soviet state, but the Soviet state would commit high treason to the principles on which it was founded if it used its authority and influence to force the workers of capitalist countries to conclude civil peace with the ruling classes. The crime of the Stalin regime against the cause of internationalism is that it has forced the vanguard of the French working class into an alliance with its ruling class, that it has forced its supporters throughout the world to become adherents and apologists of the League of Nations, the association of capitalist states. The way the working class in capitalist countries must take advantage of imperialist antagonisms, particularly if they take the form of war, is to direct their struggle and arms against the ruling class of their «own countries». Civil war and not civil peace is the Leninist method of utilizing the imperialist antagonisms – the policy of revolutionary defeatism and not the policy of social-patriotism. Revolutionary defeatism in capitalist countries is the real defense of the Soviet Union too. The international working class and not paper treaties are its real allies.

The Italo-Ethiopian war has thrown a glaring light on the methods by which the new version of social-patriotism, no less rank than the old, seeks to rivet the workers to the imperialist war machine. Tomorrow Roosevelt or his successor may decide to stem the advance of Japanese imperialism by concluding some sort of agreement with the Soviet Union, and the social-patriots will muster all their arguments to save American democracy from the talons of the Mikado. Oh, certainly, Browder will probably plead that he is fighting not only for Lenin, but for Jefferson, Tom Paine, and Abraham Lincoln. But that will not help the overthrow of

American capitalism. We accuse the Second and Third Internationals of enlisting their services to enhance the prestige of the robber League, and of the «democratic and satiated powers» whose power is based on the exploitation of the proletariat and oppression of millions of colonial subjects. We accuse these social-patriotic organizations of sabotaging the organization of a real workers' boycott against Italy by directing their attention to a belief in the League sanctions; we accuse them of consolidating Fascism in Italy and Germany by permitting the Hitlers and Mussolinis to use the argument of encirclement and Versailles, and appeal for national unity to counter national unity elsewhere. We accuse them of hallowing the status quo, of a course of class collaboration, national unity, and civil peace that will re-enact the tragedy of August, 1914. No thinking worker today can any longer afford to temporize with the issues. The treachery of the Second and Third Internationals is too plain. The building of the Fourth International to organize the revolutionary-internationalist struggle against imperialism brooks no delay.

Sanctions and the British General Elections

SUPPORT OF League of Nations or governmental “sanctions” – including sanctions in the form of “neutrality legislation” – is, according to Marxists, betrayal on the question of war. To many persons sincerely concerned over “peace” this attitude of Marxists seems sectarian and unrealistic. Should not the “imperialist antagonisms” be utilized by the working class, if at the moment they aid in “preventing war”?

Marxists base their position on clear and simple reasoning. For them, the general question of sanctions cannot be answered until we ask, “Whose sanctions?” Capitalist governments are the instruments of the bourgeoisie of their respective nations. The League is the instrument of the dominant imperialist member states. League and governmental sanctions are, therefore, weapons of the bourgeoisie of the sanction-involving nations. Support of League and governmental sanctions is, thus, necessarily support

of the bourgeoisie of these nations. And therefore, such support meant the subordination of the working class within these nations to the class enemy – means, that is to say, as in 1914, the betrayal of the working class in the face of the war crisis.

No amount of “reservations” or “distinctions” accompanying the support of official sanctions can possibly alter the essential content of such support. This is determined by the causal relationships of the actual world of history, not by words and pious hopes.

It is, already, no longer necessary to appeal merely to theoretical analysis on the question of sanctions. The policy of support of official sanctions has already borne its first great practical fruits. We can judge also by results in the present war crisis.

The first great fruit of the policy of support of official sanctions by working class parties is: the achievement of national unity in Great Britain, and the overwhelming victory of the Conservative party in the general elections of November 14.

A year ago the British Labour party was gaining strength rapidly. From the days last summer when it formulated clearly its policy toward sanctions, it has steadily lost strength – lost it, above all, in industrial centers which could rightly have been expected to return huge Labour majorities. The masses interpreted the position of the Labour officialdom correctly. Brushing aside their reservations, what was left was only: support of British imperialism, acceptance of the policy of British finance-capital. And, with entire plausibility, Baldwin showed that if you support imperialist policy, you must also support the means to carry it out – namely, armament. The masses reasoned that if they were going to have to support imperialism by either vote, they had better give preference to Baldwin, who at least knew clearly what he was doing.

But the mere numerical, the quantitative defeat is not by any means the worst of it. The policy of support of sanctions by the Labour Party, enthusiastically seconded by the Communist Party of Great Britain, has powerfully altered the basic relationship of class forces in Great Britain to the advantage of finance-capital, has disarmed and weakened the working

class. British imperialism has, with the aid of the betrayers, been put in the happy position of being able to solve the war crisis in its own way, without effective opposition. Even the Labour minority in Parliament is not a true opposition, since it too is committed to the fundamental position of British imperialism. The genuine opposition is confined to the four Independent Labour Party members, who fought the campaign on an anti-government-sanctions platform, together with those individual Labour party members whom the ILP position forced to repudiate their official party stand.

Once again are the lessons of Marxism confirmed: Compromise with the class enemy and with its state means always – capitulation to the class enemy and its state. In the present instance: Support of governmental sanctions means support of the government applying the sanctions – that is, support of imperialism. The Marxist conclusion is inescapable:

Against all forms of League or government or official sanctions.

For the independent “sanctions” of the working class, for and only for the independent revolutionary struggle of the working class against the war-makers.

(Doc. 47) War and the Workers

By John West

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INTRODUCTION

War is no longer something in the vague future, something to be prophesied and argued about. War has begun. The airplanes and machine guns of Italian Fascism are blasting their corpse-strewn road into Ethiopia. Once again the columns of the newspapers are filled with stories of attacks and counter-attacks, of cities destroyed, of plains laid waste, of the dead and wounded and dying. But far more ominous than the stories of the actual campaign now being fought in Africa are the reports in the neighboring columns: of the concentration of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean; of the new moves of the Japanese in the campaign against China; of the war games of the United States Fleet in the Pacific; of the behind-the-scenes deals in the League of Nations; of twenty-four hour operation in all the munitions plants of the world; of the new German submarines and airplanes and gases; of the new French forts along the German border; of daily changing alliances and counter-alliances.

The war begun by the campaign against Ethiopia – the deliberate, cold-blooded, unprovoked rape of the last of the independent nations of Africa – will not, cannot end in Ethiopia. This is the first great, terrible truth which we must learn and which we must teach. The war in Ethiopia is the introduction, the prelude to the new imperialist world war. It may be that England, France, and Italy will find some «solution» that will prevent the new war from spreading immediately and directly to include the rest of the world. But a solution of this kind can be at the best a short, temporary postponement. Italy has made the first open move in what can only be the new world war, the new armed struggle between the imperialist powers to re-divide the world.

In this struggle the fate of human society will be decided. Remembering the last war with its more than 40,000,000 dead and wounded, and knowing the thousand-fold advances in military technique since the last war, no man can predict adequately the horror of the coming war. Mankind stands now at the crossroads: On the one hand, the continued domination of finance capital will mean that in the approaching series of imperialist struggles civilization will be literally wiped out and human society will be thrown back again into the most frightful form of barbarism. There is only one other path: the utilization of the imperialist crisis for the overthrow of finance-capital, and the construction of a new order of society which, while releasing the productive forces to serve the needs of men, will wipe war and the threat of war from the face of the earth. But the overthrow of finance-capital and the construction of the new society can be achieved only by the action of the international working class under the leadership of the revolutionary party.

Thus the problem of war is above all the problem of the working class and its party. The problem of war is, indeed, the supreme test for the working class and the party of the working class. This test now faces us. It is for us to meet it.

[...]

IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENT WAR CRISIS

The present Italian campaign, narrowly considered, is the external expression of the violence of the internal economic and political conflicts of contemporary Italy. It must be remembered that in the Versailles Treaty, Great Britain and France repudiated most of the secret promises of territory and colonies by which they had induced Italy to enter the war on the side of the Allies. It must also be remembered that Italy is exceptionally poor in many of the basic raw materials (e.g., oil, iron, coal, cotton). Such factors as these combined with the social and political character of the Fascist regime

to precipitate economic crisis in Italy before most other nations, and to ensure that the world economic crisis would have more terribly damaging effects Italy than in perhaps any other nation.

No possible internal measures have been able to alleviate the Italian crisis. The lowering of the standard of living and real wages of the Italian masses to almost unbelievable depths has only exaggerated the conflicts, and further narrowed the possibilities of the internal market. The economic and social conflicts, in spite of the severest repressions, have shaken the political stability of the Fascist regime. Italian finance-capital must acquire sources of raw materials, new markets, and new fields for the investment of capital funds for which there is no employment at home. Mussolini must seek a re-unification of the Italian masses around the Fascist regime by directing their attention away from Italy and toward foreign conquest.

Thus both the basic economic and political factors require an «external solution» – require a war of aggression.

For a variety of reasons, the eyes of the rulers of Italy turned toward Ethiopia. Here was the last of the independent nations of Africa, not yet officially claimed by any of the imperialist powers. Control of Ethiopia would fit in nicely with other Italian colonies in Africa. Ethiopia possesses certain, if unknown, amounts of raw materials; and, more important, the exploitation of Ethiopia would open up vast outlets for Italian capital, and would create a new market.

Italy began preparations carefully. Italian Eritrea and Somaliland were strengthened. During 1934, «border incidents» were systematically cultivated, culminating in the famous Ualual incident, as a sequence to which, in December 1934, Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations. From then on, Italy began large scale war preparations, and put a great army into the field in Africa. In these preparations, the League served Italy well, for Ethiopia, forced to rely on the League and consequently to avoid any charge of provocation, was thereby prevented from making any defensive military preparations.

But the Ethiopian campaign naturally could not remain a «purely Italian affair». Italian control of Ethiopia directly threatened Great Britain's

control over Egypt, and exposed the British Empire's line of communication through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. Furthermore, Great Britain, and to a lesser extent other powers (notably the United States) were also interested in sharing in the exploitation of Ethiopia. But much more than this is involved. The matter cannot end with Ethiopia. War in Ethiopia can be only the start of the new armed struggle to re-divide the world. Italy will have to go on to other campaigns. Germany only waits for the most advantageous moment to begin her struggle to regain her pre-war colonies, to strike out to the East in Europe, and to destroy French hegemony on the Continent. Japan has already begun her conquest of China, and her moves toward the Soviet Union in the Far East. Great Britain, who has the most to lose, sees her vast empire everywhere menaced by the hungry powers. Likewise, Great Britain fears the repercussions of colonial struggle in arousing the oppressed masses in her own colonies and dominions.

In this light, the heroic efforts of Great Britain to preserve peace and to uphold the sanctity of collective agreements and the League become intelligible. British finance-capital uses the slogans of peace and support of the League to defend her empire and to try to line up as much as possible of the rest of the world on her side before the world imperialist struggle begins. In this effort, her problem with France is particularly thorny. For France is not immediately concerned in the Ethiopian affair to any considerable degree. And France is not sure whether Britain's side or Italy's side at the present moment will prove in the long run more advantageous for France. But France must have protection on the Continent against possible German aggression. At present, in the light of the Franco-Soviet Pact and the defeat – for the time being – of the French interests wanting agreement with Hitler, such protection can come best through the League. France therefore faces the contradiction of wishing to sabotage the League (i.e., Great Britain) in the Ethiopian affair, while still allowing for future strong League action in the event of German aggression. To solve this, France attempts to secure a pledge from Great Britain for future action on the Continent, in return for supporting Britain in the League now. But

Britain does not want to give an unequivocal pledge for the future which would involve a final break with Germany.

This – together with British use of the crisis to hold a new election with the assurance of a Conservative victory – is in brief the background of the daily ebb and flow of the Ethiopian affair. In its light, the actual fighting in Ethiopia sinks to minor importance. Four points need special emphasis:

(1) The Ethiopian campaign can in no sense be regarded as a local matter. It cannot be understood except as the prelude to the new imperialist world war. A temporary «solution», satisfactory to Italy, Great Britain and France, may very probably be worked out; but this can only prove to be a short postponement. Italy's aggression is the demonstration that the conflicts of world imperialism have gone beyond the stage of economic competition, «police» measures, trade wars, to the stage of armed struggle for the re-division of the world. Since the conflicts of imperialism, as we have seen, operate internationally, it follows that the approaching war will be international in scope, involving all great nations – and, indirectly at least, the entire world.

(2) The League of Nations, throughout the development of this crisis as in every other, has acted as the tool of the dominant member states. In no sense has it been an agency for peace. The League has been a convenient maneuvering ground for the diplomats. Above all, the League has been serving as the instrument of British imperialism. Support of the League in any manner is in the present crisis nothing else than support of British imperialism; or, in another sense, of the future plans of French imperialism.

(3) The approaching world war must necessarily involve the Soviet Union in a decisive manner, must indeed decide the fate of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. The idea that the Soviet Union by some magic can remain aloof is in complete disregard of historical actuality. In the development of the present crisis, the traitorous government of the Soviet Union has throughout played the game of the League of Nations. This means necessarily that it has throughout played the game of British imperialism and the future requirements of French imperialism. Litvinov acted at Geneva as the stooge of Hoare and Laval.

(4) The United States is not involved directly and immediately in the Ethiopian crisis to the extent of Great Britain, France, and Italy. It is, of course, to some extent involved even immediately – as the tremendous increase in exports to Italy during the last year and the Rickett concession affair show. But the United States above all is involved in the world imperialist crisis. In the approaching world struggle, the United States will make its bid for domination in world imperialism. This in fact is the determining and decisive feature of the approaching struggle. Because of her geographical and economic situation, the US will not enter at once into the armed struggle. But, in the later stages, when the other powers are to some degree exhausted, she will necessarily launch out for world hegemony.

V.

BETRAYAL IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

In the face of the developing war crisis, the forces for the betrayal of the workers in the struggle against war are maturing rapidly. From all sides, in all countries, the liberals, the pacifists, the reformists, the social-patriots, under the cover of what look like anti-war and pro-peace campaigns, are in actuality preparing for sell-out to the war-makers, are making ready to turn over the masses to the imperialists.

Again, as before the last war, we find the old ways and methods and slogans of betrayal. But the old methods are not enough. New appearances must be added: the masses cannot be deceived again in precisely the old ways. It therefore becomes of crucial importance to analyze the new and special forms of betrayal which are appearing in the present crisis.

1. *«Good» and «Bad» Capitalist Powers*

The most fatally dangerous doctrine, a doctrine which has been systematically propagated during recent years by liberals and by both the Socialist and Communist parties throughout the world, is the theory that a basic distinction must be drawn between the comparatively «good» capitalist nations, the «peace-loving» nations – Great Britain, France, and the United

States, on the one hand; and, on the other, the altogether «wicked» capitalist nations – Italy and especially Germany.

This theory reasons as follows: Fascism, especially Hitlerism, means war. Therefore, the fight against war is the fight against Fascism, and especially against Hitlerism, the worst form of Fascism. The success of Fascism means the destruction of democratic rights. The destruction of democratic rights means the crushing of the organizations of the working class, and thus defeat for the revolutionary movement. But Fascism, especially Hitlerism, can succeed only by war, and, since, Fascism means war, will inevitably undertake war.

What then follows? What follows is the betrayal of the working class of France, England and the United States. For, on the basis of the above chain of reasoning, to support the democratic nations in a war against Hitler is to defend democratic rights against Fascism; thus to defend the organizations of the working class; and thereby the revolution. The wheel completes its circle. Defense of the national state – that is, defense of the imperialist bourgeoisie of England, France and the United States – becomes, through this theory, a revolutionary duty!

The mortal fallacy in this position is easy enough to understand when once examined from the point of view of Marxism. The statement, «Fascism means war» is incomplete. It is not Fascism that means war. *Rather it is the continued existence of capitalism that means both Fascism and war.* Fascism means war only in the sense that it marks outwardly a great intensification of the inner conflicts of capitalism, and is thus an indication of the more rapid drive of the whole capitalist system toward the highest expression of these conflicts – imperialist war. But in the linked chain of causes that make war an inevitable concomitant of the continued existence of capitalism, the democratic nations have as integral a part as the Fascist nations. From the point of view of the working class, there can be no «good», no «peace-loving» capitalist states. Every capitalist state, democratic as well as Fascist, represents one or another form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class. To defend the democratic rights *of the working class* is one thing. But this has nothing in common with the defense of the «*democratic*»

capitalist state. The former is a primary duty of every working class party; the latter is the occupation of traitors. The latter will be put forward as the only way to protect the working class *against* war and Fascism; in practice, it will give the working class *both* war and Fascism, for the bourgeoisie of the democratic countries will not overcome the necessity for a resort to Fascism during the decline of capitalism merely by success in the next war. Indeed, the outbreak of war will in all probability be the signal for setting up Fascist governments in the «democratic» countries.

The business of the working class within any country is never under any circumstances to defend «the government» – that is, the political executive of the class enemy – but always to fight for its overthrow. To Fascism as to war there is only one answer: the workers' revolution.

2. Defense of the Soviet Union

A closely similar preparation for betrayal has gone on under cover of the slogan, «Defend the Soviet Union!»

As has already been indicated, the defense of the Soviet Union is one of the primary tasks of the working class in the coming war. But, to a Marxist, what does defense of the Soviet Union mean? The essence can be summed up quickly. It means: «Extend the October revolution». It means to strengthen the economic and political organizations of the world proletariat, to carry the class struggle on a world basis to ever higher levels, to drive toward workers' power. It means to put all faith in the working class. It means to achieve victory in the capitalist nations. And it means these things quite openly and realistically. For these are the only possible defense of the Soviet Union.

To Stalinism, however, and to the cynical Austro-Marxists, defense of the Soviet Union means: support the program of national Bolshevism; no word of criticism of Stalin and his bureaucratic associates; put all faith in diplomatic deals with bourgeois powers, in military alliances with France and Czechoslovakia, in maneuvering in the League of Nations; reduce the working class parties to branches of the foreign office of the Soviet state. And it means: do not carry on genuinely revolutionary activities within your

own country, because this would upset «peace»; permit the working class of Germany and Austria to be crushed under Fascism rather than risk one ounce of cement at Dnieprostroy or one tractor at Stalingrad. And, lastly, it means: support the war policy of your democratic government, and offer the working class to the coming imperialist war in all nations where the bourgeoisie finds its imperialist aims best served by a temporary alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy.

Naturally, Marxists do not maintain that the Soviet Union should not, whenever possible, utilize the antagonisms and contradictions among the imperialist powers to its own advantage. This was the tactic of Lenin. But this tactic can only be understood as subordinate to the strategy of the world revolution, and this strategy can base itself only on the international working class. Stalin's «maneuverings» with imperialist powers are the direct contrary of Lenin's. For Stalin «maneuvers» in such a way as to *subordinate the working class to the capitalist powers, not to advance its interests*. The Franco-Soviet Pact is the most striking example of such subordination – whereby the French working class is turned over hand and foot to the French bourgeoisie, so long as the Pact formally endures – but this is only one aspect of the consistent and continuous policy of Stalinism. Lenin, to prevent the capitalist powers from attacking the Soviet Union, placed his full reliance on the only possible force which could in actuality defend the Soviet Union: on the working class of the various capitalist powers. If the working class and its party were sufficiently strengthened in a given country, Lenin reasoned, the government of that country would not dare to attack the Soviet Union, since it would realize that such an attack would only pave the way for its own overthrow. Stalin, with his eyes focused on national Russian socialism, asks only for «peace» elsewhere, to let him build at home. He places *his* reliance, thus, not on the international working class, but on the «friendly» capitalist governments, on any agreements or treaties or pacts he can come to with them. But to secure such friendship, he must direct the Communist parties in the various nations not toward revolutionary struggle *against* their governments at home (which would endanger the government's «friendship» for Stalin), but toward putting pressure on the home

governments to line up with the Soviet Union; and, then, to essential support of the home government so long as it stays or pretends to stay lined up. This necessarily weakens and destroys the revolutionary struggle, which is always *against* the home government; and thus, in the end, disrupts the only possible defense of the Soviet Union itself, which must be a defense against and an attack on the international bourgeoisie and all their political instruments – the capitalist governments, never a collaboration with them.

We shall see the workers of France, England and the United States rallied to the flag by the leaders of the Communist party. «Defend the Soviet Union! Enlist in the army, and – fight against war and Hitlerism! Defend the Soviet Union!»

This policy of betrayal has, also, been systematically developed over a period of many years. The recent Congress of the Communist International made it official for the section of the C.I.; and the Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution on war advances it within world social-democracy. Unlike the situation at the beginning of the last war, the betrayers this time wish to be fully ready beforehand.

3. *Sanctions*

A special and profoundly important feature of betrayal in the present war crisis revolves around the question of «sanctions». The Covenant of the League of Nations provides that when a nation has been declared an aggressor against a member state, certain financial, economic, and even military measures shall be – following an elaborate procedure – invoked by the other League member states against the aggressor nation. These measures are called «sanctions», and the term «sanctions» is being extended to include measures which might be taken by nations on their own initiative (e.g., closing of the Suez Canal by Great Britain) as well as measures taken collectively by the League members.

This extension of the use of the word «sanctions» is significant. It indicates a new and ingenious method for turning opposition to war into support of war. All that is necessary is to *call* the war an «application of sanctions». Then it becomes the duty of all «friends of peace» to support it.

This, indeed, is the real meaning of the doctrine of sanctions. League sanctions are, of course, nothing else than sanctions undertaken by the leading member states of the League. The League, as we have seen, is only the instrument of its dominant members. Support of League sanctions, therefore, is exactly the same as support of sanctions applied by individual nations – e.g., by Great Britain or France.

But sanctions are war measures. They include withdrawal of financial credit, embargoes on trade, various forms of boycott. To enforce them genuinely would require a blockade of the country against whom the sanctions were invoked. The probable, the almost certain outcome of such a blockade, as history has so often proved, is war – since the blockaded nation cannot accept such a measure peacefully without surrendering political sovereignty.

Thus it follows that sanctions must be either ineffectual – a kind of large-scale bluff – or they must lead to war.

If they are ineffectual, support of them is certainly no aid to peace (or to Ethiopia). If they lead to war, support of them – no matter with what verbal reservations – means nothing else than support of war undertaken by the imperialist government applying the sanctions. In both cases, support of sanctions to be applied by capitalist governments (whether or not these are League members) is in effect support of these governments themselves. This means that such support necessarily leads to a betrayal of the revolutionary struggle against war, and the revolutionary defense of Ethiopia, which is always a struggle *against* the capitalist governments and the bourgeoisie whose governments they are.

It does no good to say, as the social-democrats and the Stalinists say, that we should support League and governmental sanctions, but at the same time «point out that the League and British and French imperialism are acting only in their own imperialist interests in applying them»; we are temporarily able to «use» the French and British governments to serve the interests of the working class, because their interests momentarily, though from «diametrically opposite causes», coincide. This is the reasoning of a Stalin or a Blum, but not of a Marxist. The Marxist knows that we can never

«use» capitalist governments for the interests of the working class, because what these governments *are* is instruments to be «used» for the interests of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, we must always fight inexorably *against* the governments, and their acts. The Marxist knows that advocacy of governmental sanctions in any form necessarily binds the working class to the state and the class enemy, necessarily weakens the class position of the workers and thus the workers' struggle for power, and necessarily prepares for turning the workers over to the sanction-applying government when the sanctions find their natural outcome in war. If we support sanctions, and the sanctions lead to war, then we have already by supporting the sanctions supported the war. It takes more than verbal reservations to crawl out of the inescapable logic of cause and effect.

The disastrous consequences of support of sanctions are already apparent. In Great Britain a year ago, the masses were turning rapidly away from the National Government. Then the British Labour Party and the British Communist party came out strongly for sanctions: that is, came out for the policy of British finance-capital and the National Government. This has, naturally, fatally obscured the class issue. No longer is there any clear line between the working class parties and the Conservatives on the war crisis. The Labour Party and the Communist party have done for Baldwin what he could not do for himself: they have brought about «national unity» on the war issue. Baldwin of course understands this; and consequently has called for the new elections to Parliament, confident of a substantial majority for the government. In France, the same result: The People's Front, advocating sanctions, becomes the main support of the «Republic» – that is, of French imperialism; Laval could reasonably apply for admission; national unity on the war issue mortally weakens the ripening *class* struggle in France, which poses on the order of the day the revolutionary struggle for workers' power and the overthrow of every form of capitalist government at the same time that the workers' leaders lend all their efforts to upholding and defending the capitalist government.

Marxists, then, reject and expose as betrayal any and all advocacy of League or governmental «sanctions». Naturally, however, this does not

mean that they take a passive, hands-off position in the present crisis or in any other. Marxists are not neutral in the dispute between Italy and Ethiopia. They are for the defeat of Fascist Italy and the blow to imperialism which such a defeat would be; and they are therefore for the victory of Ethiopia. But they propose to aid in such defeat and such victory not by appealing to capitalist governments and the imperialist League for their assistance and sanctions; but to the working class to apply its proletarian «sanctions». Only sanctions which are results of the independent and autonomous actions of the working class are of any value in the revolutionary struggle against war – since only these *separate* the class from the state and the class enemy, and only these build the fighting strength of the workers, which is alone the road to workers' power and thus to the defeat of war. Mass demonstrations, strikes, labor boycotts, defense funds for material aid to Ethiopia, refusal to load munitions for Italy, revolutionary agitation for Marxism as it applies to the war crisis, these are such sanctions as the working class must make use of. But these will be ineffectual in the immediate crisis? They are romantic and utopian? If so, then the revolutionary struggle is itself ineffectual, romantic and utopian. Perhaps such sanctions will not «solve» the present crisis. But they, and they alone, will help steel the class, materially and ideologically, for the struggle to come – the struggle for workers' power, which is, in the end, the only solution.

4. *Neutrality*

Careful notice should be given to a form of betrayal closely related to betrayal on the question of sanctions. This is a particular danger in the United States. In the United States, which is not a League member, the betrayers call, not for sanctions – which are formally irrelevant to League outsiders – but for «neutrality legislation». In the present crisis, this demand is only an American form of the demand for sanctions, combined with the worst type of ordinary pacifism.

In the United States all the rotten reformist organizations, from World Peaceways and the League against War and Fascism to the Socialist and Communist parties, are joining in this call for «mandatory» neutrality

legislation to be passed by the next Congress, and are «demanding» a «strong neutrality policy» on the part of the US government. What does this mean in the concrete? It means, in the first place, to spread among the people of the United States all the fatal pacifist illusions about US isolation. As we have seen, the United States is necessarily linked up economically, socially, and politically with the rest of the world. Its pretended isolation is a complete myth. As we have also seen, the US will inevitably be involved in the coming war, will in fact play a leading and decisive part in the coming war. Not to point this out honestly and straightforwardly, and instead to pretend that some form of neutrality legislation will succeed or even aid in isolation the US in the world struggle is to deceive and disorient the masses, to disarm them ideologically, to turn them aside from the genuine struggle against war, and to teach them to put reliance in exactly those forces which are preparing war – namely, the imperialist government of the United States and US finance-capital, which that government represents.

Thus, as always, pacifism in the form of demands for neutrality legislation in actuality aids the war makers. It strengthens the hand of the US government, strengthens its hold over the people. Since the policy of the government, like that of every imperialist government, is and must be a war policy, these demands are in reality doing their part in carrying out the war policy. The capitalists and the government officials are not slow to take advantage of the opportunity. Hearst and Roosevelt alike point out – just as does Baldwin in England – that to preserve a «strong neutrality and peace policy» the US must build up its «national defense». That is to say, they use the agitation for neutrality legislation as a basis for expanding the armed forces of US imperialism, to build new and more powerful battleships and airplanes, and to mechanize still further the already highly «modernized» US army.

But even more than this is involved in the so-called «neutrality legislation». The substance of such legislation, if actually put into effect, can only be sanctions as the US can apply them – various forms of financial and economic restrictions, boycotts, etc. As in the case of sanctions proper, therefore, the neutrality acts would be in effect war acts, and the same

conclusions must be drawn with respect to them as we have already come to in analyzing sanctions. Realizing this is enough to expose the pseudo-Marxists in the US who so bravely denounce the policy of sanctions in other countries (Great Britain, France); and then in the next breath advocate them (under the title of «neutrality legislation») for this country.

Here, as in any other phase of the struggle against imperialist war, the fight for US «neutrality» must be a working-class fight, using the methods and means of the working class. It is only the working class, operating as an independent force, which can be counted on – certainly we cannot expect imperialism itself to put an end to imperialism, which is what we do when we call on an imperialist government to avoid imperialist war. The fight must be not *for* a «government policy of neutrality», but always a fight *against* the government.

VI. THE AGENTS OF BETRAYAL

The fight against betrayal on the war issue is not, of course, a mere battle of ideas. Our ideas must be clear on the question of war, but that is never enough. The ideas must be translated into action. Betrayal does not descend from the skies. It is carried out in practice by men, by powerful individuals and great organizations. The fight against betrayal is therefore necessarily – *the struggle against the betrayers*. There must be no illusions on this score. We must not be confused by pseudo-«moral» notions about the «sincerity» and «good intentions» of «opponents of war». The effect of the actions of the betrayers, if they are successful, is literally to lead the working class to capitulation to the enemy and to slaughter. The struggle against the betrayers must be bitter, intransigent, unceasing. Our aim must be to smash utterly the influence of the betrayers and the organizations whose positions constitute betrayal. Nothing short of this is enough.

As to the outright pacifists – the Leagues for Peace and Freedom, the World Peaceways, the Councils of Churches for Peace, the broken down liberals – the problem is clear enough. We must aim to isolate them, to

prevent their ideas from gaining any hold among the working class and its allies, and we must destroy the influence which these ideas have gained.

But it has already been made clear that the most dangerous of the betrayers are those within the working class itself. It is against these that the great struggle must be waged, for so long as they hold the allegiance of the working class, betrayal will succeed.

2. The Second International

The parties of the Second International engineered the great betrayal in 1914. Nothing fundamental has altered in their position since that time. They remain, as they were, ready to hand over the workers to the imperialist governments when the war starts. Their whole course of action, not only on the war question but on every other, is to weaken the revolutionary struggle of the workers, which in turn is the only genuine struggle against war. The keynote of their policy everywhere: compromise with – that is, capitulation to – the state; which means, capitulation to the chief instrument of the class enemy. Since this is the constant guide to their day-by-day activities, they could scarcely be expected to cease compromise in the greatest crisis of all: the war crisis.

Throughout the world, social-democrats of all shades support the rottenest types of pacifist organizations. Only recently they have swung behind the ridiculous and illusion-breeding plan of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom to secure 50,000,000 signatures «against war», and have praised this campaign as a great blow to war. Prominent Socialists in every country are conspicuous members of every pacifist organization.

During the development of the present crisis, the Socialists everywhere have supported the League of Nations, as the instrument to solve the present crisis. They have been vigorous advocates of League and governmental sanctions. The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Second International held in August officially endorsed this policy, going so far as to call on the British government to close the Suez Canal.

In England, the British Labour Party, affiliated to the Second International, has throughout played into the hands of British finance-capital by supporting government sanctions, and now finds itself with no policy for the coming elections fundamentally differentiating it from the Conservatives. It is significant that almost the only criticism of this course from within the Labour Party comes from a purely negative, pacifist, do-nothing direction. In France the Socialist party has held the same position, and has become the staunchest defender of the capitalist «republican» regime.

The recent Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution on war, presented for «discussion» to the parties of the Second International, completely upholds the policy of governmental and League sanctions, endorses the League as an instrument for peace, and justifies support of «democratic» governments in a war against Fascist governments.

In some countries, notably the United States, «left» Socialists are objecting to the position on war which is being officially taken by the parties and leaders of the Second International. The «Militants» in this country have criticized the advocacy of sanctions, the Dan-Zyromski-Bauer resolution, etc., from what looks on the surface as a position close to Marxism. How far from Marxism it is in actuality is revealed by noticing the positions which the same Militants take on particular issues: They enthusiastically praise the A.F. of L. Convention resolutions which hailed the League and demanded «sanctions» by the US government. They praise and push the «50,000,000 signatures against war» campaign. They hail the Socialist NEC resolution on war (October, 1935) which, while rejecting sanctions and a «reformed» League of Nations. They praise to the skies Norman Thomas' new book on War, which fails to meet a single one of the central issues in the revolutionary struggle against war. They speak lightly of a possible «general strike» at the outbreak of war, without pointing out that such a strike would be a revolutionary act, presupposing a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary party prepared to take power – all of which are extremely unlikely at the beginning of a war, when the capitalist state is normally at its most powerful and its most desperate. And, finally, the Militants nowhere

draw the necessary conclusion that the revolutionary struggle against the Second International and its parties and its leaders, whose official position of betrayal on a world scale has been clearly unfolded.

On the question of war, a position which is correct or approximately correct in the abstract, on the surface, is never enough. It must be correct in the concrete, on particular issues, before it amounts to anything more than juggling with words. This is a disastrous weakness of many of the leaders of the left Socialists in this country. What are we to say when they come out with Marxist-sounding phrases, and then support actively the «united front» Student Mobilization for Peace (November 8, 1935), a united front that was actually a patriotic rally, having as its chief speakers throughout the country not merely social-patriots, but open chauvinists like President Robinson of City College, New York? It should be obvious that Marxists can never form «united fronts for peace» with betrayers and agents of the war-makers. Their duty on all occasions is to expose and attack the betrayers. What are we to say when these Militants are not merely silent about the illusions of pacifism, but actively propagate pacifist ideas and, especially, build up pacifist organizations? When they not merely accept but even formulate proposed government neutrality legislation? When they take no steps to purge the ranks of their own party of the hard and brazen social-patriots in its Right wing? We can only conclude that their «Marxism» is no more than a red veil, hiding beneath it weakness, equivocation, or outright capitulation to the war-makers.

There is only one conclusion to be drawn about the Second International and its parties. They are rotted to the core. They prepare – they already announce their preparation – only for a repetition of the betrayal of 1914. The struggle against war is inconceivable apart from the struggle against the Second International.

3. The Third International

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, held during the summer of 1935, during the course of the development of the present war crisis, stamped officially the repudiation of Marxism by Stalinism, and

above all announced the betrayal by Stalinism on the war question. The Seventh Congress signed, sealed, and delivered the workers under Stalinist influence to the war-makers.

This is not a development of the moment. Once started on the course of sacrificing the interests of the world proletariat to the bureaucratic dream of building a socialist Utopia within the national boundaries of the Soviet Union, Stalinism could not end short of capitulation to imperialism. In the place of the Marxist struggle for the extension of the revolution, Stalinism substituted diplomatic maneuvers to preserve “peace” by preserving the *status quo*. And to carry out this policy successfully meant the complete subordination of the sections of the Communist parties became propaganda agents and border patrols of the Soviet Union, not the revolutionary vanguard of the working class within their respective countries. Their chief occupation became not the struggle for power but the singing of the praises of their master. The Franco-Soviet Pact and its accompanying memoranda showed to the world that the duty of French Communists was no longer to fight the French bourgeoisie, but to uphold the French bourgeoisie if only it would give a paper promise to preserve the Soviet boundaries. When the imperialist League of Nations was tottering from the withdrawals of Japan and Germany, Stalin, instead of helping to drive the last nail in its coffin, entered the League, bolstered its waning authority with the prestige of the workers’ state, and prolonged the League’s fatal ability to disorient and weaken the masses and the revolutionary struggle against war.

Throughout the development of the present crisis, the Communist International and its sections everywhere have been persistently pro-League and pro-sanctions, thereby doing their part to serve the ends of British and French imperialism. Stalinism is the great source of the distinctions between «good, peace-loving, democratic» capitalist nations and «bad, war-loving, fascist» nations, and has drawn the appropriate conclusion – to support war undertaken by the former – «if only they are on the side of the Soviet Union».

Stalinism has gone far beyond even the social-democrats in lining up with the most degraded types of pacifists – from Father Divine to officers

of the DAR to cousins of the Pope – if only they will shout «Peace!» and say no word of criticism against «the peace policy of the Soviet Union». The Communist parties have built up throughout the world the pacifist, anti-revolutionary Leagues Against War and Fascism.

In France, the Communist party in the People's Front has blocked the workers' struggle for power, and has taken the road of defense of the French state both externally (against Hitler) and internally (against the pro-German wing of the French bourgeoisie, and likewise against the revolutionary assault of the Marxists) in return for Laval's promises to Stalin. In England, the Communist party has taken its place alongside the Labour Party in support of the international policy of the British imperialists. In this country, the Communist party demands more strongly than the Socialist party the passing of US government neutrality-sanctions.

The Communist party has *already* made clear that it proposes to act as the agent of finance-capital in enlisting the working class in the coming imperialist war within any nation that may be, or may pretend to be, «friendly» to the Soviet Union. The Communist International offers such services as a juicy bribe to aid Stalin in making alliances. The CI prepares, that is to say, to turn the working class in countries allied to the Soviet Union over to the imperialists.

The conclusion, as in the case of the Second International, is inevitable: the revolutionary struggle against war poses as a fundamental task the struggle against the Communist International and its national sections, demands the destruction of Stalinism.

VII.

MARXISTS IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

The position of the Marxists in the present war crisis has been made clear by the analysis of the nature of war, of the struggle against it, and of the forms of betrayal in the struggle against war. The Marxist position can best be summarized by quoting in full the Statement on the War-Situation

adopted by the Workers Party of the United States at the outbreak of the hostilities in Africa:

1. The armies of Italian Fascism, after months of deliberate preparation, have now launched their attack upon the Ethiopian peoples. Driven by the intolerable strains of internal social and economic contradictions, Mussolini and the Italian bourgeoisie seek a solution in open imperialist aggression against the last of the independent nations of Africa.

2. The outbreak of war in Africa demonstrates that the conflicts of world imperialism have reached the stage of armed struggle for a re-making of boundaries, and a re-division of territories and colonial possessions. Though the Italian campaign in Ethiopia may not lead immediately and directly to a world struggle of the imperialist powers, this delay can prove no more than temporary. *The war in Ethiopia must be understood as the prelude to the new imperialist world war.*

3. In the preparation for the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, the League of Nations has once more demonstrated beyond any possible doubt its true role. The League is not in any sense whatever «the defender of peace». It is the legal and hypocritical cover for the maneuvering of the dominant imperialist powers. Since Ethiopia first invoked League assistance on December, 1934, the negotiations have served to permit uninterrupted preparations for the war by Italy, and to deter defensive preparations by Ethiopia. The League has been utilized above all to serve the ends of British imperialism. Behind its cover, the agents of Great Britain, France and Italy have haggled over the price in terms of treaties, guarantees, protection, and territories, which each was willing to pay to preserve its own interests. The threat of League sanctions has been made not to save Ethiopia – which the League report itself offered to sacrifice – but to safeguard British colonial possessions and lines of communication, and to try to close the opening for Germany in Central Europe. The League of Nations is the agency, not of peace, but of imperialist aggression.

The struggle against imperialist war demands the unremitting exposure of the role of the League of Nations.

4. No less than the European powers is US imperialism bound by the iron chain of cause and effect to the events in Africa and to the new world conflict which they herald. The sentimental dream of US isolation, Roosevelt's promises that the US will remain «free and untangled», have no more force than the unctuous phrases of Wilson in 1916. The US will, on the contrary, play the dominant and decisive role in the new imperialist struggle. Behind its pacifist covering, the Roosevelt government is pouring more funds into its war machine than any other nation in the world. Both navy and army are constructed on a purely offensive strategic basis. The US bourgeoisie, waiting and preparing, expects to intervene in the later stages of the world struggle, when the other powers are mutually exhausted, to achieve the world domination of US finance-capital.

The struggle against imperialist war is above all the struggle against US imperialism.

5. The USSR cannot avoid implication in the world conflict. The very life of the workers' state is threatened by the approach of war. A central task of the struggle against war is the defense of the USSR. But, in the last analysis, this defense can be based only upon the revolutionary advance of the international proletariat. Stalinist diplomacy, on the contrary, to an ever increasing degree, serves solely to disorient the international proletariat, break up the struggle against imperialist war, and thus undermine the real defense of the USSR. Basing itself not upon the international working class, but upon military pacts, with bourgeois states, upon diplomatic deals, appeals to pacifist and liberal anti-war sentiment, and the maneuvers of the League, Soviet foreign policy promotes the most disastrous illusions in the minds of the workers, and acts in effect to further the interests of the French and British imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war requires the constant exposure of the foreign policy of Stalinism.

6. One of the most dangerous illusions fostered by the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, in company with demoralized liberals, reformists, and pacifists of all shades, is the notion that the world is now divided between «peace-loving democratic» nations and «war-loving fascist» nations. This

notion is part of the preparation for support of the «peace-loving nations» in the coming war. Marxism rejects and dispels this illusion or any form of it. The idea that there are peace-loving as opposed to war-loving capitalist nations, like the idea that one or another nation is «guilty» in an imperialist war, is at best formalistic ethical sentimentality, not political realism. The causes of war are to be found in all nations. The national state of every capitalist nation, without exception, is the political instrument of the class enemy, the first and implacable enemy of that nation's proletariat. The revolutionary party can make no distinction between «good» and «bad» capitalist states. It is the enemy of every capitalist state, to the death.

7. At the outbreak of the last imperialist war, the Second International revealed its internal degeneration by betraying the working class to the class enemy, by espousing the cause of national defense and patriotism, by a truce with the bourgeoisie in the interests of «national unity», by going over to social-patriotism and social-chauvinism. Already, before the outbreak of the new war, the leaders of the Socialist and Labour International have announced a repetition of the betrayal, are already preparing to turn over their following to the war-makers. In England, the British Labour Party, by calling for government applied sanctions and the closing of the Suez Canal, once again takes the position of national unity – that is, solidarity with the class enemy – before the war danger, and of fully developed social-patriotism. In France, the leaders of the SFIO have taken the same position – to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie against «Hitler aggression», and now to «implement the League Covenant» by government sanctions. In August, the Executive Committee of the Socialist and Labour International adopted a program of full-blooded social-patriotism.

The struggle against imperialist war means the struggle against the Second International.

8. During the past year, the Communist International has passed from a policy which weakened and disorientated the revolutionary struggle against war to an active espousal of the policies of class truce and social-patriotism. By the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Stalin-Laval communiqué, the conduct of the Soviet Union in the League during the development of the

Ethiopian crisis, and above all by the Seventh Congress of the CI, the Communist International stands unmasked as the heir of the social-democracy's betrayal on the issue of war, announcing itself as ready to do the hangman's job of turning over the proletariat of England, France and the US to their national bourgeoisie in the coming war, in return for paper promises of protection for the borders of the Soviet Union. In England, the Communist party applauds the position of the Labour Party; in France, the Communist party supports enthusiastically the worst betrayals of Blum and Herriot; and throughout the world the Communist International prepares the sacrifice of the working class on the altar of imperialism.

The struggle against imperialist war means everywhere the relentless struggle against Stalinism.

9. Throughout the world the only organized forces conducting and advocating the revolutionary struggle against imperialist war are the parties and groupings of the Fourth Internationalists. The Workers Party of the US carries on this struggle in the closest solidarity with its comrades in all countries.

Against the betrayers, the Workers Party rejects every form of social-patriotism and social-chauvinism; it rejects every conception of national unity and national defense; it rejects all ideas of truce with the bourgeois state, democratic or fascist; it exposes the role of the League of Nations as the pawn of the imperialist member states; it rejects the sentimental illusions of pacifists and petty bourgeois liberals; above all it directs its attacks against the enemy at home, against US imperialism.

The Workers Party places no reliance on the «peaceful» intentions of bourgeois-democratic nations, nor upon spineless «united fronts» of liberals, ministers, bourgeois women's clubs and «anti-war» professionals.

The Workers Party calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression, for the defense of the USSR, for unremitting struggle against the coming imperialist war. But for this defense and this struggle, the Workers Party calls at the same time for the sole means by which they can be, in fact, conducted: for the independent and autonomous action of the working class. It is the international working class, especially

the Italian working class, together with the oppressed colonial peoples, who are the true allies of the Ethiopian peoples – not «peace-loving» Britain, nor the League of Nations, nor Stalin-Laval, nor Roosevelt, nor their own Christian Emperor and semi-feudal chieftains. It is the independent sanctions of the working class, its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples, not the sanctions of finance-capital and its puppet states. And likewise for the defense of the USSR and the struggle against the approaching world war, it is only the independent action of the working class together with its allies under its leadership which gives hope to the working and exploited masses – a struggle not in collaboration with the bourgeoisie through the national state, but in ever sharper attack *against* the bourgeoisie and the national state.

The struggle against war is not and cannot be conceived as an «independent» struggle, having a special status above class conflicts. It is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. The struggle against imperialist war means the day by day building of working-class strength, means – not suspension of the class conflict until the war crisis passes – but the intensification of class conflict and the preparation to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the victory of the workers.

More clearly than any other phase of revolutionary activity does the struggle against war attest *the international character of the revolutionary movement*. It is an international struggle and must be conducted in terms of an international strategy, through an integrated international organization. Thus the struggle against war poses, in the most intense form, the central task of the present period: the building of the Fourth International, the dynamic generator to drive forward the revolutionary advance of the working class. Threatening as is the oncoming of the new war, relatively weak numerically as are the forces now ranged against it, there is no reason to despair. Out of the last world war came the first great step of the world revolution. Yet, in 1914, the internationalists were an organized force in only one nation, and the betrayal of social-democracy came to the great mass of the workers as a shock that was unexpected and not prepared for.

Today, organized groups of revolutionary internationalists exist in nearly every nation, and are actively forging the parties of the Fourth International; today the Second and Third Internationals have announced their betrayal beforehand, and we will thus not be trapped by surprise; and today we have the rich experience and lessons of the past generation to draw from.

The struggle against imperialist war is the struggle for socialism; the struggle for socialism is the struggle for the Fourth International, for the world revolution.

Independent Labour Party & League of Coloured Peoples (G.B.)
[C. L. R. James]

(Doc. 1) The New Leader, 4 October 1935

**Is This Worth a War? The League's Scheme to Rob Abyssinia
of its Independence**

By C. L. R. JAMES

«Gallant little Belgium» was bad enough, but «the independence of Ethiopia» is worse. It is the greatest swindle in all the living history of imperialism. The British government, having mobilised world opinion and many of its own workers behind it, has put a stranglehold on Ethiopia, as tight as anything Italian imperialism ever intended.

The proposals of the Committee of Five expose the brazen lie that any independence is being defended. The document is short and concise.

The public services of Ethiopia will be divided into four departments: Police and Gendarmerie, Economic Development, Finance, and Other Public Services. As usual with imperialist banditry masquerading under the name of law, the means of repression stand first on the list.

The Foreign «Specialists»

Foreign specialists will organise a corps of police and gendarmerie, which will be responsible for «strictly regulating the carrying of arms by persons not belonging to the regular army or to the police or gendarmerie forces», in other words, disarming the people.

This group of specialists will be responsible for «policing centres in which Europeans reside», and «ensuring security in agricultural areas where Europeans may be numerous and where the local administration may not be sufficiently developed to provide them with adequate protection». Thus the local population being disarmed will be taught the proper respect due by black men to white in imperialist Africa.

Mussolini was going to do the same. But he rather stupidly demanded the disbandment of the army. These foreign specialists will not disband the army. The army will be allowed to carry arms. Egypt, which is also

independent, has an army of only 10 000 men, so ill-equipped that they are useless for anything except to show how independent Egypt is!

The regular army of Ethiopia has never been large. The strength of the country has always been in the fact that the whole population was the army.

Once the gendarmerie has done its work, imperialism can go safely ahead with civilisation. Under Section II, Economic Development, foreigners will «participate in land tenure, mining regulations, exercise of commercial and industrial activities»; also public works, telegraphs, etc, all the things imperialism needs for its trade. It will be the same old exploitation that is going on in every part of Africa today.

First, the imperialists called the exploited areas colonies; next, protectorates; then, mandates. Now it is «helping a sister nation».

The name will make little difference to the native deprived of his arms, herded into compounds, working in mines at a few shillings a week without trade union protection, with special police and gendarmerie to teach him the way he should go. He has preferred his feudal slavery. He will look back to it in years to come as to a golden age.

Section III, Finance, shows that the League advisers will also be responsible for «assessment and collection of taxes, fees and dues». How they will revel in it! Loans also (from which the City will grow fat), and «control of pledges assigned to the service of the loans». This means that, as in China and other parts where imperialism has been «helping» the native ruler, customs and similar dues will be collected by the imperialists at once and sent to investors in Europe. Britain can default, but Ethiopia, like India, will have to pay if the native sweats blood.

After the service of the loans will come the paying of salaries, money for the gendarmerie, telegraphs, roads, railways, etc. The balance will then go to education, etc. – as we can see in India after over 200 years of British rule, where the percentage of illiterates is over 90.

Section IV deals with justice. The mixed courts which try cases between foreigners and Europeans will be «reorganised». Also there will be a reorganisation of «native justice». We recommend in this connection the

study of the report published last year on native justice in British East Africa.

Who will apply all this assistance to the long-lost sister nation of Ethiopia, so happily found at last? First, the police and gendarmerie. Wherever European settlers live in great numbers, and on the frontiers, the gendarmerie «will participate in general administration to an extent varying according to the standard reached by the local authorities and the nature of the problems to be solved». Carte blanche.

But even elsewhere the imperialists will not leave anything to the Ethiopian government at all. Each of these four sections will have at its head a «principal adviser» sent by the League. These four will have above them a chief, who will be a delegate of the League of Nations accredited to the Emperor. If this League Emperor is not specially appointed, then the four advisers will themselves elect a chief.

These gentlemen, in addition to controlling police and gendarmerie, finance, commerce and justice, also «must be able to rely on the effective cooperation of the Ethiopian authorities», and this even where they have not got special powers. Better still, there is going to be a central organisation both to coordinate the work of the assistance services and to secure for them «the necessary support of the Ethiopian Government». The League Emperor and his advisers will thus do as they like in the country and have the full support of the Ethiopian government.

The delegate and the principal advisers will, of course, be appointed by the Council of the League, «with the agreement of the Emperor». Thus he can choose between British Imperialist No 1 or No 2 or French Imperialist No 3 or No 4, or Swedish No 1 or Belgian No 2. How much choice will he have?

Hobson's Choice

But more than that. The Emperor will not be able to appoint freely a single one of the staffs of these advisers. The advisers will submit names to him from which he can choose, or even if he appoints some agents the

League adviser will have to give his endorsement «according to the nature and importance of their functions».

Finally, what control, even nominal, will the Ethiopian people, or even the Emperor, have over all this? None whatever. These advisers, will «make reports which will be communicated to the Emperor at the same time as they are addressed to the Council of the League». Thus, the advisers are not to be bothered with the Ethiopian government at all, which, however, will be able to «submit to the Council any observations it may wish to formulate in regard to these reports».

At the end of five years the plan is to be reviewed. But, by this time, imperialism will have sunk its teeth and claws so deep into the country that nothing but a revolution by the Ethiopian masses will ever hack them out.

The imperialists have been after Ethiopia for a long time, and they have got it at last. All that Italy gets, however, is a promise of her predominant interests to be recognised. It isn't good enough. Musso the Monkey put his fingers into the fire, but the British lion has snatched the nut. No wonder Garvin, in Sunday's Observer, shouts that it isn't fair, that Mussolini should have some, enough at least to show Italy that Fascism is not all bluff and does bring home the goods some time. If war is averted this way, then Eden and Laval can go back home, carrying peace with honour, and enough of Ethiopia to keep the home fires burning a little longer.

Now is there any British worker, any Negro in Africa, who, having understood this infamous document, is prepared to urge League sanctions and follow the imperialists in their defence of the «Independence of Ethiopia»?

Having got the Emperor to agree to all they wanted, the imperialists have now remembered their treaty obligations and begun to allow arms to go in. A shipment from Belgium has arrived; also anti-aircraft guns from Switzerland. The French are getting ready to protect the railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa. This is to ensure the little sister nation Ethiopia getting arms and supplies during the war.

The British worker, the Negro anxious to help Ethiopia, should keep himself far from this slime, which may so soon become blood.

Use Your Own Power

Workers of Europe, peasants and workers of Africa and of India, sufferers from imperialism all over the world, all anxious to help the Ethiopian people, organise yourselves independently, and by your own sanctions, the use of your own power, assist the Ethiopian people. Their struggle is only now beginning.

Let us fight against not only Italian imperialism, but the other robbers and oppressors, French and British imperialism. Do not let them drag you in. To come within the orbit of imperialist politics is to be debilitated by the stench, to be drowned in the morass of lies and hypocrisy.

Workers of Britain, peasants and workers of Africa, get closer together for this and for other fights. But keep far from the imperialists and their Leagues and covenants and sanctions. Do not play the fly to their spider.

Now, as always, let us stand for independent organisation and independent action. We have to break our own chains. Who is the fool that expects our gaolers to break them?

(Doc. 2) The New Leader, 18 October 1935

The Game at Geneva. Behind the scenes in the «Thieves' Kitchen»

By C. L. R. JAMES

EDEN and Laval, on the stage at Geneva. At home, the Cabinet Ministers, the Capitalist Press, the Labour leaders, the bishops, all the firm supports of Imperialism, keep up a deafening din about collective security.

But though Imperialist Governments and their supporters are all united in deceiving the masses, they cannot deceive one another. And some crude haggling has been going on between Britain and France during recent weeks. The prize is Imperialist booty, the pawns the millions of unsuspecting workers. Each Imperialist Government wants to use the League as a collective security – but only for its own Imperialist property!

The Bargain

Thus, up to July 11, British Imperialism and French Imperialism were not prepared to inconvenience themselves one inch for the collective security of Abyssinia. Sir Samuel Hoare, in the House of Commons, told Mussolini four times in the course of an hour's speech that he admitted the need for Italian expansion. He also stood by the League, but if nobody else acted, Britain was not going to act.

And everybody knew that French Imperialism did not want to do anything, having given Italian Imperialism a free hand in Ethiopia in return for help against the German threat to Austria.

After a lot of bargaining, the three agreed to divide Abyssinia on the basis of the 1906 treaty. This old-fashioned Imperialism received a solemn blessing and the appropriate holy water at the Geneva altar, and the Paris conversations began. Mussolini was offered everything except military domination. That, above all, was what he wanted. That British Imperialism was not going to let him have, even if it meant war.

Covenant Comes in Handy

Forthwith, the British Government began the talk of the Covenant, the whole Covenant, and nothing but the Covenant, dragging the unwilling Laval behind it.

Laval, too, supports the whole Covenant, but not in regard to British interests in East Africa. Eden's assurances needed re-enforcement, so Hoare himself announced that he was coming to Geneva on September 11.

The day before, Laval sent to ask him what Britain would do if a country outside the League was guilty of aggression – meaning Germany.

Hoare, at Geneva, told Laval that this country stood for «the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression».

Question of Elasticity

Laval was not impressed. (It is a pity that the great masses of workers do not view the pronouncements of Imperialists with as much understanding as other Imperialists do!) He asked the British Foreign Office point-blank to say if it meant to uphold the Covenant in regard to Austria. Hoare replied in a note full of aspirations «to establish the rule of law in international affairs», «streak of idealism in the British national character», etc., etc. But he wrote also:

«it is clear that there may be degrees of culpability and degrees of aggression, and... that consequently the nature of the action appropriate to be taken... may vary according to the circumstances of each particular case...»

Also:

«... elasticity is a part of security, and that every member of the League must recognise, as the Covenant itself recognises, that the world is not static».

Laval and French Imperialism know too well what that sort of promise means! They remember how this very National Government would not budge one inch to prevent Japan stealing a large part of China. Laval continued to pay his lip-service to collective security at Geneva, while the British Government forced the pace. Laval's chance came soon.

Need for Assurance

The British Government had its fleet ready in the Mediterranean. Nothing in the Covenant made it binding on one State to give assistance to another before the League had decided on Sanctions. So, on September 24, British Imperialism asked French Imperialism if it could count on the support of the French fleet in case of an Italian attack.

Now, for years French Imperialism had been trying to get this very point settled. As soon as German Imperialism moves against Austria, the French are going to move against it, League or no League. And the French wanted to be sure of support before the League met to decide who was the aggressor, how far he had aggressed, and all the loopholes by which Imperialist statesmen avoid their obligations.

The French reply, published in the Press on October 8, shows exactly how much these gentlemen believe in their collective security. The note states «The obligation of assistance which is contemplated, binding the two Governments, must be reciprocal»; and as if that was not enough, it adds: «that is to say, it must bind Great Britain with regard to France as much as France with regard to Great Britain».

Future Prospects

British Imperialism asks about fleets. French Imperialism wants to know not only about fleets, but of land forces and air forces. German Imperialism's not going to sail to Austria. So the note specifies for assistance. «... on land, by sea or in the air. The undertaking of assistance must therefore operate in each and every one of these cases».

And though the note does not actually mention Germany by name, it says:

«The preliminary assistance which the British Government proposes must therefore be equally assured whether the aggressor State is or is not a member of the League of Nations».

Of whom are they thinking? Not America nor Japan nor Brazil, but Germany. The two Imperialisms cannot come to terms, so the «Star», of October 8, tells us that «further exchange of views» is to take place, possibly «through diplomatic conversations».

Bribing Germany

Meanwhile, there is indication that British Imperialism is busy bargaining with German Imperialism. A Swiss newspaper reports that the British Government is trying to bribe Germany into supporting Sanctions

by promises of a loan. Laval is watching jealously. And Germany, Austria, Hungary, who have no need for collective security (for they have nothing to secure) have been busy plotting with Poland and Finland.

So the Imperialists, just as before 1914, are seeking the only security they understand – military force and military alliances.

Their pre-war alliances and war preparations, dressed up for the masses – that is what the Imperialists mean by their collective security through the League. Whatever Imperialism touches, it defiles and puts to its own ignoble uses. As fast as the Imperialists drape their skeletons, the class-conscious workers' party will strip them bare. So we shall help the great masses to understand, and by establishing Socialist Republics, realise a genuine League, based on mutual co-operation and not on Imperialist plunder.

(Doc. 3) The New Leader, 25 October 1935

The Workers and Sanctions. Why the I.L.P. and the Communists take an opposite view

By C. L. R. JAMES

Why is the Communist Party for League Sanctions, while the I.L.P. is against?

Less than a year ago the theoretical position of the two parties on war was identical. On page 22 of What the I.L.P. Stands For, passed at the annual conference at Derby in April of this year, the I.L.P. called upon its members to expose the League of Nations as an instrument of Imperialism, to reject the idea of waging war for «democratic» countries against «Fascist» countries.

The I.L.P. warned the workers that, although the Soviet Union might be at Geneva and might even be the ally of a Capitalist State in the next war, the first duty of the working class would still be: refuse to collaborate with

the capitalist class and try to seize political power. This was the only real defence of the Soviet Union.

Only Last Year

The Communist Party was saying the same thing and had said it for fifteen years. Harry Pollitt, in his pamphlet, *Labour and War*, published after the Southport Conference last year, tells us on p. 13, «There is no such things as defensive or aggressive wars under Capitalism». On p. 15, «The argument is being used that if a Fascist Germany attacks Britain when there is a Labour Government in power, it would be our duty to defend Britain. It would be nothing of the kind».

In *The Labour Party and the Menace of War*, published about the same time, R.F. Andrews says, «If Socialists ought to support the Soviet Union's work in the League, for that very reason it follows that they should oppose the Labour Party's conception of the League as a "collective peace system"». On p. 22 he asks himself a hypothetical question: «But supposing Fascist Germany attacks the U.S.S.R., are you not in favour of the workers supporting British or French Governments in an attack on Fascist Germany?» And he gives the answer, in thick print: «UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES».

The French Pact

Had the present crisis developed late in 1934, or even early in 1935, the C.P. and I.L.P. would have been side by side. But in May 1935 Stalin and Laval concluded a military alliance, and together issued the notorious communique in which Stalin repudiated the Leninist doctrine of «the enemy is in your own country», and gave his blessing to the doctrine of national defence. Eden went to Moscow; and before long the whole C.P. in every country had made not only a right, but an about turn.

Already at the end of April, Chemadanov, Secretary of the Russian Comsomols (the Young Communists), told the French Socialists: «If war comes against the U.S.S.R. and you make your revolution, you will be traitors». (See the statement on the meeting issued by the Young Socialists

of France). On May 17, Thorez, one of the leaders of the French C.P., said in reply to a straight question, that in a war between Hitler and the U.S.S.R. the French C.P. would not try to make the revolution, as such a war was not an Imperialist war but a war against the Soviet Union. (See L'Humanité, May 24). The I.L.P. not a month before had stated the exact opposite.

At Any Price

Then came the Seventh World Conference of the Comintern. The resolutions on war were one long attack on the «Fascist instigators» of war, and the last words were (in italics) «a call to toilers to work with all means at their disposal and at any price for the victory of the Red Army over the armies of the Imperialists». At any price. Even at the price of sacrificing your revolution.

The present C.P. policy is, therefore, easy to follow. It is playing for the victory of the Red Army even at the cost of leading the French workers into war. British Imperialism and French Imperialism use the League as a cover for war preparations and preservation of their booty. The Soviet Union wants to use the League to preserve peace for as long as it can. It objects to the Imperialist proposals of the Council of Five, but it supports Sanctions. If it wants France and Czechoslovakia to help it against Germany through the League, it must show itself a good League member now. The whole situation is deplorable, but there is no help for it and we have to face it.

But what cannot be condoned is that the C.P. everywhere, instead of following its own class policy, is doing exactly what Litvinov is doing at Geneva. That is the beginning and the end of the whole business. The C.P. abuses the I.L.P. for not doing what it does and finds all sorts of confusing arguments. But the I.L.P. will remain true to the principles of Lenin.

The C.P. is in an impossible position. It cannot urge a sailor to blockade the Suez Canal, and then if the Italians attack tell that sailor to turn Imperialist War into Civil War. The working class will not stand for zig-zags of that kind.

No Solution at Geneva

The argument is advanced that Lenin made pacts. So he did. But he never ceased at the same time to urge the working class of those very countries to struggle for the overthrow of their own Capitalist class.

Let Litvinov do what he can for the Soviet Union at Geneva. I personally do not believe it will come to much in the end. That, however, is a matter of opinion. What is not to be disputed is that the greater the crisis the more the working class must guard its independence.

There is no salvation in Geneva for the workers none for Ethiopia, as the Ethiopians will find out before long. Any policy which turns the minds and hopes of the workers to that nest of corruption is misleading and dangerous. The I.L.P. will fight that policy to the end.

(Doc. 4) Controversy, October, 1935

I.L.P. Abyssinian Policy

By C. L. R. JAMES

The I.L.P. has declared against a policy of sanctions. The Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress are for sanctions, even if it means war. Loudly and clearly the social-democratic leaders have sounded the trumpet. The Trade Unions in France are for sanctions, but not to the extent of war. There for the time being they stop. The parties of the Third International in Moscow and out of it are for sanctions. In Britain it is difficult to say where they are, except that they are for sanctions. To the average worker there seems a bewildering (and disheartening) confusion in these diverse reactions of the parties to the first great war crisis that faces the international working class movement. Yet it is here that the materialistic method, particularly as developed by Lenin, proves its worth. The confusion is only superficial. Behind it can be clearly discerned the rails laid down in advance, along which classes and different sections of classes were fore-ordained to

travel, to be driven from them, if at all, only by the accumulating pressure of great historical events, and the chaos ends in revolution...

The political analysis of our era has been familiar for thirty years, at the very least since the Stuttgart Conference of 1907. Monopoly Capitalism, or, as it more familiarly known, Imperialism, demands a continuous expansion which the world, exploited already to the limit, can no longer satisfy. Imperialist war is the inevitable result. The proletariat must resist such wars, and never slacken in its efforts to end Imperialism, for only with the end of Imperialism can there be any possibility of permanent peace. It may seem superfluous to re-state these elementary principles in a journal like *Controversy*. But one has to re-state them when implicitly, and even explicitly, they are challenged on every side. The war of 1914-1918, the peace that followed, the history of succeeding years, prove these main principles without a shadow of doubt. But these events showed also certain class relations and methods of action which had not been clear before 1914. It is the great merit of Lenin that he not only saw them early but crystallised them into simple and basic formulae, showed in the Russian Revolution how these formulae could be made into principles of action, and formed the Third International to be the guiding organisation of those sections of the proletariat which were to be leaders in the overthrow of Imperialism. For the failure of the Second International to make even a gesture in 1914 was seen by Lenin to be not a historical accident or an outcome of the weakness of individual personalities, but the inevitable reaction of a certain section of the organised workers, worker in name, but in social content and therefore in political outlook essentially bourgeois, ready always in a moment of crisis such as war or proletarian revolution to side with its own bourgeoisie.

In every country of modern Europe the great masses of the workers are disorganised. Among those who are organised we have as a rule the most prosperous sections of the working class; and centering around the trade union organisations, the Party press and the official labour parties, holding all the organs of power, publicity and finance; are not only the bureaucrats themselves, but a substantial mass of workers whose standard of life and

security are intimately bound up with the continuance of the bourgeois regime, that is to say, with Imperialism. Lenin saw this was and to a large extent always would be so. Hence the formation of the Third International of revolutionary workers – an international existing for the overthrow of Imperialism by civil war between the proletariat of every country and its own bourgeoisie, an international whose strategy and tactics of political action we know, but whose ideology it is worth-while re-calling today.

«The necessary distance was kept up in the party by a vigilant irreconcilability, whose inspirer was Lenin. Lenin never tired of working with his lancet – cutting off those bonds which a petty-bourgeois environment creates between the party and official social opinion... Thus the Bolshevik Party created not only a political but a moral medium of its own independent of bourgeois social opinion and implacably opposed to it» (Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, III, p. 166).

When after the war France and Britain grabbed Germany's colonies and then formed the League of Nations, Lenin kept the International sharply away from any truck with it. «Thieves' kitchen» he dubbed Geneva and warned the masses against any illusions about peace being established through the League. He and the International knew the League for what it was, a cloak for the machinations of Imperialism which needed some protection against the wide-spread horror of war and the distrust of Imperialism engendered by the war. A short view of the Third International, particularly of its recent history, will show us how inevitably the various parties in the world today have reacted to the Abyssinian crisis and indeed had no other road open to them.

After 1922 the International received defeat after defeat, ending in the rout of the German workers in February 1933. Yet, up to October 1933, even after Germany had left the League, the rulers of Russia who control the International, were still speaking of Geneva in Leninist terms (See I.P.C., Oct. 20th 1933, p. 1005). At the Soviet Congress of December 1933, however, we find Litvinov telling the Russian workers that there has been a great change in the League as an instrument of peace. The reason for this criminal nonsense was the fact that the negotiations for the Franco-Russian

alliance were under way, and France was determined to bring Russia into the League. That Russia had to make an alliance with a bourgeois state and enter the bourgeois League was unfortunate. That is not the point here and now. We have to accept such historical facts, and while we have to be clear about causes, Russia at least is there and likely to remain there. Russia's being in the League would entail Litvinov's having to make certain statements with certain mental reservations. What is unpardonable and has had such catastrophic effects is the fact that Litvinov and the Soviet rulers not only made these statements at Geneva, but have consistently switched the whole policy of the international proletariat round to support of the League of Nations idea. It was not only that Stalin signed the communiqué with Laval and thus saddled the French proletariat with the doctrine of National Defence. Three weeks before the communiqué was issued he sent the Secretary of the Young Communist International, Chemodanov, to France who told the French Youth: «If war occurs against the U.S.S.R. and you make your revolution you will be traitors». In other words, in a war against Germany if the Soviet Union is on the side of France you must fight side by side with your own bourgeoisie. In *L'Humanité* of May 24th there was reproduced a speech by Thorez of the French C.P.: «And now I answer a question that has been put to me: "In case of such a war launched by Hitler against the U.S.S.R., would you apply your slogan Transform the Imperialist War into the Civil War?" Well, no! Because in such a war it is not an imperialist war that is involved, a war between two imperialist gangs, it is a war against the Soviet Union».

As if France would be fighting against Germany for any other purpose than the same old imperialist purpose of the redivision of markets and important centres of production. The old parallel of Lenin making pacts with the Imperialists is brought in to justify the policy that the C.I. lays down for the workers in France. The analogy is so obviously false and empty that it only proves the emptiness of the C.I. case. Lenin was prepared to make a pact with the Imperialists, utilising the divisions between them. But weak as the Soviet Union was then, far weaker than it is today, Lenin did not at the same time cease to urge all workers to implacable struggle with the

bourgeoisie. It is not what Lenin said to the bourgeoisie that matters. It is what he said to the workers.

All this may seem a far cry from sanctions and Abyssinia. It is not, but indispensable to a true understanding of the various policies. We have not only to oppose them, but to know where they spring from and, most important for the British workers, where they are leading to.

When Italian Imperialism, threatened by internal difficulties, came to terms with France over Austria and launched the attack on Abyssinia, British Imperialism encouraged it. Up to June Eden was still bargaining with Mussolini as to how much Britain could get out of it. (See *New Statesman* and *Nation* pamphlet on Abyssinia, page 14). But Mussolini proved intractable. And when British Imperialism realised how dangerous the situation was for British interests in East Africa, it turned to the League. But first it made one last effort. In the Paris talks in August it offered Mussolini the whole of the economic exploitation of Abyssinia, if only he would allow an international police force instead of an Italian army in Abyssinia. That they would not have. When Mussolini refused the British turned nasty. They manipulated the proposals of the Committee of Five which put Abyssinia into their hands, and still hiding behind the League, showed Mussolini that they were not going to let him get away with it. At the present time of writing France is the determining factor. France will not come in unless she gets a promise from Britain about Hitler and Austria, and Britain hesitates. She wants to watch and see how the conflict goes. But the British army is mobilised, the Fleet in position, the naval reserves called in. British Imperialism is ready. It does not want war. Who wants war? But it will manoeuvre, and if Mussolini insists, and sanctions do not stop him, then the British Government will fight as anybody in their place would.

Now let us see how the various parties react.

British Imperialism knows that its own interests are the ones at stake. In the last resort it will have to fight for them, and immediately the Labour leaders line up. They always have, and they always will, except when the masses are at boiling point, when they will oppose only to sell them out as Russia between March and October 1917 and in England in 1926. It does

not matter what they passed at Brighton in 1933 or at Southport in 1934. In 1914 they were pledged to resist. But they must line up or take the revolutionary road. That road they will not take. And so nervous are they about the strong anti-war feeling in the country that they shout war even before the Government does so, most probably after having a hint or two from the Foreign Office. Baldwin thanks them in his Bournemouth speech for passing the resolution on sanctions. That disposes of the fallacy that Labour is urging the Government. As if Baldwin would mobilise the army and call in the naval reserves and send the fleet to the Mediterranean under pressure from workers. The hypocrisy of people who say this passes all reasonable expectation, as if workers could ever urge Imperialists into sanctions, if even sanctions mean war. These leaders are insuring themselves in advance. If war does come through sanctions, then they, having supported sanctions, will be taken into the Cabinet. As in 1931 some will be formal heads, and once more a «united Nation» goes into the slaughter.

The I.L.P., owing to the general turn of the party away from social-opportunism to revolution, has cut itself away from this fatal policy and, while supporting Abyssinia as Lenin supported Afghanistan against Britain, will not allow itself to be caught in the Imperialist trap, as many sincere workers have been, or rush gladly in as their leaders are doing.

Let us now look at France. There, French interests are not directly threatened. There is more room for diversity. Laval on the right wants to keep out. Herriot, the Radical, however is afraid of Fascism in France and would like to take this opportunity and drive out Laval. But though he will do more than Laval, he does not want actually to fight. It is easy therefore to understand the French Labour leaders. As usual they line up directly behind the bourgeoisie and, in cases of confusion, that section nearest to them. Sanctions by all means, they say, but no war. If, however, war does come, and war under Herriot, they will come in, we need have no fear. On the extreme Left in France is the group of Bolshevik-Leninists, the Trotskyists, whose position is similar to that of the I.L.P. They will fight this collaboration with the bourgeoisie to the end and try to turn Imperialist war into Civil war. Where are the Communists and the Third International?

They also follow that line. Soviet Russia is at the League fighting for sanctions and hoping that by being firm in this alliance, when the time comes, she will get support against Germany from France, Czechoslovakia and possibly Britain. Germany is not in the League, but the Franco-Soviet alliance is an alliance against Germany. Hence, long months ago, the Soviet Union had the C.P. in France lined up with the Trade Unions, and of course they are shouting sanctions as loudly as the rest, and if France is led into war the C.P. will support and, if necessary, take part, as Andrew Rothstein informed an I.L.P. meeting some time ago. He spoke of a probable war between France and Russia, on the one hand, and Germany on the other. But the French bourgeoisie are not fools. The C.P. is tied up with large sections of them in the Popular Front, and if there is going to be any sort of war they are going to see that the C.P. is firmly enmeshed in it. There should be no surprise therefore that the C.P. in Britain and most of their fractions in other parties are for sanctions. Sometimes they say sanctions mean war, at other times it may mean war; they talk about fascism, about «forcing» the National Government and «exposing» it at the same time as you demand, etc. To any true Marxist all that means just nothing. Soviet Russia is hoping to keep in with Britain and France at the League for fear of Germany, and the word has gone forth to the parties: follow us and support sanctions and all the League trickery. That is the beginning and end of the policy of the C.P.

There is no earthly use in trying to follow the rationalisation by which these various parties seek to prove that «sanctions» is the correct policy for the working class. All the blather about Fascism to be fought by Democracy etc, etc., as if in a war there is anything to choose between Fascist Imperialism and Democratic Imperialism. It is not surprising nor bewildering, though somewhat nauseating at times. They are merely following out the laws of the political groups to which they belong and have to find some reasons. They have a hard job. We propose one query of many to any revolutionary socialist. It is this: If you are for sanctions, you are closing the Suez Canal. That can be done only by warships. You therefore must tell the sailors of the Fleet that you as a revolutionary are in support

of this action. But Mussolini may attack. From start to finish he has never been bluffing, and it is madness to think that he will climb down now. The moment he attacks, war begins. How is the sanctionist now to make propaganda to the Fleet and tell the sailors to turn Imperialist war into Civil war? No true Marxist can play these games with the proletariat. There are too many ties already between the bourgeoisie and the masses for revolutionaries in the grave crisis of a war to go adding to them.

So much for the present. The danger for the I.L.P. is in the future. Certain elements are against the «sanctions» policy now. They talk about turning Imperialist war into Civil war. But there are indications that they are not true Leninists. If an Imperialist War between Germany and Russia should break out and by any chance Britain is drawn in on the same side as the Soviet Union, then those who are against sanctions now and against any sort of collaboration with their own bourgeoisie will begin to shout for supporting its own Government «while exposing it». That way lies disaster. The true revolutionaries in the I.L.P. must be on guard; whatever the circumstances, the enemy is our own bourgeoisie, and in war time more than any other time, whatever the war; for every war in which an imperialist bourgeoisie takes part is an Imperialist war. The circumstances of modern war are such that any prolonged struggle will bring the masses into the streets. They will want leadership. The I.L.P. must be ready. And it will be all the stronger if it remains always and through every temptation, in peace time as in war, the implacable enemy of its own bourgeoisie.

(Doc. 5) The New Leader, 20 December 1935

Truth about «Peace Plan». Britain's Imperialist Game

By C. L. R. JAMES

THE cat is out of the bag – or at least most of it. Honest Stanley Baldwin, holding desperately on to the tail, has only been able to prevent

the hindquarters of the unsavoury animal from displaying itself. It had to come, of course, but the moment was untimely. That was all.

The agitation appears to be taking the form of protest against the dismemberment of Abyssinia by those who believe in the Covenant of the League.

It is nothing of the kind. By the proposals of the Committee of Five the independence of Abyssinia was sold two months ago. The Peace Plan is the inevitable consequence of the previous Imperialist negotiations.

Story of the Plot

Every worker knows to-day that in return for help against a re-armed Germany, Laval gave Mussolini a free hand in Abyssinia. Having made his bargain with French Imperialism, Mussolini, as Hoare informed the House of Commons on October 22, told the British Government that he was ready to talk Abyssinia with them. The British Government, as Hoare said in the same speech, never replied. The reason Hoare gives is, first, that they had to set up a committee, had to make investigations in the Sudan and Kenya, and at last were so upset and confused by events that they could not discuss the matter calmly. (This sounds unbelievable, but it is true, and can be found in Hansard for October 22).

The real reason is simple. They did not want to tell Mussolini «yes». That could be used in evidence against them later. But if they said «no» and stood by the League, Mussolini, at that early stage, would have had a serious check. And if so, good-bye to all hopes of joint exploitation of Abyssinia.

Since 1902 Britain had been trying for the Lake Tsana concession and had not got it. Japan was penetrating Abyssinia; America was beginning. And if Abyssinia got over this difficulty she would arm so that none of her European Imperialist neighbours would have another chance to do what they had been attempting by war and intimidation for fifty years.

The British Imperialists were right. On May 11, Abyssinia, desperate, offered British Imperialists the Lake Tsana concession, after having refused for 33 years. The British Imperialists said «no». To take it then would have been awkward. They could afford to wait.

Eden as Puppet

Up to late June, Peace Ballot or no Peace Ballot, they were bargaining with Mussolini. The famous Zeila offer of a British port to Abyssinia in return for territory to Italy has come up again. Eden, who made it, is the darling of all those who put their faith in the League. But this gentleman told the House on July 11 exactly why British Imperialism made it. «Had the proposal been accepted and allowed us to find a basis for a settlement, let us not forget that Great Britain stood to gain as much as any other nation». Eden, like all the rest, will use the League for purposes of Imperialism. If he did not, Imperialism would throw him on the dust-heap.

But Mussolini proved, from the British point of view, unreasonable. In Paris in late August, as was noted by the Foreign Correspondent of the «Manchester Guardian» (September 7), they offered him everything except the actual Protectorate, and still Mussolini said «no». The British Government realised that he aimed at dominating the whole of the strategically powerful plateau of Abyssinia. That would be a permanent threat to British East Africa, and that they were not going to have. So they began to shout for the Covenant, the whole Covenant, and nothing but the Covenant.

«Action now!» said Eden, and Britain led the way, the Labour Party, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Communist Party calling for more Sanctions and still more. But the British Government did not, and does not, want to fight Italian Fascism. If Mussolini persisted in being unreasonable they would have to fight him, and it would be better to fight a League war or, as the «Daily Herald» put it two years ago, «a legal war»; they mobilised world opinion behind them, made sure of the future exploitation of Abyssinia by the proposals of the Committee of Five (see the New Leader , October 4), and then invited Italy to sit at the Board, but under the auspices of the League. Mussolini refused.

The British Government, though sorely perturbed at his unreason, stood firm, for British interests were involved. They had won the election on the League slogan, and had even started on the gradual imposition of

Sanctions. They tried to bring Laval in. Laval bargained stiffly – he wanted a promise of help against Germany. The British Government haggled. They did not want to commit themselves so far. It is certain that if Abyssinia did not stop Mussolini they would have to give Laval his promise.

But here the course of the war and Mussolini's internal difficulties played into their hands. The war is not going well. The Italians will never dominate that plateau. That is certain. The British Government therefore is first of all safe from the threatened danger, and, secondly, has got the League Mandate of the Committee of Five to fall back on whenever a general settlement is to take place. It has got no more use for the League, and taking the bull by the horns produces this Peace Plan.

Workers and Imperialism

Eden, who was the chief mouthpiece for the League policy, feels rather an ass. Honest Stanley has once more deceived his admirers, but that clever confidence man will most probably get away with it.

Even if the Cabinet is severely shaken (which is doubtful) British Imperialism will not fight Italy either for Abyssinia or for collective security. It will fight for British Imperialist interests and nothing else. British Imperialism will stand firm till it is broken by the British working class, supported by the Colonial workers and peasants. All else is illusion or hypocrisy.

If Abyssinia is to be saved it will be by her own exertions and the help of the International working class.

(Doc. 6) The New Leader, 27 December 1935

**«Honest» Stanley in a Fix – What next in the Abyssinian
Dispute?**

By C. L. R. JAMES

THE events leading to last Thursday's debate mark a turning point in the history of the class-struggle. British Imperialism had used the League to stop Italian Imperialism's threat to the British Empire; had used it to secure the common exploitation of Abyssinia by the proposals of the Committee of Five; had used it to win the election; and now, having been in secret communication with Mussolini, only wanted to throw the League over as quickly as possible.

Honest Stanley Baldwin had got away with the Trades Disputes Act, he had got away with the Sedition Act, he had got away with the India Act, by which British Imperialism gives self-government to India but controls £80 out of every £100 the Indian Government will spend! He had even got away with the abolition of Snowden's taxes on land, which Honest Stanley's Government had sworn never to touch.

Lies and Evasions

Surely his rugged honesty, some hard rugged lying, and some honest rugged bluff («my lips are sealed») could turn this awkward corner? The cowardly Labour Party would snarl a little, something else would turn up, and people would forget.

But Baldwin rushed it too quickly. Egypt, Japan, and the Miners made him act too crudely, and in addition he, like most of us, thoroughly misunderstood the strength of the pro-League feeling in this country. He had to turn back.

The mess the Government was in can be seen by a study, not of the press, but of Hansard. Hoare said he was strongly pressed to go to Paris (col. 2,005), while Lord Halifax told the House of Lords the same evening

that Hoare did not go to Paris to discuss terms, but while he was there Laval asked him to do so as a matter of sudden urgency. (House of Lords Debates, col. 278.)

Honest Stanley said he did not know what Hoare was arranging in Paris until he got a letter on Monday morning (col. 2,027). He said that he had no time to study the documents before the leakage took place, and then the Cabinet had to consider whether they would repudiate an absent colleague or not (col. 2,028). And yet, not ten minutes after, he told the House that never at any time during the week had he and his colleagues any idea that they were breaking their election pledges in consenting to these terms. This will go down in history as the stupidest thing ever said by any Prime Minister in the House of Commons, and shows the mess honest Stanley was in.

Chamberlain Answers

But amid the stream of lies, sometimes nauseating and sometimes comic, one question – what would the Government do now – remained unanswered, until Neville Chamberlain wound up the debate.

After saying (col. 2,113) that Mussolini might fight if oil sanctions were imposed, he continues:

«that need not necessarily stop the imposition of oil sanctions, and if the League should decide that oil sanctions should be applied, and that they can be effective, and should we be satisfied that all members of the League, at any rate who matter, are not only ready to give us assurances, but are prepared to take their part in meeting an attack, which may be sudden and unexpected, we, too, are prepared to play our part and agree to the imposition of an oil sanction».

So now we know. «Action now», said Eden when British Imperialism wanted to check Mussolini. But today, «If... and if... and if... then we shall apply an oil sanction».

But the masses of the people can see quite clearly whether an oil sanction is applied or not. And if it isn't, honest Stanley will be seen to be what he really is.

Signal at Danger

This is the dilemma. To save the Government's face some sort of gesture must be made with sanctions against Mussolini. But the Government cannot risk a war for the sake of the League they never have believed in, or for Abyssinia. The pro-League feeling in the country is in part fear of war and in part, distrust of Imperialism and all its ways. This distrust has been deepened by last week's events. The stage is set for a great mass swing to the left. But towards what? A Labour Government? Labour is hopeful. But it lives on dreams. The British bourgeoisie, with the world as it is, are not going to allow Attlee and Morrison to muck about with the country, fiddling with everything and settling nothing. Parliament is now dangerous for the Imperialists. They will turn to Fascism. That is the next move, and we must be ready.

(Doc. 7) The Keys, vol. 3, no. 5, January/March 1936

Abyssinia and the imperialists

Africans and people of African descent, especially those who have been poisoned by British imperialist education, needed a lesson. They have got it. Every succeeding day shows exactly the real motives which move imperialism in its contact with Africa, shows the incredible savagery and duplicity of European imperialism in its quest for markets and raw materials. Let the lesson sink in deep.

European imperialism has been after Abyssinia for fifty years. What do they want it for? They want it, first of all, for the minerals that are there, to plant cotton, to send some of their surplus population to the highlands, to make the natives buy Lancashire goods, or German goods or Italian goods, as the case might be, to invest money and then tax the native so as to make him pay a steady interest. All this they call developing the country and raising the standard of civilisation. They build a few schools and a few

hospitals. Some few of the richer natives get jobs in the government service and come to European universities for education. They are pointed out as evidence of the high standard of civilisation that has been introduced into the native country.

But all the money that the imperialists are making out of the country has to be paid for by labour, and the real sufferers are those millions who, unprotected by trade union organisation or any sort of organised public opinion, are driven off their lands, down into mines at a shilling a day, or working above ground for fourpence a day as in Kenya, with all the special humiliations and degradations that are attached to the African in Africa, not because he is black, but because the imperialist despite his guns and cruisers, is in such mortal fear of the indignation of these people that he builds up in every possible way a wall of defence between himself and them. First of all, he has his cruisers always about, his aeroplanes and his trained soldiers. But in addition he insists always to his own people that they are superior to the exploited races, and he insists always to the exploited races that they are inferior to his own. Thus he reinforces the power of arms by democratizing the mentality of those whom he uses for his purposes both at home and abroad.

Now to this question of Abyssinia. These European imperialists have been after Abyssinia for fifty years. We have to remember that, because the issue before us today is obscured by the mountain of lies and nonsense which are being wrapped around it. They wanted it for the purposes described above, and they have got it. There is no longer any independence of Abyssinia worth a scrap of paper as far as the imperialists are concerned. The moment the Emperor signed the proposals of the Committee of Five in late September the independence of Abyssinia had vanished. All that Italy, Great Britain and France had been quarrelling about among themselves and with Abyssinia was given to them by those proposals, wrapped round with silver paper labelled «assistance to a weaker nation», and blessed with the holy water of the League. European imperialism was determined to get Abyssinia, and it has got it. Let us trace the steps.

Italy tried in 1896 and was beaten at Adowa and driven out. Abyssinia is a high plateau, strategically very powerful. The people are splendid fighters, so that the imperialists saw they could not steal it as easily as they had stolen the rest of Africa. In 1902 Britain asked for the Lake Tana concession. The Abyssinians refused. In 1906 Britain, France and Italy divided Abyssinia in London by the Tripartite Treaty. When they were finished they sent to tell Menelik, the Emperor of Abyssinia, who told them they could write what they liked in treaties, he remained master of his own country. They sheered off.

In 1915 Britain and France brought Italy into the war by, among other promises, a hint of Abyssinian territory. But when the war was over Britain and France grabbed the German colonies and Italy was left out. In 1919 Italy offered Britain to divide Abyssinia with her. The British government said no, that they did not want to have any power near the Lake Tana concession. Whereupon Italy seeing that Britain was not prepared to divide, conspired with France and dragged Abyssinia by the hair into the League of Nations. This was in 1923. This prevented Britain acting single-handed against Abyssinia as she wanted to do. So in 1925 Britain offered to Mussolini to divide on the same terms that she had rejected in 1919. But Abyssinia threatened to fight, and France supported Abyssinia at the League. Britain and Italy apologised, said they had meant no harm. France, it is to be noted, has a railway from Jibuti in French Somaliland to Addis Ababa. She makes an enormous profit from it, and French goods travel along this railway into Abyssinia. So in as much as France cannot attack Abyssinia herself, she was quite prepared to support Abyssinia to keep the others out.

But by January 1935 France is terribly afraid of Germany. Mussolini has a fine army, and in return for a promise of help against Germany, France «disinterests herself economically» from Abyssinia. In other words gives Mussolini a free hand. In Italy the water is up to Mussolini's nose, and he must find some sort of explanation somewhere or perish. So having squared France, he informs the British that he is ready to talk Abyssinia with them. This was on the 29th January last. The British government would not do a

single thing. They would not reply to Mussolini because they did not want to say yes—that could be used in evidence against them and yet they did not want to say no. Because Abyssinia had been blocking them for forty years, and it was time that she was brought to order. Abyssinia kept on appealing to the League of Nations. Laval would not budge, neither would the British Government. Mussolini meanwhile sent his ships packed with men to Africa. But the Abyssinians would not be frightened, and at last the British Government had to take notice. The League met and after some negotiations, they appointed Britain and France to discuss with Italy in Paris.

As can be seen from the Manchester Guardian of September, in the notes of the foreign correspondent, Britain and France offered Mussolini vast opportunities for exploitation in Abyssinia, but demanded that he should not dominate the country with an armed force. They all would do that together, and the force would be internalised. But Mussolini said no, and when Britain realised that Mussolini meant to establish himself in Abyssinia as firmly as they, for instance, were established in India, they got thoroughly frightened. For Abyssinia, powerfully situated as it is, is in the heart of the British Empire in East Africa, Mussolini would form an army of these splendid Abyssinian fighters, and from there, in the next war, he could march down into any of the British colonies around.

Britain at once sent the fleet to the Mediterranean, started to mobilise the British Army, and seeing that she might have to fight, decided to make it a League War, in defence of collective security, the independence of Abyssinia and a lot of blather of the kind. All the small nations at Geneva, terribly frightened at what is going to happen when Hitler begins, were glad to see Britain standing up for the League at last and wished to support. «Action now» said Eden, sanctions etc. etc. The British Government, however, manipulated a scheme known to the world as the Proposals of the Committee of Five, by which Abyssinia would be delivered to them lock, stock and barrel, disarming of the people, all economic concessions, League advisors to govern the country, control of Budget taxes etc. – in fact all that they had been trying to get for fifty years. The Emperor could get no arms and they refused to give him any until he signed. Between the devil and the

deep sea he chose the British Government masquerading as the League. Britain was now in a powerful position. Even although France was unwilling she had Mussolini in a serious hole.

She invited him to come in and share in this League mandate. He refused. The League started to impose sanctions, and worse still, the war went badly for Mussolini. The Abyssinians have been defending themselves with great skill and there is little possibility, in fact none, that Mussolini will dominate the plateau which has made the British government so suddenly enthusiastic for the League. Mussolini, therefore, despite all his noise and bluster, showed himself willing to come to terms and take as much as he could without threatening British interests. Forthwith Britain produces the peace plan, giving half of Abyssinia to Mussolini. Once British interests are no longer threatened and they can get their Lake Tana concession, they have no more interest in the League than they had when Japan stole a large piece of China.

What has caused the trouble is that many well-meaning people in Britain took the British government seriously when it announced itself as converted to the League. This sudden reversal has come as a shock, and Baldwin has had to get rid of Samuel Hoare and dodge and shift around and confess that a mistake has been made. One thing however we can take as certain – the British imperialists were prepared to support the League on behalf of Abyssinia and collective security, and even fight, as long as British imperialist interests were threatened. These are now safe, and all that they are concerned with now is dodging out of their promises as quickly as they can! Public opinion is against them. Public opinion on the whole is not aware that by the proposals of the Committee of Five the imperialists have got what they wanted. It genuinely thinks that the League is protecting Abyssinia, and, that accounts for its indignation.

But British imperialism does not govern only the colonies in its own interests. It governs the British people in its own interests also, and we shall see that imperialism will win. It will talk a lot but it will do nothing for Abyssinia. The only thing to save Abyssinia is the efforts of the Abyssinians themselves and action by the great masses of Negroes and sympathetic

whites and Indians all over the world, by demonstrations, public meetings, resolutions, financial assistance to Abyssinia, strikes against the export of all materials to Italy, refusal to unload Italian ships etc.

Mussolini, the British government and the French have shown the Negro only too plainly that he has got nothing to expect from them but exploitation, either naked or wrapped in bluff. In that important respect this conflict, though unfortunate for Abyssinia, has been of immense benefit to the race as a whole.

(Doc. 8) Controversy. Special Supplement, No. I [may 1936]

Italy and Abyssinia. Should British Workers Take Sides?

C. L. R. JAMES

(Finchley I.L.P.)

THE point that must be constantly borne in mind in this dispute is that those who urge the Party to declare for international solidarity with all colonial peoples against Imperialism are not putting forward Trotskyism, Brandlerism or any doctrines associated with any group or sect. «Refusal to handle munitions for Imperialist purposes» following «mass-demand for the withdraw of Imperialist armed forces from colonial territories» is Party policy, to be found on page 23 of «What the I.L.P. Stands For». The reasons for this are not sentimental, but economic and political. Colonies are a source of power and revenue for the ruling class, which enables them all the more surely to pay good wages to a small section of the workers and use these to keep the great masses in poverty and subjection. Secondly, while the profits go mainly to the ruling class, the burden of armaments to defend these colonies is borne by the whole nation besides the inevitable imperialist wars which they cause. Therefore any suggestion that the advocacy of independent working-class action against the Inner Executive's policy of neutrality is the work of groups or cliques must be at once dismissed as

untrue. Secondly, on page 26 of the I.L.P. Annual Report for 1936 there is the resolution of the Bureau calling for the international working-class boycott of Imperialist Italy, the prevention of the transport of armaments and munitions to Italy or Italian territories, and openly wishing for the defeat of Italian Imperialism and the victory of the Abyssinian people. It was signed by Brockway and Campbell Stephen and endorsed without protest by the N.A.C. in August, 1935. The Inner Executive is undoubtedly entitled to reverse a decision previously come to (subject to the ultimate approval of the party). This is a possibility that a revolutionary Party above all must face. But the burden of responsibility lies with the Inner Executive. It is not those with wild revolutionary notions who are trying to force something new on the Party. It is the Inner Executive which is forcing something upon the Party not only new but absolutely unprecedented in the whole history of Socialism. What are their alleged reasons?

1. «The issue is not between Italy and Abyssinia but between Italian Imperialism and British Imperialism». (N.A.C. Manifesto, Annual Report, page 15.) It is a tragic thing that such shameful nonsense should find itself among the official documents of the Party. Is there any child of five who does not know that first and foremost in this question is the fact that the Italian armies are using every means at their disposal to destroy the Abyssinian army in order to make Abyssinia a colony, as all Africa and half of Asia has been made into colonies? No interest of British Imperialism in Abyssinia can obscure this plain and simple fact. It is a waste of ink and paper to have to write it.

2. «It is the League which has told us that Italy is the aggressor». Let us guard against any possibility of confusion. With Germany, France, Britain and Japan, capitalist nations continually prowling around the globe seeking new prey or the protection of old, revolutionary Socialists refuse to listen to the appeals of Imperialist statesmen against this or that one being the aggressor. «Aggression» is inherent in the capitalist system. But Abyssinia is not a capitalist nation; it is a feudal nation, and therefore has no need to seek markets, or sources of raw material, the ceaseless quest of every capitalist nation. The Emperor and other chieftains have fought among

themselves in the same way as British barons fought in the Wars of the Roses, or as African tribesmen have fought. But to say that on account of these internal squabbles and the mere fact that Haile Selassie calls himself Emperor, a Socialist is entitled to take no side when faced with the aggression of Italian Capitalism for capitalist purposes is either profound ignorance or the most barefaced dishonesty. It is not a question here of a small nation. It is a question of a colonial nation. By this same argument we justify every past, present and future raid by capitalism against a colonial people.

3. «Workers' control in each nation». (Annual Report, page 15.) It is difficult to write with restraint of this slogan, which disgraces the Party in the eyes of every intelligent Socialist. Where are the workers in Abyssinia who are to take control? Hundreds of thousands of slaves and serfs, scattered over a huge country, thousands of small peasants and some chiefs, men living in a condition similar, except for a few modern developments, to England when William the Conqueror landed here. What is to be said of leaders who call upon the workers of an industrialised country like Italy with great cities, millions of workmen organised in factories and with the political experience of centuries behind them, to do the same as these backward Abyssinian peasants and slaves? It would be more decent of the Inner Executive to say with the Tories, «Let Italy take them and civilise them». That would be a lie, the slave is no better working in a mine for 4d. a day than he is at present, but on the whole it would be less discreditable than this willful persistence in an historical absurdity.

4. «Workers' sanctions are helping Britain, may lead to war», etc., etc. This perhaps is the most specious, and for us, of the I.L.P., the most dangerous argument of the Inner Executive. If accepted, it destroys the whole basis of the workers' struggle. The Inner Executive will not have the nerve to deny that this struggle concerns the Italian worker. And once they admit that, their whole case is gone. For what concerns the Italian worker concerns the British worker, and the French workers and all others. If they deny this then all their international affiliations and Bureau for Unity are so much bluff. And if British workers, French workers and Norwegian seamen

were all to take independent action, while calling for solidarity with the Italian workers, Abyssinia would be left alone, for each imperialist government, including Italy, would have immediately to grapple with its own insurgent workers at home. With the past and present possibilities of this other writers will probably deal. But the correctness of the line remains unchallenged. Leaders who oppose it will have to produce some better reasons for their singular perversion of Party policy, and disregard of every accepted principle of Socialism. This is a critical stage in the history of the I.L.P., a struggle between the political development of the Party and the personal prestige of certain individuals. Those of us who oppose the Inner Executive so fiercely on this matter do it because, believing in the historic mission of the I.L.P. to lead the workers of Britain to Socialism (and no greater task can face any body of men and women in this century), we fight for the political line against the personal. If the Party allows the Inner Executive to get away with this then the Party, after four years of struggle and sacrifice to reach where it is to-day, will have started on the backward road. A revolutionary party cannot reverse its direction at every whim and caprice of its leaders. The Third International thought it could. See it to-day hanging on to the coattails of Liberals and «progressive» Tories. In these lean days above all we must hold to our political line, so that when the masses come, as come they will, we can show them the one and only road.

(Doc. 9) The New Leader, 5 June 1936

Fighting for the Abyssinian Emperor

Sir

May I make my position in regard to fighting for Abyssinia clear?

Early last year I offered myself through the Abyssinian Embassy here to take service under the Emperor, military or otherwise.

My reasons for this were simple. International Socialists in Britain fight British imperialism because obviously it is more convenient to do so

than to fight, for instance, German imperialism. But Italian capitalism is the same enemy, only a little further removed.

My hope was to get into the army. It would have given me an opportunity to make contact not only with the masses of the Abyssinians and other Africans, but in the ranks with them I would have had the best possible opportunity of putting across the International Socialist case. I believed also that I could have been useful in helping to organise anti-Fascist propaganda among the Italian troops.

Actual Experience

And finally, I would have had an invaluable opportunity of gaining actual military experience on the African field where one of the most savage battles between capitalism and its opponents is going to be fought before very many years. As long as the Emperor was fighting imperialism I would have done the best I could. The moment, however, any arrangement had been come to which brought the country within the control of European imperialism a new situation would have arisen, and I would have identified myself with those bands, hundreds of thousands of them, who are still fighting, and for years are going to carry on the fight against imperialistic domination of any kind.

I did not intend to spend the rest of my life in Abyssinia, but, all things considered, I thought, and still think, that two or three years there, given the fact that I am a Negro and am especially interested in the African revolution, was well worth the attempt.

Unfortunately, Dr Martin, the Minister, told me that he thought my work with the International Friends of Ethiopia would better serve the struggle against Italy. When, however, that body decided to support League Sanctions and possibly lead British workers to what Marxists knew from the start would be an imperialist war, I broke at once with the society.

Faithfully yours
CLR James
London

«La lutte» [Vietnam]

(Doc. 1) La lutte, n. 24, 23 février 1935

**Encouragée par la France, l'Italie fasciste entre en guerre
contre l'Abyssinie**

Pour décider l'Italie à participer à la guerre mondiale de 1914-1918, la France et l'Angleterre avaient promis de lui accorder une partie des dépouilles de l'empire ottoman, une nouvelle limitation des frontières de la Tripolitaine, la révision du statut des Italiens de Tunisie, et une solution du problème de l'Adriatique.

Cependant, l'article 13 du Traité de Londres du 26 Avril 1915 est très vague en ce qui concerne la délimitation et l'étendue de ces compensations.

Ce qui fait qu'après la guerre,

L'Angleterre reçoit 1.917.000 km² peuplés par 6.074.000 habit.

La France reçoit 483.000 km² peuplés par 2.913.000 habit.

La Belgique reçoit 54.000 km² peuplés par 3.000.000 habit.

L'Italie ne reçoit pour sa part que 205.000 km² peuplés par 130.000 habitants.

De là est né un conflit permanent entre la France et l'Italie. Cette dernière, avide de matières premières, poussée par le besoin de posséder des terres pour l'émigration du surplus de sa population ne cesse d'employer des mots énergiques pour réclamer ce qu'elle croit avoir la prétention d'obtenir. Elle soutient la politique révisionniste de la Hongrie, elle prend l'Autriche sous sa garde, elle ennuie la Yougoslavie et la Petite – Entente qui sont sous l'influence française.

Ainsi donc, c'est pour avoir la sécurité dans les pays balkaniques que M. Laval vient de concéder à M. Mussolini des avantages énormes dont le résultat est estimé par le Ministre français, pour l'Europe favorable à «une paix de cinquante ans».

Voyons un peu ce que la France a payé pour ce prix d'amitié.

La rectification de la frontière méridionale de la Libye apporte à l'Italie une superficie égale à celle de la Tunisie.

La vieille route des caravanes appartiendra désormais aux Italiens qui pourront assurer leur marche vers le lac Tchad, et le Cameroun.

Quant aux contreforts du Tibesti, avec les localités d'Auzou et de Guezeti ils permettront à M. Mussolini de contrôler grâce à des points d'eau les déplacements des populations nomades passant de l'A.O.F. en Egypte, et du Soudan anglo-égyptien vers la Libye.

D'autre part en ce qui concerne la Mer Rouge, la cession de l'île de *Doumeïra* et du promontoire de *Der Eloua* avec son hinterland, porte sous le contrôle de l'Italie, le détroit de Bab-el-Mandeb. La France abandonne pour cela 750.000 km²?

Mais, en cédant à l'Italie le port de Der-Eloua elle abandonne en même temps un point stratégique d'une valeur pour le moins égale à celle du détroit de Gibraltar.

Pour ce qui est du statut des Italiens en Tunisie, il ne sera plus question de sa prorogation de trois mois en trois mois d'après les conventions de 1896. L'accord tunisien permettra aux Italiens de constituer en quelque sorte un Etat particulier dans le protectorat français jusqu'en 1965.

On voit donc que soi-disant pour assurer la paix européenne, M. Laval n'hésite pas à accorder à M. Mussolini des avantages énormes.

Désormais, l'Italie aura la main libre en Afrique. Au nom de la «civilisation» elle a déjà commencé à attaquer le seul pays africain qui reste indépendant, l'Abyssinie.

«La situation apparaît particulièrement grave et comme pouvant avoir des conséquences sérieuses... Il appartient aux pays les plus directement intéressés et *en premier lieu à l'Italie, d'annuler purement et simplement les causes d'un tel désordre*», écrit un organe italien *le Tenère*.

Et les causes du désordre sont d'après *il Messagero* «une explosion de xénophobie, fruit du fanatisme nationaliste abyssin», de «l'incapacité du Gouvernement d'Addis-Abbaba de contrôler la situation».

Les mêmes prétextes, que ceux dont se sert le Japon pour dépecer la Chine!

Le cliquetis des armes en Afrique noire est loin d'évoquer l'image de la «paix pour une cinquantaine d'années» de M. Laval.

L'Abyssinie organise la résistance devant la mobilisation des troupes italiennes. Sa population (10 millions environ) a déjà donné des preuves d'héroïsme lors des précédentes invasions étrangères.

D'autant plus qu'elle a derrière elle le Japon qui, depuis longtemps, s'est installé économiquement en Abyssinie – le péril jaune dénoncé naguère par le «Duce».

La France qui achète à l'Italie la sécurité de sa position dans les Balkans au prix d'une guerre mussolinienne en Afrique est loin de travailler pour la paix comme le ministre français des Affaires étrangères a voulu nous le faire entendre.

(Doc. 2) La lutte, n. 40, 22 juin 1935

Brigandages impérialistes

La situation internationale de la semaine passée est nettement marquée par la recrudescence des provocations des deux états impérialistes les plus actifs – l'Italie et le Japon – contre l'Ethiopie et la Chine.

L'agression italienne

On peut affirmer que l'agression imminente de l'Ethiopie par l'Italie n'a pas eu pour point de départ un «incident de frontière». On sait maintenant à quoi s'en tenir sur ces prétextes impérialistes.

Depuis plusieurs années, cet acte de brigandage a été prémédité, et préparé de longue main par Mussolini lui-même. On a en effet aujourd'hui des précisions «intéressantes» et significatives sur les buts véritables de la politique italienne en Abyssinie.

Une «haute personnalité fasciste» vient de déclarer – le 17 juin – au correspondant de *l'Agence économique et financière* que «dorsque les colonies allemandes furent réparties aux alliés après la guerre des diplomates italiens

de second rang oublièrent à Versailles d'obtenir la réalisation des promesses faites à l'Italie en 1915 parce que leur attention fut détournée de la question coloniale par celle des ports d'Adriatique, à Fiume et Trieste».

«Par sa politique abyssine M. Mussolini tente de rectifier les anciennes erreurs».

Par ailleurs, le Duce a souligné «qu'il désirât l'Abyssinie et considère sa demande comme pleinement justifiée en raison du sang italien versé pendant la guerre et de l'erreur dont fut victime l'Italie à Versailles».

En somme, entre bandits impérialistes, on n'est plus d'accord au sujet du butin. L'Italie fasciste trouve aujourd'hui que du gigot qui a été partagé à Versailles, on ne lui a laissé que... l'os.

Et elle réclame.

Elle trouve tout naturel de s'accorder un «morceau» en l'espèce l'Ethiopie que convoite d'ailleurs l'Angleterre.

Est-il besoin de dire que l'Ethiopie, membre de la S.D.N. devant l'agression par les forces militaires italiennes a réclamé, à plusieurs reprises, à cette organisation internationale, une intervention qui lui est due. Et dans cette affaire comme dans tant d'autres, la S.D.N. s'est distinguée par sa carence habituelle.

La sinistre comédie de Stresa où l'Italie s'est posée en «champion de la paix» avec 800.000 hommes armés jusqu'aux dents et une propagande effrénée pour la guerre de la part des fascistes.

Un mois après l'entrevue de l'Isola Bella, le sous-secrétaire d'Etat italien aux Colonies, Alexandro Lessona dans un discours provocateur a dressé ce qu'il appelle «un acte d'accusation contre l'Abyssinie» (sic!) à qui il reproche notamment:

- 1) De ne Pas respecter le Traité d'amitié de 1928 avec l'Italie
- 2) De constituer, par son état d'anarchie (resic) un danger pour les puissances voisines:

Et de conclure – naturellement! – à la nécessité de l'annexion pure et simple de l'Ethiopie par l'Italie. Car «on commence à se demander, a-t-il dit, si l'on doit reconnaître à ce peuple le droit non seulement à se maintenir sur pied, mais de posséder une vaste colonie... etc...».

Mais voilà qu'aujourd'hui, Mussolini jette lui-même son masque. Il y a longtemps qu'il «désire» l'Ethiopie parce que il y avait «du sang italien versé pendant la guerre» (!). Il «désire» l'Ethiopie et l'aura malgré l'Angleterre et le Monde .

Le Giornale d'Italia est plus explicite encore sur les moyens. «Le moment est venu, écrit-elle, de changer notre attitude de tolérance et de régler nos comptes».

C'est net et clair: la politique italienne évoluera rapidement vers l'agression armée contre l'Ethiopie.

Un crime nouveau contre l'indépendance des peuples va bientôt se commettre aux yeux du «monde civilisé».

Le brigandage Japonais

L'impérialisme japonais, de son côté redouble ses attaques contre la Chine.

Les dépêches d'hier nous rapportent que «l'avance continue des japonais dans le Nord de la Chine a permis le contrôle de la ligne télégraphique de Schanghai à Tientsin et toutes les stations de radio télégraphie entre la Chine du Nord et Pékin».

Par ailleurs, plus de 40.000 Japonais sont prêts envahir la province de Houpeï, tandis que d'importants mouvements de troupes et d'avions ont lieu dans la région Pékin — Tientsin.

On sait que devant le renouvellement des attaques japonaises, le Gouvernement central Chinois a lancé un appel aux gouvernements anglais et américains. On conçoit que cet appel soit fort embarrassant pour l'Angleterre. Une «intervention britannique» équivaldrait à une attitude inamicale vis à vis de l'impérialisme japonais.

Entre impérialismes, on se ménage.

L'attitude du Japon n'a cessé d'être menaçante. L'Etat-major de l'armée japonaise du Kouang-Toung aurait décidé de considérer l'armée du Chahar «comme une horde de bandits». Il lui reproche d'avoir violé la trêve de Tatan le 2 Février. Le général japonais Dohaira a déclaré: «L'affaire du

Chahar est brûlante». Ce qui montre qu'une intervention mitigée de l'Angleterre ne saurait arrêter les prétentions nippones.

Les visées japonaises portent actuellement sur la Transbaïkalie et la Chine-centrale avec pour objectif rieur la Chine méridionale.

Mais la prise en possession de la région de Kaïgan montre cependant le danger d'une intervention antisoviétique de la part les nippons.

Ainsi le plan stratégique de l'impérialisme japonais se dessine devant nous sous cet aspect: d'abord s'emparer delà Mandchourie et de la Mongolie et entreprendre l'intervention antisoviétique. Ensuite, guerre contre les Etats-Unis.

L'impérialisme japonais ne s'arrête pas là. Il ne rêve ni plus ni moins à «conquérir le monde».

(Doc. 3) La lutte, n. 43, 13 juillet 1935

La guerre en Ethiopie

Jusqu'au bout...

Le «conflit italo-éthiopien» s'aggrave de jour en jour. L'impérialisme italien semble déterminé à envahir l'Ethiopie dans le plus bref délai, si on en juge par les préparatifs fiévreux de l'Italie dans les premiers jours de cette semaine.

Mussolini haranguant à Salerne les divisions «trois janvier» a affirmé de nouveau sa volonté de guerre.

«Gouvernement et peuple, clame le sinistre Duce, nous sommes engagés dans une lutte que nous sommes décidés à mener jusqu'au bout». (Havas 6 juillet).

A l'heure où nous écrivons ces lignes plus de 300.000 soldats italiens avec des centaines d'avions, de chars d'assaut et de canons sont massés aux frontières éthiopiennes. Dans ces chiffres entrent les 90.000 chemises-noires «volontaires», les 50.000 hommes composant les 3 divisions «Gavinana», «Peloritana» et «Sadaouba» et enfin les 3 nouvelles divisions

provenant d'une deuxième mobilisation toute récente déclarée nécessaire pour répondre à une soi-disant «attitude belliqueuse» du Négus d'Ethiopie

Devant l'agression imminente, l'Ethiopie a de nouveau fait appel à la S.D.N. Dans une note remise au gouvernement des Etats Unis, elle déclare s'en rapporter au pacte Kellog et dit «que le gouvernement abyssin se trouve contraint à cette démarche afin de sauvegarder l'indépendance et l'intangibilité de l'Abyssinie après que le gouvernement italien ait fourni une nouvelle preuve de ses intentions agressives» (Radio du 5 juillet).

On peut dire, d'ores et déjà, que l'Ethiopie sera – une fois de plus – trahie par la S.D.N. et laissée sans défense en face d'une puissance armée jusqu'aux dents, agressive, insolente et ne cachant nullement ses intentions de rapine.

Les Etats-Unis, «champion de la Paix» semblent fort embarrassés d'être mis au pied du mur. Ils ont pourtant le cynisme «d'exprimer sa satisfaction (?) de voir la S.D.N. s'engager dans la voie d'une solution acceptable pour les deux parties (sic!)».

Pendant ce temps, l'impérialisme italien effectue de nouveaux transports de troupes en Erythrée et multiplie les provocations contre l'Ethiopie.

Les visées italiennes

La conquête de l'Ethiopie ne constitue, à vrai dire, que le commencement de la politique d'expansion impérialiste de l'Italie. L'Ethiopie devait dans l'esprit du «Duce» constituer «la continuité territoriale» des 2 colonies italiennes de l'Est-Africain.

Les visées du fascisme italien portent surtout sur une «pénétration» au Centre de l'Afrique, pénétration qui devait réaliser «l'Empire africain» de l'Italie. Les aveux de la presse italienne sont fort significatifs à ce sujet.

«Il faut être prêt aujourd'hui pour demain, écrit le Corriere della Sera du 9 janvier, pour le placement de nos marchandises, pour notre affirmation commerciale sur le continent noir... Les accords de Rome doivent être envisagés comme le tremplin économique de la progression commerciale italienne à l'intérieur du continent noir...».

Une route est actuellement construite par l'Italie devant relier la Lybie à l'Égypte. Une autre est projetée de Tripoli au Lac Tchad, le fameux «translybien» devant relier l'Afrique occidentale et l'Afrique équatoriale françaises à l'Afrique méditerranéenne Malienne.

Avec les lignes maritimes et aériennes appropriées ces projets devaient assurer à l'Italie la domination sur le continent noir.

Antagonismes impérialistes

Tel est le programme africain du fascisme italien. Cependant il faut exercer avec la France et l'Angleterre, les 2 maîtresses de l'Afrique.

La France peut-elle tolérer une poussée italienne en Afrique centrale? C'est peu probable, d'autant plus que cette poussée éventuelle permettra à l'Italie de réaliser ses projets de routes commerciales notamment la liaison Tripoli-Lac Tchad qui sera le concurrent mortel du «Transaharien» et du «Transafricain», les 2 pièces maîtresses de la domination française sur le continent noir.

L'Angleterre, de son côté, possède dans le territoire éthiopien la «clef» de l'Égypte, en l'occurrence le lac Tsana qui approvisionne le Nil. Or on sait que le Nil constitue le pilier de l'économie égyptienne avec ses richesses cotonnières.

On comprend alors l'opposition grave d'intérêts qui dresse l'Angleterre contre l'Italie.

De plus, la «continuité territoriale» entre la Somalie et l'Erythrée renforce la position de l'Italie sur la Mer Rouge où l'Empire britannique règne en maître incontesté.

Enfin le développement extraordinaire du commerce italien en Afrique orientale et en Afrique australe inquiète à plus d'un titre les capitalistes anglais.

Contradictions...

Mais le fait remarquable dans le moment actuel du conflit italo-éthiopien est que deux parties antagonistes se forment et s'affrontent: d'un côté l'Italie et la France, de l'autre l'Angleterre avec l'Allemagne.

La France portera la responsabilité de l'agression italienne contre l'Éthiopie par les accords de Rome où Laval a fait à Mussolini d'importantes concessions en Afrique; ensuite par l'opposition des délégués français contre la requête éthiopienne à la S. D. N.

Après l'accord naval anglo-allemand, la France a cru devoir resserrer encore les liens qui l'unissent à sa «sœur latine» et encourager le coup de force de Mussolini par une attitude foncièrement hostile à toute intervention britannique.

Pour s'opposer au front anglo-allemand en Europe, la France est obligée de faire des concessions à l'Italie en Afrique.

Aussi la contradiction entre l'attitude de la France et ses intérêts impériaux n'a rien qui nous étonne.

«C'est justement là la justification de la thèse marxiste qui nous montre l'existence du capitalisme au milieu des contradictions qu'il engendre et reproduit sur une nouvelle base».

Vers une nouvelle guerre impérialiste

C'est sous cet angle qu'il faut observer et expliquer les événements actuels en Afrique.

Quelles que soient les déclarations officielles et les attitudes des impérialismes, il est un fait indéniable: l'exacerbation des contradictions capitalistes à l'époque impérialiste.

Ces contradictions nous mènent à grands pas vers une nouvelle guerre impérialiste pour un nouveau partage de l'Afrique et peut-être du monde.

«C'est que, dans son état actuel, l'impérialisme dispose de moins en moins de moyens pour résoudre ses conflits; il est obligé d'avoir recours à une solution de circonstance sans tenir compte des répercussions plus ou

moins lointaines de cette solution. Il accumule ainsi de plus en plus let contradictions dont il périra».

(Doc. 4) La lutte, n. 46, 3 août 1935

Vers une nouvelle crise de la S. D. N.?

Le Conseil de la Société des Nations qui s'est réuni le 31 juillet dernier aura à résoudre le difficile problème du conflit italo-abyssin.

Les radios nous annoncent que Mussolini «s'est retiré dans son château rocheux de Rocca delle Caminate, où il a l'habitude de se rendre quand il doit prendre de lourdes résolutions». Quel mauvais coup le sinistre fasciste va-t-il méditer dans sa retraite?

Les milieux diplomatiques de Genève se demandent avec appréhension s'il ne pense pas «à la sortie de l'Italie du sein de la S.D.N.», ce qui serait, d'après certains, un coup mortel pour Genève après la sortie de l'Allemagne et du Japon.

Préméditations italiennes

Depuis plus d'un mois, la presse italienne multiplie sarcasmes et provocations contre l'institution internationale de Genève.

«... La solidarité de Genève, proclame le Popolo d'Italia, est une tragique illusion européenne».

«La S.D.N. gendarme de l'Empire britannique», tel est le thème développé par la Tribuna. Par ailleurs journal Ottobre de Rome déclare ouvertement: «Nous souhaitons que l'Italie quitte Genève et qu'elle soit à la tête de la ligne des Etats dissidents».

Au surplus, on sait que Mussolini a failli porter il y a quelques 3 mois – en Mai exactement – un grand coup d'éclat: Quitter la S.D.N. le jour même où «dans un patriotique recueillement» l'Italie fêtait le vingtième anniversaire de son entrée dans la grande guerre.

Mais le «Duce» ne pouvait pas alors risquer une aggravation de son conflit avec l'Angleterre. Il a dû comme on sait se résoudre à un compromis qui lui permettra de gagner du temps, pour renforcer sa position internationale et pour augmenter ses forces armées en Afrique orientale.

Depuis l'accord naval anglo-allemand, les deux «sœurs latines» sont d'accord sur la «mission civilisatrice» de l'Italie en Ethiopie.

La politique de Laval, au lendemain du conflit de la France avec l'Angleterre est à coup sûr la cause essentielle de la nouvelle offensive fasciste contre la S.D.N.

La politique de M. Laval

Politique dangereuse au premier chef, qui risque à l'heure actuelle de compromettre la paix non seulement en Afrique et en Europe mais encore dans le monde entier.

On se rappelle que par les accords de Rome la France de M. Laval a donné à Mussolini un appui moral et financier pour sa guerre africaine.

L'Echo de Paris a fait en son temps l'éloge du ministre des Affaires étrangères français «qui a fait de son mieux pour adoucir l'intransigeance britannique» autrement dit l'opposition anglaise à la conquête de l'Ethiopie par l'Italie.

Nous apprenons quelques jours avant la réunion du Conseil de la S.D.N. que M. Laval proposerait «l'établissement d'un protectorat italien sur l'Abyssinie, basé sur le traité de 1916 entre l'Angleterre, la France, l'Italie et respectant l'intégrité (sic) de l'Abyssinie». Cette proposition prévoit aussi l'établissement d'une zone d'influence anglaise autour du lac Tana, l'Italie ayant reconnu dans un échange de note avec l'Angleterre en Décembre 1925, les droits exclusifs (resic!) de l'Angleterre sur les eaux abyssines».

Pour qui sait lire entre les lignes cela veut tout simplement dire, partage à l'amiable de l'Ethiopie entre brigands italiens et impérialisme anglais. Laval qui se pose maintenant en «ministre de la paix», «espoir des 2 parties» s. v. p. trouve plus commode démembrer la nation éthiopienne au profit des 2 antagonistes italiens et anglais. C'est paraît-il la preuve de l'habileté du Premier français dont la politique consiste d'une part à

détourner l'Italie de l'Europe Centrale où la France entend régner en maîtresse et d'autre part à contenter l'Angleterre avec qui il faut compter.

Voilà pourquoi, au nom de la diplomatie, M. Laval, sacrifie et l'indépendance d'un pays membre de la S.D.N. et la paix mondiale.

L'attitude anglaise

On sait que l'Angleterre s'oppose à la conquête de l'Ethiopie par l'Italie pour des raisons que nous avons indiquées dans le N 43 de la Lutte.

D'après le Daily Telegraph le conflit italo-abyssin est «considéré par le nouveau ministre des Affaires étrangères sir Samuel Hoare, ainsi que par M. Anthony Eden, comme l'un des problèmes les plus urgents à résoudre».

Suivant l'opinion anglaise, la Grande Bretagne et la France se doivent de maintenir le covenant non seulement par suite d'une obligation morale de membres importants de la S.D.N. mais c'est aussi une question de sécurité collective».

Le capitaine Eden représentant de la Grande Bretagne au Conseil de la S.D.N. insistera donc sur la nécessité au cas où l'on n'arriverait pas à un compromis d'aborder le fond du débat c'est à dire d'élargir la discussion. Ce qui amènera une intervention genevoise dans le conflit, et certainement le départ de la délégation italienne qui se sent soutenue par Laval en personne.

La faillite de la S.D.N.

C'est avec la menace de la sortie de l'Italie de la S.D.N. que le Conseil va délibérer sur l'affaire italo-abyssine.

Le Temps étudiant la tâche du Conseil de la S.D.N. dans le différend italo-abyssin écrit: La première chose à faire pour obtenir un résultat appréciable est de *réserver l'avenir* en EVITANT UNE RUPTURE BRUTALE A GENEVE.

L'essentiel, d'après ce journal, est de «temporiser dans les circonstances actuelles car il paraît que dans une telle question», le temps travaille ici pour une solution pacifique.

C'est Laval qui se charge d'exécuter les ordres du Temps et du Comité des Forges. Après un échange de vues entre MM. Laval et Eden

«le gouvernement anglais paraissait partager les vues françaises, sur les avantages d'une temporisation au moins conditionnelle».

«Temporisation» qui permettra à Mussolini de provoquer, et étendre insidieusement «sa mission civilisatrice sur l'Ethiopie».

«Temporisation», pour s'entendre sur le partage de la pauvre Abyssinie, membre de la S.D.N.

Plus que jamais, l'organisation de Genève se montre «gendarme» non seulement de l'Empire britannique mais aussi des grandes puissances.

Ses décisions ne font que sanctionner les méfaits des bandits impérialistes contre les peuples arriérés.

Les frictions qui se produisent de temps à autre en son sein, reflètent l'antagonisme entre les impérialismes dans le monde. Elle en sort chaque fois, plus diminuée en autorité et en prestige.

La S.D.N. ne sauvera pas la Paix. Elle n'a jamais été qu'une assemblée de représentants du capitalisme international.

La paix ne sera que lorsqu'il y aura entente directe entre les peuples dans une Union soviétique du Monde.

(Doc. 5) La lutte, n. 47, 10 août 1935

Suite à Genève...

On sait la que S.D.N. a clôturé le 4 août sa session extraordinaire consacrée au «conflit italo-abyssin». La résolution Laval - Eden laborieusement mise sur pied a été adoptée à l'unanimité. Cette résolution «remet en mouvement la procédure de conciliation» en assurant la désignation d'un «super-arbitre» par les deux parties.

Une deuxième résolution – non votée par l'Italie – décide la réunion du Conseil pour le 4 septembre afin «d'évoquer l'examen général... des rapports entre l'Italie et l'Ethiopie».

Fiasco complet

Les délibérations de Genève ont abouti à un fiasco complet. Et on ne s'en cache pas! Les politiciens fossiles qui ont essayé de concilier les intérêts divergents des impérialismes anglais et italiens ne s'en sont pas tirés à leur honneur, au contraire. On ne se gêne pas d'ailleurs pour le leur dire.

Le «Popolo di Roma», tout de suite, après la clôture de la session souligne – très justement d'ailleurs – l'insignifiance et le vide de la seconde résolution genevoise qui renvoie au 4 septembre le débat général sur le conflit».

La «grande presse» française aux ordres de Laval tout en montrant leur «satisfaction» sur commande, ont dû reconnaître «que la formule de compromis n'a pas concilié les différences d'opinions italo-abyssines ou italo-britanniques».

«L'Echo de Paris», cher à Laval, qualifie, sous la signature de Pertinax le compromis d'ambigu et est convaincu qu'avant un mois, le conflit surgira de nouveau.

L'impression générale est que le politique de Laval faite de tergiversations entre l'Italie et l'Angleterre a abouti à un échec sévère. Le S.D.N. a montré son impuissance à régler un «différend» entre deux Etats, membre de l'organisation, ce qui n'est pas pour relever son prestige déjà fort entamé. L'impérialisme français qui tient à faire de Genève un instrument de sa politique d'hégémonie européenne a tenté un dernier effort pour le sauver: une conférence à trois entre la France, l'Angleterre et l'Italie va s'ouvrir bientôt pour tenter – encore une fois – de résoudre le problème italo-abyssin ou plutôt le différend anglo-italien.

Négociations impérialistes

Après l'échec d'une entente publique, va commencer une «guerre des chancelleries» impérialistes. Dans les négociations secrètes des diplomates, le quai d'Orsay jouera, à coup sûr, un rôle décisif. Comme il est à prévoir

que Laval continuera à soutenir l'Italie dans ses prétentions exorbitantes, on peut, d'ores et déjà, affirmer que la Conférence à trois n'aboutira à rien.

On connaît en effet les positions respectives des deux puissances antagonistes: l'Italie soutenue par la France exige des concessions politiques en Ethiopie tandis que les Anglais ne tolèrent que l'octroi à Rome des concessions économiques. La conférence, on le prévoit facilement, évoluera vers un cul-de-sac et chacun restera sur ses positions.

On indique que parallèlement aux négociations en vue de résoudre le conflit, il sera possible d'accorder les vues italiennes et anglaises sur la délimitation des zones d'influence fixée par le traité de 1906.

Autrement, nouvelle tentative «d'accorder» les appétits des brigands anglais et italiens sur le dos de l'Ethiopie.

Il paraît «qu'une grande perplexité règne au sujet des négociations qui vont s'ouvrir», car les décisions de Genève considérées du côté anglais comme un échec d'Eden, va inciter le délégué anglais à adopter désormais une attitude intransigeante qui n'est pas pour faciliter les «accords».

On estime que «la détente du conflit italo-éthiopien et la tension italo-britannique ne peuvent résulter finalement que de la modification des vues italiennes dans un sens modérateur».

Quoi qu'il en soit, la succession des «Conférences» ne peut refléter que le conflit des impérialismes nationaux dans le partage du monde.

Les «temporisations» du genre de la résolution Laval-Eden ne pourront pas éviter aux peuples les malheurs d'une guerre impérialiste mondiale.

L'Ethiopie toujours menacée

En attendant, l'Italie continue à envoyer des troupes en Erythrée et à multiplier les provocations contre l'Ethiopie.

La presse italienne, après les décisions de Genève est unanime à proclamer «l'insignifiance visible» de la «solution» de la S.D.N. Après avoir facilité pour la forme M. Laval de son «œuvre», le Giornale d'Italia estime «qu'elle n'élimine pas les thèses opposées de l'Italie et de l'Angleterre».

De tout cela, il apparaît que l’Ethiopie est toujours sous la menace d’un coup de force italien et le monde est toujours en danger de guerre.

Il appartient aux peuples de France, d’Italie et d’Angleterre et aussi au gouvernement soviétique dont le représentant préside actuellement la S.D.N. de s’opposer aux manœuvres des politiciens tarés qui veulent à tout prix résoudre leur différend dans une conflagration sanglante.

(Doc. 6) La lutte, n. 49, 24 août 1935

Vers une nouvelle guerre mondiale...

Rupture

Dans «La Lutte» du 10 Août dernier nous avons écrit: «La conférence (tripartite) on le prévoit facilement, évoluera vers un cul de sac et chacun restera sur ses positions».

On sait que le Conseil de la S.D.N. réuni le 4 Août a décidé l’ouverture d’une conférence à trois entre la France l’Angleterre et l’Italie pour tenter encore une fois de résoudre le «conflit italo-éthiopien».

Cette conférence «tripartite» qui vient de s’ouvrir il y a quelques jours a abouti, comme nous l’avons prévu, à une «rupture» et chacun, en effet, est «resté sur ses positions».

Les radios nous rapportent que «dans la première conférence tripartite, MM. Laval et Eden se sont mis entièrement d’accord pour donner des concessions économiques à l’Italie. Le Gouvernement français à propos des garanties envisage, avec le consentement du Négus, la présence des conseillers italiens dans les diverses branches de l’administration éthiopienne» (Havas du 17 août).

Comme on voit, Laval et Eden, pour contenter l’Italie, n’ont pas hésité à sacrifier les intérêts les plus vitaux de l’Ethiopie.

Mais l’impérialisme anglais tout en faisant des «concessions» au dépens de l’Abyssinie, tient à sauvegarder ses «intérêts» en Afrique orientale, en l’occurrence le lac Tsana et les sources du Nil Bleu.

C'est ainsi qu'au cours de la Conférence à trois, les milieux anglais «marquent une très forte opposition aux concessions politiques en faveur de l'Italie».

Or la délégation italienne présidée par Aloisi «insiste sur la portée politique des traités».

Comme dit Laval, «la négociation est dure», nous dirons plus: elle est, à priori, impossible.

Deux jours après l'ouverture «un communiqué officiel annonce l'ajournement de la conférence tripartite et déclare que l'étude se poursuivra par voie diplomatique» (Havas).

C'est la rupture...

Bilan déplorable de la politique de M. Laval

«Pauvre France médiatrice!» s'écrie avec compassion un de nos confrères, en tête des radios apportant les difficultés dans lesquelles se débat M. Laval pour concilier les impérialismes anglais et italiens.

Or si on se reporte à la politique extérieure du Gouvernement français depuis le 18 Juin c'est à dire depuis l'accord naval anglo-allemand, (voir «La Lutte» n. 41) on doit reconnaître à la «France» de M. Laval une grande part de responsabilité dans les prétentions exorbitantes de Mussolini, cause de l'échec de toutes négociations en vue de sauvegarder la paix.

Car, à peine connue la conclusion du traité naval, sur l'ordre du Président français toute la «grande presse» se met à entonner les louanges du «Duce» et à parler de «la sœur latine représentant en Afrique la Civilisation et le Droit».

On comprend, après cela, l'attitude de plus en plus agressive de l'Italie dans le conflit avec l'Ethiopie d'une part et la Grande Bretagne d'autre part. L'impérialisme italien se sentant soutenu par Laval dans sa guerre africaine est déterminé à «aller jusqu'au bout», à tenir tête au besoin à l'Angleterre ce que Mussolini n'a pas osé entreprendre il y a quelques mois.

Ce qui explique l'attitude remarquable de hauteur et de cynisme de l'Italie lors de la Conférence tripartite.

Il semble que M. Laval en est revenu de sa politique désastreuse. Mais il est trop tard; toute faute en politique se paie, même assez chèrement! Du côté français. on affirme maintenant que «rejetant les concessions... l'Italie se heurtait contre la souveraineté de l'Ethiopie et du pacte de la S.D.N.».

Mais il y a beau temps que Mussolini le fait avec l'appui du Gouvernement français!

Danger de guerre

On comprend «les difficultés de M. Laval» quand il se rend compte qu'il a imprudemment mis son doigt entre l'arbre anglais et l'écorce italien.

Il a songé à ménager l'un et l'autre; et c'est dans ce sens qu'il s'est entendu avec Eden sur les propositions que l'on connaît.

Mais l'attitude inqualifiable de l'Italie l'a mis dans une situation terrible.

Il est en train de tenter désespérément un rapprochement avec l'Angleterre. «L'Intransigeant» ne fait que confirmer la réaction de Laval eu écrivant: «Nous ne méconnaissions pas les plaintes justifiées (?) de M. Mussolini, mais nous sommes obligés de nous mettre à côté de l'Angleterre par sa façon de soutenir les principes de la S.D.N.».

En attendant, l'Italie précipite ses préparatifs de guerre et l'Europe vit avec inquiétude les sombres jours d'avant Août 1914.

L'Angleterre impérialiste «se rend absolument compte du sérieux de la situation européenne «créée par la rupture de la conférence tripartite.

Le «Morning Post» déclare que le fait qu'une puissance européenne a l'intention de se servir des armes comme instrument de sa politique est un avertissement pour l'Angleterre QU'ELLE POURRA ETRE ENTRAINEE, CONTRE SA VOLONTE, DANS UNE NOUVELLE ET TERRIBLE GUERRE.

Nous ne dirons jamais assez que le régime capitaliste est arrivé à sa «dernière étape» de contradictions.

L'antagonisme entre les impérialismes nationaux dans le partage du monde ne peut plus se résoudre que par une guerre beaucoup plus terrible que la dernière.

La paix ne sera de ce monde que lorsque les prolétariats organisés de tous les pays se seront substitués aux politiciens tarés qui détiennent

actuellement la vie et la mort des hommes, et qui mettent en danger la culture et la civilisation.

(Doc. 7) La lutte, n. 50, 31 août 1935

L'Italie veut la guerre

Nous avons, écrit la semaine dernière que «l'Europe vit avec inquiétude les sombres jours d'avant Août 1914».

De fait, les radios de ces derniers jours nous apportent des précisions alarmantes sur la veillée d'armes européenne.

Mussolini cherche à «gagner du temps»

En participant aux négociations de Genève et de Paris, l'Italie fasciste, déterminée à déclencher dans le plus bref délai la guerre africaine, avait voulu tout simplement «gagner du temps».

Les diplomates italiens vont aux conférences avec mission de les saboter. Tandis que les déclarations de Mussolini deviennent de plus en plus agressives et que les transports en Afrique de troupes, d'armes d'avions et de chars d'assaut s'opèrent de plus bel.

C'est dans cet esprit que «l'Italie présentera sa thèse à Genève» à la plus grande joie des fossiles de la S.D.N. Mais leur «excellente impression» sera de courte durée. La prochaine réunion du Conseil de la S.D.N. ne sera qu'un échec de plus pour l'institution genevoise.

Pendant que M. Laval, pour la France et MM. Samuel Hoare et Eden pour l'Angleterre se préparent aux prochains palabres, Mussolini renforce ses armées africaines. Immédiatement après la rupture de la Conférence tripartite «dix-sept bateaux italiens ont passé le canal de Suez et seize autres sont prêts à partir de Naples pour l'Est de l'Afrique» (Havas).

Du samedi au lundi dernier, un croiseur et un contre-torpilleur et treize bateaux «avec près de cinq mille hommes de troupes et un matériel de

guerre de toutes sortes sont allés s'ajouter aux 300.000 italiens massés aux frontières éthiopiennes.

Dans les parades militaires, le sinistre «Duce» multiplie arrogances et provocations. Au correspondant du Daily Mail «M. Mussolini souligne que sur la voie désormais ouverte, la marche doit être continuée jusqu'au bout et que *les sanctions mèneraient inéluctablement à la guerre*».

Dans ces paroles, l'Italie fasciste affirme sa volonté de guerre.

Contre Genève

Mussolini «a promis que l'Italie ira à Genève le 4 septembre». Mais il fait entendre aux dirigeants de la S.D.N. que si on le contrarie, que «dans le cas où la S.D.N. se prêterait aux sanctions, l'Italie quitterait immédiatement Genève».

Autrement dit l'Italie se rendra à Genève avec la ferme intention d'obtenir de la S.D.N. la main libre pour s'annexer l'Abyssinie. Et c'est la guerre coloniale hideuse et meurtrière de part et d'autre

Mais si la S.D.N. «est vraiment assez imprudente» pour s'opposer aux visées impérialistes de Rome les différents s'achèveront par la guerre – c'est Mussolini lui-même qui le dit – «il y aura non seulement un million mais dix millions de vies sacrifiées et la faute en retombera sur l'institution genevoise».

Pas sur Mussolini bien entendu!

Donc, de gré ou de force, c'est la guerre.

En tous cas, l'organisation genevoise ne survivra pas à une telle éventualité qui nous parait, hélas! inévitable.

L'Italie, membre de la S.D.N. est en train d'attenter à la vie de cette organisation.

Que fera Laval?

En présence des provocations italiennes contre Genève, quelle sera l'attitude de la France?

Nous avons souvent parlé ici même de la grande part de responsabilité qui incombe à M. Laval dans sa politique de soutien de l'Italie fasciste contre l'Ethiopie.

Nous avons parlé la semaine dernière des résultats déplorables de cette politique et des «difficultés» de Laval en présence de l'attitude inqualifiable de Mussolini lors de la conférence tripartite.

Cependant «le couple France-Italie» est trop intimement lié pour que la France puisse à Genève envisager des sanctions contre l'Italie «car une pareille mesure ébranlerait les fondements de la politique franco-italienne».

Cette politique est basée sur le système des pactes d'alliance militaire, réplique à l'accord naval anglo-allemand.

Nous avons dit que cette politique mène directement à la guerre, alors que l'unique façon d'éviter une nouvelle conflagration mondiale est dans le désarmement intégral des Etats impérialistes.

Mais nous savons bien que les politiciens bourgeois sont incapables de sauvegarder la paix du monde.

M. Laval qui a soutenu ouvertement l'Italie dans sa guerre africaine ne pourrait pas approuver les sanctions contre l'Italie.

«Précautions» anglaises

On commence, du côté anglais à parler sérieusement de la possibilité d'une guerre anglo-italienne.

Pour le moment, la Grande-Bretagne se contente de «prendre ses précautions».

Des précautions qui ressemblent beaucoup à des préparatifs en vue d'une guerre prochaine. Des troupes anglaises quitteront l'Angleterre au cours de cette semaine et iront renforcer les garnisons de Suez et du Canal pendant que le porte-avions «Glorions» se dirige vers la mer Rouge avec plusieurs escadrilles d'avions.

De plus, les milieux politiques anglais laissent entendre «qu'en aucun cas l'Angleterre ne tolérera un contrôle italien sur la région du lac Tsana et est décidée à l'occuper avant l'arrivée des troupes italiennes».

Pour renforcer sa situation en Afrique orientale, la Grande Bretagne envisagerait déjà une alliance avec l’Egypte en accordant à celle-ci diverses concessions.

A bas la guerre!

Telle est la situation critique de l’Europe devant le problème africain. Les provocations italiennes et les préparatifs de guerre de l’impérialisme anglais mèneront rapidement le monde vers un conflit armé.

Contre la guerre impérialiste

Les prolétariats de tous les pays y compris celui de la Russie soviétique doivent lutter pour ce mot d’ordre et empêcher les gouvernements capitalistes d’envoyer à la mort des millions d’êtres humains.

(Doc. 8) La lutte, n. 51, 7 septembre 1935

L’Amérique dans la bagarre

Cet article avait été écrit avant les radios annonçant la dénonciation de la convention Rickett. Nous maintenons intégralement notre argumentation et nos conclusions. Les initiés de la politique internationale ne se trompent pas sur l’intention du Secrétaire d’Etat américain Cordell Hull. Sur son intervention, l’«African exploration development corporation» (A.E.D.C.) accepte d’annuler la concession. Accepter d’annuler n’est pas annuler. Il y aura mille prétextes pour «prouver» que, malgré sa bonne volonté, l’A.E.D.C. se heurte soit à l’opposition du Négus soit à l’intransigeance italienne. En résumé, il y a des chances pour que l’intervention du gouvernement américain n’ait d’autre but que de celui jeter du lest et de traîner... La tragédie éthiopienne traverse une étape comique, voilà toute la signification de la dénonciation de la convention.

La Lutte

Du nouveau dans le «conflit italo-éthiopien». L'aventure italienne en Afrique semble devoir tourner au tragique.

Coup de théâtre

Pendant que Mussolini précipite ses envois des troupes en Afrique orientale, que Laval-Eden préparent quelque résolution pour la prochaine réunion du Conseil de la S.D.N., un véritable «coup de théâtre» survient qui aggrave infiniment le conflit: c'est l'impérialisme américain qui entre en scène.

Le 31 août, un communiqué a annoncé au monde que le gouvernement éthiopien «avait conclu et signé un accord avec une société américaine, lui concédant l'exploitation des gisements pétrolifères et miniers dans les territoires qui bordent la Somalie et l'Erythrée italiennes, sur une superficie moitié de celle de l'Ethiopie» (Havas).

Ce communiqué produit, comme on pense, l'effet d'un pavé dans la mare aux grenouilles impérialistes.

Dans la «presse» fasciste c'est un tollé général exprimant «une réelle indignation». L'officiuse *Giornale d'Italia* affirme que l'intrusion américaine ne modifie en rien «des prétentions italiennes» en Afrique orientale.

«L'opinion publique» (sic), est, paraît-il, persuadée que le gouvernement britannique était de connivence et que les négociations furent hâtées après l'échec des conversations tripartites pour mettre l'Italie devant le fait accompli.

En tous cas, un élément nouveau et – non des moindres – est entré en jeu dans la lutte entre impérialismes nationaux: le pétrole et la politique du pétrole américain.

Le gouvernement de Washington a beau nier sa participation à ce «coup de théâtre»; ses déclarations semblent fort embarrassées et ses intentions impérialistes cousues de fil blanc. Les «Rois» du pétrole américain ont jeté leur dévolu sur les gisements éthiopiens.

La politique du Négus

Le «coup» de la concession américaine montre manifestement que le Négus escompte un appui anglo-saxon dans le but d'intimider l'impérialisme italien.

L'octroi des concessions pétrolifères sur une aussi grande superficie dénote le désir du Gouvernement éthiopien d'associer les Etats-Unis dans la guerre qui vient. Cela équivalait pour l'Amérique comme dit le Sénateur Borah à «acheter un intérêt dans la guerre». Or, c'est le vœu le plus cher de l'impérialisme américain en quête de débouchés pour ses entreprises superindustrialisées.

Pour l'Ethiopie, il semble que l'entourage du Négus se réjouit de ce tournant dans la politique éthiopienne. L'optimisme, dit-on, règne à Addis-Abeba.

On le comprend aisément, car «l'Ethiopie ne sera plus seule en face de l'Italie» dans le cas où une guerre impérialiste se déclenche.

Mais, il faut voir dans l'acte du Négus, un effort désespéré pour résister à l'Italie fasciste. Car ce n'est pas une solution – pour échapper à la mainmise italienne – que de se mettre sous le «protectorat économique» des Etats-Unis.

Ce ne sera qu'un déplacement d'influence dans la carte impérialiste du monde, déplacement présageant dans un avenir prochain des conflagrations beaucoup plus graves. Disons, plus précisément que les chances d'une guerre mondiale se trouvent singulièrement aggravées.

Dans cette course effrénée des grandes puissances d'Europe et d'Amérique vers les richesses naturelles et les grands marchés, les Etats arriérés ne pourront qu'y laisser leur peau.

L'Ethiopie ne gagnera rien dans une nouvelle guerre mondiale.

Vers un nouveau partage du monde?

Dès l'entrée en scène des Etats-Unis, la physionomie du conflit semble se modifier: la formation d'un bloc anglo-saxon est à prévoir. Malgré les dénégations de l'Angleterre sur la provenance des capitaux de la Société

concessionnaire qui seraient «cent pour cent américano-éthiopiens», une entente anglo-américaine se formera certainement dans le cas d'une attaque italienne.

De son côté, l'Italie fasciste ne décolère pas. Ne dit-on pas qu'elle a menacé de bombarder Addis-Abeba?

La France, encore une fois, est dans une position délicate. Ayant jusqu'ici soutenu l'Italie dans ses prétentions africaines, Laval se bute actuellement contre l'opposition anglo-saxonne. Il essaie de s'en tirer assez piteusement d'ailleurs – en proposant avec Eden une solution dilatoire sous la forme d'une commission d'enquête.

Cela ne sauvera pas la paix ni la S.D.N. Car l'Italie prépare actuellement son retrait de l'organisation de Genève pour avoir la main libre en Afrique orientale.

La presse anglaise, exprimant le désir de l'Empire britannique «d'éviter à la S.D.N. un bouleversement profond», propose «une nouvelle distribution des colonies» d'Afrique.

«La distribution actuelle des propriétés coloniales est faite pour menacer sans cesse la paix mondiale et c'est l'Angleterre surtout qui est appelée à inaugurer dans ce sens».

«L'essentiel du problème, écrit K. Radek dans les *Izvestia* de Moscou, consiste dans le fait que l'Italie appartient au groupe des grandes puissances que l'issue de la guerre mondiale a laissé mécontentes et qui cherchent à réviser les conditions de la paix».

La politique italienne depuis plusieurs années consiste à provoquer un nouveau partage du monde.

Or, une «nouvelle distribution des colonies», ne se fera qu'à l'issue d'une guerre impérialiste.

L'Italie est déterminée à provoquer la guerre en Afrique.

Avec la participation de l'impérialisme américain, une guerre en Abyssinie pourrait se révéler au monde ce que la guerre en Libye a été pour l'Europe d'avant 1914-1918.

(Doc. 9) La lutte, n. 52, 14 septembre 1935

Le «comité des cinq» contre l'Éthiopie

Nous vivons cette semaine, de sombres journées où le sort du monde se joue en des conciliabules puant de mensonges et de duplicité. Nous voulons parler de la présente session de la S.D.N. à Genève destinée à régler le différend anglo-italo-éthiopien.

Insolence italienne

La comédie de Genève commence par un incident dû à l'insolence du délégué italien. Quand la parole a été donnée au Professeur Jèze représentant de l'Éthiopie, le baron Aloisi a quitté la séance. Après cela, il a eu encore la prétention «de vouloir exclure du débat le représentant de l'Éthiopie»!

Pour contenter encore une fois son ami Mussolini, M. Laval se démène pour aboutir à une solution qui lui est chère: «l'idée primitive» d'un comité de cinq membres.

Ainsi, pour la deuxième fois, à cause de l'insolence de l'Italie, le Conseil de la S.D.N. s'est vu obligé de se dessaisir du conflit. Ce n'est pas hélas! pour accroître son prestige.

Le «comité des cinq» comprend les représentants de la France, de la Grande Bretagne, de l'Espagne, de la Pologne et de la Turquie.

On s'empresse, dès sa constitution de se réjouir de la «détente» dans la situation. Parce qu'il a commencé par formuler le souhait «qu'aucun acte ne soit commis par les gouvernements intéressés qui puisse troubler ou compromettre la tâche du comité».

Concessions éthiopiennes

La tâche du comité des cinq? Ce n'est évidemment pas de faire que les exigences de l'Italie soient réduites au minimum et d'assurer à l'Éthiopie l'intégrité de son territoire.

Les «travaux» du comité des cinq comporteront des tractations entre les impérialismes français, anglais et italiens pour le partage de l'Afrique orientale.

Au moment où les représentants des impérialismes rivaux se penchent sur la carte du continent africain, le Conseil de la Couronne d'Addis-Abeba, pour apaiser leurs esprits surexcités par l'appât, a décidé d'accepter de nouvelles concessions. «L'empereur dit être prêt à des concessions envers la S.D.N. dans le sens que des conseillers européens soient envoyés auprès de lui, le choix de ces conseillers *qui pourraient être aussi bien américains*, étant laissé à la S.D.N.».

D'autre part, il ferait des concessions à l'Italie sur la frontière d'Argaden et lui accorderait de plus la construction d'une route allant de la frontière érythréenne à Gandar.

Toutes les propositions du Négus montrent que, l'Ethiopie a voulu en finir avec la menace d'un coup de force de l'Italie fasciste.

Mais cela ne fait pas l'affaire des impérialismes français, anglais et italien réunis.

Aux ordres des impérialismes

Ce serait trop simple, pour le comité des cinq, aux ordres des puissances impérialistes, de prendre en considérations les concessions du Négus et condamner l'attitude de l'Italie dont Sir Samuel Hoare, ministre des affaires étrangères anglais disait quelle «confine à la folie criminelle».

M. Laval, dit-on, avant de partir pour Genève aurait reçu l'assurance que Mussolini «ne serait pas entièrement hostile au projet d'un condominium international sur l'Ethiopie avec prépondérance «militaire et économique», reconnue à l'Italie.

On confirme en outre que le comité, des cinq, naturellement mené par Laval-Eden «terminerait les travaux par une recommandation (sic) tendant à mettre l'Ethiopie sous la tutelle de l'Italie en assurant le Négus de l'assistance internationale».

Le correspondant de Genève du Daily Telegraph écrit qu'il est certain que quelques membres du Comité des cinq (on sait lesquels!) estiment

qu'une négociation de l'accord serait facilitée si on incluait le traité italo-éthiopien dans l'esprit du traité anglo-irakien de 1930.

Or ce traité que l'on veut prendre maintenant comme «modèle» est un modèle de duplicité impérialiste.

Par ce traité le Gouvernement britannique «reconnaît le Roi de l'Irak qui est membre de la S.D.N. comme souverain libre et indépendant (?), mais de son côté le Roi de l'Irak reconnaît l'intérêt essentiel pour la Grande Bretagne d'assurer la liberté de ses voies de communication». «En conséquence, il lui reconnaît *le droit d'établir sur le territoire des bases navales et aériennes de contrôler la police*».

Autrement dit tout en déclarant que le Négus est un «souverain libre et indépendant», on met l'Ethiopie sous un régime de semi-colonie. En attendant qu'une fois installés dans le pays, les fascistes provoquent des «incidents» qui mettront définitivement le peuple éthiopien sous le joug de l'Italie.

L'Ethiopie n'acceptera jamais une telle proposition. Et alors la S.D.N. assistera-t-elle impuissante à une attaque armée de l'Italie contre le royaume du Négus.

Le rôle de M. Laval

La grande presse exalte le rôle de M. Laval, le conciliateur dans le comité des Cinq. Mais c'est pour cacher le jeu néfaste de la politique extérieure lavalienne derrière les résolutions genevoises, les déclarations diplomatiques, les conférences tripartites, le comité de cinq.

Les ouvriers et les paysans de France, solidaires avec tous les peuples opprimés, n'accepteront pas que sous le couvert des phrases rusées, M. Laval prépare la guerre de l'Italie.

(Doc. 10) La lutte, n. 53, 21 septembre 1935

L'U.R.S.S. et la paix

Vingt-et-un ans après l'effroyable tuerie de 1914, nous voici «aux portes de la Guerre». L'Europe en 1935 est de nouveau en proie à une fièvre d'avant-guerre, d'une guerre encore plus barbare et plus meurtrière que la dernière.

Le capitalisme, c'est la guerre!

L'impérialisme, «dernière étape du capitalisme», engendre la guerre. La caractéristique principale du capitalisme actuel est la domination des monopoles constitués par les groupements patronaux les plus importants. C'est par la réunion de toutes les sources de matières premières entre les mêmes mains que se trouve assuré le maximum de solidité de ces monopoles.

On a vu avec quel acharnement les groupements capitalistes internationaux anglais, américains, français ou italiens cherchent à arracher à leurs adversaires toute possibilité de concurrence, en manœuvrant l'entourage du Négus en vue d'obtenir des concessions sur les gisements pétrolifères d'Ethiopie.

Mais, les puissances impérialistes antagonistes savent bien que «seule la possession des colonies donne de complètes garanties de succès aux monopoles contre tous les hasards de la lutte avec leurs concurrents».

La lutte pour le partage des colonies devient de plus en plus acharnée provenant de l'antagonisme inévitable entre les vieilles puissances impérialistes telles que l'Angleterre et la France et les Etats capitalistes qui montent comme l'Italie et l'Allemagne.

L'Impérialisme est à la source même des guerres.

De plus «la guerre détruit, la consommation en produits manufacturés de tous ordres augmente, en temps de guerre, dans des proportions formidables et les profits s'accroissent dans les mêmes proportions».

La guerre est donc pour le Capitalisme une nécessité vitale.

Les contradictions de l'économie capitaliste arrivée à la phase suprême de son développement engendrent ainsi nécessairement des guerres impérialistes. Elles ont provoqué la grande guerre de 1914-1918, elles veulent encore, à partir du «conflit italo-éthiopien» mettre le monde entier à feu et à sang.

Le socialisme et la paix

Au contraire le socialisme dont le but est de faire disparaître la plus-value et la notion du profit capitaliste provenant de l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme, n'a pas besoin de la guerre.

Une société socialiste ou évoluant vers le socialisme – dont l'U.R.S.S. nous donne l'exemple le plus vivant – tendant vers l'amélioration des conditions d'existence du genre humain, ne peut qu'avoir horreur de la guerre et la combattre avec acharnement.

C'est ce qui explique pourquoi le prolétariat de l'U.R.S.S. – la première nation socialiste du monde – désire profondément la Paix. Sa place doit être à l'avant-garde du prolétariat mondial qui veut lui aussi la paix, qui combat actuellement pour reculer l'échéance d'une guerre mille fois plus meurtrière que la dernière.

C'est pour combattre la guerre que les dirigeants de l'Union soviétique ont pris place à la Société des Nations faisant ainsi leur «entrée dans le concert européen».

Certes, ce n'est pas parce que l'U.R.S.S. obtient la présidence du Conseil de la S.D.N. que le problème de la guerre peut se résoudre dans le cadre du régime capitaliste.

«Le but de la politique extérieure de l'U.R.S.S. est d'obtenir par tous les moyens que la guerre n'éclate pas avant la disparition du régime qui seul, pourrait être responsable».

A ce point de vue l'Union soviétique ne peut qu'être soutenue par l'opinion unanime du prolétariat mondial.

Alors, forte de la puissante impulsion des masses contre le fascisme et la guerre, l'U.R.S.S. imposera aux nations impérialistes la Paix du monde.

Le point de vue soviétique à Genève

Le prolétariat mondial ne se fait pas d'illusions sur l'utilité – dans les conflits impérialistes – de la Société des Nations.

Mais, à l'heure où l'Italie fasciste veut à tout prix provoquer la guerre pour un nouveau partage du continent noir, le devoir du représentant de l'Etat prolétarien est de dénoncer la volonté de guerre du fascisme.

C'est ce qu'a fait Litvinov «qui critiqua sévèrement l'Italie en séance publique» à la présente session de la S.D.N.

En effet, l'Union soviétique, solidaire de tous les peuples opprimés «ne saurait approuver l'attitude que le Baron Aloisi (représentant de l'Italie) exige de la S.D.N.».

«L'absolue liberté d'action que demande l'Italie serait, dit le délégué soviétique, synonyme d'une invitation adressée aux autres puissances de violer, elles aussi, les obligations envers la S.D.N.».

Il a achevé son discours en dénonçant l'attitude cynique du délégué italien lequel «n'avait pas nié le danger de guerre, mais l'avait expressément confirmé».

Contre la guerre italienne en Ethiopie.

Soutien du peuple abyssin dans sa lutte pour le droit des peuples de disposer d'eux-mêmes.

Telle ne peut être que l'attitude du prolétariat soviétique, défenseur des opprimés, profondément attaché à la paix mondiale.

Avec l'U.R.S.S. pour la paix

La tâche internationale dominante des travailleurs, pour sauvegarder la Paix est de soutenir l'Ethiopie dans sa lutte de libération nationale contre la domination fasciste.

Avec l'U.R.S.S., le prolétariat de tous les pays doit prévenir la guerre impérialiste qui vient par une lutte acharnée contre le fascisme international, sous le drapeau de la Révolution mondiale.

(Doc. 11) La lutte, n. 54, 28 septembre 1935

A quand la guerre?

Le fait marquant de cette semaine, dans l'imbroglio italo-abyssin, a été l'effondrement dans le ridicule du fameux «Comité des Cinq».

Mussolini n'est pas content

Nous avons écrit dernièrement (voir La Lutte N° 52): «Les “travaux” du comité des cinq comporteront des tractations entre les impérialismes français, anglais et italiens pour le partage de l'Afrique orientale».

De fait, les «Cinq» au mépris des droits du peuple éthiopien de disposer de son territoire national, ont cherché à concilier les impérialismes antagonistes en leur départageant «les zones d'influences» d'Abyssinie.

Partage «pacifique» du butin: voilà ce à quoi tendent les efforts de Laval-Eden au sein du Comité. Mais Mussolini, qui est gourmand n'est pas content, pas du tout.

Et il ne cache pas sa colère, colère du comparse qu'on roule.

«Tout en réduisant la souveraineté de l'Ethiopie, fait-il entendre, le projet (du Comité des Cinq) ne donne pas satisfaction aux aspirations politiques italiennes». Repoussant dédaigneusement du pied la «part» que «les autres» lui font, il déclare: «les propositions du Comité des cinq me sembleraient ironiques». Et encore: «Il me semble que le comité me prend pour un collectionneur de déserts».

Le conseil des Ministres (sic) de Rome a aussitôt sanctionné les déclarations du Chef en rejetant purement et simplement les propositions des Cinq.

Pour un coup de pied à «l'ami» Laval, c'en est un. Décidément, les «succès» de la politique extérieure lavalienne sont cuisants.

Que fera Genève?

Après le rejet par Rome de leurs propositions les membres du Comité des Cinq ont été obligés d'avouer leur échec et de «déclarer que les

réclamations italiennes excluait toute idée de négociation pacifique en ce moment».

Le comité a décidé de faire un rapport au Conseil de la S.D.N. l'informant de «l'avortement de tous les efforts de conciliation».

La Paix peut-elle encore être sauvée par Genève?

A cette question est lié le sort même de la S.D.N. Or, les «dirigeants responsables» de l'institution genevoise donnent au monde anxieux le spectacle d'un désarroi pitoyable.

Dans les «milieux internationaux» on pense même que «le stade de conciliation semble actuellement dépassé», et que le premier soin du Conseil sera de prononcer sur la procédure à appliquer.

Ce sera, pour Genève, un nouvel aveu d'impuissance: la S.D.N. commence d'ailleurs à en avoir l'habitude. Les dirigeants responsables ne dissimulent pas que la question de procédure elle-même est secondaire et qu'il importe avant tout de parer aux prochains événements.

Or devant l'imminence de la guerre italienne contre l'Éthiopie, la S.D.N. ne dispose d'aucune mesure efficace de sanctions contre l'État agresseur.

Au surplus, une bonne partie de l'opinion genevoise, dont la France de M. Laval, a une peur bleue du départ de l'Italie de la S.D.N. D'ores et déjà, on se demande avec terreur si le Conseil saisi par le Comité des Cinq ne va pas prendre «des mesures qui éloigneront pour toujours l'Italie de Genève».

Le «Matin», journal du Comité des Forges, qui soutient depuis toujours l'aventure fasciste en Éthiopie recommande même de «laisser les choses suivre leur cours normal, tout en essayant d'empêcher l'expansion du litige en Europe».

La S.D.N. va-t-elle pousser sa couardise à ce point? Ce n'est pas impossible. Dans tous les cas, on peut être sûr que l'institution genevoise n'osera entreprendre aucune sanction contre l'Italie fasciste.

Quant à l'Angleterre

L'opposition anglo-italienne, devant la tournure des événements, a, ces derniers jours, revêtu une forme extrêmement aigüe.

On connaît les préparatifs de guerre de l'Empire britannique: mouvements de la flotte anglaise en Méditerranée, et les renforcements des garnisons britanniques aux différents points stratégiques: Gibraltar, Malte, Egypte.

Il semble que l'impérialisme anglais ne recule pas devant la perspective d'une guerre mondiale quand il a à défendre ses intérêts impériaux.

L'attitude anti-italienne de l'Angleterre le fait poser au champion de la paix. C'est ainsi que le journal radical *L'Œuvre* approuve «l'attitude décidée de l'Angleterre à propos du conflit italo éthiopien».

Il ne faut pas, toutefois négliger le fait que la position britannique n'est nullement inspirée par des sentiments anti-guerriers.

Au contraire, l'Angleterre est prête à sacrifier la paix et la S.D.N. pourvu que ses intérêts impérialistes soient sauvegardés.

Un impérialisme en vaut un autre, et l'Ethiopie n'a pas à choisir entre l'Italie et l'Angleterre.

«Aux portes» de la guerre

Devant l'insolence de Mussolini, Laval commence à trouver que le «Duce» va trop fort et prépare actuellement un «tournant» à sa politique extérieure. L'attitude actuelle de la France à Genève relative au litige italo-abyssin est considérée comme hésitante. Laval semble vouloir manœuvrer entre l'Italie et l'Angleterre pour obtenir l'appui anglais quant à la future politique française en Europe Centrale.

Cette curieuse attitude du Président du Conseil français, qui avait soutenu ouvertement l'Italie dans sa guerre contre l'Ethiopie, n'est pas pour contribuer à assainir l'atmosphère de guerre.

Le danger de guerre en Abyssinie est imminent et inévitable. La guerre est voulue par l'Italie fasciste précédemment soutenue par la France de Laval.

Le volte-face français ne changera rien «au cours normal» des événements.

(Doc. 12) La lutte, n. 55, 5 octobre 1935

Mobilisation en Ethiopie. Mobilisation civile en Italie

Depuis quelques mois, grandit le danger d'une nouvelle guerre mondiale. On affirme de plus en plus retrouver l'atmosphère de 1913.

De fait, la course aux armements a repris avec une frénésie sans pareille au nom de la «sécurité». Dans tous les pays «civilisés», les préparatifs en vue d'une guerre prochaine se poursuivent fiévreusement pendant que la «grande presse» active son travail de développement du chauvinisme. La population est soumise à des exercices «d'obéissance passive» aux décisions de l'état-major. L'Abyssinie mobilise. L'Italie mobilise «civilement». Les troupes franchissent même la frontière éthiopienne en direction du Mont Moussali au S.O. d'Assab. La guerre devient une triste réalité.

L'Impérialisme et la guerre

C'est que la guerre se présente, à l'heure actuelle, comme l'une des ressources suprêmes des impérialismes aux abois.

La guerre de 1914 était née des rivalités des grandes puissances impérialistes pour le partage du globe. Les traités de 1919 ont substitué un nouvel équilibre à celui d'avant-guerre.

Mais le capitalisme continuant, sauf en U.R.S.S., à dominer les nations le développement des antagonismes économiques et politiques devait inéluctablement mener à un conflit armé. Car la puissance formidable des moyens de production devient de plus en plus incompatible avec l'existence des frontières nationales et a mené le capitalisme à une crise sans

précédent. Chaque impérialisme aux prises avec des difficultés insurmontables, se prépare pour de nouveaux confits espérant, dans l'issue d'une guerre, instaurer un nouvel équilibre plus favorable pour lui.

De par le monde, les foyers de guerre n'ont jamais été si nombreux. En Europe, c'est en Autriche, en Hongrie, à Dantzig, à Mémel; en Asie les dangers sont encore plus précis, en Chine, à la frontière orientale de l'U.R.S.S.; en Afrique c'est en Ethiopie où la guerre peut éclater d'un jour à l'autre.

La complexité des rapports et des antagonismes ne permet pas de prédire l'endroit et la date de l'explosion. Mais une chose est certaine une nouvelle guerre mondiale frappe à la porte.

La guerre et les classes laborieuses

La guerre de 1914 a coûté la vie à des millions d'hommes. La prochaine sera infiniment plus terrible: la technique et la «rationalisation» des procédés de destruction ont pris un tel développement depuis 1919, qu'une nouvelle guerre exterminerait une partie importante de l'humanité.

Les classes laborieuses et plus particulièrement la classe ouvrière que ses attaches à l'usine retiennent dans les grandes agglomérations seront les plus grandes victimes de la guerre moderne.

Elles auront le plus à souffrir de «l'attaque de l'arrière», car les centres industriels devenant à la fois centres de production, centres d'échange et centres d'habitation les plus denses deviennent autant de «points de mire».

On peut imaginer aisément «l'état de tension» qui régnera dans ces centres en période de guerre. La répression se fera avec «brutalité et précision» contre les militants ouvriers et même contre tous les hommes libres.

La lutte contre la guerre sera pour eux, quasi impossible.

On a raison de dire: «La guerre future, c'est la géhenne pour les classes laborieuses».

A bas la guerre!

La seule voie, pour sauver l'humanité d'une destruction irrémédiable c'est d'arracher la direction de la société à la bourgeoisie, à l'impérialisme. Il n'y aura donc pour le prolétariat, de lutte contre la guerre en dehors de la lutte pour abattre la domination capitaliste, pour conquérir le pouvoir.

En Indochine, les gens ne se représentent pas suffisamment les horreurs de la guerre, pour les enfants du peuple, pour les masses laborieuses. On ne réalise pas assez les souffrances, les misères, les désespoirs des soldats au front. On ne réalise pas les anxiétés, les privations des hommes de l'arrière. Certains jeunes «intellectuels» de chez nous ont même des idées dont le moins qu'on puisse dire est qu'elles sont criminelles même si elles ne sont pas répandues systématiquement.

«Que les blancs se tuent, nous dit l'un d'eux, la vie sera plus facile pour nous. Le paddy se vendra. Il y aura du travail pour tout le monde, du riz pour tout le monde».

Sans compter qu'il y a là une erreur grossière, cette inconscience est vraiment superbe. Nous sommes ahuris de ce mépris de la vie des autres, de la vie humaine.

«A bas la guerre!» Telle doit être la pensée de chaque travailleur, tel devra être le cri de chaque ouvrier.

(Doc. 13) La lutte, n. 56, 12 octobre 1935

L'agression italienne et les menaces de guerre mondiale

Depuis une semaine la guerre fait rage en Ethiopie. Le sinistre Mussolini est allé «jusqu'au bout» pour réaliser son rêve de «grandeur romaine» (sic) asservir les peuples arriérés.

Ainsi l'Italie fasciste a jeté au monde le défi: elle va faire sa guerre coloniale envers et contre tous.

«L'Europe est inquiète»

Depuis le début de l'attaque italienne l'Europe vit des jours d'avant-guerre. «L'Europe est inquiète» et les peuples se demandent avec angoisse ce qui pourrait sortir du «guépier» éthiopien.

De fait la politique extérieure du cabinet Laval semble dénoter un affolement complet, caché, bien entendu, sous l'habituelle phraséologie pacifiste.

«Il faut s'en remettre à Genève» semble dire M. Laval qui, par ailleurs manœuvre ouvertement pour une alliance militaire avec l'Angleterre en prévision d'une guerre européenne prochaine.

L'Angleterre de son côté n'en semble pas moins désemparée devant la brusque attaque de Mussolini.

Il faut reconnaître que, atteinte dans ses intérêts impériaux par l'entreprise coloniale de l'Italie la Grande Bretagne a, l'égard de l'Italie, une attitude plus «ferme». Mais nous savons bien que cette attitude n'est pas dictée par des sentiments anti-guerriers et que l'Angleterre ne reculerait pas devant des sanctions militaires, par conséquent une guerre mondiale, quand ses intérêts impérialistes seront lésés au profit d'un impérialisme concurrent.

Une telle attitude, pour nous, a plus de chance de provoquer une conflagration générale, que de «circonscrire» le conflit. Il faut dire qu'à l'époque actuelle de la décadence capitaliste, l'enchevêtrement des contradictions impérialistes ne permet jamais de circonscrire le danger de guerre.

Les peuples européens vivent des jours sombres. Les bourgeoisies qui décident de leur sort et dont les rivalités s'exaspèrent de jour en jour se tournent de plus en plus vers la guerre et la réaction.

La politique anglo-française et les dangers de guerre

Les menaces de guerre font travailler les chancelleries. Au lendemain de l'agression italienne contre l'Éthiopie, les négociations entre la France et l'Angleterre sont devenues plus serrées.

Il ne s'agit plus à l'heure actuelle le louvoyer, il s'agit de se tenir prêt pour une guerre prochaine. La diplomate anglo-française a marché à fond

ces jours-ci. Ce n'est pas par hasard que «la réponse française aux questions anglaises relative à *une assistance immédiate et éventuelle* en Méditerranée» est affirmative, et qu'«elle élargit et précise le problème».

Ce n'est pas non plus pour rien que la France demande entre autres points «que cette assistance ne doit pas être limitée au domaine naval mais *englober aussi le domaine terrestre et aérien*» et «qu'il conviendrait *d'organiser le fonctionnement technique* de l'assistance mutuelle immédiate en cas d'attaque».

Il est maintenant hors de doute que le gouvernement français est revenu de sa politique de soutien de l'Italie fasciste dans son aventure africaine. Et ce n'est pas trop tôt, car le danger d'une guerre européenne se précise après l'avance faite à Hitler par Mussolini «pour un pacte de non-agression concernant l'Autriche et pour la fourniture du charbon allemand à l'Italie».

Mais ce rapprochement de la France avec l'Angleterre suffit-il à prévenir la guerre? Il est évident qu'il donne à réfléchir à Mussolini, mais il faut dire qu'il peut tout aussi bien exacerber le chauvinisme italien et provoquer un nouveau regroupement des forces antagonistes, ce qui aggrave les dangers d'un conflit européen voire mondial.

C'est que dans l'Europe inquiète les manœuvres politiques se nouent et se dénouent. L'Allemagne hitlérienne espère toujours un nouveau partage du globe où elle trouverait à boire et à manger, tandis que les états balkaniques, sous pression depuis des lustres, ne demandent qu'à détruire leur équilibre perpétuellement instable.

La politique extérieure de M. Laval avant ou après le rapprochement franco-britannique ne produit que des fruits amers. Les résultats de ses manœuvres entre l'Italie et la Grande Bretagne porteront la guerre dans l'Europe dégénérée.

Battre le fascisme

«Il faut empêcher la guerre et battre le fascisme».

La S.D.N. a reconnu, «sans équivoque» dans le rapport du «Comité des six» «d'assaut et la violation du pacte dont l'Italie est l'assaillant».

Il faut empêcher Mussolini d'accomplir son mauvais coup.

C'est ici, que l'Ethiopie peut bénéficier des contradictions irréductibles entre les impérialismes anglais et italiens. Depuis le début des hostilités italo-éthiopiennes «la tension dans les milieux politiques d'Angleterre est immense quant au développement et au résultat des décisions de Genève» (au sujet de l'agression). On fait également savoir que les Italiens sentent les sanctions».

Autrement-dit si les sanctions économiques, préconisées par Laval ne sont pas suffisantes, on pourrait recourir aux sanctions militaires. Certains milieux anglais ne cachent pas cette façon de voir. Car d'après eux «plus les sanctions sont lourdes plus la guerre finira vite».

Mais, il ne faut pas croire, que la politique de sanctions de l'Angleterre, ou que le rapprochement franco-britannique soient susceptibles d'enrayer la guerre en Europe. Ce ne sont qu'autant de signes de l'imminence d'une guerre impérialiste à l'époque actuelle de la décomposition capitaliste.

Ces manœuvres politiques des bourgeoisies internationales sont trompeuses et passagères. Dans l'«Europe inquiète» de la réaction et de la guerre comme dans le monde, les militants prolétariens doivent être conscients de l'interpénétration de la politique intérieure et de la politique extérieure. Aux réactions nationales et internationales, ils n'opposeront pas la confiance en la S.D.N. impérialiste, ni dans les alliances éphémères.

La voie est dans le renforcement de l'internationalisme prolétarien pour forger l'opposition irréductible à la politique de guerre de la bourgeoisie au sein d'un parti unique du prolétariat.

(Doc. 14) La lutte, n. 57, 19 octobre 1935

**A bas les conquêtes coloniales. Défendre l'Ethiopie, c'est
défendre la paix**

Sur les 30 millions de kilomètres carrés que compte l'Afrique, 28 millions sont entre les mains des impérialismes européens. Sur 152 millions

d'habitants, 140 millions d'indigènes subissent le joug de la domination anglaise, française, italienne, belge, espagnole.

«Encore un effort sanglant, celui que la jeunesse de l'Italie fasciste s'apprête à accomplir et l'Afrique tout entière sera Europe» («Critica fascista»).

Etat de guerre

Le Duce veut du sang.

La bataille est engagée.

Désormais ce ne seront plus les phrases pacifistes de M. Laval qui pourront retenir le dictateur de Rome.

Mussolini raille la Société des Nations.

Il raille le monde entier.

Aussi le Pacte ne serait plus qu'un chiffon de papier si les Etats membres de l'Institution de Genève ne se décidaient pas à appliquer l'article 16 du Covenant qui leur recommande «de rompre immédiatement avec l'Italie fasciste toutes les relations commerciales ou financières, d'interdire tous rapports entre leurs nationaux et ceux de l'Etat en rupture de Pacte et de faire cesser toutes communications financières, commerciales ou personnelles entre les nationaux de cet Etat et ceux de tout autre Etat membre ou non de la Société».

Donc, il faut des sanctions *urgentes* et *énergiques*. La Société des Nations est en train d'envisager l'application des sanctions économiques.

Il est intéressant de rappeler qu'au cours des discussions de la Paix, le gouvernement français avait signalé les mesures suivantes comme plus particulièrement opérantes: le blocus, l'embargo, le refus des matières premières et des denrées alimentaires indispensables à la vie économique; l'interdiction d'émettre des emprunts publics. Quant au gouvernement italien, il avait prévu 14 points parmi lesquels citons «la fermeture des ports et le refus des matières premières indispensables à la vie économique, le boycottage», «le blocus maritime exécuté par les forces navales désignées à cet effet par le Conseil». *L'action militaire commune de la part des Etat investis d'un*

mandat à eux conféré par le Conseil (occupation territoriale, prise de possession des établissements publics).

Ça c'était de la théorie.

A l'heure actuelle, l'Angleterre passe la première à l'action pratique. Elle demande à la France, lors du prochain blocus, de *mettre à sa disposition, les ports méditerranéens, en particulier Bizerte et Ajaccio, car Malte et Athènes seraient probablement évacuées comme étant trop vulnérables.*

Après cela, si Mussolini ne sent pas encore la nécessité vitale pour son régime d'arrêter son action militaire en Ethiopie, alors, nous tous Blancs, Jaunes, Noires du monde entier, nous pouvons dire adieu à nos mères, femmes, sœurs, enfants pour nous jeter dans la mêlée.

C'est ça le propre du régime capitaliste, c'est ça sa civilisation.

Pour le jeune peuple Ethiopien. Pour la paix.

L'impérialisme britannique a ses propres raisons de s'opposer à la conquête italienne en Afrique. Il ne peut pas, supporter la présence d'une autre puissance sur le territoire de l'empereur abyssin.

Mais tous les peuples du monde entier ont aussi leurs raisons à eux de défendre véritablement les indigènes du continent noir.

Ils défendent aux fascistes d'accomplir l'acte le plus inhumain, le plus misérable, celui de porter atteinte à l'existence et à l'indépendance des nationalités soi-disant inférieures.

Ils défendent par là le peuple italien qu'une poignée de fous sanguinaires momentanément maîtres de l'Italie forcent à marcher vers la mort, vers la misère incroyable que déjà le régime des chemises noires entretient dans son pays depuis des années.

Ils défendent en dernier lieu eux-mêmes, car l'agression du gouvernement italien contre l'Ethiopie «excite les appétits d'autres puissances, détruit l'équilibre déjà instable entre les Etats et risque d'engager l'Europe et le monde dans un nouveau et effroyable carnage».

Les Abyssins sans armes ne veulent pas la guerre. Ils veulent vivre libres et tranquilles chez eux. Ils n'acceptent pas d'autre civilisation que celle

qu'ils cherchent eux-mêmes à posséder avec leurs traditions, leurs mœurs et leurs coutumes.

Le peuple italien ne veut pas la guerre. Il n'envie rien des autres peuples. Il ne souhaite que sa libération de l'esclavage mussolinien. Il sait que le massacre des indigènes de l'Afrique, c'est aussi la mort de ses enfants, la misère dans ses foyers.

Le monde entier ne veut pas la guerre. Il a déjà connu les multiples aspects néfastes de la dernière tuerie.

Tous veulent la paix sauf le fascisme.

Et tous se décident à travailler pour la maintenir. Le 3 Septembre dernier, s'est tenue à Paris une Conférence internationale pour la défense de l'Ethiopie et de la Paix. Elle a réuni 130 délégués représentant 150 organisations de toutes les tendances et de toutes les races. Elle «fait appel à l'union active et à la solidarité combattive des masses populaires du monde entier, de la jeunesse qu'une guerre dévorerait, des femmes qui craignent la destruction de leur famille, des intellectuels qui ont foi dans le peuple, de tous les honnêtes hommes, quelles que soient leurs doctrines, leur religion, leur race, pour coordonner toutes les initiatives et les forces de l'œuvre de Guerre à la Guerre».

Mussolini est averti; M. M. Hitler, Laval, Eden sont avertis

Après tout, si jamais les masses populaires du monde entier ne peuvent pas empêcher le déclenchement d'une conflagration internationale, par les maîtres de ce régime, fasciste, naziste, et tout autre impérialiste, alors ce sera tant pis pour eux, malheur à eux, le prolétariat de tous les pays saura saisir cette occasion favorable pour mettre fin à la Guerre par ses propres moyens.

Par le renversement de la bourgeoisie sanglante.

Par la mort du fascisme.

Par la Révolution prolétarienne.

(Doc. 15-16) La lutte, n. 58, 26 octobre 1935

Le fascisme sera abattu par ses propres conséquences

«Qui veut noyer son chien l'accuse de la rage» dit le proverbe.

Pour annexer l'Abyssinie le baron Aloisi, au nom de l'Italie fasciste, dénonce les barbaries éthiopiennes.

Il oublie simplement que le régime fasciste est maître dans l'art de tuer les enfants de son propre pays. En voici quelques exemples pour édifier nos lecteurs.

Barbaries fascistes

C'est de 1919 que datent les excès du parti de Mussolini; incendies des maisons ouvrières et des bureaux des journaux de gauche, affichage de listes noires, expéditions armées en camions contre les adversaires politiques, instituteurs exécutés – comme l'instituteur Cameo, de Pise, institutrices assommées, déshabillées et obligées de circuler dans les rues, députés abattus (Peppino di Vagno), assassinats individuels et massacres collectifs.

Décembre 1922: A Turin, sous la direction personnelle de De Vecchi, actuellement ministre de l'Instruction publique, des douzaines de citoyens sont enlevés dans la nuit du 17. Trente-cinq d'entre eux sont égorgés.

Un peu plus tard, à la Spezia 14 personnes sont tuées, d'autres, comme le professeur Del Santo, sont laissées mortes.

En 1923 à Trieste, pillages, incendies et meurtres.

En 1924: cinquante agressions de députés italiens. Les victimes sont: Amendola, Modigliani, Nitti, Masuri, Forni. Deux morts: Picini, le 28 février; Matteotti. Le 10 juin.

En 1925: les fascistes assassinent le député Pilati et l'avocat Consolo.

En 1926: Mussolini est l'objet d'un soi-disant attentat. Conséquence immédiate: 20.000 personnes sont arrêtées.

Les populations sont de nouveau massacrées. Rien que pour Milan trois morts et cent blessés.

En 1928: un nouvel attentat (!) sur la place Giulio Cesare. Nouvelles fusillades: 20 tués dont des femmes et des enfants et 50 blessés.

En neuf ans le Tribunal spécial a distribué plus de 16.000 ans de réclusion à près de 2.000 condamnés. Il a peuplé les îles de déportés. Il a fait mourir en prison des détenus politiques. Il en a fait tuer par ses geôliers. On peut citer Gaston Sozzi, Villa, Pugliesi.

Dans les quatre premiers mois de cette année 1935 le tribunal a distribué plus de douze siècles de réclusion.

Ainsi dans son propre pays à l'égard de son peuple, Mussolini se montre terriblement barbare. Il devrait commencer par se civiliser lui-même et ses partisans, au lieu de prétendre civiliser les Africains.

On comprendra facilement pourquoi, soucieux du sort de son peuple, le Négus rassemble ses forces armées pour repousser l'offre meurtrière de ses «bienfaiteurs». Il a l'opinion publique du monde entier avec lui, en particulier la masse formidable des nègres de toutes les religions. L'acte abominable des fascistes italiens ne fait que resserrer les liens qui unissent les indigènes de race noire. Une autre conséquence en sera le réveil formidable de ces multitudes d'exploités qui, prenant conscience de leur droit et de leur force, ne manqueront pas un jour de se soulever en bloc contre leurs oppresseurs.

Cette conséquence inattendue de la guerre contre l'Ethiopie, les puissances impérialistes, comme la Grande Bretagne, la France et la Belgique s'en voudront de ne l'avoir pas prévue!

Le peuple italien contre la guerre

Les journaux relatent volontiers les manifestations enthousiastes des fascistes mais ils ne parlent jamais de la réprobation des masses populaires italiennes contre Mussolini et son régime.

Citons quelques exemples:

27 février 1935; manifestation contre le gouvernement au cinéma «Vittoriale», rue Peliziane, à Milan.

10 mai: dans la Vénétie Julienne, *les carabinieri doivent aller chercher de force, à domicile, les réservistes rappelés sous les drapeaux.*

25 mai: dans la province de Come, *manifestation contre la guerre des miliciens «volontaires»*.

5 juin: à Peschiera, *mutinerie de soldats*. L'un d'eux est tué par un officier, un capitaine est jeté dans un ravin.

17 juin: à *Tricase nouvelle mutinerie*, 5 morts et des blessés.

Autres mutineries à Ascoli, Piceno, et à Naples. Incidents violents à Albino, à Gênes, et à Milan.

9 juillet: à Milan, Livourne, Coni *les soldats envoyés en renfort manifestent*. À Ancone *les femmes cherchent à empêcher le départ des trains en se jetant sur les voies*. À Turin, on arrête un commerçant parce qu'il avait fermé sa boutique en signe de deuil pour la mort de son fils à la frontière.

À Milan, à Turin on recommence les arrestations en masse de près de 200 intellectuels d'un seul coup, et nombre d'entre eux sont déferés devant le tribunal spécial, condamnés au confino ou soumis à la surveillance spéciale».

Le peuple italien ne veut pas de guerre.

Il ne veut pas que ses fils meurent pour les capitalistes italiens. Il ne veut pas voir mourir ses enfants pour revaloriser un Mussolini ambitieux, coupable du chômage actuel et des difficultés financières en Italie.

Attention Duce!

Attention à votre régime de terreur et de misère à l'intérieur et de guerre à l'extérieur!

Si la guerre italo-éthiopienne continue, nous serons heureux d'apprendre un jour que le vaincu ne sera ni le peuple éthiopien, ni le peuple d'Italie, mais Mussolini lui-même.

A bas le fascisme, fauteur de guerre!

Aspects d'Abyssinie

I. – Agriculture

L'agriculture est favorisée par les conditions naturelles de sol et de climat. Dans la partie non désertique, sur les plateaux, «en maints endroits

– dit Marcel Griaule – on peut passer en moins d'une demi-heure d'un paysage en tous points comparables à celui de la Beauce et où se meut le même bétail, à un paysage en contrebas de 1.000 mètres où règnent une végétation et une faune tropicales». La variété des cultures va du coton et du café jusqu'au blé et au mil, dont la farine est l'aliment essentiel de l'habitant. L'élevage est prospère, quoique souvent affecté d'épizooties contre lesquelles le pasteur éthiopien est désarmé.

Dans la répartition des terres, comme dans l'organisation politique et administrative du pays qui n'entre pas dans les cadres de notre article, on retrouve une série d'éléments caractéristiques de la féodalité sans, toutefois, en présenter toujours les traits exacts. La terre des hauts-plateaux appartient grosso modo: un tiers au roi, un tiers au clergé (très nombreux et qui détient différentes fonctions, notamment l'instruction publique), et un tiers à l'aristocratie terrienne. Différentes charges politiques, militaires, administratives, judiciaires sont attribuées en fonction de la possession des terres. «Cependant, le paysan, écrit Marcel Griaule, appelé dans la langue du pays “contribuable” (quelle franchise!) n'est ni esclave, ni serf. Il est libre, il est lui aussi propriétaire de terrains» (en dehors des hauts plateaux). Bien entendu, on ne peut même songer à évaluer avec précision la répartition des terres entre les 10 millions d'habitants que compte approximativement le pays, aucun cadastre n'ayant encore jamais été établi, ni aucun recensement effectué. Mais le fait est que le paysan possède sa terre et se nourrit de son produit. C'est dans la possession de son sol tout d'abord qu'il puise son courage à défendre son pays.

II. – «Industrie»

En dehors de l'agriculture et de l'élevage, l'économie est fort restreinte. Quelques usines locales fournissent au paysan le peu qui lui est nécessaire et qu'il ne peut produire lui-même. Il pourvoit à son habillement par le tissage domestique du coton sur un métier rudimentaire.

Il existe cependant un artisanat assez développé pour la fabrication d'armes, la poterie, la tannerie, l'orfèvrerie, etc...

Ce sont surtout les couches plus aisées de la population qui constituent la clientèle pour les marchandises d'importation dont la moitié consiste en cotonnades, «fournies dans la proportion de 80% par le Japon». En échange, l'Abyssinie exporte ses produits naturels, principalement du café moka et des peaux. Ses clients sont l'Angleterre, la France, l'Allemagne, la Belgique, l'Italie, la Tchécoslovaquie. Dans l'ensemble, le commerce d'exportation n'atteint pas un milliard de francs par an.

Le niveau économique du pays est bien représenté par sa monnaie, le thaler d'argent, monnaie des pays pauvres. Encore, dans certaines régions, y supplée-t-on par des cartouches, des barres de sel gemme.

III. – Voies de communication

Ce retard économique est dû essentiellement à l'absence de voies de communications. Sur un territoire grand comme la France et l'Allemagne réunies, il n'y a que les 783 kilomètres du chemin de fer à voie étroite de Djibouti à Addis-Abeba. La route normale est la piste muletière. Le moyen de transports, la caravane.

L'absence de voies de communications intérieures et de voies d'accès faciles à l'extérieur qui a protégé le pays contre l'invasion militaire et commerciale, l'a aussi tenu à l'écart du progrès économique et a empêché la mise en valeur des richesses naturelles. On a vu ce qu'étaient les richesses du sol. Quant au sous-sol, les avis diffèrent. Voici cependant ce qu'en dit la «Géographie économique» de J. G. Kergomard: On recueille un peu de poudre d'or dans le Godjam, le Damot, sur les rives du Tana et dans le Ouallaga, le platine fournit 120 kilogrammes de métal. On a signalé quelques gisements de houille et de lignite non loin du littoral et près d'Addis-Abeba; les mines du Choa et du Tigré donnent un excellent fer; le soufre se rencontre dans les régions volcaniques; on exploite un peu le cuivre, mais c'est le sel qui est l'objet du commerce le plus actif... De grands gisements de sels de potasse sont signalés dans la plaine d'Asale... «Mais les qualités si remarquables du pays abyssin resteront sans utilité tant que les moyens de communication ne seront pas meilleurs».

IV. – Opinion d'un Français averti sur le conflit

Dans certains journaux ouvriers, on s'efforce à démontrer que l'Abyssinie est pauvre, démunie de toutes ressources comme si l'on voulait convaincre le Duce que le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle. C'est un peu naïf. D'abord, l'Abyssinie ne serait-elle qu'un désert que ce ne serait pas un argument pour le capital italien. La France a bien tenu à faire main basse sur l'aride Sahara. L'impérialisme, dans son expansion coloniale, ne se donne pas toujours pour but un profit immédiat. Parfois il lui suffit de nuire au voisin ou de renforcer ses positions stratégiques pour une expansion ultérieure. Or, par-delà les richesses minières, soient-elles même incertaines, par-delà le marché de 10 à 12 millions d'Ethiopiens (pourra-t-il les domestiquer, même en cas de conquête, c'est une autre histoire); enfin, par-delà la pointe dirigée contre l'Angleterre sur le lac Tsana – (Nil égyptien et coton, cet «or blanc») – l'Italie met à l'ordre du jour la lutte contre l'hégémonie anglaise dans la Méditerranée et s'attaque à la route des Indes. C'est bien plus important que le sous-sol abyssin. La conquête de l'Abyssinie est une étape qu'il espère profitable dans la lutte de l'impérialisme italien contre son rival britannique.

Cette étape abyssine réussira-telle dans la mesure où elle se cantonnera entre Italiens et Ethiopiens? Du point de vue économique, nous avons déjà indiqué ici-même les faiblesses de l'Italie. La situation de l'Abyssinie, telle qu'elle a été décrite ci-dessus, peut apparaître encore bien plus faible. Mais en dehors des considérations stratégiques et militaires qui n'entrent pas dans notre sujet, il convient de se rappeler le côté politique de la position réciproque des belligérants. Il n'a pas été pour peu dans la résistance héroïque et longtemps victorieuse contre de puissantes armées françaises et espagnoles d'Abd el-Krim au Maroc. «L'Abyssinie dressée contre l'envahisseur, c'est cinquante Maroc», dit Marcel Griaule qui est en France un des meilleurs connaisseurs des choses d'Abyssinie. Et dans une autre étude, le même auteur, très bienpensant par ailleurs, prévoit objectivement que le paysan abyssin «se défendrait devant l'envahisseur comme devant un bandit, avec l'énergie du désespoir». Et il conclut d'une

manière fort peu encourageante pour le Duce en disant que «l'affaire se jouera à pile ou face».

Jean DUPUY

(Doc. 17) La lutte, n. 59, 9 novembre 1935

Les négociations anglo-italiennes «pour la paix»

On fait beaucoup de bruit sur les «entretiens» qui ont eu lieu la semaine dernière entre Mussolini et Sir Eric Drummond, ambassadeur de la Grande Bretagne à Rome.

Par ailleurs il se confirme qu'au cours de la dernière conversation de vendredi dernier entre le «Duce» et l'ambassadeur anglais, la possibilité de mettre un terme à la guerre a été «envisagée».

On a envisagé également la possibilité d'un compromis. Les bases de ce compromis seraient les propositions Eden en Août et la thèse italienne distinguant entre l'Ethiopie centrale et les provinces périphériques.

Rappelons pour nos lecteurs que c'est au cours de la Conférence tripartite de Paris que MM. Laval et Eden se sont mis d'accord pour donner des concessions économiques (en Ethiopie) à l'Italie (Voir La Lutte N° 49).

Où en sont les pourparlers

La grande presse à la dévotion de Laval y voit, comme de juste, un grand succès pour le Président du Conseil français dont la médiation a été, paraît-il, à l'origine de la détente dans les relations diplomatiques anglo-italiennes.

Cependant il faut bien se rendre à l'évidence. Dans les milieux officiels, on souligne en effet que ces tentatives de propositions de paix sont encore à l'état *embryonnaire* et ont plus ou moins la forme d'enquêtes.

Les négociations se poursuivent toujours à Rome mais les milieux fascistes ont fait sentir qu'elles peuvent *aboutir à bref délai*.

En réalité, si on est arrivé à une détente anglo-italienne, la question de la guerre en Ethiopie reste entière. On ne voit même pas un indice favorable à la cessation des hostilités en Afrique.

Car il reste à savoir si l'entente est possible entre impérialistes rivaux au sujet de l'Abyssinie. Les conciliabules entre chancelleries seraient inopérantes quand les intérêts impériaux s'avèreront inconciliables, de part et d'autre.

De nouveaux «incidents» diplomatiques ou autres surgiront inévitablement.

Le danger de guerre mondiale n'en sera que plus aggravé.

Les visées italiennes

Pendant que M. Laval ménage des «conversations» entre Londres et Rome, les hostilités reprennent avec une violence accrue sur le front sud de l'Ethiopie.

Les troupes italiennes auraient pris d'assaut la ville abyssine fortifiée de Dagnerei sur la rivière Shebelli tandis qu'au front nord le général de Bono prépare une nouvelle offensive pour le début de la semaine prochaine.

Comme on le voit, Mussolini, tout en flirtant avec Paris et Londres ne perd pas son temps.

C'est visible qu'il se livre en ce moment à une course de vitesse espérant mettre l'Angleterre, la France et la S.D.N. en face du fait accompli.

D'un autre côté, il manœuvre pour temporiser et éviter une aggravation des sanctions dont l'application énergique lui aura coupé pied et jambe.

Par ailleurs, il espère toujours, avec l'aide de son ami Pierre Laval, faire entendre raison à l'intraitable Angleterre.

Il espère taire triompher la thèse italienne «distinguant entre l'Ethiopie centrale et les provinces périphériques», autrement dit, demandant le démembrement de l'Ethiopie en accordant, bien entendu, la domination italienne sur les provinces limitrophes de l'Erythrée et de la Somalie italienne: Le Tigré et l'Ogaden etc...»

C'est dans ce sens qu'il a consenti à reprendre les négociations.

Pour le peuple d’Ethiopie, ces conciations entre chancelleries impérialistes ne peuvent être que néfastes. Les conversations entre Paris Londres et Rome ne sont que des tractations non pas «pour la paix» mais pour le partage pacifique de l’Afrique orientale.

Les réticences anglaises

De son côté, la Grande Bretagne vient de préciser sa position dans le problème italo-abyssin par d’importantes déclarations de Sir Samuel Hoare, ministre des affaires étrangères.

Dans un grand discours prononcé à la Chambre des Communes celui-ci parlant du conflit en Afrique orientale, a dit que la politique britannique était demeurée inébranlable.

Après s’être défendu d’avoir voulu «attaquer le fascisme», il a déclaré que c’est «avec la seule intention de maintenir la fermeté des principes du Covenant» que l’Angleterre a participé aux discussions de Genève.

Néanmoins, parlant des sanctions militaires M. Hoare les a présentées comme un thème délicat et a déclaré «admettre candidement» (sic) que les conditions pour des sanctions militaires, c’est-à-dire un accord collectif à Genève contre l’Etat agresseur, «n’ont jamais existé».

Quant à la question de la fermeture du Canal de Suez aux troupes italiennes, comme sanctions, M. Hoare l’a délibérément écartée. On sait que la fermeture du Canal a été à plusieurs reprises réclamée par le parti travailliste et les organisations ouvrières internationales.

Cette attitude toute de réticence de la Grande Bretagne n’est pas pour arrêter l’Italie dans son aventure africaine.

Pour des sanctions énergiques et immédiates

Pour faire cesser la guerre en Afrique, pour sauvegarder la paix mondiale, ni les négociations entre chancelleries, ni déclarations verbales ne peuvent aboutir à des résultats tangibles.

Il faut supprimer à l’Italie fasciste les moyens de nuire. Il faut qu’une coalition de puissances puisse faire appliquer des sanctions sévères, énergiques, immédiates.

Il faut fermer le canal de Suez et mettre l'Italie dans l'impossibilité de transporter ses troupes en Éthiopie et de les ravitailler.

Ces mesures, la S.D.N. peut encore les prendre. Elle doit les prendre sous peine de sombrer piteusement comme a sombré il y a un siècle la Sainte-Alliance dont elle est une réédition.

(Doc. 18) La lutte, n. 60, 16 novembre 1935

«Chimères et réalités» ou les sanctions économiques

Un mois s'est passé depuis que, sans aucune déclaration de guerre, l'Italie fasciste, membre de la S.D.N. a attaqué et envahi un Etat libre, membre également de l'organisation genevoise: l'Éthiopie.

Les radios nous apportent tous les jours des nouvelles angoissantes sur l'avance extrêmement rapide de l'armée italienne sur le front de l'Érythrée où Adoua, Adigrat, Aksoum et – plus récemment Makallé, villes principales de la province du Tigré ont été tour à tour prises d'assaut.

Au sud, le front de Somalie est plus calme, l'avance plus difficile dans le désert de l'Ogaden. Toutefois, il y a quelques jours, on apprend la prise de Gorahei, l'un des centres stratégiques importants du Sud éthiopien.

Que fait Genève?

L'opinion mondiale se demande ce qu'attendent les puissances membres de la S.D.N. pour appliquer contre l'État agresseur les sanctions prévues par l'article 16 du Pacte.

On sait qu'il peut y avoir deux sortes de sanctions: les sanctions militaires et les sanctions économiques.

On sait en outre que Sir Samuel Hoare Ministre des Affaires étrangères britanniques, dans son discours à la Chambre des Communes d'il y a 15 jours, a délibérément – et à juste titre – écarté l'hypothèse des sanctions militaires.

Restent les sanctions économiques. Et c'est sur ce point que depuis un mois ces messieurs du «Comité de Coordination des sanctions» discutent à perte de vue pendant que les armées italiennes bien équipées et bien nourries se livrent à des massacres d'Ethiopiens.

Il y a quinze jours, nous avons écrit:

«Ces mesures (les sanctions), la S.D.N. peut encore les prendre. Elle doit les prendre sous peine de sombrer piteusement... etc.».

Or, à la lumière des pourparlers de Genève, il faut se rendre compte de l'énorme bluff des «sanctions économiques».

L'application des sanctions est prévue pour le 18 novembre prochain. Comme si, pour empêcher un assassin de tuer sa victime, il faut se fixer une date à laquelle on lui enlèvera son couteau.

Que valent les sanctions?

Parlant de l'attitude de la S.D.N., «si un Etat s'avisait d'en attaquer un autre», M. Gaston Moch, qui se pique, par ailleurs, d'être «réaliste», propose en 1932... les sanctions économiques.

«Le seul moyen de répression, qui soit à la fois possible et efficace consiste en la mise à l'index, qui est d'ailleurs prévue par l'article 16 du Pacte» (Chimères et réalités, page 100).

Or la réalité est tout autre.

Pour être efficaces, les sanctions économiques doivent être appliqués «à l'unanimité». Il semble que les prometteurs de ces sanctions ignorent cette vérité première.

Les sanctions économiques ont été décidées par la S.D.N.: «Malheureusement, comme dit Francis Delaisi, c'est un tribunal sans huissiers ni gendarmes».

Les membres de l'assemblée de Genève sont loin de s'entendre sur l'application de la mise de l'index. Car, il ne faut pas compter sur leur volonté de paix quand il s'agit pour eux de perdre un client. Par ce temps de crise, on ne s'y résigne pas facilement.

Des sanctions contre un Etat qui veut à tout prix faire la guerre? Mais les états capitalistes n'attendent que la guerre pour écouler leurs stocks

accumulés par la crise et mettre un peu d'ordre dans leur situation économique branlante!

Exiger des magnats de France, d'Angleterre, d'Allemagne, d'Etats-Unis et d'ailleurs le boycottage de l'Italie en guerre, c'est leur demander de se faire harakiri.

C'est ce qu'ils ne veulent point.

La guerre, pour eux, c'est les affaires: voilà ce dont il faut se rendre compte et en régime capitaliste, les «affaires» priment tout y compris la vie des millions d'êtres humains.

Il faut encore mentionner l'attitude des vaincus de la grande guerre, des opprimés du Traité de Versailles pour qui la S.D.N. a toujours été une association d'opresseurs. L'Autriche, la Hongrie, la Pologne se sont désolidarisées de Genève au sujet des sanctions.

Que dire des puissances qui en sont sorties en claquant la porte tels le Japon et l'Allemagne hitlérienne? Ils sont trop heureux de profiter de leur situation pour songer à se rallier aux sanctions.

Les Etats-Unis ont hypocritement mis l'embargo sur les armes. En revanche, Roosevelt, serviteur des magnats du Pétrole américain, a refusé d'interdire l'exportation du coton et du pétrole à destination de l'Italie.

Telle est la situation internationale avant le 18 novembre, date de l'application des sanctions prônées par les «hyper-sociétaires» de Genève.

Que valent les sanctions économiques en régime capitaliste?

Elles valent ce que vaut la volonté de paix des puissances impérialistes dont les besoins vitaux sont justement la guerre et le brigandage.

Quant à nous...

Pour le prolétariat mondial «la Société des Nations, c'est la Société des brigands impérialistes» comme disait Lénine.

Si elle se pose en ce moment en champion de la «la paix par les sanctions», c'est uniquement pour servir les intérêts impérialistes du couple France-Angleterre.

L'antagonisme entre les impérialistes anglais et italiens, dans le conflit italo-éthiopien ne nous intéresse pas. Leurs marchandages au sein de la S.D.N. ou leurs provocations mutuelles se concluent toujours par des hécatombes d'ouvriers et de paysans.

Les organisations ouvrières et paysannes de tous les pays dénonceront le caractère illusoire des sanctions prônées par les impérialistes de la S.D.N.

Elles lutteront pour le boycottage de l'Italie de Mussolini, boycottage efficace seulement si tous les travailleurs – depuis les dockers jusqu'aux mécanos – y participent activement.

Seule l'action de la classe ouvrière organisée en une internationale unique révolutionnaire et combattive peut assurer la paix au monde.

(Doc. 19) La lutte, n. 66, 28 décembre 1935

Il faut empêcher le partage de l'Éthiopie

La guerre d'Éthiopie traîne en longueur. Les armées italiennes avancent très difficilement, harcelées par la résistance héroïque des troupes éthiopiennes. Le temps n'est plus aux communiqués triomphants de Rome et aux proclamations claironnantes de Mussolini.

Les bulletins officiels du G.Q.G. italien doivent reconnaître qu'en divers points, les forces italiennes «ont été obligées de battre en retraite» et que de forts contingents de soldats du «Duce» ont repassé le Canal de Suez, ne pouvant supporter le climat meurtrier d'Abyssinie.

Mussolini est actuellement dans une situation terrible: il y va, en effet, de la vie et de la mort du régime fasciste en Italie.

Mais «l'ami» Laval est là qui se charge de tirer le «Duce» du mauvais pas.

Les propositions de Paris

M. Laval qui continue à se poser en médiateur cherche à faire accepter par l'Angleterre un partage «équitable» de l'Ethiopie, partage suggéré par Mussolini lui-même.

On se rappelle des propositions présentées par les fascistes avant l'application des sanctions. Il s'agissait de «distinguer» la région centrale d'Ethiopie et les provinces périphériques, d'établir un contrôle international, de «désarmer» l'Ethiopie, de sanctionner... l'occupation italienne du Tigré et de donner «en échange» (sic) à l'Ethiopie un port franc en territoire érythréen: Assab.

Le moins qu'on puisse dire de ces prétentions impérialistes est qu'elles sont exorbitantes.

Or si on rapproche des thèses italiennes, les propositions dites «de Paris» élaborées par MM. Laval-Hoare, il semble que les représentants de la France et de l'Angleterre ont fait droit aux exigences mussoliniennes.

Ces fameuses propositions prévoient:

1° un échange de territoire et la cession de la portion orientale de la province de Tigré à l'Italie.

2° un ajustement (sic!) de frontière entre l'Erythrée et la province de Danakil, l'Abyssinie recevant, une portion du territoire érythréen contenant le port d'Assab.

3° un autre ajustement (resic) de frontière entre la Somalie italienne et l'Ogaden donnant à l'Italie une grande partie de l'Ogaden.

Ces odieuses propositions de démembrement de la Nation éthiopienne ont été présentées au monde comme étant un règlement «pacifique» du «conflit italo-éthiopien».

M M. Laval-Hoare instituent la «prime à l'agression»

Ainsi les impérialistes ont jeté le voile. Les négociations engagées entre Paris, Londres et Rome, pendant que là-bas en Ethiopie les avions de Mussolini massacrent hommes femmes et enfants, ont abouti à cet accord entre voleurs: le partage de l'Ethiopie.

MM Laval-Hoare, défenseurs du Pacte de la S.D.N., sanctionnistes à tout crin se sont révélés du coup impérialistes conséquents. La prime à l'agression qu'ils ont délibérément – et par-dessus la tête de la S.D.N. – accordée à leur compère Mussolini pourrait un de ces jours prochains leur être attribué à leur tour.

On comprend l'indignation des petits Etats de l'organisation genevoise. *L'Aften Porten* (Norvège) déclare que si la S.D.N. approuve ces propositions c'est qu'il ne lui reste plus une parcelle d'idéalisme. Les petits Etats n'auront plus que quitter cette Société, puisqu'ils n'ont plus rien à en attendre.

Comme on voit, jamais la S.D.N. ne mérite plus qu'aujourd'hui le nom de «Société de brigands impérialistes» attribué par Lénine.

Il faut empêcher les brigands impérialistes de Genève de régler le conflit italo-éthiopien dans le sens de leur intérêt.

Echec à Laval-Hoare!

A peine connues, les propositions de Paris rencontrent dans le monde une opposition de plus en plus vive de la part de l'opinion publique justement révoltée par le caractère impérialiste de la méthode de règlement.

Sous la poussée des masses populaires de France et d'Angleterre les négociations impérialistes ont dû lâcher prise.

A Londres l'opposition a obligé le gouvernement anglais à abandonner le projet. Du coup, Hoare désavoué publiquement perd la face et démissionne. D'ailleurs, la démission du ministre des affaires étrangères anglais a apparu comme le seul moyen de sauver le ministère conservateur bien mal en point.

En tout cas, le désaveu du ministre Hoare est la condamnation à mort des propositions de Paris.

A Paris, Laval est sérieusement en difficulté. Sa politique pro-italienne soulève des tempêtes d'indignation même dans le camp des radicaux jusqu'ici à la remorque de Herriot.

M. *Léon Blum*, socialiste, a déposé à la Chambre une demande d'interpellation, reprochant aux propositions de Paris d'être une presse à

l'agression tandis que *Gabriel Péri*, député communiste dénonce vigoureusement la méthode impérialiste de règlement éthiopien et stigmatise le Gouvernement qui a mis l'amitié italienne au-dessus de la loi internationale.

M. *Pierre Cot*, mandaté par le groupe radical de la Chambre, reproche à Laval d'abandonner la politique de sécurité collective en accordant une prime à l'agresseur italien qui, au surplus, a été désigné expressément par le S.D.N.

Le scrutin de confiance qui a lieu à l'issue de ces débats est significatif: le gouvernement obtient une majorité singulièrement amoindrie tandis que 80 radicaux ont voté contre le gouvernement.

Du coup Herriot se sent visé et les attaques acerbes des militants radicaux l'ont obligé d'abandonner la présidence du Parti radical.

Les «démissions sensationnelles» de Hoare et d'Herriot montrent nettement l'opposition des masses contre les solutions impérialistes du conflit.

Par ailleurs à Genève, l'impression générale est que le projet de partage de l'Ethiopie est mort et enterré.

Ainsi la vigilance des masses a tenu en échec les manœuvres de Laval-Hoare qui veulent livrer le peuple éthiopien au bourreau fasciste.

Démission! Démission!

Les propositions de Paris ne sont que le résultat final des compromis de M. Laval pour qui la paix signifie écrasement et esclavage des peuples faibles.

Les radicaux – malgré leurs réactions momentanées – sont encore derrière Herriot pour soutenir cette politique impérialiste.

Les masses travailleuses de France et du monde sont pour l'indépendance véritable et complète de l'Ethiopie.

Elles sont adversaires de toutes décisions qui règlent le sort du peuple abyssin par les méthodes impérialistes de mandat, de sphère d'influence.

La politique de maquignonnage du cabinet Laval-Herriot est désavouée par la majorité du peuple français. Il faut empêcher ces serviteurs du fascisme de renouveler leur coup.

Démission! Démission!

Pour un gouvernement ouvrier et paysan anti-impérialiste.

Appendice

I. T. F., Impressions de voyage en Italie. Mussolini va-t-il à sa perte?¹

I. Un Etat fasciste sans fascistes

Cela paraît incroyable et c'est néanmoins vrai: l'Italie est aujourd'hui un Etat fasciste dans lequel il n'y a plus de fascistes. Tel est le résultat étonnant d'observations que j'ai pu faire pendant un voyage de plusieurs semaines à travers tout le pays.

Il convient, certes, d'établir une distinction entre les apparences et la réalité. Selon les apparences, l'esprit fasciste est toujours prédominant. On continue à porter l'uniforme ou l'insigne fascistes et on se salue à la romaine. J'ai toutefois pu constater que précisément les gens qui s'affichent comme des fascistes invétérés se manifestaient, dans une conversation intime, comme des adversaires prononcés du régime. Un proverbe qui circule à présent en Italie et qui dit: «Tre italiani insieme fanno tre fascisti, due italiani insieme fanno due amici, un italiano solo fa un antifascista» (*trois Italiens ensemble font trois fascistes, deux Italiens ensemble font deux amis, un Italien seul fait un antifasciste*) prouve bien qu'il s'agit non d'une série de hasards constatés par moi, mais d'une expérience généralement faite en Italie.

Dans toutes les couches de la population, on constate une aversion égale contre le fascisme. L'ouvrier est antifasciste, le paysan est antifasciste, le petit bourgeois est antifasciste et le capitaliste est antifasciste. Les uns le sont parce que le fascisme les a privés, avec la liberté, de leur gagne-pain, les autres parce qu'ils constatent avec effroi que le fascisme entraîne de plus en plus le pays dans une catastrophe économique.

Celui qui ne juge que de manière superficielle et n'entre pas en contact plus direct avec la population ne supposera pas un tel état d'esprit en Italie. A nouveau, des étrangers voyageant en Italie m'ont chanté en termes élogieux les transformations immenses et impressionnantes qui se sont réalisées sous Mussolini. Le fascisme – ainsi pensent-ils – a fait sortir le pays de son état arriéré et l'a élevé, en à peine treize ans, au niveau des

¹ *La Révolution prolétarienne*, n. 203, 25 Juillet 1935.

grands pays industriels européens. Comme preuve de cette affirmation, ils vous citent les modernes autostrades que l'on rencontre dans le pays entier et dont une conduit même jusqu'à une altitude de 2.000 mètres sur l'Etna, les travaux de modernisation pratiqués dans chaque ville d'une certaine importance, la meilleure réglementation de la circulation, etc., etc., sans oublier évidemment la construction de nouvelles villes, telles que Littoria et Sabauda qui, de loin déjà, annoncent leur existence aux étrangers par une mer de lumière telle qu'on a l'habitude d'en voir aux alentours des grandes capitales.

Toutes ces choses sont des faits indéniables. Celui qui visite aujourd'hui l'Italie et se rappelle l'état du pays, il y a dix ou vingt ans, a certes l'impression qu'un immense progrès est en train de s'accomplir. Seulement, cette impression s'efface aussitôt qu'on s'éloigne de quelques kilomètres seulement des grandes routes du mouvement touristique international. Alors la caractéristique n'est plus le progrès, mais le déclin; les maisons et les ruelles sont plus sales que jamais auparavant; nulle part, on n'aperçoit une nouvelle bâtisse ni même un échafaudage qui en annonce la construction. Les gens sont mal vêtus et mal nourris. Le touriste se voit placé devant une misère indescriptible. A Messine, par exemple, il y a aujourd'hui encore des quartiers étendus composés des baraques de l'époque du tremblement de terre, répandant une odeur pestilentielle. Généralement – du moins dans le Midi – il n'y a plus de lumière électrique en dehors des grandes villes et les gares mêmes sont éclairées au pétrole. Très souvent l'eau potable doit être amenée dans de grandes jarres en grès, attendu qu'il n'y a pas de puits et encore moins de conduites d'eau. La Sicile qui était autrefois le grenier de Rome est aujourd'hui pour les deux tiers desséchée et aride parce que le fascisme a négligé d'exécuter les travaux d'irrigation nécessaires.

On comprend que la population rurale italienne ne soit pas précisément ravie des autostrades; elle possède assez de discernement pour se rendre compte que ces routes non seulement engloutissent l'argent qui aurait été nécessaire pour les travaux d'irrigation et pour un meilleur entretien de ses propres routes, mais encore que sa misère croissante doit

avoir un lien quelconque avec ces constructions luxueuses. Le paysan, ainsi se dit-elle, doit vivre dans la misère pour que la ville puisse gaspiller l'argent sans compter.

Les contrastes entre la ville et la campagne sont plus frappants que jamais. Il est manifeste que le fascisme, en prenant ces mesures, ne pense pas tant à leur efficacité et à leur utilité pour sa propre population, mais tâche surtout d'en imposer aux visiteurs étrangers qui, en venant en Italie, ne veulent voir que de belles choses. Il construit d'impressionnantes façades tout aussi coûteuses qu'elles sont peu économiques.

En ce qui concerne ce dernier aspect de la question, son importance peut être le mieux mesurée à la dette publique italienne qui va croissant. Suivant des renseignements officiels, les dépenses ont excédé les recettes de 32 milliards de liras pendant les 12 années de domination fasciste. La situation financière est par conséquent une des plus menaçantes qui existent au monde. On se demande avec appréhension, voire avec angoisse, où conduira la route sur laquelle le fascisme s'est engagé.

Ce qui complique particulièrement la situation italienne, c'est que l'industrie et le commerce vivent de commandes de l'Etat. Si celles-ci tarissent, il y aura une stagnation générale des affaires et l'effondrement économique sera là. Dans les milieux capitalistes, on parle ouvertement d'une telle possibilité. Beaucoup prennent déjà des mesures pour sauver individuellement ce qu'il y a moyen de sauver. Une fuite de capitaux a commencé sur une vaste échelle et les difficultés s'en trouvent augmentées. Il n'est pas rare d'entendre des capitalistes exprimer la crainte que Mussolini ne soit un jour obligé pour se maintenir au pouvoir d'avoir recours à un prélèvement sur le capital, opinion que nous n'enregistrons ici qu'à titre de curiosité. On comprend en tout cas pourquoi la bourgeoisie italienne est guérie à présent du fascisme. Le dégrisement a été complet. Les Italiens ont compris, eux, ce que les étrangers n'ont toujours pas saisi: c'est que *Mussolini n'est qu'un Potemkine de proportions gigantesques* qui, à la place de villages composés de façades bon marché, construit des villes en pierre coûteuse et conduit ainsi le pays à la ruine économique.

II. - La campagne contre l'Abyssinie

Ce qui distingue de manière frappante l'Italie actuelle de celle d'autrefois, c'est le nombre d'uniforme qu'on voit dans les rues. Plusieurs villes suscitent chez le visiteur vraiment l'impression qu'il se trouve dans une immense caserne. C'est comme si tout le peuple italien avait échangé la mandoline pour le mousquet.

Dans l'Italie méridionale, on voit plus d'uniformes que dans le Nord. Celui qui voyagerait de Messine à Milan pourrait avoir l'impression qu'il traverse deux pays entièrement différents, l'un se trouvant en état de guerre et l'autre en état de paix. La milice est même plutôt rare dans les rues des villes septentrionales. A Milan, j'ai pu marcher pendant des heures dans le centre le plus animé sans rencontrer un seul uniforme de milicien. On voit aussi moins d'insignes fascistes dans les villes du Nord que dans celles du Midi et le salut à la romaine ne s'y pratique guère.

La différence n'est pas seulement extérieure. Dans le nord de l'Italie, la population n'a jamais pu vraiment s'enthousiasmer pour le fascisme. Elle le considère comme un produit méridional, qui est loin d'être bon. Toujours à nouveau, on m'a assuré: «Le fascisme n'est pas autre chose que la *camorra* napolitaine arrivée au pouvoir. Nous sommes gouvernés par des malfaiteurs». Le nombre d'Italiens méridionaux, notamment de Napolitains, qui détiennent en ce moment des fonctions élevées dans le nord du pays est en effet frappant au grand mécontentement de la population. D'autre part, cependant, il est un fait historique que le premier «fascio» n'a pas été constitué à Naples, mais précisément à Milan. La victoire de Hitler n'est-elle pas aussi partie de la ville démocratique de Munich, tandis qu'il est manifeste que le Troisième Reich représente la domination de la Prusse despotique sur le reste de l'Allemagne? La courte vie échue aux affiches fascistes dans les villes du Nord fait en tout cas ressortir que dans cette région l'antipathie contre le fascisme est plus forte et plus manifeste. Placées le soir, elles sont partout arrachées le lendemain matin, aussi bien au centre que dans la banlieue des villes. On m'a dit qu'il en est ainsi depuis longtemps. Avec cela, les journaux typiquement fascistes sont moins lus dans le Nord que dans le

Midi. Le Popolo d'Italia de Mussolini, qui paraît à Milan, est partout crié dans les rues, mais on ne l'achète pour ainsi dire pas.

Ce pays où l'uniforme domine est-il aussi un pays militarisé? La question était pour moi du plus haut intérêt. Pendant un long séjour en Italie, j'avais autrefois appris à connaître les Italiens comme un peuple pacifique ayant horreur du militarisme et de la guerre. Lorsque, il y a plus de vingt ans, je me trouvais pour la première fois à Milan sur la place de la Cathédrale, je fus pris malgré moi dans une immense manifestation contre la guerre en Libye. Mussolini aurait-il réussi à modifier si foncièrement le caractère d'un peuple que celui-ci acclame à présent avec enthousiasme une action qu'autrefois il détestait?

C'est pourquoi j'ai cherché à me rendre compte partout de la manière dont le peuple réagit à propos du conflit d'Abyssinie. Nulle part, je n'ai pu constater la moindre trace de cet enthousiasme que les journaux italiens tâchent de faire accroire aux étrangers aussi bien qu'à leurs compatriotes. L'attitude de la population est grave et réservée. Dans des conversations personnelles, j'ai appris des opinions surprenantes. Un ancien communiste, qui à présent semble extérieurement être fasciste des pieds à la tête, m'a affirmé que l'intervention de Mussolini contre l'Abyssinie était la preuve la plus palpable qu'il était au bout de son latin. On n'avait pas oublié en Italie que les gouvernements précédents commençaient toujours une action en Afrique lorsqu'il se trouvaient en difficultés. Mussolini suivrait à présent, selon mon interlocuteur, la même méthode. Il ne fallait cependant pas entraver le mouvement dès le début; au contraire, il fallait le pousser davantage, car sur les plateaux rocheux d'Abyssinie il ne cueillerait pas de lauriers; il pourrait uniquement y courir à sa perte.

En faisant ces réflexions, le communiste n'a exprimé que ce que beaucoup d'autres pensent de l'aventure abyssinienne de Mussolini. Dans la majorité de mes conversations avec des Italiens, j'ai entendu exprimer une même attente et de simples ouvriers m'ont déclaré plus d'une fois: «Signore, vogliamo i fucili per finire la fame» (*Monsieur, il nous faut des fusils pour en finir avec la faim*), et lorsque je demandais, simulant de l'étonnement, si le mot «fame» voulait dire «fascisme», ils me l'ont toujours confirmé.

Tandis que Mussolini ne pense qu'à sa propre gloire, d'autres ne sont préoccupés que de sa chute. Il n'est évidemment pas possible de constater jusqu'à quel point ces derniers sont nombreux, mais en observant les gens et dans beaucoup de conversations, j'ai pu voir que leur nombre n'est pas mince. Plus d'une fois j'ai étudié la mine des gens, lorsque dans différents ports des troupes étaient embarquées. L'enthousiasme se limitait généralement à ceux qui restaient et il n'échappait pas à un spectateur attentif qu'il s'agissait la plupart du temps de miliciens en civil exécutant un ordre.

A l'époque exactement où je me trouvais en Italie, la classe 1911 fut appelée sous les drapeaux. Le public se bousculait autour des journaux contenant cette nouvelle. Tout le monde semblait frappé et pour autant que des réflexions se faisaient entendre, elles étaient hostiles. J'ai aussi voyagé pendant plusieurs heures avec ceux qui se rendaient sous les armes. La plupart d'entre eux ne parlaient pas et restaient assis, songeurs, généralement très abattus. Je n'ai vu qu'une fois des visages amusés: c'était devant une affiche contenant l'adieu, rédigé dans un langage des plus lyriques, des chemises noires de la ville prenant congé de la population afin d'aller poursuivre dans la noire Afrique «l'œuvre de civilisation du fascisme» et conjurant ceux qui restaient de veiller sur «ses grandes conquêtes».

Après tout ce que j'ai pu voir en Italie, j'ai tendance à croire que le Négus peut dormir d'un sommeil plus paisible que Mussolini.

III. - Pays de famine

Ce qui m'a le plus impressionné, c'est que les travailleurs italiens ne se sont pas laissés, le moins du monde, infecter par le fascisme. En bloc et de manière unie, au nord et au midi, ils y résistent, constatation qui m'a à plusieurs reprises été confirmée par des éléments bourgeois. Mais il faut dire que, pour l'ouvrier italien, le fascisme signifie chômage et réduction des salaires.

J'ai rencontré, à ce sujet, la situation la plus mauvaise dans le sud du pays. Le salaire s'y élève en moyenne à 7 livres par jour (ce qui correspond à environ 9 francs français). Dans de rares cas, ce niveau est dépassé dans le

midi. Celui qui y touche 12 livres par jour est considéré comme un richard. Dans l'Italie centrale, et surtout dans le nord du pays, le niveau des salaires est en général plus élevé et on peut dire qu'il varie pour la masse entre 14 et 18 livres par jour. Les ouvriers spécialisés gagnent parfois davantage et peuvent aller dans des cas exceptionnels jusqu'à 30 livres, mais ces cas sont fort rares. Le personnel au service de l'Etat, qui est considéré comme l'élite parmi les ouvriers et employés, touche des traitements mensuels variant grosso modo entre 400 et 700 livres. Tous les chiffres cités indiquent des revenus bruts qui, dans la pratique, subissent encore une forte réduction de par nombreuses retenues sous la forme de cotisations obligatoires à des organisations fascistes de toutes sortes.

Ceux qui sont tentés de croire qu'à ce bas niveau des salaires correspond un coût de la vie modéré se trompent. L'Italie est un pays plutôt cher que bon marché. Les prix de quelques denrées alimentaires, choisies au hasard, le font comprendre. Le pain coûte – les prix sont indiqués par demi-kilo en livres (une livre = 1 fr. 30 français environ) – 0,65 à 0,85; le riz, de 1 lire à 1,50; le bœuf, de 2,50 à 5; le beurre, de 6 à 6,50; le sel de cuisine, 1,15; le sel de table, 7,50; le veau, de 5 à 6,50; le café, de 12,50 à 16,50; le sucre, 3,15; les œufs, 0,35 à 0,40 la pièce; un litre de lait, 1,80; les pommes de terre, 1 à 1,20 par kilo et le fromage ordinaire de 4,50 à 6 le demi-kilo.

Les chaussures et produits textiles coûtent en général les mêmes prix qu'en Suisse qui est considérée comme un pays cher. Les habitations (2 pièces, cuisine et bain) coûtent dans des quartiers modernes de Milan environ 300 livres de loyer par mois.

Les travailleurs agricoles sont rétribués en grande partie en nature. On peut se rendre compte de la situation où se trouve cette catégorie de travailleurs sur la base du contrat collectif pour la province de Crémone, entré récemment en vigueur, et considéré par la presse fasciste elle-même comme étant la réglementation la plus favorable. D'après les témoignages mêmes de la presse fasciste, le revenu journalier dépasse à peine 14 livres. On ne paye donc en espèces qu'à peu près 100 livres par mois. Le reste est payé en nature. Les travailleurs sont contraints d'accepter cette forme de

paiement (à l'exception du lait) et la valeur des produits est calculée suivant les prix de gros en vigueur.

La semaine de 40 heures, qui d'ailleurs a été combinée avec une diminution proportionnelle des salaires et avec une retenue spéciale sur les salaires de ceux qui font une semaine de travail complète, ne peut jusqu'à présent être constatée que dans les industries où jusqu'ici le chômage partiel prédominait. La loi a prévu, à priori, une série d'exceptions importantes; elle ne s'applique par exemple pas aux entreprises de l'Etat, à l'agriculture, ni à certaines industries d'intérêt vital, dont celle de l'armement fait en majorité partie. L'influence de la loi sur le marché du travail a par conséquent été minime. Il est vrai que la statistique officielle indique entre mai 1934 et mai 1935 une diminution du nombre des chômeurs d'un million à 800.000, mais il convient de tenir compte, à propos de ce chiffre, que pour commencer il y a un plus grand nombre d'hommes sous les armes et en deuxième lieu que l'industrie de l'armement – Mussolini vient encore de signaler la chose avec orgueil – fonctionne à plein rendement.

Le secours aux chômeurs est tout à fait misérable. L'allocation de chômage, qui varie entre 1,75 et 3,5 lire par jour, est accordée pendant six mois au maximum. Après cette période, le chômeur en est réduit à des secours facultatifs qui ne sont accordés qu'en nature.

Il y a cependant en Italie une grande partie de la population dont la misère est, si possible, encore plus grande que celle de la classe ouvrière. Ce sont les paysans. Tout ce que le fascisme a fait pour eux, c'est remettre en vigueur une série de taxes et supprimer d'anciens droits. Les paysans se plaignent constamment de la charge intolérable des impôts. Des révoltes locales de paysans se sont déjà produites. Dans plusieurs villages de Sicile, par exemple, les paysans ont manifesté, avec les poches de leur pantalon retournées, en criant sans cesse: «Fame! fame!» On a tâché de les apaiser avec des promesses. Parfois des denrées alimentaires ont été distribuées et quelquefois même de l'argent. Dans la campagne romaine, j'ai rencontré un berger acculé au désespoir. Le commissaire des impôts avait imposé chacune de ses trente chèvres de 60 lire, ce qui faisait pour notre homme

une fortune à payer. Il avait décidé de vendre ses chèvres et de partir pour la guerre contre l'Abyssinie. Du moins ainsi disait-il.

La rime suivante circule en ce moment en Italie: «Quando si salutava ancora così (ici, on met la main à son chapeau), si mangiava ogni dì. Dacchè si saluta alla romana, si mangia una volta la settimana». (*Lorsqu'on saluait encore ainsi, on mangeait tous les jours. Depuis qu'on salue à la romaine, on mange une fois par semaine*). On voit donc que la population établit un lien direct entre la faim et le fascisme.

IV. - Les écueils entourent le navire de l'Etat fasciste

La voie dans laquelle s'est engagé le navire de l'Etat fasciste avec Mussolini à la barre est remplie de dangers. Le navire risque de donner sur des écueils. Le plus dangereux entre ceux-ci est sans aucun doute la situation financière. La dette publique, qui se monte à des milliards, dont une partie n'est même pas stabilisée, est suspendue, telle une épée de Damoclès, sur la dictature. Des hommes d'Etat ayant le sentiment de leurs responsabilités iraient déjà, devant une situation bien moins tendue, à la recherche de voies et moyens permettant un assainissement et érigeant l'économie en principe. Mussolini n'en fait rien. Il n'hésite pas à déclencher une action où tous les torts sont de prime abord d'un côté et dont on peut dire avec certitude qu'elle doit ruiner davantage les finances publiques: la campagne contre l'Abyssinie. Les dépenses nécessitées par les premiers préparatifs n'ont-elles pas, en effet, été évaluées par le ministre des finances à 620 millions? Avec cela, il s'agit d'une entreprise dont chacun sait que ce n'est pas une affaire de quelques mois, mais bien d'années.

Mussolini est pris dans sa propre politique. Le mouvement contre l'Abyssinie n'avait, au début, que la valeur d'un dérivatif, en quoi Mussolini est parti de la supposition que les grandes nations européennes seraient à tel point accaparés par leurs propres soucis et aussi par la préoccupation de maintenir la paix en Europe, qu'elles n'entraveraient pas une guerre italienne contre l'Abyssinie, mais qu'au contraire elles la favoriseraient. Ces considérations ont fait que Mussolini commença l'action plein de confiance et, afin de mettre en lumière aussi pleinement que possible les succès

escomptables, il mit immédiatement en œuvre tous les moyens de la propagande. Chaque transport de troupes, fût-il minime, devint l'objet d'une espèce de fête nationale. La presse modulait ses accents sur les deux motifs de la «grande Italie» et de la «mission civilisatrice» que le fascisme a à accomplir sur la terre africaine, non seulement plus pour sa propre gloire, mais aussi pour l'honneur de tout le monde civilisé! L'intention était facile à percer. Le peuple italien devait, par des phrases et des fêtes, être détourné de ses propres désirs. Son mécontentement contre le fascisme devait être transformé en un nouvel enthousiasme. Ce dessein n'a pas réussi.

L'unique résultat obtenu par l'art de propagandiste de Mussolini a été que son jeu est devenu une question décisive de prestige pour le régime fasciste, ne lui permettant plus une liquidation du problème sans résultats palpables. Qu'il le veuille ou non, Mussolini est contraint de continuer sur la route où il s'est engagé, même si cette route conduit à la ruine financière et économique du pays.

Un autre écueil est constitué pour Mussolini par son isolement de plus en plus accentué au milieu de la population italienne. Aujourd'hui déjà, cet isolement a amené un changement fondamental du caractère de la dictature fasciste. Si autrefois, celle-ci pouvait du moins compter sur l'appui de certains milieux bourgeois, elle n'a plus à présent d'autre soutien que la milice fasciste. En même temps, en effet, que la bourgeoisie, l'armée régulière s'est détournée de Mussolini. Les officiers supérieurs n'avaient jamais été très emballés du fascisme. Les généraux ont pactisé avec lui parce qu'ils en avaient besoin et que le roi le leur ordonnait. Aujourd'hui, les anciennes divergences ont remonté à la surface et on ne se donne guère de peine, du moins du côté des militaires, pour les dissimuler. Néanmoins, Mussolini n'a rien à craindre directement de ce côté. Une dictature militaire serait aujourd'hui tout autant compromise en Italie que l'est la dictature de la milice et un renversement de Mussolini serait, en tout cas, pour les masses laborieuses, le signal d'une vague de rébellion qu'aucun sabre militaire n'arrêterait plus. C'est certainement cette considération qui décide la bourgeoisie à se croiser les bras et à laisser l'histoire aller son cours. Elle

craint, il est vrai, les conséquences de la politique mussolinienne, mais elle craint autant l'incertitude qui peut surgir avec la chute du fascisme.

L'animosité des ouvriers et des paysans n'est pas non plus de nature à inspirer à Mussolini des craintes immédiates. D'une part, la peur devant la dictature paralyse encore leurs mouvements et, d'autre part, les liens organiques et les conceptions politiques précises nécessaires pour déclencher une action qui menacerait sérieusement le régime de la dictature leur font défaut.

C'est pourquoi, pour le moment, certains écueils émanant de la milice même me paraissent plus directement menaçants pour Mussolini. L'histoire nous a appris qu'une bonne entente entre une milice et son dictateur ne persiste jamais indéfiniment. Le 30 juin 1934 en Allemagne en a été une preuve sanglante. Mussolini n'a pas eu, jusqu'ici, besoin d'offrir au monde l'image d'un pareille Saint-Barthélemy parmi ses propres amis, vu qu'ayant étudié l'histoire avec plus d'attention il avait purifié sa milice fasciste bien avant la «marche sur Rome» qui n'existe que dans la légende, et que depuis lors il a toujours continué à la nettoyer. Ces dernières semaines précisément, il semble avoir repris cette activité avec un zèle particulier, car de manière générale on explique le transport en Afrique d'importants contingents de milice par les difficultés qui seraient nées pour Mussolini au sein de celle-ci. Il semble s'agir cette fois de l'épuration la plus vaste qui ait jamais été entreprise.

Pendant mon séjour en Italie, je n'ai pas pu apprendre assez sur les événements internes dans la milice fasciste pour pouvoir déterminer l'ampleur des conflits nés en son sein et leurs causes. Toutefois, les écueils se dessinent nettement. Mussolini réussira-t-il à les contourner?

Pour le moment, il semble que son navire y soit lancé à toute allure, à moins qu'il ne s'échoue auparavant sur les écueils financiers ou sur les rochers d'Abyssinie.

VII^e Congrès mondial de l'Internationale communiste
Discussion sur le rapport d'activité du Comité exécutif de
l'Internationale communiste
Onzième séance (31 juillet – après midi)¹

Camarade FURINI (Italie) – Camarades, le rapport du camarade Pieck a une importance historique car il fixe la ligne de notre action dans la période actuelle et dans celle où se préparent des événements décisifs pour la sorte de l'humanité. Les parties critiques et autocritiques du rapport du camarade Pieck sont particulièrement importantes. (*Applaudissements*). C'est par la critique et l'autocritique que les organismes de l'Internationale communiste ont pu diriger d'une main ferme toutes les sections. Nous ne pouvons pas en dire autant de la direction de l'Internationale communiste des jeunes qui est, jusqu'à ce moment, la seule section de l'Internationale communiste qui n'ait pas senti la nécessité politique de faire son autocritique.

Le camarade Pieck a traité le problème: collaboration ou lutte de classe, pour dévoiler l'essence de la politique social-démocrate. Nous croyons qu'il n'est pas superflu de traiter le même problème à l'égard de la politique du fascisme. Car il ne faut pas croire que le contenu bourgeois et réactionnaire de la politique fasciste est clair aux yeux de toutes les masses. L'expérience démontre que la question de la conquête des masses décisives n'est pas toujours circonscrite à la conquête des ouvriers social-démocrates, qu'elle doit être élargie à la conquête des ouvriers qui subissent encore l'influence du fascisme ainsi qu'aux autres couches des masses travailleuses.

Voici ce qu'a dit le VI^e Congrès de l'Internationale communiste sur le fascisme:

Le trait caractéristique du fascisme est qu'au moment de l'ébranlement du régime économique capitaliste et en raison des circonstances objectives et subjectives, la bourgeoisie profite de mécontentement de la petite et moyenne bourgeoisie urbaine et rurale et

¹ *La Correspondance Internationale*, n. 100, 27 octobre 1935.

même de certaines couches du prolétariat déclassé pour créer un mouvement de masse contre-révolutionnaire afin de barrer la route au développement de la révolution.

Et encore:

Le fascisme réalise un nouveau type d'Etat s'appuyant ouvertement sur la violence, la contrainte et la corruption non seulement des couches petites-bourgeoises, mais aussi de certains éléments de la classe ouvrière.

En effet, si un des éléments essentiels du fascisme est la violence terroriste réactionnaire, une de ses caractéristiques est qu'il représente un mouvement de masse qui touche, dans une mesure et dans des formes différentes, toutes les couches de la population. C'est pour ne pas avoir suffisamment tenu compte de cela que nous avons commis une série d'erreurs.

Lorsque nous parlons de l'influence du fascisme, nous nous reportons à l'influence directe du fascisme, c'est-à-dire au fait qu'il y a des masses fascistes, mais aussi à l'influence indirecte, à savoir qu'il y a des masses qui ne sont pas fascistes, mais qui pensent ou bien que le fascisme a fait ce que tout autre régime serait contraint de faire, ou bien encore que le fascisme finira par donner quelque chose de ce qu'il promet, etc.

Lorsqu'on parle de l'influence du fascisme, nous pensons aussi à la Sarre. Camarades allemands, nul plus que nous n'est en mesure de comprendre l'importance mondiale de votre lutte héroïque contre cette vague de sauvagerie réactionnaire qui dépasse tout ce qui était connu en Europe jusqu'à maintenant. Mais, camarades, lorsque vous affirmez que le fascisme n'a pas d'influence parmi la classe ouvrière, permettez-moi de vous dire que nous ne vous comprenons pas bien. Comment le fascisme aurait-il pu vaincre en Allemagne sans une pareille influence? Comment pourrait-il garder le pouvoir?

Voyez-vous, en Italie, il y a quelques années, Mussolini lui-même a reconnu, tout comme votre canaille de Goebbels, que la classe ouvrière n'était pas avec le fascisme. Et nous avons écrit dans les thèses du IV^e Congrès de notre parti que le fascisme a fait des grands efforts pour se lier avec la classe ouvrière, mais que ses efforts ne lui ont apporté aucun résultat.

Eh bien, nous n'avons commencé à faire des progrès sérieux dans la conquête des masses que lorsque nous avons compris que cette thèse était fausse. Nous avons toujours insisté sur les différences entre l'Allemagne et l'Italie. Mais qu'on nous permette de souligner aussi les analogies.

Le fascisme au pouvoir se démasque, c'est vrai. Mais le processus n'est pas aussi direct que certains camarades pourraient le croire. Le fascisme au pouvoir dispose aussi de beaucoup de moyens (dont la violence est le principal, mais non pas le seul) qui influent même sur l'orientation des grandes masses.

Je voudrais débarrasser le terrain d'une double légende.

Il y a des camarades qui pensent que le fascisme est arrivé au pouvoir en Italie parce que le prolétariat italien n'a pas lutté. En réalité, le prolétariat italien a lutté héroïquement et en grandes masses durant des années. Il a fait un grand nombre de grèves générales, mené des luttes armées. Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas réussi à battre le fascisme? On répond habituellement: Parce qu'il n'y avait pas encore de parti communiste et que la social-démocratie a mené le prolétariat à la défaite. Tout cela est vraie. Mais c'est loin d'être suffisant.

Qu'aurait dû faire un fort parti communiste? Oui, le prolétariat italien a lutté, mais sa faiblesse essentielle a été son isolement des couches travailleuses qui auraient dû être ses alliées et qui, au contraire, étaient acquises au fascisme. La condition fondamentale de la victoire aurait donc dû être une vaste politique de regroupement de toutes les masses travailleuses. Cela donne toute la signification, tout le sens politique de l'admirable action qui mène en cette période notre parti frère de France et qui a si bien exposée à cette tribune par notre camarade Cachin.

Un autre aspect de la légende c'est qu'en Italie, nous n'aurions pas immédiatement repris la lutte après l'arrivée du fascisme au pouvoir. C'est faux. Dans un rapport de l'Internationale communiste des Jeunes, distribué ici, il est dit de notre Fédération des Jeunesses qu'elle a été dominée pendant une certaine période par la conception qu'il est impossible de lutter contre le fascisme.

Nous protestons contre cela de la façon la plus catégorique. Il y a des dizaines de dirigeants de la jeunesse qui ont été condamnés à 10 ou 20

années de prison, et en outre des centaines de jeunes militants ont reçu en moyenne cinq années de prison. Il en est de même pour le parti. On peut compter par milliers ses militants emprisonnés. Et les déviations dont on parle dans le rapport de l'Internationale des Jeunes ont toujours été énergiquement combattues et étaient loin d'être dominantes.

Nous nous élevions contre cette illusion qu'il suffit de lutter et de se battre n'importe comment contre le fascisme. Nous démontrions qu'une lutte héroïque ne suffit pas pour empêcher la victoire du fascisme ou pour le renverser, si cette lutte n'est pas menée de façon à nous lier non seulement à une avant-garde mais aux plus grandes masses et à créer un mouvement large, efficace.

Nous avons en Italie un régime fasciste totalitaire, qui d'une façon ou d'une autre groupe tout un réseau d'organisations de grandes masses. Et ces organisations constituent un terrain d'action réel pour amorcer un travail dans les masses.

Or, nous avons parlé pendant longtemps d'utiliser ces possibilités «légalistes», de travailler dans les organisations de masse du fascisme, mais ce travail ne se faisait pas. Pourquoi? Parce que nous l'avons considéré non comme tâche centrale de notre travail de masse, mais comme une tâche parmi beaucoup d'autres.

Et nous avons mis au centre de notre attention les problèmes d'organisation sans comprendre qu'il est impossible de résoudre nos problèmes d'organisation en dehors d'une juste politique de masse.

Est-ce que cela veut dire que notre action n'a compté pour rien en Italie après l'illégalité totale? Non, une telle opinion serait une opinion opportuniste, et non pas une autocritique sérieuse.

Nous avons participé à des luttes de masse, nous en avons même déclenché, mais à un certain moment nous nous trouvions détachés des masses. Il s'agit de luttes qui englobaient des milliers d'ouvriers. Il y avait aussi des luttes spontanées qui parfois prenaient, dans les campagnes, un caractère violent, insurrectionnel dans quelques cas. Chaque fois dans ces mouvements se produisaient, nous avions tendance à penser: «Ça y est. Cette fois vraiment le fascisme est profondément ébranlé». Tous ces

mouvements ont porté évidemment des coups au fascisme. Mais nous les avons souvent surestimés et avons lancé des mots d'ordre qui ne répondaient pas à la situation.

Nous n'avons fait un progrès décisif que lorsque nous avons compris que l'activité dans les organisations de masse légales devait être non pas un côté, mais le point central de notre travail de masse.

Il serait faux d'opposer le travail à l'usine au travail dans les organisations de masse.

La réalité, c'est que nous ne sommes jamais arrivés si largement aux usines que depuis que nous travaillons sérieusement dans les organisations de masse fascistes.

La lutte révolutionnaire exige des larges liaisons avec les masses. Tout ce qui sert à nous lier aux masses est juste; tout ce qui nous éloigne des masses est erroné.

Notre organisation clandestine, notre activité souterraine, la diffusion de la presse illégale du parti sont des conditions nécessaires pour mener une action dans les organisations de masse élargies; mais on ne touche pas les masses au jour le jour seulement avec cela.

Pour influencer les masses au jour le jour, il faut un travail long, patient, opiniâtre; il faut conquérir des points d'appui à la base des organisations de masse.

Notre camarade Ercoli écrivait en 1931:

Il n'existe pas une profonde différence entre un groupe du parti et un groupe syndical, si ce dernier agit seulement comme un groupe de propagande syndicale. La différence commence à être profonde seulement si le groupe syndical réussit à mener en fait une activité syndicale quotidienne.

Mais une activité syndicale quotidienne est impossible si on n'utilise pas les possibilités légales. Les possibilités légales dont je parle ne consistent pas tellement dans la «loi» fasciste que dans certaines caractéristiques générales du fascisme, dans la tendance qui est permanente chez lui de se créer une base de masse, dans la démagogie sociale à laquelle il a recours.

Nous n'avons pas apprécié à leur juste valeur ces directives du chef de notre parti. Pendant longtemps, on mettait l'accent non pas sur la nécessité de donner une grande envergure à ce travail, mais sur le danger opportuniste qui pouvait en découler. Le résultat a été ce qu'il pouvait être. Toutes les résistances s'abritaient derrière les dangers. Ces résistances existaient dans le parti jusque dans ses organismes dirigeants. En criant au danger on ne faisait pas le travail.

Les résistances ont été surmontées dans notre parti, il y a un an seulement. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que même à l'heure actuelle il n'en existe pas des restes.

Quelques mots, maintenant, sur la façon dont nous travaillons en Italie. Je prendrai l'exemple d'une organisation d'une localité industrielle assez importante. Dans cette localité, nous avions il y a quelques années un comité du parti.

Dans une usine, notre cellule, composée de jeunes camarades, a su se lier avec des ouvriers catholiques, avec la majorité des ouvriers fascistes et de vieux ouvriers socialisants, sur la base de la lutte pour les revendications immédiates économiques menée en utilisant le syndicat fasciste. Dans une autre usine nous avons mobilisé toute la masse, par la même méthode, en un front unique avec les socialistes, en réussissant à avoir quelques victoires sur les revendications posées. Dans une troisième usine, où la masse était plus arriérée, nous avons été obligés de lutter avec de méthodes encore plus simples, et pour de toutes petites revendications.

Je vous ai cité des exemples de résistance contre la réduction des salaires. Mais, dans les derniers mois, ont commencé des luttes pour l'augmentation des salaires.

Un autre résultat important: à la suite de la pression des masses influencées par l'action du parti, les dirigeants fascistes ont été obligés d'abolir le système Bedeaux qui avait institué une rationalisation féroce, haïe des ouvriers.

De notre travail a surgi le problème: devons-nous lutter pour la démocratie intérieure dans les organisations de masse?

Nous pensons que ce mot d'ordre est excellent pour lier nos revendications immédiates économiques à nos revendications immédiates politiques.

En même temps nous avons repoussé le mot d'ordre proposé par quelques camarades: «Nous exigeons l'élection de représentants ouvriers dans les corporations centrales!». Nous l'avons repoussé, car cela ne nous aurait pas donné une possibilité de plus de liaison avec les masses, une possibilité de plus de travailler parmi elles, et aurait contribué à déplacer l'attention des masses des problèmes immédiats de leur vie, de l'usine, des organisations sur lesquelles ils peuvent influencer, vers des organismes qui sont loin des masses.

Le rapprochement avec les ouvriers fascistes et avec les nouveaux cadres de la classe ouvrière qui se forment dans les organisations fascistes, nous a fait poser un autre problème: celui du front unique avec les travailleurs fascistes. Nous l'avons résolu dans un sens affirmatif, car le front unique pour les revendications immédiates avec les travailleurs fascistes atteint le système en un point particulièrement sensible.

Dans le cours des luttes dans les usines, nous nous sommes liés avec les ouvriers socialistes partout où nous avons travaillé. Or, malgré tout cela, il y a encore chez nous beaucoup de sectarisme.

Les résistances socialistes à une véritable action commune sont encore grandes. Nous ne trouvons pas dans le pays de véritables organisations socialistes; en générale, nous trouvons des socialistes isolés. Et ce n'est pas sans importance qu'un petit groupe de socialistes qui est appelé: «Rédaction du pays» de la revue du parti socialiste, ait publiquement exprimé une opinion très ferme au sujet du front unique, en contradiction avec la rédaction à l'étranger de cette même revue qui combattait d'une façon insidieuse le front unique.

Le Conseil général à l'étranger du parti socialiste vient de prendre une décision qui consolide l'unité d'action, ce qui prouve une fois de plus la pression des ouvriers socialistes.

Camarades, je n'ai pas encore parlé de la guerre contre l'Abyssinie car nous avons tenu à vous mettre au courant de nos expériences essentielles;

nous en parlerons, du reste, plus largement plus tard. Mais la guerre du fascisme en Abyssinie va commencer, et ce fait créera une situation nouvelle où le parti sera appelé à de très grandes tâches.

Déjà on observe une situation de tension plus grande dans le pays. La guerre est extrêmement impopulaire. Les difficultés de tout ordre viennent seulement de commencer. L'inflation aura des répercussions très grandes parmi la petite bourgeoisie urbaine qui est la base de masse la plus large du fascisme. Nous devons nous préparer aux plus grandes tâches en nous rendant compte que non seulement cela ne diminue en rien l'importance de notre politique de masse par l'utilisation des possibilités légales, mais que cela en augmente l'importance car c'est dans ces organisations que doit se manifester la crise la plus grave du fascisme dans ses liaisons avec les masses.

Les illusions sur la guerre sont nombreuses parmi les masses et même dans le parti, et nous les combattons énergiquement en en expliquant l'erreur. En particulier, la théorie de la spontanéité qui fait espérer que le fascisme s'écroulera de lui-même par la guerre et que c'est donc bien que la guerre vienne. Il y a là toutes les variétés de déviation.

Je vais ici, camarades, dire un mot pour remercier le Comité mondial de la lutte contre le fascisme et la guerre de l'aide qu'il nous apporte et particulièrement je vais rendre hommage au camarade Barbusse pour l'infatigable activité qu'il déploie dans la lutte contre la guerre en Abyssinie.

L'élargissement de notre front de lutte, l'introduction dans notre propagande et agitation d'éléments nouveau pour la solution des problèmes qui se posent devant les masses travailleuses non prolétariennes, a déjà eu des répercussions, par exemple sur certains éléments anciens démocrates.

Quelle perspective avons-nous dans notre pays? Il y a quelques années le misérable contre-révolutionnaire Trotski présentait pour l'Italie cette perspective que c'est de la petite bourgeoisie, d'une position «antifasciste» de la grande bourgeoisie elle-même, qu'il fallait attendre le salut. Cette thèse a été détruite par les faits. C'est le prolétariat guidé par le parti communiste qui tient la tête de la lutte et qui commence à grouper autour de lui toutes les couches mécontentes de la population.

Camarades, pour conclure, deux mots sur les résultats du travail de notre parti dans ces dernières années. Quels en sont les résultats? Nous avons commis beaucoup d'erreurs, mais notre parti est depuis neuf ans le seul parti qui lutte contre le fascisme sans un moment de répit, en puisant toujours dans la classe ouvrière des nouvelles forces qui comblent les brèches faites dans les rangs de l'ennemi.

Nous avons sauvé beaucoup plus que le drapeau de la classe ouvrière. Nos militants dans le pays, par leurs sacrifices, par leur lutte incessante, ont sauvé l'avenir, ont préparé la victoire future.

Pendant des années, les masses ont vu en nous le seul parti à la pointe du combat antifasciste, mais elles ne nous connaissaient que peu comme les dirigeants de leurs propres luttes quotidiennes.

Aujourd'hui, nous marchons en colonnes grandissantes sur la grande route. Et nous ferons notre devoir jusqu'au bout.

(La salle se lève et applaudit longuement. La délégation allemande lance par trois fois un vigoureux Rot Front! La délégation espagnole crie «Hourra!» et lance son cri d'allégresse Tric-Trac).

L'APPELLO DELL'INTERNAZIONALE¹

Nel momento in cui Mussolini completa l'ammassamento delle sue truppe in vista di un attacco imminente contro l'Abissinia,

in cui la guerra, prima ancora d'essere dichiarata, ha già riempito gli ospedali di ammalati e messo in lutto tante famiglie,

l'Internazionale insiste presso le sue Sezioni sulla necessità che vi è di ricordare incessantemente, alla luce dei presenti avvenimenti, che per la sua stessa natura, per le conseguenze ineluttabili della sua politica di forza, il FASCISMO È LA GUERRA.

Sono tre le potenze dispotiche – la Germania, il Giappone e l'Italia – che insidiano la pace del mondo. Mentre i preparativi di guerra della Germania minacciano la pace in Europa, mentre il Giappone sviluppa in Cina il suo vergognoso brigantaggio, l'Italia, dopo aver ridotto in schiavitù il suo popolo, parte in guerra col pretesto di liquidare la schiavitù in Etiopia e calpestando una mezza dozzina di trattati solennemente conclusi, si dispone ad iniziare una cinica guerra di conquista.

Anche in quest'ora tragica, l'Internazionale tiene a dichiarare che non bisogna disperare della pace. Bisogna, al contrario, raddoppiare gli sforzi per salvarla. In nessun caso l'Internazionale si rassegnerà alla guerra, neppure se concepita come un mezzo di liberazione del popolo italiano.

I. – L'Internazionale invita le sue Sezioni a servirsi di tutti i mezzi politici a loro disposizione per indurre i governi al compimento dei loro doveri come membri della S.d.N. mettendo fine alla deplorable carenza dell'organismo di Ginevra e obbligando:

a) a trarre dall'aggressione mussoliniana le conseguenze che comporta, ed a prendere le misure previste dal Covenant per salvaguardare la pace, chiudendo, eventualmente, il Canale di Suez al traffico di guerra italiano;

¹ *Il Nuovo Avanti*, n. 33, 24 agosto 1935.

b) a provocare un arbitrato che non sia una derisione, come nel caso attuale in cui non è consentito neppure di ricercare a chi apparteneva il territorio sul quale si è prodotto l'incidente di frontiera di Ual-Ual;

c) ad assicurare all'Abissinia l'indipendenza e l'integrità territoriale che gli è stata garantita con l'art. 10 del Patto, opponendosi alla spartizione dell'Etiopia in zone d'influenza o al protettorato di una grande potenza.

II. – Ogni Sezione dell'Internazionale deve impegnarsi con tutti i mezzi politici di cui dispone per far cessare lo scandalo che costituisce il libero approvvigionamento in armi e munizioni dell'aggressore, mentre si rifiutano i mezzi più elementari di difesa allo Stato attaccato.

In modo particolare le Sezioni debbono vigilare affinché non sia accordato alcun aiuto finanziario al delitto fascista. D'altronde l'Italia democratica e socialista, l'Italia di domani, ha solennemente proclamato che non riconoscerà i debiti contrattati da Mussolini.

III. – L'I.O.S. ha già preso contatto con la Federazione Sindacale Internazionale per ricercare in comune i mezzi coi quali il proletariato mondiale potrà opporsi efficacemente alla guerra.

SE MALGRADO TUTTO LA GUERRA SCOPPIASSE, L'I.O.S. PARLANDO A NOME DEI LAVORATORI DI TUTTI I PAESI, HA FIDUCIA CHE LA POPOLAZIONE LAVORATRICE D'ITALIA PERVENGA AD UTILIZZARNE LE RIPERCUSSIONI PER ABBATTERE IL VERO NEMICO DEL POPOLO ITALIANO, CHE NON SI TROVA AD ADDIS-ABEBA MA A ROMA.

L'I.O.S. INVIA AGLI OPERAI ED AI CONTADINI D'ITALIA CHE MUSSOLINI HA RICHIAMATO PER MANDARLI IN AFRICA, IL SALUTO FRATERNO DEI LAVORATORI DEL MONDO E DICE LORO: LE ARMI CHE IL FASCISMO VI METTE NELLE MANI VOLGETELE CONTRO I TIRANNI FASCISTI.

L'I.O.S. saluta i popoli etiopici ed in generale i popoli di colore che simpatizzano con loro e spera che, alleati al proletariato del mondo intero, essi riusciranno a spezzare le catene del feudalesimo, senza che gli sfruttatori feudali del loro paese siano sostituiti dagli sfruttatori capitalisti esteri.

Infine l'Internazionale attira solennemente l'attenzione dei lavoratori del mondo intero e di tutti i partigiani della pace, sui contraccolpi profondi che la guerra dell'Italia contro l'Abissinia, le eventuali concessioni che dessero a Mussolini delle soddisfazioni incompatibili con l'indipendenza dell'Abissinia, e la carenza della S.d.N., rischiano di avere in Europa, fra l'altro per l'incoraggiamento che apporterebbero alla Germania hitleriana.

Rivolgendo un appello al mondo di sollevarsi contro l'avventura sanguinosa nella quale Mussolini si appresta a precipitare l'Italia, l'I.O.S. non difende soltanto i diritti dell'Abissinia e gli interessi reali del popolo italiano, ma difende la causa della pace mondiale.

La responsabilità della guerra ricadrebbe, con tutto il suo peso, sulle classi e sui governi capitalisti, e in primo luogo sulle grandi potenze occidentali senza delle quali la Società delle Nazioni non potrà mai assolvere il compito che gli incombe.

Dinanzi a questo stato di cose l'Internazionale invita la classe operaia a fare tutto ciò che è in suo potere per salvare la pace.

**La guerre ne peut être empêchée que par les efforts conjugués
de la France, de l'Angleterre et de l'U.R.S.S.**

**Sans attendre la réunion du Conseil de la Société des Nations
les trois puissances intéressées au maintien de la paix doivent offrir
à l'Italie une procédure réelle, sincère et entière d'arbitrage**

**SI L'ITALIE L'ACCEPTE L'ESPOIR DE LA PAIX EST
RETABLI.**

**SI MUSSOLINI LA REFUSE IL SE DESIGNERA LUI-
MEME DEFINITIVEMENT COMME L'AGGRESSEUR¹**

Sur le plan gouvernemental, la guerre ne peut plus être arrêtée que par une exacte coordination d'efforts entre la France et l'Angleterre d'une part, et entre la France et la Russie soviétique de l'autre.

Par quel acte précis peut se manifester, à l'heure présente, l'effort coordonné des gouvernements anglais, soviétique et français? En première lieu, par une offre impérative d'arbitrage signifiée simultanément à l'Ethiopie et à l'Italie.

Je n'ignore pas qu'une soi-disant procédure d'arbitrage est dès à présent en cours. Le Conseil de la S.D.N. l'a remise en train pendant sa dernière session, et un super-arbitre, M. Politis, vient même d'être choisie il y a quelques jours à peine. Il est impossible de la prendre au sérieux un seul instant. Elle est viciée d'avance par le contrat qui a défini la mission des arbitres. Il ne s'agit plus, dans les circonstances actuelles, de déterminer qui est le responsable de l'incident des frontières de Oual-Oual – tâche impossible, d'ailleurs puisqu'il n'entre même pas dans le mandat arbitral, tel que la S.D.N. et l'Ethiopie elle-même l'ont défini, de rechercher si l'affaire s'est engagée en territoire éthiopien ou en territoire italien. Nous sommes aujourd'hui trop loin du compte et les événements ont marché plus vite que l'arbitrage. Il ne peut s'agir désormais que d'une procédure réelle, sincère, entière, portant plénitude de juridiction internationale, évoquant le litige dans sa substance et dans sa totalité en tenant compte de tous les

¹ *Le Populaire*, n. 4.575, 22 août 1935.

intérêts en cause, aboutissant à une solution complète de conciliation et de transaction sans humiliation ni désaveu pour aucune des parties, substituant par conséquent un règlement de droit politique à l'action de force.

C'est assurément ce qu'a entendu la résolution de Bruxelles, quand elle invite tous les partis affiliés à l'I.O.S. «à assurer un arbitrage qui ne soit pas une dérision comme c'est le cas actuel». On nous dira: mais cela c'est l'affaire de la S.D.N. qui se réunira le 4 septembre et non pas d'un trio de puissances sans qualité et sans mandat. Je réponds simplement que d'ici le 4 septembre deux semaines encore vont s'écouler et que le péril est aggravé par chaque jour qui passe. Une initiative anglo-franco-soviétique blessera peut-être les formes, mais elle répondra sans nul doute à l'esprit du pacte. Je ne m'avance guère en affirmant qu'une fois la S.D.N. réunie, il ne se trouvera pas une voix, soit au Conseil, soit à l'Assemblée pour formuler un reproche. Bien loin de là, la S.D.N. marquera sa gratitude aux puissances plus diligentes qui, devant l'imminence du danger, auront anticipé sur ses résolutions.

L'Italie mussolinienne acceptera ou rejettera l'offre d'arbitrage réel. Si elle accepte – ce que je souhaite de toute ma force – c'est la table rase: ses fautes sont réparées, ses crimes sont oubliés, du moins ces crimes-là; la conscience universelle qui la désigne d'ores et déjà coupable redevint impartiale; l'espoir de la paix est rétabli. Si elle refuse, elle porte alors contre elle-même un témoignage irrécusable; elle se désigne et se marque elle-même définitivement comme l'agresseur. Combien de fois ai-je rappelé ici la conception de Jaurès partiellement reprise à Genève par Litvinov suivant laquelle le refus d'arbitrage au seuil d'un litige formait le signe infaillible de l'agression?

Le Cabinet britannique se réunit aujourd'hui même à Londres, les ministres, rappelés en hâte de tous de tous les coins de l'Angleterre et d'Europe, vont délibérer sur la situation créée par le «fiasco» de Paris et arrêter leurs mesures. L'I.O.S. leur a désigné celle qui s'impose la première:

réintégrer le litige italo-éthiopien dans un cadre de justice internationale,
appliquer l'arbitrage comme prévention de la guerre.

LEON BLUM

PEACE AND WAR¹

This Congress expresses the grave apprehension of the organised workers to the serious danger of the present international situation and to the increasing preparations that are being made for war.

It affirms that the maintenance of democratic institutions is an essential factor in the preservation of peace, and records its conviction that the existence of Fascist dictatorships, notably in Italy and Germany, have fostered the spirit of militarism and fomented national antagonisms, which gravely imperil the peace of the world.

The Congress condemns the attitude of those Governments which have refused to use effectively the machinery of the League of Nations in the settlement of disputes between nations, as instanced by the aggressive actions of Japan in the Far East, and that of Italy against the Abyssinian people.

Congress reaffirms its policy, outlined in 1934 at Weymouth, and declares its resolute faith in a collective peace system operating within the League of Nations, and its determination to take all appropriate action to make that system a reality.

Congress reiterates its demand for practical and adequate measures of disarmament, and for the establishment of an international agreement for the supervision of the manufacture, sale and transport of arms and munitions, and for the suppression of the private manufacture of arms. It calls upon the British Government to take the initiative, through the League of Nations, to convene a new Conference of all nations concerned, in order that this purpose may be achieved.

Finally, the Congress instructs the General Council, in conjunction with the National Council of Labour, to watch closely the development of events in order that, should emergency arise, such measures may be taken, in consultation with the affiliated organisations, as may be necessary to deal with the situation.

¹ Report of Proceedings at the 67th Annual Trades Union Congress Held at Margate September 2nd to 6th 1935, London: Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 1935.

Declaration on the International Crisis.

This Congress, in full accord with the views expressed by organised Labour wherever freedom of expression exists, is gravely disturbed by the violation of the law of nations threatened by Italy under Fascist domination in preparing a war of conquest upon Abyssinia. The Congress declares its profound conviction that such violation of the sanctity of international treaties is destructive of the foundations of civilisation.

It condemns in the strongest terms the provocative and defiant attitude of the Head of the Italian Government towards the League of Nations. It appeals to the Italian people to honour their pledges to abandon war as an instrument of policy and their acceptance of responsibility jointly with all other members of the League for the maintenance of peace.

United and determined in its opposition to the policy of Imperialist aggression, this Congress calls upon the British Government in co-operation with other nations represented at the Council and Assembly of the League, to use all the necessary measures provided by the Covenant to prevent Italy's unjust and rapacious attack upon the territory of a fellow member of the League. The Congress pledges its firm support of any action consistent with the principles and statutes of the League to restrain the Italian Government and to uphold the authority of the League in enforcing peace.

While resolute in refusing to countenance any resort to war in flagrant violation of international treaties, or to permit Italy to profit by any act of aggression, this Congress recognises the imperative necessity of eradicating the evils and dangers arising from the economic exploitation of colonial territories and peoples for the profit of imperialist and capitalist Powers and groups.

We, therefore, call upon the British Government to urge the League of Nations to summon a World Economic Conference, and to place upon its Agenda the international control of the sources and supply of raw materials, with the Application of the principle of economic equality of opportunity for all nations in the undeveloped regions of the earth.

1935 Labour Party General Election Manifesto The Labour Party's call to power¹

[...]

The international situation

The Government has a terrible responsibility for the present international situation. It did nothing to check the aggression of Japan in the Far East, and thus seriously discredited the League of Nations and undermined the Collective Peace System.

It has wrecked the Disarmament Conference by resisting all the constructive proposals made by other States. As regards air armaments, in particular, Lord Londonderry has boasted that he succeeded, though with great difficulty, in preventing an agreement for the complete abolition of all national air forces.

The Government has helped to restart the arms race, and it failed to make Signor Mussolini understand that, if he broke the peace in Africa, Britain would join with other nations in upholding the authority of the League.

Too late to stop the war, the Government ranged itself at the eleventh hour behind the Covenant at Geneva. Even so, its action has been slow and half-hearted. Whilst paying lip-service to the League it is planning a vast and expensive rearmament programme, which will only stimulate similar programmes elsewhere. This Government is a danger to the peace of the world and to the security of the country.

Labour's peace policy

The Labour Party calls for a reversal of this suicidal foreign policy. It seeks wholehearted co-operation with the League of nations and with all States outside the League which desire peace. It stands firmly for the Collective Peace System. It demands speedy action, through the League, to

¹ Labour Party's annual conference, Brighton, October 1935.

bring the war in Africa to an end, to be followed by an immediate resumption of negotiations for all-round disarmament.

Labour will efficiently maintain such defence forces as are necessary and consistent with our membership of the League; the best defence is not huge competitive national armaments, but the organisation of collective security against any aggressor and the agreed reduction of national armaments everywhere.

Labour will propose to other nations the complete abolition of all national air forces, the effective international control of civil aviation and the creation of an international air police force; large reductions by international agreement in naval and military forces; and the abolition of the private manufacture of, and trade in, arms.

A Labour Government would also seek full international co-operation in economic and industrial questions, with a view to increasing trade and raising standards of living throughout the world, and removing the economic causes of war, through equitable arrangements for access to markets, for the international control of sources of supply of raw materials, and for the extension of the mandate system for colonial territories.

[...]

L'APPELLO DEL CONGRESSO¹

Rappresentanti dei lavoratori d'Italia, dei partiti della democrazia e della classe operaia italiana, di associazioni di emigrati italiani d'Europa e d'America, designati da centinaia di migliaia di italiani d'ogni età, sesso, d'ogni condizione sociale e di ogni opinione politica o religiosa, sparsi per il mondo o reduci dalle carceri e dalle isole fasciste;

in cospetto della rappresentanza dell'Internazionale Operaia Socialista, dell'Internazionale Comunista e delle organizzazioni internazionali, venute a portare al popolo italiano il solidale appoggio del proletariato mondiale in lotta contro il fascismo e contro la guerra;

ci siamo riuniti il 12 e 13 ottobre 1935 nella sala Matteotti della «Maison du Peuple» di Bruxelles, in un Congresso degli Italiani, per dichiarare alto e forte l'angoscia del popolo italiano di fronte alla guerra scatenata il 3 ottobre, e la sua volontà di pace; per dire ai nostri fratelli soldati in Italia e in Etiopia, e agli Italiani tutti, una parola che susciti nei loro spiriti un incrollabile proposito d'azione contro la guerra; per separare, davanti all'opinione pubblica mondiale, la responsabilità del popolo italiano da quella del fascismo, il quale sta consumando contro l'indipendenza del popolo etiopico e contro l'umanità il più abbominevole delitto.

La guerra iniziata in Africa il 3 ottobre non è guerra dell'Italia, ma del fascismo.

Essa è la conclusione di tredici anni di una folle politica liberticida di asservimento delle masse ad un pugno di sfruttatori e di profittatori, politica che — dopo aver tentato invano l'ultima sua giustificazione con una inconsistente esperienza corporativa — cerca uno sbocco nella esasperazione dello sciovinismo, seguendo così il destino di tutte le dittature capitaliste e militariste le quali, dopo aver creduto di risolvere o di eludere le crisi politiche ed economiche, da cui furono portate al potere, con l'assassinio della libertà, si lusingano poi di poter coprire o allontanare

¹ *Avanti!*, n. 14, 20 ottobre 1935; *Nuovo avanti*, n. 41, 19 ottobre 1935; *L'idea popolare*, n. 2, 19 ottobre 1935.

l'inevitabile fallimento sotto gli allori insanguinati di effimere vittorie militari.

La guerra lungi dal risolvere i problemi del pane e del lavoro, riduce i lavoratori ad una più grande miseria, getta in un baratro di sangue le già stremate risorse del paese, crea nuove servitù aggravando la stretta degli egoismi capitalisti, falciando sulle aride e inclementi ambe africane il fiore della gioventù italiana.

Già per la breccia aperta dal cannone fascista si affacciano tutti gli appetiti e i contrasti imperialisti e sulle orme fasciste si preparano a marciare tutte le forze reazionarie che in Germania ed altrove covano un odio mortale contro l'Unione Sovietica e verso ciò che sopravvive delle libertà democratiche.

Di fronte agli uomini e di fronte alla storia, noi dichiariamo che il fascismo è il solo responsabile della guerra, delle sue conseguenze e delle sue complicazioni. Il fascismo ha disonorato l'Italia rompendo con le migliori tradizioni del suo popolo il quale ha sempre aiutato tutte le lotte di libertà e di indipendenza nazionale; ha esposto l'Italia al disprezzo universale rompendo i patti di pacifica convivenza tra i popoli e tradendo la parola data del rispetto dell'indipendenza abissina: ha fatto decidere contro l'Italia le sanzioni che la Società delle Nazioni aveva previste contro l'aggressore, ha sollevato la riprovazione del mondo civile coi bombardamenti aerei di popolazioni indifese.

In queste condizioni, lottare contro la guerra africana, imporre con tutti i mezzi la cessazione immediata, significa lottare per la salvezza del popolo italiano, significa evitare all'umanità una spaventosa catastrofe.

Noi dichiariamo pertanto solennemente che il Congresso è fiero di mettersi alla testa di questa lotta.

Esso fa appello ai soldati, alle madri, ai lavoratori ed agli spiriti liberi d'Italia e del mondo intero, agli stessi fascisti cui la guerra rivela la vera natura della dittatura mussoliniana, per imporre *l'immediata cessazione delle ostilità ed il ritiro delle truppe dall'Etiopia.*

Esso chiede ai lavoratori d'Italia d'unirsi per organizzare la resistenza e il sabotaggio delle misure di guerra e difendere la loro vita, il loro pane, il loro avvenire.

Esso attende dalle masse emigrate uno sforzo sempre più energico contro la guerra e contro il fascismo.

Esso invoca la solidarietà di tutti i popoli fratelli e chiede alle organizzazioni operaie internazionali il boicottaggio dei rifornimenti di guerra, ed alla S.d.N. la applicazione delle sanzioni per far cessare la guerra, nella convinzione che le sanzioni economiche se saranno sollecite ed energiche, e soprattutto perché saranno potenziate dalla solidarietà operaia mondiale, potranno far piegare il regime fascista anche prima che, in conformità con la speranza terribile di Mussolini, le sanzioni militari vengano ad aggravare il pericolo di una guerra mondiale già minacciante.

Con questo spirito e questi intendimenti il Congresso delega ad un Comitato d'azione in cui siano rappresentate tutte le correnti politiche che hanno risposto al suo appello unitario, il mandato di organizzare e di stimolare sul piano nazionale ed internazionale le misure concrete della lotta, chiamando a raccolta tutto il popolo lavoratore attorno alla parola d'ordine:

**PACE IMMEDIATA CON L'ETIOPIA!
VIA MUSSOLINI!**

IL TELEGRAMMA ALLA SOCIETA' DELLE NAZIONI¹

M. BENES

Presidente della S.D.N., Ginevra.

Il Congresso degli italiani contro la guerra d'Etiopia che, nelle circostanze attuali, ha dovuto riunirsi all'estero per proclamare la sua fedeltà alla pace e alla libertà,

¹ *Avanti!*, n. 14, 20 ottobre 1935; *Nuovo avanti*, n. 41, 19 ottobre 1935; *L'idea popolare*, n. 2, 19 ottobre 1935.

riunendo in una comune volontà di lotta contro la guerra delle centinaia di delegati rappresentanti le masse popolari d'Italia e rappresentando l'opinione pubblica italiana,

constata con la più grande soddisfazione che il Consiglio della S.d.N. nella condanna dell'aggressore ha nettamente distinto le responsabilità del governo fascista da quelle del popolo italiano,

afferma che la guerra d'Africa è la guerra del fascismo e non dell'Italia, che essa è stata scatenata contro l'Etiopia e contro l'Europa senza nessuna consultazione del paese in dispregio non soltanto degli impegni solenni presi di fronte alla S.d.N. e dell'Abissinia, ma anche dei sentimenti e degli interessi reali del popolo italiano.

Certo d'interpretare il pensiero autentico del popolo italiano, il Congresso dichiara che è dovere della S.d.N., nell'interesse dell'Italia, di erigere una barriera insormontabile alla guerra e s'impegna a sostenere le misure che, per imporre la cessazione immediata delle ostilità, saranno prese sia dalla S.d.N., sia dalle organizzazioni operaie.

LA PRESIDENZA DEL CONGRESSO

“POUR LA CAUSE DU PEUPLE”

Résumé du Rapport de Maurice Thorez au Comité central du Parti communiste, le 17 octobre 1935¹

Le Comité central du Parti communiste s'est tenu les 17, 18 et 19 octobre. A son ordre du jour se trouvaient l'étude des décisions et résolutions du VII^e Congrès de l'International communiste, les problèmes de l'unité d'action, du Front populaire et de la réalisation de l'unité totale de la classe ouvrière. Notre camarade Maurice Thorez y a prononcé un important discours dont nous publions ici des extraits. Nous pouvons d'ailleurs informer nos lecteurs que le rapport de notre camarade paraîtra très prochainement en brochure.

[...]

L'agression fasciste en Abyssinie et nos tâches présentes

Mais, maintenant, en présence de l'agression du fascisme italien et du danger, d'une nouvelle guerre mondiale, quelles sont les tâches que doit fixer le Comité central?

1. – Mobiliser les masses contre le fascisme italien, contre l'agression armée, par de grandes démonstrations, de grandes manifestations. Il faut non seulement entraîner dans l'action les prolétaires, mais aussi tous les pacifistes, tous les gens de cœur et de raison.

2. – Soutenir la politique de paix de l'Union soviétique mieux que nous le faisons, faire connaître, mieux que nous le faisons, surtout dans la presse de province, les discours, comme ceux de Litvinov et de Potemkine à l'assemblée de la Société des nations, lesquels montrent la volonté de

¹ *L'Humanité*, n. 13.471, 4 novembre 1935. Il rapporto di Thorez venne pubblicato come opuscolo il 20 novembre 1935, con delle variazioni rispetto agli estratti pubblicati dall'*Humanité*: la prima frase in corsivo tra parentesi quadre non figura nella versione del quotidiano comunista, mentre tutto il brano successivo, in corsivo e tra parentesi quadre, è il testo dell'opuscolo sostitutivo del punto intitolato «A propos des sanctions militaires».

l'Union soviétique de maintenir la paix, alors que d'autres pays n'ont que le souci de défendre leurs intérêts, au détriment de la cause de la paix.

Montrer que Litvinov, dès le début, à propos des menaces contre le peuple abyssin, s'est prononcé résolument et nettement contre toute entreprise du fascisme en Ethiopie.

[C'est le contrôle des faits et des gestes de fat Société des Nations par les masses laborieuses, et avant tout leur action propre qui assurera l'indépendance absolue du peuple abyssin.]

Rappeler le discours du camarade Potemkine à propos de l'agression italienne, qui a déclaré: «*Nous, nous réprouvons toute guerre coloniale, toute entreprise de guerre coloniales.*»

Montrer enfin, l'action de tous ces militants, luttant au sein de la Société des Nations, comme une partie de notre grande lutte dans tous les pays, pour la paix, pour la cause des opprimés.

3. – *Exiger l'application du pacte de la Société des nations.*

4. – Combattre la politique de Laval et de ses soutiens fascistes sans se mettre à la remorque de l'impérialisme anglais, sans admettre les vertus que se découvre tout à coup l'impérialisme anglais, parce qu'il ne s'agit pas pour lui de la paix en général, mais des intérêts de l'impérialisme anglais, et, par conséquent, sans approuver non plus des opinions de la social-démocratie visant à mettre la classe ouvrière à la remorque de la Société des nations et misant sur l'application des sanctions par les gouvernements.

Les problèmes des sanctions et notre attitude

Quelle est donc notre attitude à propos des sanctions?

Notre Parti et l'Internationale communiste ont posé sérieusement le problème des sanctions économiques et militaires.

1. – *A propos des sanctions économiques.*

Nous avons le sentiment que l'application effective des sanctions économiques suffirait pour entraver la guerre. Mais nous savons que les gens des impérialismes sont capables de rendre ces sanctions inopérantes. *C'est*

donc la classe ouvrière, des marins, des dockers, etc... qui doit intervenir de manière à rendre effectives les sanctions contre le fascisme italien.

Maurice Thorez montre alors, à propos des sanctions militaires, toute la démagogie des fascistes au service de l'étranger mais indique combien certaines exagérations, comme la campagne des sanctions militaires faite à la remorque de l'impérialisme étranger peuvent porter un préjudice certain à la cause de la paix.

2. — A propos des sanctions militaires

Cela ne veut pas dire que dans des conditions déterminées, la menace des sanctions militaires ne soit pas nécessaire et efficace pour faire reculer l'agresseur et sauvegarder la paix.

C'est ainsi que le seul fait que nous soyons prêts à utiliser les contradictions internationales pour obtenir, dans tous les cas, la victoire des armées de l'Union soviétique et par conséquent pour défendre les intérêts des travailleurs du monde entier, signifie que l'on peut envisager contre les fauteurs de guerre la possibilité de sanctions militaires.

Mais dans le moment présent, il est opportun, nécessaire, utile à la cause de la paix de mettre le centre de gravité sur l'action des masses, sur l'action de la classe ouvrière et sur son «unité».

[Nous devons nous rendre compte que les masses ne sont pas du tout emballées pour les sanctions militaires, qu'il y a chez elles un fond de pacifisme, mêlé d'égoïsme, et qu'il existe une crainte assez justifiée d'être entraînée, par la voie des sanctions militaires, vers la guerre mondiale. C'est pourquoi les campagnes des fascistes ont obtenu un certain succès dans les masses. Et, je veux dire ici, tout de suite, qu'il faut constater, nous le verrons sur d'autres points, combien certaines exagérations socialistes nuisent à la cause de la classe ouvrière, à la cause de la Paix.

Certaines formules de Léon Blum sont malheureuses. La campagne des sanctions militaires qui est à la remorque de l'impérialisme britannique, porte un préjudice certain à la cause de la Paix!

Cela veut-il dire que nous pourrions être, dans tous les cas, nous, communistes, contre les sanctions militaires? Pas le moins du monde!

Le seul fait que nous sommes prêts à utiliser les contradictions internationales pour obtenir, dans tous les cas, la victoire des armées de l'Union Soviétique, signifie que

nous envisageons avec beaucoup de raison, avec beaucoup de calme, la possibilité d'une guerre, et par conséquent, la possibilité de sanctions militaires. Leur menace peut sauvegarder la paix.

Il est surtout nécessaire et utile à la cause de la paix de mettre l'accent sur l'action des masses de la classe ouvrière, et sur son unité!]

[...]

Il fascismo è il responsabile delle sanzioni¹

OPERAI!

LAVORATORI ANTIFASCISTI E LAVORATORI FASCISTI!

ITALIANI!

Dal 18 novembre, per colpa del fascismo, l'Italia è al bando del mondo civile.

Le sanzioni economiche, previste dalla Società delle Nazioni contro l'aggressore, contro gli Stati che rompono la pacifica convivenza dei popoli, sono applicate contro l'Italia.

È la prima volta, nella storia del mondo, che questo avviene. E la data del 18 novembre è, sì, una data di infamia, ma è una data di infamia per il governo fascista, per Mussolini, per quanti hanno voluto e preparato l'aggressione all'Abissinia. Essa sanziona, di fronte ai popoli e di fronte alla storia, le responsabilità del fascismo e del suo duce nell'attentato perpetrato contro la indipendenza di un popolo e nei bombardamenti e nelle distruzioni selvagge di popolazioni pacifiche e inermi.

È contro i responsabili della guerra, è contro il fascismo aggressore che le sanzioni sono applicate – non contro il popolo italiano.

Le sanzioni sono destinate a stroncare la guerra infame e disastrosa in cui il fascismo ha gettato l'Italia – non a soffocare economicamente il popolo italiano.

Le sanzioni, se saranno severamente e universalmente applicate, saranno la salvezza dell'Italia dalla rovina e dalla catastrofe a cui la porta Mussolini.

Ecco perché le organizzazioni operaie, la popolazione lavoratrice di tutti i paesi, i combattenti per la pace, di ogni opinione politica e religiosa sono ovunque i più tenaci e fattivi fautori delle sanzioni contro il fascismo aggressore. Essi hanno imposto ai propri governi e alla Società delle Nazioni l'applicazione delle sanzioni; essi vigilano ora perché in tutti i paesi gli amici

¹ *Avanti!*, n. 16, 1° dicembre 1935; *L'idea popolare*, n. 7, 23 novembre 1935.

dei profittatori della guerra e dei mercanti italiani di cannoni non violino, a favore di costoro, le sanzioni.

Non un soldo di credito devono trovare all'estero i fautori della guerra d'Africa!

Non un briciolo di pane, non un grammo di alimenti deve essere sottratto al consumo del popolo italiano per essere esportato e scambiato con materiale di guerra.

Non una cartuccia, non un'arma deve essere importata in Italia per continuare l'iniqua guerra africana.

OPERAI!

LAVORATORI ANTIFASCISTI E LAVORATORI FASCISTI!

ITALIANI!

Una sola passione, una sola volontà ci deve animare ed unire in questo momento tragico per il nostro paese: far finire la guerra! Questo è il grido dei nostri giovani fratelli inviati in Africa, è il grido di dolore delle madri, dei figli, delle spose rimaste in patria: è il grido di tutto il popolo lavoratore.

Solo un pugno di sfruttatori e di profittatori della guerra ha interesse che questa continui. Sono costoro che dicono che le sanzioni sono applicate per affamare il popolo italiano.

Menzogna!

È la guerra con le sue esigenze che sottrae al consumo il meglio delle risorse del nostro paese e le getta nella fabbricazione di oggetti di distruzione e di morte. Il fascismo imputava alle sanzioni, prima ancora che entrassero in vigore, le colpe della sua bancarotta finanziaria, per cui l'estero da tempo non fornisce più merci allo Stato fascista, avendo questa perduto ogni credito. Sono i profittatori di guerra, gli speculatori, gli accaparratori, i pescicani che aggravano questo stato di cose.

FINISCA LA GUERRA! – Deve essere il grido comune di noi tutti: operai, contadini ed impiegati, lavoratori antifascisti e lavoratori fascisti. La disciplina militare e bestiale che si impone nelle officine, i tribunali di guerra, il razionamento dei generi di prima necessità, le privazioni che ci sono imposte con il pretesto delle sanzioni hanno semplicemente lo scopo di

continuare la guerra, di aumentare i profitti dei pescicani e degli accaparratori, di salvare i responsabili di una imbelle politica che ha posto l'Italia sull'orlo dell'abisso e al bando del mondo civile.

Dobbiamo organizzare nelle officine, negli uffici, nelle case, la resistenza alle misure di affamamento del governo. Non dobbiamo permettere che ci sia ridotta la scarsa razione di pane, peggiorato il già miserabile tenore di vita, accresciuta la oppressione politica che ci schiaccia e che ha reso possibile la guerra.

Agitiamo le nostre sacrosante rivendicazioni nei Sindacati, nelle officine, nelle sedi delle organizzazioni fasciste, ovunque e ogni qualvolta che se ne offre la possibilità. Chiediamo con tutte le nostre voci la FINE DELLA GUERRA, la punizione dei responsabili di essa. Imponiamo il rapido rimpatrio dei nostri fratelli inviati in Africa dove la guerra e un clima micidiale li decimano. Imponiamo il ritorno degli operai che già si ammutinano per la vita infernale a cui sono costretti laggiù ed impediamo la minacciata rappresaglia contro gli operai protestatari. Così facendo, faremo opera santa per la salvezza del nostro popolo e del nostro paese.

Questa è la nostra risposta ai proclami fascisti contro le sanzioni. Questa è la parola di azione e di lotta che diamo a tutti i lavoratori, a tutti gli italiani che amano il loro paese e lo vogliono grande e rispettato nel mondo per le sue opere di pace e di civiltà.

18 novembre 1935

IL COMITATO D'AZIONE CONTRO LA GUERRA FASCISTA
IN ABISSINIA NOMINATO AL CONGRESSO DEGLI ITALIANI

DICHIARAZIONE DEL COMITATO D'AZIONE CONTRO LA GUERRA D'AFRICA¹

Il Comitato italiano d'Azione contro la guerra d'Abissinia, sicuro d'interpretare i veri interessi e i sentimenti più profondi del popolo italiano, al quale la dittatura fascista impedisce col terrore di esprimere la sua riprovazione indignata contro l'avventura sanguinosa e rovinosa per i due paesi che gli ha imposto:

protesta contro il compromesso Laval-Hoare, perché tale progetto, in luogo di metter fine al conflitto fascista-etiopico, lo perpetuerebbe aggravando i pericoli di un nuovo e più atroce cataclisma internazionale; e offrendo un premio all'aggressore distruggerebbe il principio stesso della sicurezza collettiva e incoraggiando tutti i fautori di guerra e principalmente l'hitlerismo, ad abbandonarsi alle avventure criminose che essi meditano e preparano apertamente contro la pace del mondo, senza risolvere con ciò, aggravandola anzi, la crisi che tormenta il popolo italiano.

Il Comitato italiano dichiara solennemente a tutti i popoli che sul piano nazionale il progetto Laval-Hoare, con la cessione all'Italia di territori abissini non riuscirebbe ad attenuare, ma al contrario aggraverebbe la miseria e l'oppressione politica del popolo italiano.

La dittatura fascista, nel corso degli ultimi tredici anni, ha sconvolto l'economia nazionale, gettando miliardi nell'abisso della folle impresa africana – invece di utilizzarli per fertilizzare e colonizzare i vasti latifondi del Mezzogiorno e delle isole, ancora incolti o malcoltivati – ne ha completata la rovina.

L'Italia, non possedendo i capitali necessari per colonizzare i territori che le concederebbe il progetto Laval-Hoare in Abissinia, tale colonizzazione – d'altronde impossibile per ragioni di clima – non potrebbe essere tentata che con capitali stranieri, al cui dominio sarebbe per conseguenza sottoposta tutta la vita economica del nostro paese.

¹ *Avanti!*, n. 17, 22 dicembre 1935; *L'idea popolare*, n. 11, 21 dicembre 1935.

Sul piano internazionale il compromesso Laval-Hoare non farebbe cessare la guerra in Africa, né servirebbe d'ostacolo contro il pericolo di guerre future. Infatti, da una parte il fascismo considererebbe ogni concessione territoriale come un incoraggiamento alla conquista totale e definitiva dell'Abissinia, dall'altra, il popolo etiopico continuerebbe, giustamente, a lottare sino all'estremo per difendere e riconquistare la sua indipendenza nazionale, mentre tutti gli appetiti dei regimi di preda che si sono moltiplicati in Europa in questi ultimi dieci anni attendono l'occasione propizia per scatenare la guerra.

Il popolo italiano vuole la pace vera e definitiva, non una pace ipocrita e di violenza, che distruggerebbe ogni possibilità di intesa internazionale, che prolungherebbe la guerra in Africa, che aggiungerebbe alla sua rovina economica la soggezione al capitale straniero. Per queste ragioni il comitato, in nome del popolo italiano (che da tredici anni attende e prepara il giorno in cui potrà risolvere i problemi essenziali della sua vita nazionale nella libertà, nella pace e nella collaborazione di tutti i popoli protesi nello slancio generoso verso i principi di una vera civiltà), rivolge un vivo appello a tutti i popoli perché esercitino una pressione energica sui propri governi affinché la S.D.N. respinga un compromesso che rappresenta un premio di prestigio alla dittatura fascista e non un vantaggio per il popolo italiano.

Il popolo italiano si rivolge particolarmente alle organizzazioni operaie di tutti i paesi perché, applicando le sanzioni a tutti prodotti che servono alla guerra, ne impongano la cessazione e impediscano al fascismo di far credere al popolo ingannato che le sanzioni siano dirette contro di esso, mentre servono ad arrestare la guerra.

Il Comitato saluta con commosso entusiasmo i sintomi di resistenza e di rivolta del popolo e dei soldati d'Italia contro la guerra e il fascismo che l'ha scatenata e chiama i lavoratori italiani a intensificare la lotta per gli obiettivi fissati dal congresso di Bruxelles: cessazione immediata della guerra e via Mussolini!

TROTSKYIST OPPOSITION TO I.B.R.S.U.¹

Organisations connected with the International Communist League (supporters of the «Fourth International») are making a vigorous attack in their publications on the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity. Below we give the charges – *and the facts*.

1. The Bureau is disintegrating.

The Facts: During no period of the life of the Bureau have the contacts between its sections been closer than during the last six months. Reports are regularly received and common policy and common action pursued. The Dutch R.S.A.P. has recently disaffiliated, but its difference of view on the question of the Fourth International is of long standing. This loss has been counter-balanced by strong contacts made with Revolutionary Socialist sections in many parts of the world (see page 2).

2. The Bureau has no common platform even on the question of revolutionary struggle against war.

The Facts: The Platform of revolutionary struggle against war adopted by the Conference held by the Bureau in Paris last February is the most concrete and detailed programme of action that has yet been produced (see Appendix to «What the I.L.P. Stands For», pages 21-24). The resolution adopted by the Enlarged Bureau, quoted on page 2 of this Bulletin, is unanimously supported by the sections affiliated to the Bureau. On other fundamental questions there is wholehearted agreement (see page / of this Bulletin).

3. Policy differences between the affiliated Parties are becoming greater.

The Facts: The affiliated Parties are increasingly moving towards the acceptance of a common policy on all issues. Greater unity is shown at every meeting and in every succeeding report received.

4. The Dutch R.S.A.P. alone supported the I.L.P. in opposition to League sanctions. The German S.W.P. supports the League and sanctions.

¹ *Revolutionary Socialist Bulletin. New Series*, No. 2, January 1936. Il testo è monco in quanto nelle due copie consultate l'ultima pagina era mancante.

The Facts: The last and present issues of the Bulletin show that campaigns against League sanctions have been conducted in almost every country by the Parties affiliated to the League. The Executive of the German Socialist Workers' Party write:

«It is not true that we support the League and sanctions. On the contrary, as we wrote you before, we have the same point of view as the I.L.P. and its struggle against Capitalist sanctions is ours».

5. The Swedish Socialist Party is cooling off and is likely to leave the Bureau.

The Facts: Emil Andersson, the Secretary of the Swedish Socialist Party, writes:

«On account of rumours distributed from Trotskyist quarters that the Swedish Socialist Party' connections with the I.B.R.S.U. have loosened and interest in international collaboration with it has decreased among our members, we herewith affirm that there is no ground for such statements. Our connections with the Bureau are today more intimate and more solid than they ever were. The interest of our members for [...]

Italy and Abyssinia. Should British Workers Take Sides?¹

FOR: Bob Edwards, Fenner Brockway, C. L. R. James

AGAINST: James Maxton, M.P., John McGovern, M.P., Joseph Southall

INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY 35, St. Bride Street, London,
E.C.4.

FOREWORD

THE Independent Labour Party is unitedly opposed to the injustice and folly of capitalism and the barbarity and folly of war.

The Party declares for:

1. Opposition to all wars waged by capitalist governments, whether British or foreign.

2. Refusal to support «sanctions» by any capitalist government or capitalist League of Nations, which would be essentially the manoeuvrings of one group of Imperialists against another.

3. The General Strike, given favourable conditions, against any war-making capitalist government.

4. The use of any opportunity created during a war for the overthrow of the Capitalist State and its replacement by a Workers' State aiming at the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth of Socialism.

5. Organised and co-ordinated international working-class action against capitalism, imperialism and fascism.

Whereas on these points the I.L.P. is unanimous, on one important question its members have not yet reached agreement. Ought workers in a capitalist country to attempt any action against a *foreign* imperialist Power engaged in attacking a people in a pre-capitalist stage of development? In particular, ought British workers to organise (or ought they to have

¹ *Controversy. Special Supplement*, No. 1 [may 1936].

organised) any action against the Italian Government in defence of Abyssinia?

The I.L.P. leadership (Inner Executive Committee, subsequently supported by the National Administrative Council) declared *against* this policy, whether it be described as independent working-class action, or workers' embargo, or workers' sanctions. The I.L.P. Annual Conference, Easter, 1936, declared by a narrow majority *for* such action.

In view of the situation thereby created, Conference decided to submit the question to a plebiscite of the Party membership.

The internal discussion organ of the I.L.P. is its monthly magazine, «Controversy». It was agreed that, prior to the plebiscite, a special issue of «Controversy» should include statements on this question by leading members of the Party.

In the belief that all politically-alert workers and all Socialists will be interested in this serious discussion of an urgent question, the Editor of «Controversy» has, with the permission of the National Administrative Council, issued the arguments in pamphlet form in order to make them available to the public.

BOB EDWARDS

(National Administrative Council, I.L.P.)

SINCE the I.L.P. disaffiliated from the Labour Party it has steadily moved towards the acceptance of Revolutionary Socialism. This is particularly noticeable in the development of its policy of action against war. This policy, laid down in the pamphlet, «What the I.L.P. Stands For», rejects the negative policy of pacifism and accepts the principle of turning the threat of Imperialist war into Social Revolution.

The fact, however, that this present pamphlet argues the question whether the I.L.P. should accept the principle of working-class action as against the principle of working-class neutrality, is a demonstration of the need for more clarity on this basic subject. Space does not allow its

exhaustive study; this article, therefore, is confined to the simple question of differences.

THE WAR CRISIS.

Italian Fascism, faced with recurring internal crises, impelled to cover up its failures at home by an unprovoked attack on the last independent State of Africa, prepared to face even the military strength of the British Empire, has started a movement that must react in every corner of the world. Italy's war on Ethiopia has opened up a new era of imperialist struggle to re-divide the material sources of the world. The resultant moves (already manifest) towards new alliances and counter-alliances must inevitably lead to the new world war.

The British Fleet concentrates in the Mediterranean; Japan drives against China and the Mongolian states in her preparation for war with the Soviet Union; Germany occupies the demilitarised Rhineland; Turkey moves towards the occupation of the Dardanelles; the decks are being cleared for the coming conflict. This is the situation which faces the working-class movement of the world, this is the situation which faces the I.L.P., to meet which it must now choose its policy. This is, for our Party, the *supreme test*.

INDEPENDENT WORKING-CLASS ACTION.

What must we do? The experiences of the workers in the last war have created such a mass demand for peace that the situation now can in no way be compared to that of 1914. The workers desire peace – but not peace through the annihilation of the people of Abyssinia or their exploitation by Italian Imperialism. The workers desire the defeat of Italian aggression – but not through the victory of British Imperialism.

Our policy of working-class action must aim at four things:

1. Defeat of Italian Imperialism.
2. Maintenance of the independence of Abyssinia.
3. Prevention of the victory of British Imperialism.

4. Furtherance of the struggle of our own working class against British Capitalism at home and towards Workers' Power.

There is but one policy that can take in its stride these four points of struggle and that is the policy of independent working-class action. This policy alone would separate the working class, as a class, from the Capitalist State and Capitalist institutions.

Independent working-class action requires (1) the organised refusal to load munitions to Italy, (2) the boycott of Italian goods, (3) strikes and demonstrations, (4) defence funds for the help of the Abyssinian people – along with our general revolutionary agitation against the home Government, against Capitalism and War. This policy was boldly advocated by Brockway at the commencement of hostilities but repudiated a month later by the Inner Executive Committee of the I.L.P. The policy found an immediate response from the whole party membership. It united all sections. Group internal warfare was either forgotten or suspended. Never was our Party so united. I ask those who doubt this fact to look back in retrospect to that period. During those few weeks the membership worked with a new enthusiasm, a comradeship and a buoyancy not witnessed in the Party for some considerable time. Had this policy been maintained it would, undoubtedly, have brought great masses of the workers into action against Imperialism and War, and have created a realistic alternative to League of Nations' sanctions and national unity behind a national government.

It may well be that these activities would not suffice to save Abyssinia and to defeat Italian Fascism, but this weapon of working-class action would help to build a fighting morale, a tested revolutionary leadership; it would prepare the workers theoretically, organisationally and technically for the larger struggle for Workers' Power and Socialism.

WORKING-CLASS NEUTRALITY?

The I.L.P. has rejected Sanctions through the League of Nations; it has rejected National Unity and Military Sanctions behind the National Government. The Party must also reject the equally dangerous policy of

working-class neutrality. We must accept, if we are Marxists, the above policy of independent revolutionary working-class action.

The case of the Parliamentary group for working-class neutrality was best summarised by John McGovern when he said: «I stand aloof from the quarrels of Mussolini, Baldwin and Haile Selassie – they are all the same. Our duty is to the British working class». This statement enables us to reach the very kernel of the issues that the party's plebiscite must decide. This is nationalism which is being preached. It represents one of the most dangerous pitfalls against which Marx specially warned the workers. This policy of sublime neutrality represents a fundamental repudiation of the first principles of revolutionary Socialism, viz., the principle of working-class Internationalism.

In this world of Fascist Nationalist tendencies must we allow policies so similar in effect to pass muster in the guise of Socialism? Our duty is, of course, always to our own working class. But are not the interests of the British workers inseparably linked with those of the colonial and exploited peoples of the world? The fight of the Abyssinian people for independence is also the fight of the subject peoples of the British Empire and of the subject peoples of the world.

What, in practice, has been the effect of this policy of negation? It has led to the complete isolation of the I.L.P.

In his Conference address, Maxton stated that when he looked round for allies he found surprisingly few. This is perfectly true. On this issue, when we were the only party in the land free to advocate a policy that would lead the workers into struggle, we isolated ourselves by the acceptance of the line laid down by the Inner E.C. This isolation is the direct consequence of the policy inflicted on the Party from above.

The Party Conference at Keighley realised this fact and turned down the line of the Inner E.C. It is now left for the whole Party membership to follow up the Conference decision by their conclusive support for working-class action as the only positive weapon for carrying on immediately the struggle against the enemy at home and linking that struggle with the fight

of the backward peoples against the exploitation of Imperialist aggression abroad.

The pursuit of such a policy will end the unnatural isolation of the I.L.P. because it will bring us into action with our left-ward moving comrades in every section of the working-class movement in the Divisional Labour Parties, local Trades Councils, Trade Union, Socialist League and C.P. Branches, Anti-war Committees and indeed all workers who can be rallied for the fight against Imperialism and war.

Out of this autonomous struggle of the workers our Party is bound to emerge equipped with technique, rich in experience and leadership, a revolutionary party strong enough, bold enough, capable enough to lead the workers in the decisive struggle for Power and Socialism.

JAMES MAXTON, M.P.

(National Chairman, I.L.P.)

THE question of the attitude to be adopted towards the problems of war and peace is the most difficult and intricate one that has to be faced in these days by political Parties in this and other lands. There is no political Party in this country that has a clear and definite line of policy, nor even a united opinion behind an indefinite policy. In a recent debate in Parliament I pointed out that in the Labour Party there were five different points of view, several of them completely contradictory of others. It is not therefore surprising, though matter for regret, that there should be, as disclosed at Keighley, a difference of opinion on this issue in our own ranks.

When I find myself in disagreement with comrades with whom I have been accustomed to agree, and with whom I now agree on 95 per cent. of our Party policy, method and tactics, I conclude that the matter of difference is one that requires complete re-examination by all concerned, and that those most actively interested should present their case, both for their own benefit and that of others, in a cool passionless fashion.

My general approach is that war is an outcome of capitalism, just as Fascism, poverty and unemployment are outcomes of capitalism, and that

until capitalism is overthrown, while nations will not always be at war, there is always an imminent war danger. I agree with Litvinoff and Stalin at least to this extent, that it is sound Socialist strategy to stave off war in Europe as long as possible. I think their method of achieving that object is badly conceived and wrongly applied, but I have to admit that they have gone to extreme lengths, both internally and externally, with the avowed object of delaying European war. They have gone the length of imposing policies on their various national sections which in effect mean the suspension of the class struggle and approval of collaboration with capitalist parties and sections.

My reasons for wishing the delay of European war are to some extent the same as theirs. It is of first importance to the workers of the world that Russia should have her social and economic machinery in full working order and demonstrating its superiority over capitalism in a manner so clear as to be beyond argument and denial. It is of equal importance that the working-class movements in capitalist countries should have time to rally themselves, reorganise themselves, and get united on a real policy of struggle. My quarrel with the Russian policy is that it hinders rather than helps this development. It is also of importance that the suppressed workers in the Fascist countries, particularly Germany and Italy, should have time to develop some effective means of struggle against their despotisms.

This, in brief outline, is the general state of mind in which I approached the Italian-Abyssinian struggle, on which it was necessary to take a position and state my beliefs on the platform and in Parliament. One's natural sympathies went out to the Abyssinian people, one's natural antagonisms were directed against Fascist Italy. These natural feelings were fanned by the capitalist press. The Abyssinians were angels of virtue, the Italians were demons of vice.

These were the natural sentimental reactions. Did cool dispassionate thought maintain them as correct?

The facts were different. The Italians were for the most part decent working men and women like ourselves, disinclined to leave their homes for military adventures in Abyssinia or elsewhere, but driven on as workers

trapped in the capitalist machine operated by the Dictator Mussolini. The Abyssinians were for the most part decent workers on the land, living in primitive conditions, tyrannised over by a barbaric feudal monarch, and urged to fight to defend him in his power and splendour and his right to exploit them.

If the aggression had been by Britain our task would have been easy. Our job was to try in every way possible to overthrow capitalist power in Britain, using the special circumstances to aid us in our effort. But in this particular dispute the interest of British Imperialism was that Italian Imperialism should be defeated. For Italy to establish herself in this part of Africa was to occupy a strategic position with reference to the British Empire, which substantially weakened the world power of British Imperialism. If I believed in Machiavellian tactics I could easily argue that to those who wish British Imperialism weakened a pro-Italian policy was the correct line.

To take a pro-Abyssinian line was to aid British Imperialism. That was the popular line in this country. Every Party in the country, from Conservative to Communist, were pro-Abyssinian, with variations in their way of helping Abyssinia. All shouted their belief in sanctions. It was the easy way to follow, particularly for those who had to face electors.

We refused to take it. The N.A.C. decided not to choose, as between the rival representatives of capitalist power, which was the less offensive and place our support behind it. We took a working-class line and told the workers of Italy and Abyssinia that they must struggle to overthrow their rulers, and we told the workers of Britain that they must do the same thing, and must refuse to allow themselves to be marched into battle in this dispute.

We could not see the distinctions between economic sanctions, financial sanctions, working-class sanctions and war. Any one of these varieties of sanctions, if effectively applied, created ultimately a situation in which war was inevitable. If ineffectively applied they were a fraud on the Abyssinian people, leading them on to certain defeat under the impression that aid was coming from outside.

It is regrettable that numbers of Abyssinians have died in anguish, it is equally regrettable that numbers of Italians have also lost their lives. It would not have been any less regrettable if numbers of Britons had died alongside of them, and it would have been criminal if Europe had been allowed to become again one vast battlefield. To play with sanctions of one kind or another was to play with fire, and the N.A.C. refused to do it.

To-day the correctness of our line is being demonstrated by the facts. Abyssinia is a sorry picture to-day. The whole episode leaves no one with any claim to be proud of their conduct, but the I.L.P. can at least claim that no word of ours hounded the Abyssinians to their deaths, and no word of ours encouraged hatreds against the Italian workers. From our platforms we did the only thing that a party of our dimensions can hope to do. We educated the British workers in the true inner meaning of the conflict, exposed the meaning of capitalist Imperialism, and helped to stem waves of passions which produce the most dangerous psychological state that Socialists have to face in the early period of any war situation.

The war has not so far spilled over into Europe. The workers have still time and opportunity to rally themselves and align themselves for the bigger struggle, and the I.L.P. can play a major part in the rallying movement if it keeps itself free of policies and alliances which commit the people to war.

FENNER BROCKWAY

(National Secretary, I.L.P.)

1. ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS IMPERIALIST AGGRESSOR.

Mussolini has never hidden his intentions. He has boasted that the object of Italy was to follow the example of Britain in annexing a backward territory as part of her Imperialist mission. Yet the Inner Executive of our

Party has declared for neutrality – not between Italian and British Imperialism, but between Italy *and Abyssinia*.

2. ABYSSINIA SHOULD BE ASSISTED.

The Inner Executive argued that Haile Selassie is a dictator like Mussolini and that therefore Socialists should be neutral. How can a Fascist dictator and a feudal ruler be put in the same category? A Fascist dictator represents the strongest development of Capitalist tyranny. To permit a Fascist Power to conquer a feudal State is to strengthen Capitalism. To assist a feudal State to resist a Fascist State is to weaken Capitalism. This does not mean we are content to leave Abyssinia feudal; but if peoples of «backward» States are to be encouraged to replace feudalism by Socialism (as feudal territories within Russia are doing), the Socialist movement must win their confidence by supporting them against Capitalist Imperialism.

Having created solidarity in this way we can move to the next stage of helping them to build a peasants' and workers' organisation.

3. WE MUST NOT WEAKEN ITALIAN IMPERIALISM BY STRENGTHENING BRITISH.

It is not only for the sake of Abyssinia that we should seek to defeat Italian Imperialism. It is important to resist every Imperialist adventure as part of our general struggle against Capitalism. Capitalism requires Imperialist expansion. To strike a blow at Imperialist expansion is to strike a blow at Capitalism. A defeat for Mussolini in Africa would help to bring down Fascism in Italy.

We must be careful, however, that our blow is struck against Imperialism as a whole and not against the Imperialism of one country in the interests of the Imperialism of another country. In the case of Abyssinia there are the rival interests of Italy and Britain. To defeat Italian Imperialism in order to allow British Imperialism to triumph would not injure Capitalism. We must find a policy which strikes both at Italian and British Imperialism.

4. WE MUST NOT SUPPORT IMPERIALIST SANCTIONS.

Sanctions imposed through Capitalist Governments and the Capitalist-dominated League are not aimed against Imperialism as a system but are in the interests of one Imperialism against another. The League is an organisation to defend the existing Imperialisms (largely of Britain and France) against the developing Imperialisms of other Capitalist nations (Italy, Germany and Japan). We must, therefore, oppose British Government sanctions and League sanctions stimulated by the British Government in British Imperialist interests.

5. WE SHOULD URGE INDEPENDENT WORKING-CLASS ACTION.

Refusal to support Imperialist sanctions does not mean that no action can be taken. It is the workers themselves who produce and transport the materials necessary for war by Italy; it is the workers who would provide the war materials for Britain if she participated in the war for Imperialist purposes. *Through their organised Trade Union Movement the workers should refuse to supply war material for both.*

When Italy threatened to attack Abyssinia the International Federation of Trade Unions met. It should have sought united action by making contacts with the Russian Movement, the American Federation of Labour, and other unaffiliated sections. A joint meeting with the Russian Movement was certainly possible. To put the policy of independent workers' action in concrete terms, I suggest a resolution:

(a) This joint meeting of the I.F.T.U. and the T.U.'s. of the U.S.S.R. resolves that the international Trade Union Movement shall refuse to make or transport war materials to Italy for its Imperialist attack on Abyssinia. It shall be the duty of our national sections to organise this refusal at once and to support financially all workers involved. National sections not heavily involved shall contribute towards an International Fund for this purpose. Contact shall be made with the American Federation of Labour and other unaffiliated T.U. bodies with a view to securing world co-operation.

(b) The purpose of this action is to maintain the independence of Abyssinia, to strike a blow at the Imperialist aggression of the Italian Fascist Government, and to resist Imperialism generally. We recognise that other Capitalist Governments cannot be trusted to assist this purpose and that their opposition to Italy is based on their own Imperialist interests. We shall therefore carry through our organised refusal of war materials to Italy independently of any sanctions imposed by Capitalist Governments, and if rival Imperialist interests lead to the participation of other Capitalist Governments in the war, we shall equally refuse war materials to them.

(c) We hereby appoint a Commission to go to Abyssinia with the purpose of (1) rendering technical assistance in resistance to the Imperialist designs of Italy and Britain, and (2) making contacts which will be of service in building a workers' and peasants' movement in Abyssinia aiming at the construction of Socialism.

6. WORKERS' ACTION WAS PRACTICABLE.

When Italy began its attack the feeling against Italy was strong and deep everywhere. Spontaneously the workers acted. The dockers at Cape Town, at French ports, on the Pacific Coast of America, in India and Ceylon, and in New Zealand refused to handle war materials for Italy. The Boot and Shoe Operatives in this country declined to work on a contract for the Italian army. (I have evidence that anti-war feeling contributed to this decision as well as the low price offered.) These were isolated actions, but were sufficiently widespread to indicate the support which would have been given to an international lead. *That lead might have been given if pressure had been a little stronger.* I have seen reports of interviews with the officials of the I.F.T.U., who indicated that they would favourably consider action if Soviet Russia (from which wheat, petrol and timber were going to Italy) would co-operate. *But even if this policy had been rejected, it is a Socialist duty always to give the correct Socialist lead.* Such a lead would have rallied considerable support and would have drawn Revolutionary Socialists to the I.L.P.

7. WORKERS' ACTION WOULD NOT ENCOURAGE WAR.

Those opposed to workers' action argue that it would be as likely to lead to war as would Government sanctions. It might have that effect if its purpose were to resist Italian Imperialism irrespective of other Imperialisms. But the action we propose would be independent of the Imperialist purposes of any Government and would be aimed against them all. It would not be anti-Italian and pro-British. It would be anti-imperialist. Every Imperialist Government would realise that it was faced by a revolutionary challenge. The British Government would certainly not regard such a movement as an ally, but as an enemy; it would see in it a challenge to Capitalist constitutional authority; it would know that such a self-reliant independent working class would menace British Capitalism as well as Italian Fascism. *The strongest case for independent working-class action is that it challenges Imperialism abroad and Capitalism at home at one and the same time.*

8. «FIGHT THE ENEMY AT HOME» DOES NOT MEAN ISOLATION.

The first duty of Socialists is to «fight the enemy at home», but this does not mean that concurrent international action should not be taken with the workers of other countries. Suppose the British Government had been the Imperialist aggressor in this case. Should we not have expected action by the Socialists of other countries to hinder our Government in its Imperialist war? Should we not have welcomed a decision by the workers of other countries to refuse our Government war materials? Of course we should. Similarly the small heroic band of Italian Socialists have the right to expect the co-operation of the workers of other lands in resisting the Imperialist war of their Fascist Government.

9. WE MUST DECIDE OUR POLICY FOR THE FUTURE.

Let no member of the Party think this issue is now unimportant because the Italo-Abyssinian war seems to be nearing its end. Before it is settled working-class action may be required both against British and Italian

Imperialism. But, in any event, we shall have to face similar situations in the future.

Japan is threatening Mongolia. Are we to say that the only action which the European workers can take to help Mongolia is to overthrow their own Governments? Surely we must also urge the refusal of any materials to Japan which will assist in her Imperialist aggression and a similar refusal to the British and American Governments if they participate for their Imperialist interests.

We are asked why we have not advocated this policy against *British* Imperialism in India, etc. WE HAVE! It is the accepted policy of the I.L.P. We have not yet secured sufficient support to apply it, but that does not make it wrong. The Abyssinian War provided a splendid opportunity to apply it because working-class feeling was so strongly stirred.

Working-class action against all Imperialisms is the Revolutionary Socialist policy. Let the I.L.P. fearlessly adopt it.

JOHN McGOVERN, M.P.

(National Administrative Council, I.L.P.)

THE war between Italy and Abyssinia has revealed divergent views in our Party due to a section desiring to assist Abyssinia by applying what have been termed «working-class sanctions» against Italy.

The League of Nations, Conservative, Liberal, Labour and Communist Parties, and the Trade Union Congress, have all supported sanctions on behalf of the collective security of the League against Italy whom they all call «the aggressor». Those who support workers' sanctions do not support any action by the League or their Capitalist Government, even if employed to assist Abyssinia. The only object they have in common is to defeat Italy and thereby assist the Emperor to maintain Abyssinia as an independent State. The case I require to put is against that policy, to prove that it is not the correct policy for a Revolutionary Socialist Party to adopt, and also that it is impracticable.

Italy and Abyssinia are both anti-socialist States, their rulers are both dictators and only differ in the development of the country. It is unnecessary to make a choice but in my estimation the rule of the Negus is the more brutal one. Should we take sides in this struggle between two such States? If we choose between them then we fall into the error of backing war. There is no difference between Abyssinia and Belgium except that the Belgian case was stronger, due to her people being more civilised. Every argument that has been advanced in favour of taking sides in the present war was advanced in 1914. We were asked to support the Allies in order to smash the Kaiser and dethrone Militarism. In 1936 we are asked to smash Mussolini and dethrone Fascism.

If you take sides you are inevitably led to support your side by every kind of action whether employed by the workers or rulers. But when you agree to employ workers' sanctions you decide to prevent if possible all war material from reaching Italy and to encourage your rulers to send war material to Abyssinia. Surely no one will deny that that becomes support of, and continuation of, war. That is the most cowardly form of support, because you support war by the use of Abyssinian lives and refuse to use your own bodies for the war which you back. You urge on the ignorant African natives to their doom and back the brutal Emperor at the same time. Not only do you carry out that policy, but you encourage the Abyssinian natives to resist in the belief that you are giving some kind of practical help which every member of the I.L.P. must know is quite impossible and criminally misleading. If Mussolini succeeds in capturing the whole of Abyssinia will the natives be worse under his rule than that of the Negus? We must remember that neither side is fighting in defence of workers' rule or workers' power and my opinion is quite definite that in such circumstances we should refuse to take sides. How is it that the policy of workers' sanctions only coincided with the League of Nations' decision to apply sanctions? Why had we no agitation for sanctions in the Manchurian, Chinese, South American wars? Why is there no sanctions demand against the British Government, that holds so much of Africa and is responsible for more deaths in India every year than will be killed in the

whole Italo-Abyssinian War? It is in my estimation sentimental hysteria and a desire to line up in some form of sanctions war, because the tide was running that way in the country. One could sense from all that has been said and written on the matter that there was a fear in their minds that they might be associated with pacifism and then they ran around for a so-called practical policy and almost became military Jingoists.

Some who are supporters of workers' sanctions state quite openly that if they were in Abyssinia they would fight in the Abyssinian army. Quite so; that is due to the fact that they do not really know their Socialist case and what their attitude to war ought to be.

If their policy of support for Abyssinia by the sending of war material to the Negus should lead to the sinking of the ship by an Italian submarine, and that act led Britain into the war, would they enlist in the British armed forces or refuse to support the war they assisted in making?

If you could stop oil, coal, food, etc., from reaching Italy by the application of workers' sanctions whom would you hit most? The 1914/18 war taught us that the armed forces are the last to suffer and that you strike at the civilian population of women and children by depriving them of the necessary food and nourishment. Workers' sanctions undermine the stamina of the civilians, military sanctions strike at the army in the field. The supporters of military sanctions are more humane and practical than the advocates of feeble and ineffective workers' sanctions.

If workers' sanctions are effective they mean an extension of war and if they are ineffective they are a fraud and of no real value. If a general strike had taken place in Great Britain (and that would be 100 per cent, workers' sanction) it would not have made the slightest difference to the progress or conduct of the war.

The supporters of workers' sanctions fail to differentiate between a general strike against war when their own nation is involved and action against an outside power. No person has yet attempted to show us how they would successfully operate these sanctions. It is not due to the fact that they had no opportunity but because they had no real practical case. Fenner Brockway gave us a jumble of misleading cases at the Conference. The

American example was of a strike that had been in operation for a considerable time and was not due to the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. His other case of the English firm refusing the boot contract from the Italian Government was also wrong and was due to the fact that the price offered was too small to run the contract at a profit.

The only action I can suggest is to build up a strong and militant Socialist Movement and work for the final overthrow of Capitalist Imperialism by Economic Revolution. That is surely definite enough and one which, when accomplished, will abolish war and end Imperialism.

Every sanction would inevitably lead to war and if the government agreed with the worker's sanctionists but said, «We agree that Italy should be defeated and we intend taking strong military action», what would our workers' sanctionists say then? Would they then cry out to the government, «You are too practical and definite and we cannot agree to your action»? If they agree that they would join up if in Abyssinia and use the force of the Emperor, why refuse to back the force of the National Government? From every test made the case for workers' sanctions fails as anti-Socialist and impracticable. The Abyssinian and Italian workers have been slaughtered and those who are guilty of false promises to the Abyssinian natives of assistance which they know to be beyond their power are guilty of criminal action.

War is a product of capitalist rivalry and cannot be stopped until you end the system. Concentrate on that goal and refuse to be diverted by sentimental hysteria.

C. L. R. JAMES

(Finchley I.L.P.)

Il contributo di C. L. R. James è incluso nei Documenti delle sezioni nazionali.

JOSEPH SOUTHALL

(*Birmingham City I.L.P.*)

WHENEVER the Government of a powerfully-armed country attacks and invades a weaker country the sympathy of every generous and disinterested person goes out to the victim, and the question arises, what can be done to save him? Thereupon the astute Imperialist sets to work to utilise these feelings of pity for his own purpose which consists in setting nation against nation, as in 1914, so that the real enemy of them all – capitalism – may escape observation. This is the main purpose of the bogus League of Nations and its plausible policy of sanctions, ostensibly to protect the victim from the aggressor, but in reality to protect the greatest aggressors, and preserve their plunder for them.

The I.L.P. is united in rejecting the League and its sanctions, and the only question in dispute is the policy as regards workers' embargo (or sanctions) as applied to the Imperialist aggression of one particular country alone, viz., Italy.

My contribution to this discussion is based upon the principle that *all* war credits should be opposed, as they are in fact opposed by our four members in the House; believing as I do, that night-bombers and poison gas can never be the instruments of Socialism: and this principle I would fain see carried into the industrial sphere if that can be done, but I see a very grave mistake in saying that we will stop (if we can) munitions going to some other country but not to our own armed forces, that we will not supply bombs to be dropped on Abyssinia but will go on supplying them to be dropped on Mohmand or Afridi villages by the British Air Force. And what is true of bombs is true of oil, except that oil is used for civil as well as military purposes, and therefore an embargo on oil involves hardship to the Italian people – how much more so would a stoppage of food supplies?

Yet in the «New Leader» of October 11th., 1935, in an article advocating workers' action, we find this passage: «Italy is dependent upon the organised workers of Europe and Soviet Russia. Italy has to import coal,

oil, cotton, wool, iron, steel, copper, rubber, nickel, wheat, and almost all the goods essential to war. Unfortunately, neither the I.F.T.U. nor the Communist Trade Unions have asked their members to stop supplies».

Observe that coal, wool and wheat are among the things that are to be denied to Italy by Workers' Embargo – the very necessities of life itself are to be cut off from the Italian people who are as much the victims of Imperialism as the Abyssinians or the Egyptians are. Workers' sanctions would thus exceed in severity upon the people of Italy anything yet attempted by the rival Imperialism of Great Britain, alias the League.

Now I am sure that Fenner Brockway does not wish to deprive the Italian people of food and clothing because of the Imperialism of their Government. We must take the greatest care not to inflame hostility between the people of our own country and those of other lands, whatever crimes their Governments may commit, for if we do this we pave the way to war. In the same article one finds these words: «Workers' action would be to defend the rights of Abyssinia and to bring Mussolini and his Fascist regime crashing to the ground». This is a misreading of human nature, for in every country there is deep resentment against outside interference with its policy, and the infliction of hardships on the population of Italy would strengthen the position of the Dictator. One has only to imagine what the ordinary Britisher would say if any foreign country or countries attempted to cut off our food supplies in order to force our Government to evacuate Egypt or India. It would rally immense support to the Government at once and strengthen its position. What then would be the feeling in Italy? Throughout Northern Italy winter can be very severe, when the bitter winds from the Alps bring down frost and snow upon her. If, in addition to their present poverty and distress, the workers and peasants of that land felt that their food, their woolen clothing and their fuel (wheat, wool and coal) were being cut off by the action of British workers, they might well be driven to despair and even to accept the desperate remedy of war. And when once the thousands of aeroplanes are let loose with their cargoes of poison, the great cities of Europe will become the habitations of death.

We must never forget that what Italian Imperialism is doing in Abyssinia is closely copied from what British and French Imperialisms have done *and are still doing* in India, Egypt, Morocco and elsewhere, and that our first duty is to deal with British Imperialism before we attempt to coerce other aggressors. In endorsing the term «aggressor» we should be unconsciously endorsing the verdict of Geneva which, by inference, whitewashes the other aggressors – England and France.

I myself can see a clear distinction between League sanctions and workers' embargo, but I doubt if the ordinary docker can, and we must not inflame his anger against his fellow worker in another land.