

# The Struggle Against the Italo-Ethiopian War

IN ITALY

By BATISTA

**F**ROM the very beginning of the hostile activities carried on by fascism against Ethiopia, the Communist Party of Italy has done its utmost to explain to the masses the rapacious, aggressive, imperialist character of this war, and has refuted Mussolini's cynical lie about "Italy bringing the age-long civilization of Rome to the desolate land of Ethiopia". In its propaganda the Party has shown that what fascism is bringing to Ethiopia is not civilization, but death and destruction and the bloody annihilation of an almost defenseless population. The enemy of the Italian people is not in Addis Ababa, but in Rome, is not the Ethiopian people who are defending their own independence and their own land, but fascism, which is increasing the distress and oppression of the masses of the people of Italy for purposes of imperialist expansion, and is leading the country into catastrophe. The defeat of Italian imperialism in this bandit war will make it easier for the masses of the people of Italy to overthrow the fascist yoke.

The Communist Party of Italy has been working and is still working to organize mass revolutionary action against the war. In the manifesto headed "Save our country from catastrophe", and distributed by the Central Committee of our Party throughout Italy in tens of thousands of copies, it says:

"Form revolutionary groups in the barracks, on board ship, and in the airforce units. Explain to the soldiers the rapacious aims of this war, which are directed against the Italian people. Organize the struggle to improve your living conditions and against the intolerable discipline. Organize collective refusal to be dispatched to Africa. Remember that your duty at the front is to fraternize with the Ethiopian troops, to organize collective refusal to go into battle, and to desert from the front with your weapons. Use the weapons you have for the fight against those who oppress Italy."

The manifesto appeals for an increased struggle inside the mass fascist organizations to make use of the smallest legal possibilities to carry on the struggle for increased wages and pensions to the families of the mobilized soldiers, and for the right to elect freely representatives to the trade unions, and leaders of local trade union organizations; every possible means must be used to organize protests and demonstrations to prevent the dispatch of troops to Africa.

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Of course, the fact must not be ignored that in the course of thirteen years of fascist dictatorship fascism has succeeded in arousing chauvinist

feelings in certain sections of the population. But the fascist press lies when it asserts that the army and the Italian people are enthusiastic in entering the war, and that if the fascist government were to refuse to make war, "200,000 rifles in Africa would begin to shoot of their own accord".

The war in Ethiopia has already brought new restrictions and privations to the Italian masses, in the shape of the appropriation of agricultural products, increased taxation, and incredibly high prices for foodstuffs. The war is depriving families of their breadwinners, is hurling thousands and tens of thousands of young men to their death, and inflicting epidemics and privations upon them. It is increasing all the existing class contradictions to an enormous degree, is causing discontent, and is consequently driving ever increasing masses of the people into political action.

Even foreign correspondents who sympathize with fascism cannot hide the unpopularity, displayed in Italy, of the war against Ethiopia. Contrary to the assertions of the fascist press, those who are mobilized do not at all set out for the front with songs on their lips, but they are collected by the gendarmes at their homes or their places of work, without any preliminary notice being given to them; they are put in automobiles and driven to the military districts, without any opportunity of taking leave of their families. The population offers the following explanation for this kind of mobilization: during the last war, despite the fact that anti-government parties existed legally, those who were mobilized were allowed a few days to spend with their families, but now that the fascists are in power, those who are mobilized are dispatched to the front like prisoners.

If the fascist newspapers are to be believed, then the conclusion can be drawn that the Italian workers are thinking of nothing else but how quickly to join the volunteers and go to the war. Actually the situation as to how the volunteers join is as follows: meetings of the militia, the fascists and the fascist youth are arranged behind closed doors and in the presence of the local authorities. One of the fascist leaders asks those present: "Do you love Italy?" And having obtained an answer in the affirmative from all those present, their leader invites each of them to send in an application to join the volunteers. As only a few join up even after this, each of those present at the meeting is sent a written invitation from the authorities on the following day asking them to join the volunteers; the invitation is delivered by a policeman, who waits while the signature to join is given. All that remains to be done is either to sign or to suffer persecution. However, in spite of all compulsion and threats, there are daring people who refuse to sign the proposal made by the authorities. This, of course, does not signify that there are no members of the militia and the fascists who join up voluntarily, but in these cases their "voluntary action" is primarily dictated by poverty and the hope of securing bread for their families, etc.

There are ever more frequent cases in different localities of outbursts of hatred against the imperialist war which is smoldering among the masses of the people.

In this article we cannot give even a short description of the tens

and hundreds of actions undertaken by the people, or of the actions of the soldiers and militia against the war, which have taken place of late. We shall mention only the more important ones.

For example, in Milan, after an incident had occurred with the fascist militia who had invited a large group of soldiers to sing fascist songs, the latter began to sing the revolutionary, proletarian song, *Bandiera Rossa* (Red Flag). In Milan, Turin, and many other towns, there have been demonstrations of conscripts. At one of the Milan railway stations, the conscripts beat up the station master, a fascist. In Parma, women and children lay down on the railway track to prevent a train carrying soldiers from leaving the station. In Bergamo a conflict occurred between departing militiamen and fascists; some were wounded and one killed. In Caltanissetta the workers of the sulphur mines called a strike for a few days and organized a stormy demonstration to prevent the departure of conscripts. In Naples there was a fight between soldiers and gendarmes, as a result of which four gendarmes were killed. In one of the barracks the soldiers beat up a captain for his abusive conduct. One captain who killed a soldier with the butt of a rifle was thrown over a precipice a few days later. At the front, soldiers refused to get into tanks and ten of them were shot. In Florence, Ascoli Piceno and other localities, the soldiers protested against their terrible conditions. In Milan, students of the Lyceum demonstrated against compulsory military training in schools. In Massaua (Africa), workers demonstrated in the square against the Italian authorities on account of the terrible conditions and demanded to be dispatched back to Italy. Not a day passes but in one place or another demonstrations and protests take place against war; there are frequent cases of desertion among the Italian soldiers.

The Secretary of State for Propaganda called a special meeting of foreign press representatives for the purpose of refuting the information which had filtered through to the outside world about the discontent in Italy. Nevertheless, the correspondent of the *Petit Parisien* who published this refutation pointed out also that in Genoa, Spezzia and other towns, demonstrations took place which were immediately suppressed.

Even the most primitive forms of protest against war cause the dictatorship serious disquiet. It is enough to point out that one trader was arrested for the sole reason that he hung a notice on the door of his shop: "Closed on the occasion of the death of my son in Africa".

The military and civil authorities seriously warn soldiers and workers returning from Africa on sick leave on no account to speak about the living conditions of the workers and soldiers in Africa. Every sick man returning from Africa is a source of protest against the war, even if he does not indulge in any agitation. Fascism is so much afraid of the "infection" spread by those returning from Africa that the sick are sent for a time to Rodos Island, and not to Italy.

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The Italian Communist Party has done much, and is still doing much, to carry on anti-war agitation among the masses. The local organ-

izations have improved their work. Besides distributing the central Party press, the organizations of the Communist Party themselves in some localities, on their own initiative, reprint and distribute leaflets and poems against the war; petitions of protest against the high cost of living and the war are drawn up in factories and workshops and also in workers' homes. They are signed by tens and hundreds of workers, women, Socialists, Catholics, and fascists. The petitions are sent to the *podesta*, to the prefect, and to Mussolini himself.

Several demonstrations demanding increased wages have taken place recently in factories in big industrial centers. The workers have successfully defended their demands by making use of the representatives of the fascist trade unions and through trade union meetings.

For example, 70 per cent of the workers of one big factory took part in a trade union meeting; a commission was elected there which obtained the following increase in the hourly wages: repairers from 1.72 lire to 1.80; solderers from 1.72 to 1.80 and from 1.80 to 1.90; apprentices from 1.16 to 1.20 and 1.50. Overtime wages were increased by 25 per cent and piecework rates by 10 per cent.

Forty-three workers were fined in one undertaking in the course of one day, and in reply, 500 workers collected at the gates and forced the management to rescind the fine and change the watchmen.

In another factory, after several protests had been made to the Board of Management and to the trade union, the young workers obtained an increase in wages.

In yet another factory the workers called a strike twice and then went to the trade union; as a result they obtained an increase in wages of six lire a day. At a big metal works an increase in wages of from 18 to 25 centesimes per hour was obtained for the skilled workers. In many other factories wage increases have been obtained for groups of skilled workers. In some places it has been possible to get some results in the "Dopo Lavoro", in the war invalids' organizations, in Catholic organizations, and in anti-war work among the troops.

The war which has only just begun is increasing the discontent of the masses. The increase in the cost of living, the suffering, poverty, sickness and death, are causing discontent in the ranks of the fascists themselves, and calling forth spontaneous indignation against the war.

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We should mention a few serious shortcomings in the mass movement against the war and in the work of the Communist Party.

The protests against war are still mainly of a spontaneous character; they are few in number and only limited numbers of soldiers and of the civil population take part in them. The petition movement covers a narrow circle of people; the demands set forth in the petitions are not supported by workers' commissions and the masses when they come before the authorities to whom they are addressed (*podesta*, prefect, etc.). Only limited numbers of workers take part in the actions inside the factories for the observance of agreements and for increased wages, and the wage increases obtained almost always affect only the most skilled section of the workers; only in rare cases are there increases in

the wages of the lower-paid categories of workers, such as unskilled workers, women and the youth. These actions are not linked together, and are of a purely economic character.

The chief reason for this, besides increased fascist reaction (the introduction of severe discipline in the factories, constant arrest of anti-fascists, and attempts to revive the famous fascist storm detachments) is that our Party work is weak. The work of the Party still bears the strong impress of the sectarian position which was for several years adopted by the Party in its mass work, especially in connection with using legal opportunities of work inside the fascist trade unions and other mass organizations. Although the Party work has on the whole improved, it is still far from satisfactory both in quality and quantity.

The pact for unity of action concluded a year ago between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party has provided the members of the Communist Party with the opportunity of establishing living contacts, true, with a still limited number of Socialist workers. True, in the factories and in the fascist trade unions our comrades are, in many cases, working side by side with the Socialist workers, but sectarianism and insufficient work in the "Dopo Lavoro" organizations, the cooperative societies, and other organizations are responsible for the fact that the united front has not yet become the vital force capable of drawing the toilers who are still backward in the political sense into the struggle and setting them in motion. We must also mention the fact that although the Socialist Party did sign the united front pact, it has done very little to put it into actual practice.

We have succeeded in obtaining big results in setting up an anti-war united front among the emigrants, both with Socialists and with other anti-fascist currents. Together with the Socialist Party, the Communist Party took the initiative in organizing a congress of Italian emigrants on October 12-13 in Brussels. All Italian organizations and anti-fascist currents took part in this Congress (with the exception of "Justiccio" and "Liberti"), as well as numerous literary organizations and men of letters.

An organizational committee was formed at the congress which was entrusted with the task of doing everything necessary to increase and develop the struggle in Italy against the war.

The anti-war movement against fascism and Mussolini which is developing in different countries is of tremendous importance. Our Party must use all its political authority to direct all forces capable of facilitating the revival of the mass struggle towards concrete work inside Italy.

The slogan: "Peace with Ethiopia!" "Down with Mussolini!" will become popular among the broad masses in Italy and also among the masses who support the fascists, if the Communists by a correct policy and untiring efforts among the population and the army, in the fascist trade unions and in all mass organizations, succeed in standing at the head of all the discontented, of all the friends of peace.

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## IN FRANCE

By K. S.

THE struggle between the two camps, the camp of war and that of peace, the struggle between those supporting Italy's robber plans and those opposed to Italy's war of aggression in Ethiopia, has become extremely acute in France. The struggle has been directed not only against Italian fascism, but also against the war instigators in France itself, *i.e.*, against the French fascists. The increase in the activity of the fascist bands has of late once more shown that the fascist danger is still far from overcome, and has extremely sharpened the struggle between the forces of peace and liberty and the forces of war and slavery.

The Communist Party and the People's Front, in their struggle for peace, have to fight not only against the fascist leagues which have insolently put forward the slogan: "Long live Mussolini!" They have also to fight against the enormous force represented by the "Comite des Forges" which is seeking a way out of the crisis in this war, which is the more profitable for them as it is being waged by another country.\*

They have to fight against the section of the bourgeoisie which is using all its efforts to paralyze action by the League of Nations, and which is organizing pro-Italian demonstrations of fascists and an Anglo-phobe campaign in the French newspapers. Finally, inside the People's Front itself they have to fight against the renegade Doriot whose political compass on all questions is his hatred towards the Soviet Union and Communism.\*\*

Having advanced the slogan: "Sanctions mean war", the fascist organizations and fascist press are trying to arouse the population against the application of the pact of the League of Nations. The fascists are very skilfully camouflaging the nature of their activities, and attempt to hide behind the slogan of peace. They are depicting the war of Italian fascism in Africa as simply a colonial expedition which must be merely winked at, and which can have no consequences for the world situation.\*\*\*

And in their thirst for "neutrality" these freshly baked "pacifists"

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\* In the radio-chronicle of the "Society of Economic Study and information" (*i.e.*, of the same "Comite des Forges"), transmitted by wireless on October 17 from the Eiffel Tower, it was pointed out that the war operations of Italy in Africa can provide an excellent market for French industry. On the other hand, we read in the supplement to the newspaper *l'Usine* (the organ of industry and metallurgy) of October 19: "We are still hoping that, thanks to the acumen and wisdom of our government, international agreements against war will be observed, and at the same time France will maintain friendly relations with different countries interested in the given problem [*i.e.*, will prevent the application of economic and financial sanctions against Italy—K. S.]. If, as can still be hoped, we achieve this end, there is no doubt that the result will be an unexpected business boom which, perhaps, will be astounding in its dimensions and rate of development."

\*\* The French fascists say: "Moscow wants war". Doriot writes: "The present policy of the Soviet Union is a policy of war". The French fascists justify Italian aggression by stating that Italy also has a right to colonial expansion. M. Doriot gets up at a meeting and says that he considers "the demand of a big and thickly-populated country which is unable to feed her land" is quite legitimate. *Emancipation*, October 26, 1935.

\*\*\* The "Patriotic Youth" organization, for example, distributed the following leaflet: "Some say that Mussolini is right. Others assert that Mussolini is to blame. What business is it of ours? But sanctions mean war. And the French youth want peace!"

go so far as to provoke world war by proposing that England and Italy settle their accounts between themselves.\*

But by trying to camouflage their real plans, the French followers of Mussolini and Hitler are doing their utmost to wipe off the disgraceful brand "Fascism is war", which the masses have laid upon them, and are making furious attacks upon the Communist Party and the People's Front, accusing them of stirring up war by their demand that economic and financial sanctions be adopted against the aggressor.

The most reactionary section of the French bourgeoisie are obviously reckoning upon the establishment of fascism in France. This is why, without mentioning their international policy, which amounts to an attempt to remove the menace from the direction of Hitler Germany by an agreement with the latter, and by violating the mutual assistance pact between France and the U.S.S.R., the reactionary bourgeoisie itself would consider the fall of fascism in Italy a blow. This fear was clearly expressed in the *Echo de Paris*. Italian fascism, writes Henri de Kerinis, plays the role of antitoxin in Europe, as a barrier against rising Communism. "The overthrow of fascism," he continues, "would, from now onwards, be of advantage only to Italian Communism." And the fascists want to prevent this at all costs, even at the price of civil war. The "republicans" of the *Echo de Paris* and the monarchists of the *Action Francaise* threaten in chorus that: "The adoption of sanctions against Italy would mean civil war in Paris and throughout France".

Italian fascism can be satisfied with the activities launched by its French agents. The Turin *Stampa* writes, in its issue of October 26:

"So long as there are 300,000 'Fiery Crosses' ready for action in France and several thousand members of the 'French Solidarity' Movement as well, the ominous plans of the radical Free Masons in relation to Italy cannot be realized."

In the face of the war frenzy of the reactionary and fascist bourgeoisie, the Communist Party has launched an ideological struggle to show the masses of the people who is hostile to the real interests of the country and who is defending them. The Communists declare that the question facing the French toilers is not that of defending British imperialism, whose sudden solicitude for the "independence" of Ethiopia is only a veil for the imperialist policy it is steadily pursuing, neither is it a question of fighting against the Italian people who are suffering from the fascist dictatorship and are trying to get rid of it. It is a question of maintaining peace and of defending the independence of the Ethiopian people. By starting its war of aggression in Africa, Italian fascism menaces the whole world. For in the present tense situation, the smallest spark may cause an explosion, and convert both hemispheres into a gigantic field of fratricidal war. Consequently, the interests of maintaining peace demand the immediate cessation of war in Ethiopia. By what means? First and foremost, by unity of action on the part of the masses themselves, on a national and international scale,

\* In this deep strife between two great peoples, it is our duty to say to them: 'Fight nobly, but we cannot participate in your struggle.' (Declaration of the fascist *Darquier de Pelpois*, at a meeting in the "Wagram" hall in Paris on October 5. *Ami du Peuple*, October 6, 1935.)

with a view to surrounding the fascist aggressor in an iron ring of proletarian struggles. In the interests of maintaining peace, the Communists are prepared to utilize all means. This is why they support the economic and financial sanctions adopted by the League of Nations, and demand that they be applied.

By fighting against the application of economic and financial sanctions against Italy, the French fascists are lining up with the rapacious plans of Mussolini. It is not the interests of the French people that they have at heart when they advocate France's "neutrality" and declare that "sanctions mean war". They are not thinking of peace when they want to free the hands of Italian fascism, for peace is indivisible and the slightest crack in it may pave the way to the beginning of a world war.

The French fascists assert that they love their fatherland, yet they are working on behalf of Mussolini and in the long run on behalf of Hitler. By fostering the development of Italian fascist aggression, they are urging France on to the road to agreement with Hitler so as to make it possible for him to attack the U.S.S.R., after which Hitler, as he himself has declared in his book *My Struggle*, would, if he could, attack France. On the other hand, the Communists, by fighting against the instigators of war in France, by helping the Italian people to get rid of the fascist dictatorship, by supporting the policy of the U.S.S.R.—the main force engaged in the struggle for peace in an environment which is armed to the teeth—are really defending the interests of the French people and at the same time the interests of the entire international proletariat.

Such are the arguments put forward by the Communist Party as against the war agitation of the fascists. The Communist Party has organized numerous meetings throughout the country which have gained the interest of considerable masses of the people and have resulted in a rise of the sentiments of the masses against the war instigators. The struggle for unity of action among the peasantry has also attracted the bourgeois peasant organizations into the anti-war struggle. The Party press is conducting an energetic campaign to mobilize the masses; in particular *l'Humanité* is playing the chief role in unmasking the benevolent policy towards Mussolini which Laval wants to force upon the French government.

The Party and the revolutionary trade union organizations have shown to the toilers the means they should use to fight for the application of proletarian sanctions. Thus, the Communist Party has called upon the workers' organizations and all the workers employed on the railroads, at the ports and in munitions works to establish "vigilance committees" to expose the dispatch of war materials destined for Italy and to mobilize the masses to prevent all loading and dispatch of ammunition or any other cargoes to Italy. We have to admit, however, that these correct instructions are still not put into practice sufficiently. The Party has not yet been able to secure the general application of proletarian sanctions against Italian fascism on a broad scale. True, on September 4, the Marseilles dockers were able for a time to stop the



loading of Italian steamers. On October 25, the dockers in Port St. Louis held up the loading of hay on an Italian ship for two hours, and arranged an anti-war demonstration in the town. At the *Gnome et Rhone* works in Paris, where motors for Italian airplanes are produced, petitions were circulated round the works protesting against fascist aggression in Ethiopia, and about 800 signatures were obtained. Other such facts could be quoted, but they are all only isolated unconnected actions.

The Communist Party has stubbornly striven to increase unity of action so as to organize the struggle against war. It is a pity that these efforts met with no response among the leaders of the Socialist Party. At the end of August, just before the Italo-Ethiopian war began, when it was necessary to organize a powerful united movement against the war, the leaders of the Socialist Party turned their backs upon the proposals of the Communist Party. At that moment, instead of concentrating their efforts upon organizing a joint struggle of the masses, *le Populaire*, the organ of the Socialist Party, laid all its hopes upon a diplomatic regulation of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. The fact that the leaders of the Socialist Party were not sufficiently prepared to organize a joint struggle only damped the enthusiasm of the masses at a moment when action on their part might still have prevented the aggression. True, the Communist Party was able later to get the leaders of the Socialist Party to make a joint appeal to the masses. But not everything necessary was done to get the decision, which had been passed jointly, put into practice. The Socialist leaders took no steps to call upon their organizations to consolidate militant contacts with the Communist organizations. They did not support the proposals for joint struggle made by the Communist International at the right time. The Socialist workers had a better understanding of the serious position which had arisen and the need for international unity of action. It is enough to point to the numerous resolutions passed by local conciliation committees, demanding the immediate realization on an international scale of the united front against the war.

We all know, however, that these measures alone will not prevent a war conflagration. The preservation of peace is in the hands of the toilers themselves, and it will triumph only as a result of energetic action on the part of the broad masses against the instigators of war.

It is also quite clear that the united actions of the masses can only be endowed with a more militant character by consolidating the united front between the Socialists and Communists. And here, in turn, the resistance to, and sabotage of, decisions passed jointly can only be overcome by increasing the activity of the Communist organizations. And it is in this direction that all the efforts of our comrades must be immediately concentrated.

Militant unity of action at the present moment is the only means of strangling all the forces which are unloosing the hounds of war, and of maintaining peace.

Therefore, we must state quite clearly to all friends of peace that that which we are passing through today cannot be solved either by wavering or by postponement. Every minute lost is made use

of by the instigators of war. Today there is still time to act, but tomorrow may be too late. The cause of peace demands the urgent mobilization of the broad masses of the people. He who postpones this mobilization today will bear a heavy responsibility before history.

## IN GREAT BRITAIN

By PETER KERRIGAN

**T**HE Communist International Manifesto of October 7 declares:

“British imperialism, under cover of suspicious concern about the ‘independence’ of Ethiopia, is preparing for war with Italy for the possession of Ethiopia. The British navy is prepared for action.”

This policy of British imperialism in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict is mainly determined by the following:

First, the successful conquest of Ethiopia by Italy would immensely improve the strategic position of Italian imperialism and would directly menace Britain’s control of the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, the Red Sea route to India, the East, and Australia. Second, it would directly threaten Britain’s position in the Sudan and Egypt by putting the control of Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile, in the Italian hands, leaving the cotton crop in Egypt and Sudan at the mercy of those who control this source of irrigation. There is an even wider danger for British imperialism here of the possible seizure of Egypt and the Sudan by Italy. This is made clear in an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, semi-official organ of the British Foreign Office, on July 25, 1935, which states:

“If the Duce (Mussolini) grasps Ethiopia and amalgamates Eritrea and Italian Somaliland he would attempt to realize his vision of re-establishing the Roman African Empire by joining Ethiopia and Libya via the Sudan and Egypt. Those who hold this view are sure that Britain will use every resource to thwart such a scheme and that America will help behind the scenes.”

Third, the effect of Ethiopia’s national war of liberation not only on the African people but on all colonial peoples throughout the world is bound to influence the situation in Britain’s colonies, especially in her extensive African colonies. That Britain is aware of this and concerned about it is shown in the article of the *Daily Telegraph* for October 7, which says, after reporting on the precautions being taken by Britain in Egypt:

“Egyptians are becoming impatient with the humiliating position to which the present relations between Egypt and Britain condemn them, particularly at a time like the present.”

We should also note the stormy strike movement in the Kenya colony, and the stormy demonstrations in support of Ethiopia in the West Indies.

At the same time the National government utilized the situation in order to drastically increase the British armed forces, and staged a lightning election campaign with its foreign policy and rearmament as its main program, astutely utilizing the chauvinism which it has created and the confusion of the Labor Party in order to win another long term of office and rapidly complete its war preparations.

No one better realizes than the British imperialists, who have assisted in the rearming of Hitler, what possibilities are opened up by the war in Africa before the German war machine in taking the first steps in its long-planned war on the Soviet Union by seizing Memel and driving forward for the acquisition of Austria. British imperialism prefers that German expansion should be directed towards the East rather than by the occupation of Austria, and fears the *weakening of Italy in Europe because of this*.

As a result of the conflict of imperialist interests in which the main responsibility lies at the door of British imperialism, the League of Nations has been unable to prevent the outbreak of war by effective collective action.

With these facts in mind let us consider the policy of the Communist Party of Great Britain in its struggle for peace, for the defense of Ethiopia, and against the imperialist National government. The Communist peace policy right up to the beginning of Italy's war attack on Ethiopia was embodied in the eleven points dealt with in Comrade Pollitt's article in last month's issue of *The Communist International*, and its whole campaign was directed towards developing the utmost working class action for these points. Alongside these concrete demands the Party endeavored to mobilize such a movement as would force the National government (1) to renounce the Anglo-German naval agreement; (2) to abandon all forms of support to Hitler; (3) to give full support to the Franco-Soviet peace pact; (4) to sign a peace pact with the Soviet Union; (5) to renounce its own imperialist conquests, concessions and mandates. In carrying through this policy the Party has had to consistently struggle against the line of the trade union and Labor Party leadership, which has been one of "unflinching support" for the foreign policy of the National government.

The manifesto of both the Labor Party Congress and the Trade Union Congress, without in any way criticizing the policy and motives of the government, declares that "Congress pledges its full support of action consistent with the principles and statutes of the League to restrain the Italian government". In addition to the support to the British government's line the manifesto proposed the international exploitation of the backward regions. Furthermore, the Labor leaders' support for British imperialism was shown by statements in the *Daily Herald* reassuring Continental Socialists that Britain had no imperialist aims in Ethiopia!

The Communist Party of Great Britain laid special stress on showing that effective mass action of the workers is the main and best way of assisting the Ethiopian people, and only through this mass pressure could the National government have been forced into supporting the

Soviet Union's fight at the League of Nations for peace, and ensured the operation of collective sanctions; that this was the only way of ensuring peace especially if it was accompanied by the most bitter fight against the National government, exposing its war aims and making clear its responsibility for the present situation. It is necessary to use all efforts to unify the workers' forces to achieve the maximum independent actions of the trade unions and working class organizations for stopping of supplies for Italy. A fine example of the state of feeling among the workers on this point is the *decision of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union to instruct all its workers to refuse to work on any orders for boots for the Italian army*. This decision has been circulated to all its branches and to all the employers in the industry. The Party specially featured this in its press and campaigns, raising the question of similar action by the workers in the transport and other war industries. The reports of *the refusal of London dockers to load the Italian steamer Boccaccio and the protest demonstrations of Manchester and Cardiff dockers against the loading of Italian ships, together with the appeal of the London Trades Council to the Trade Union Congress to take action to prevent the transport of war material to Italy* show the extent to which feeling among the British workers is rapidly developing. These actions have been accompanied by demonstrations many thousands strong in London, South Wales, and many other important centers, and by the organization of extremely broad peace councils elected at conferences representing Labor Parties, Communist Parties, peace societies, trade union branches, churches, youth organizations, etc. An important incident in the campaign was the London demonstration of friendship and solidarity to the Ethiopian people, which went to the Ethiopian Embassy. The Ethiopian Minister, on behalf of his government, received a deputation organized by the London Communist Party and thanked the British workers for their warm support. The Party published an Ethiopian special edition of the *Daily Worker* which sold upwards of 100,000 copies, while a pamphlet explaining the Ethiopian situation issued by the League Against Imperialism reached the extraordinarily high circulation of 70,000 copies, with eight reprints.

The Party also kept in the forefront of its fight the need to defend the economic interests of the workers and in this connection made a big effort through the trade unions and through the raising of money to assist the workers in the Blackburn aircraft factory who were on strike against the worsening of their conditions, and to rally the utmost aid and assistance to the British miners in their struggle against company unionism in South Wales and for a national increase in wages.

However, there have been weaknesses in carrying out the line. In the early stages of our campaign there was weakness in showing that the policy of the Labor Party and trade union leaders was one which *strengthened the National government by its emphasis on support for the government and absence of any exposure of the government's motives*. At times we tended to place the question of sanctions in too formal a way and not to show it as dependent on the whole of our line being applied, especially the line of independent action by the workers

against the war. In our criticism of the line of the Independent Labor Party and their attack on our policy we tended too much to remain on the defensive, instead of showing how their policy indirectly meant support of fascism and was terribly dangerous to the British workers, hindering the maximum unity in action. The Communist Party also, it seems, has not been able to maintain the high level of struggle against the fascist attack by organizing additional mass actions against goods for Italy on the basis of the widest united front apart from those mentioned above.

We have now reached the period in which the fascist offensive has taken place in Ethiopia and the war is on. The Communist Party of Great Britain must continue and intensify its fight for peace. It must be ready to adapt its line for any sharp changes in the situation, fighting the attempts being made to come to a thieves' bargain with Italy at the expense of the Ethiopian people.

In Britain we struggle to carry into life the call for "the establishment of unity of action by all workers' organizations and all friends of peace in all countries so as to isolate and curb the fascist instigators of war." At the general election in November, at which the National government made its foreign policy and rearmament one of the main issues, the Communist Party of Great Britain fought to mobilize the workers to defeat the warmongering National government at the election and replace it with a Labor government pledged to fight in defense of peace and to defend the conditions of the workers. Together with this, and especially inside the trade unions, we must continue to exert every effort to build up unity of action, to multiply the actions of the London, Cardiff and Manchester dockers, and shoulder to shoulder with all toilers, with all who are for peace, develop such a mighty, stormy movement as will ensure not a single train, not a single ship in support of the Italian war in Ethiopia. Every conceivable effort will be made by our Party to develop this movement to such a stage as will sweep away the hated National government, and in the words of Comrade Pollitt, "*secure the return of a Labor government on the basis of the united struggle for the preservation of peace, the defense of democracy, and the improvement in the conditions of the workers*". In this way a most tremendous change can be made in the direction of greatly strengthening all the forces making for peace in Europe and the whole world.

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## IN THE UNITED STATES

*By R.*

**I**N the United States the large Negro population of over twelve million and a large Italian immigration of over three and a half million were factors making the campaign in the support of Ethiopian independence especially stirring. The campaign of solidarity with Ethiopia, struggling to defend its independence, took on extensive proportions and evoked great national interest.

Many newspapers, not only the *Daily Worker* (central organ of the

Communist Party) but even well-known bourgeois papers, took a clear-cut position, although not all to an equal degree, "We stand with Ethiopia!"

The position of the United States government as expressed in its "neutrality" stand decided to place an embargo on all actual war supplies to both Italy and Ethiopia. Our Party has carried on a strong agitational campaign against this position, pointing out that such "neutrality" can only help Italian fascism. Instead, we raised the slogan, "Stop shipments of munitions and all war supplies to Italy", and "Give all aid to Ethiopia". The United States government has even prevented its citizens from sending to Ethiopia war supplies for which private citizens were willing to pay by popular subscription. The Party slogans are very popular and many trade unions have responded to them. The Seattle Central Trades Council passed a motion supporting the stand of the marine unions not to load any ships with goods for Italy. The National Convention of the American Federation of Labor has taken a position against the Italian aggression, declaring it "outlaw".

At this writing the Socialist Party has not officially acted on the proposals of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for a united front in defense of Ethiopian independence. However, in many localities the Socialist Party has joined such united front actions.

The Communist Party has raised the following slogans: "For unity of world labor and all opponents of war!" "For the defense of peace!" "For the defense of Ethiopia!" "For the stopping of all arms shipments to fascist Italy!" "For the barring of loans and credits to fascist Italy!" "For united action of all nations to prevent war on Ethiopia!" "For direct support to Ethiopia and to the anti-fascist masses of Italy!" "For support to the peace policy of the Soviet Union!" "Socialists, Communists, trade unionists, all opponents of war, unite for peace and against fascism!"

#### FORMS OF ACTIVITY

On July 3, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States issued an appeal to join in a united front demonstration on August 3 in Harlem and in defense of Ethiopia. Speakers were sent to all kinds of organizations. One hundred thousand Negro and white people marched in this demonstration in the heart of New York's Negro population in Harlem. On the same day, demonstrations also took place in the following cities: Baltimore, Cincinnati, New Brunswick, Buffalo, St. Louis, Passaic, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco and other cities.

On August 31, ten thousand Negro and white workers joined in a united front demonstration in Chicago. Two thousand police broke up the meeting and slugged the workers. McKenna and Haywood, the leading Communist organizers, were badly beaten and arrested.

On September 11, on behalf of all Communists and sympathizers, the *Daily Worker* took a position for immediate practical aid to Ethiopia by issuing an appeal supporting the American Medical Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia. That same week, there was instituted day

and night picketing of Italian consulates by the American League Against War and Fascism sections in a number of cities. In some cities the police did not permit such picketing.

In Detroit a mass picket line picketed for one hour in front of the Italian consulate, after which it was broken up by the police. The picket line was organized by a united front Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopian Independence.

Some of these forms of activity, such as the measures for practical aid, were not planned out and proposed by our Party, but were initiated by various groups. The Negro organizations, especially, reacted to the attack against Ethiopia. Even the Negro churches began to swing into the movement and join "Hands Off Ethiopia Committees". On September 17, a united front conference at the Shiloh Baptist Church, under the auspices of the Philadelphia Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, set into motion the machinery for establishment of "Hands Off Ethiopia Committees". The following week, the New York Committees for Ethiopian Independence held a united front indoor meeting at Madison Square Garden, with twelve thousand present. The Negro bourgeois reactionaries did everything they could to confuse the issue, first, making it a race question, Negro versus Italian, by closing Italian shops with flying squads, etc. (In New York and New Jersey there were small riots between Italian and Negro people.) And, second, by slandering the U.S.S.R. to be a supporter of Italy. Thus, in June, a Negro renegade from the Communist Party by the name of Mackawain tried to discredit the Communist Party with the Negro population in Harlem by misrepresenting and misinterpreting the actions of the Soviet Union at Geneva as playing Britain and France's game of imperialist maneuvering. All the actions of the Communist Party gave the lie to these accusations and largely made them futile, but especially useful was the September 30 feature in the central organ of the Communist Party, the *Daily Worker*, of an interview at Geneva between Teclé Hawariate, ambassador of Ethiopia, and James Ford of the Communist Party, in which Hawariate praised the stand taken by the Soviet Union.

The support to our Party position on this question was well illustrated when on October 10 a huge Madison Square Garden meeting, with eighteen to twenty thousand people present, heard Comrade Browder's report on the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern and also a report on the Ethiopian situation, and amidst a great demonstration pledged support for the defense of Ethiopian independence.

During October, the character, growth and problems of the movement can be best shown by these outstanding examples:

October 5: Huge united front demonstration in Harlem, New York, of Negro and white workers against Mussolini. City places 1,250 extra police at corners and on rooftops "to keep demonstration in check".

October 8: The Central Committee of the Communist Party calls for support of the collection of twelve million signatures in the United States for a people's mandate against war. The campaign is being conducted under the auspices of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

October 9: Ten thousand workers demonstrate under Communist Party leadership in front of the Italian Consulate in Philadelphia. Harry Wicks, Communist candidate for mayor, speaks from second-story window of hotel opposite Consulate and scatters thousands of leaflets. Police broke down door, slugged Wicks, and arrested many.

October 11: One thousand at Chicago mass conference held in the Community Memorial Church under the auspices of the Joint Conference for Defense of Ethiopia plan to aid Ethiopian defense. Decide to raise a "John Robinson Defense Fund to Aid Ethiopia". (John Robinson is a Chicago Negro flier who is now in the service of Ethiopian troops.)

October 12: At the Columbus Day celebration at Columbus Circle, New York, which the fascists tried to turn into a pro-Italian demonstration, a tremendous opposition struggle developed among the audience, and Governor Lehman of the State of New York and Mayor LaGuardia of the City of New York had to retire from the main platform to a nearby park to speak, while anti-fascist demonstrators won the support of most of the audience.

October 26: Seventy-five thousand people participated in a united front march and open air demonstration in New York led by many American Federation of Labor progressive leaders including Gorman of the textile workers' union, Negro reformist leaders and leaders of the Communist Party.

The above are only some of the main examples of our activity. In addition, thousands of meetings have already been held on the streets in neighborhoods all over the country. Hundreds of workers have been arrested in demonstrations, picket lines, etc., and have turned the court trials into tribunes against Italian fascism and imperialist war.

The campaign for the defense of Ethiopia and to popularize the revolutionary and pro-people's position of the Soviet Union is now assuming broad proportions.

If there is anywhere a weakness in the activity it can be said to be in the comparatively weak work among the Italian population. Especially strong is the agitation of the pro-fascist groups that the Italian people have no other way out of the crisis, but through war. Especially weak is our concrete answer to these arguments. Of course, we can answer in a general way, "the Communist way out", but there is a concrete, practical and understandable program necessary that every Italian worker in the United States can grasp.

In this connection, the *Daily Worker* published a full page statement of the Communist Party of Italy, explaining its position on Ethiopia, although the statement had a significance not only among the Italian masses.

It must also be noted that the demagogy of the "civilizing influence" of Italy has been received with great scorn in the United States by all classes of the population, and that this made the development of the movement for the defense of Ethiopian independence easier. Italian aggression can be said to have no support anywhere among the masses. Even the reactionary press, which looks with favor on the adventure, present



it to their readers in the cautious style of simply printing Mussolini's statement.

All these things give our Party the opportunity of widening the anti-war movement to newer and hitherto unmoved sections of the population and to raise the anti-war movement to a much higher level.

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## IN CANADA

*By J. PORTER*

**T**HE Canadian Communist Party, at first, failed to draw the proper conclusions from the Italo-Ethiopian war as being one of imperialist conquest on the part of Italian fascism and a war for independence on the part of the Ethiopian people, and did not therefore organize the masses for mass pressure to force the Canadian government, a member of the League of Nations, to disassociate itself from the hypocrisy of Britain and to support to the full the policy of the U.S.S.R. The slogan advanced was "Keep Canada Out of War". But this position of the Party was quickly corrected.

The policy of the Party in the present war situation is to arouse a mighty people's anti-war movement, headed by a united front of the Communist, Socialist, and trade union movements.

The events in Ethiopia have alarmed the Canadian common people. The Communist Party, in the course of a stirring general election campaign, warned them that Mussolini's attack upon Ethiopia is the prelude to a world war. The Party was able to assist and direct the work of the League Against War and Fascism, embracing over 300,000 people, with the result that the League has expanded, carried out a whole number of emergency conferences in the main cities, arranged numerous demonstrations, parades, and sent delegations to Italian consulates, under the slogan: "Hands Off Ethiopia!" While the top leaders of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (the Farmer-Labor Party) and the trade unions persist in their refusal actively to participate in the League Against War and Fascism, increasing numbers of local, district, and individual national leaders have actively engaged in the actions organized by the League.

Because of the increasingly strong peace sentiments within the trade unions, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, which is the central body of the American Federation of Labor unions in the country, at its Halifax convention adopted a strongly worded resolution condemning Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia, and demanding the enforcement of the League Covenant. The Congress indicated that the unions would support aid for Ethiopia, but (and here the top leaders take full responsibility) no practical measures were made for struggle against the war, such as the stoppage of the war shipments of Canadian nickel by the action of railroad and mine workers, etc. Nevertheless, the resolution shows the ferment which is proceeding within the American Federation of Labor unions, and gives a splendid opportunity for appealing to the membership for anti-war actions.

The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation leaders declared for the full application of the League Covenant and that unless the fascist conquest of Ethiopia was prevented, the danger of world war was imminent. These words were not translated into action by Woodsworth, the C.C.F. leader, and his colleagues. Had this been done, the great influence the C.C.F. has among the masses could have been used to bring about a much stronger anti-war movement, and would have also greatly assisted in the defeat of capitalist candidates in the election. The Communist Party made earnest and repeated efforts to forge election unity, raising the issue of government before the masses and in particular before the C.C.F. leaders and membership. Our Party correctly stated that the return of a majority of C.C.F. and Communist candidates pledged to peace and against fascism would be one of the most powerful blows against the war alliance with Great Britain maintained by the dominant sections of the Canadian bourgeoisie.

This did not prevent the active participation of the C.C.F. membership and supporters in the movement for the defense of Ethiopia, and consequently in the defense of world peace.

One striking feature of the peace movement was the manner in which Negro churches and organizations cooperated with the large Italian immigrant groups in Eastern Canada. Joint committees of the Negro and Italian people are carrying through a good campaign, with the active aid of the Communists. A climax of this international fraternizing was when a prominent Negro lawyer defended in court two Italian anti-fascist workers charged with assaulting the police during an anti-fascist action. An outstanding C.C.F. leader gave evidence for the defense in this trial, which resulted in the virtual acquittal of the accused workers.

The Youth Council in Toronto, representing about 160,000 of the young generation, concretely applied its slogan, "Peace, Freedom and Progress" by actively engaging in the fight to defend the Ethiopian people from Italian fascism. The young generation circularized all the candidates for the federal election, demanding their stand on the present war. Large student strikes in Vancouver and Montreal, called as a protest against high school fees, added the slogan in defense of Ethiopia to their demands.

The Communists placed squarely before the people of Canada the issues called forth by the war. They correctly linked up the fight for peace with the struggle for independence of the Ethiopian people, and against Canadian imperialism's war alliance with Britain, with the general elections, which took place on October 14. The positions of Bennett and Mackenzie King, the Conservative and Liberal leaders, which on the face of it were "anti-war", were exposed by the Communists by contrasting the consistent support given to British war policy with the lying election propaganda of their chief bourgeois leaders. In this activity the C.C.F. and the Communist Party were united. In almost fifty constituencies the Communists and the C.C.F. workers succeeded in coming to an agreement to support the Labor candidates on the program which included the fight against war and for peace.

However, it must be admitted that the Communist Party of Canada has not yet succeeded in moving the decisive sections of the workers, the metal miners, transport workers, etc., into concrete anti-war actions, such as the stoppage of nickel shipments on which Italy depends, such as the prevention of the sending of troop ships for Mussolini, the stoppage of war shipments of wheat, etc. Likewise, assistance to the Red Cross services of the Ethiopian people, which was asked for by the defense movement in Canada, has not reached anything like the proportions it should have.

In this connection, it is clear that too little attention was paid to the Western wheat farmers. When the Italian troops commenced their attack on Ethiopia, the price of wheat rose to higher levels than at any time since 1929, owing to the prospective demand for wheat and flour by Italy. The capitalist press hailed this as "evidence of recovery". Hundreds of thousands of export wheat farmers and their families, dependent on the world market for their livelihood, may be caught up into support of war because of the temporary benefit this may bring in the form of higher prices to some farmers. Special attention should be paid by the Communists to these toilers. It must be shown to them that the rich grain merchants and the farmers' creditors benefit most from the rise in prices, and that war does not offer a solution to their difficulties.

In connection with the Italo-Ethiopian war the Communist Party of Canada is now developing activity to bring mass pressure on the policy of the Canadian government to follow a policy of peace desired by the common people of Canada, and is *especially* engaged in developing independent working class action in the struggle for peace, for the defeat of Italian fascism and for Ethiopian independence.