

# World Socialism

## ETHIOPIA—AND AFTER

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WITH Addis Ababa falling into Mussolini's hands, with Haile Selassie fled and the Ethiopian armies disorganized and incapable of further resistance, it must be stated that Ethiopia has already been conquered by Italy. Italy has done in East Africa what Japan did in Manchuria. There remains only the task of "mopping up," which the fascists will undoubtedly carry out with the help of some of the methods they employed against the labor movement at home. In consolidating fascist rule in Ethiopia, Mussolini will have not only the example of Japan, but the examples of "democratic" Belgium and its Congo, "democratic" Holland and its Indonesia, "democratic" France and its Indo-China, "democratic" England and its India, "democratic" United States and its Philippines.

Italy's seizure of Ethiopia greatly intensifies the war danger and will undoubtedly result in the immediate speeding up of the armaments race, which is already proceeding at a rapid pace. Italy will now be in a position to consolidate and exploit Eritrea, Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia on a "unified" basis, with Eritrea supplying access to the sea, or else through a deal with France for the use of Jibuti. Occupation of Ethiopia provides Italy with a dominant position in East Africa, which, supplementing its strong position in the Mediterranean, will serve to intensify the Anglo-Italian struggle.

### Failure Of Sanctions

What now becomes of the League of Nations? What of sanctions? Will those who placed their faith in these capitalist instruments continue to cling to them as an act of defeatist desperation? The utopians who hoped that sanctions would "strangle" Italy must surely admit that even from a purely practical viewpoint they have failed utterly. The League of Nations played the usual role, dallying when determined action might have had some effect, offering compromises at Ethiopia's expense and knuckling under when the pressure was put on.

The League could play no other role, for as an organization of imperialist countries, it merely reflects all the contradictions among those countries. Sanctions by the League could be nothing else but an instrument in the imperialist struggle, and the results have amply justified their rejection by revolutionary Socialists.

A well-known writer on international affairs has pretty well summarized the reasons for labor support for capitalist sanctions by the argument that "labor . . . has found an ally in its struggle against fascist imperialism." And to be consistent, having found such a powerful ally as Britain, should not labor stake its entire future upon it? This is precisely what happened. Support of sanctions by labor has led to shameful passivity by the labor movement against Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Only here and there, as isolated cases, were there any signs of independent labor action. Even the traditional demonstrations at the consulates were conspicuously lacking. In comparison with the activity over American intervention in Nicaragua some years ago, activity on behalf of Ethiopian independence was non-existent.

It is important to bear the lessons of Ethiopia in mind because once again we are reminded that the colonial countries can either be the Achilles heel of world imperialism or they can be the reserve of capitalist reaction. Marx

once said that "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin if it is branded in the black." A labor movement in an imperialist country which fights for a new social order, but does not consider the liberation of the oppressed peoples as part of that fight, thereby places itself on the side of the imperialist oppressors. One of the factors which has helped world capitalism in the present crisis has been its ability to overcome colonial revolt and intensify its exploitation of the colonial people. A resurgence of the colonial movement would not only be a great stimulus to the world labor movement, but would also weaken capitalism considerably. And conversely, a more aggressive struggle in the capitalist countries against colonial oppression would greatly stimulate the anti-imperialist struggle in the colonies.

### Divide and Rule

The labor movement must of course be on guard against imperialist tricks in the colonies—for instance playing one racial or religious group against the other. For many years this was the stock "method of rule in India. We see an application of this method today in Palestine. There is no doubt that the anti-Jewish riots and the tenseness between Jews and Arabs are being promoted by British interests.

Such a stirring up of racial hatreds is, it seems, the only possibility Britain had for securing acceptance of the new Legislative Council which gives Britain power. Arabs and Jews were unanimous in their opposition to it. This joint opposition contained the seeds of future Arab-Jewish co-operation against British imperialism and threatened Britain's hold on Palestine. Now England can step in as the "peace-maker" and "guardian of order" and strengthen its own position against both Jew and Arab. There can be no salvation for the colonial people in such a situation. Labor must definitely align itself with the colonial population against imperialism, and it must exert its influence for unity of the toiling colonial people against imperialism.

The struggle for the re-division of the world among the leading imperialist powers, beginning with the re-division of the colonies is already at an advanced stage. Manchuria to Japan, Ethiopia to Italy—these may be the preludes to new raids upon the colonies. Germany, with or without the collusion of some other country, may next make its bid. Out of this scramble may come the next world war—perhaps sooner than we anticipate.

The colonies will surely play an important role in the war struggle. The imperialists look upon them as reservoirs for men and for materials. If the international labor movement neglects the colonies, that is what they will be. But we cannot neglect them. Our ally in the struggle against imperialism cannot be imperialism of a different type. Not the League of Nations, not capitalist sanctions, not imperialist alliances, but the colonial people themselves, against all imperialists, are our allies. Not to wait until someone new country becomes a victim, but to carry on the struggle immediately against all imperialists, and particularly the imperialist at home, is the need of the hour. Not to fight only against the "fascist" imperialism of Italy, Japan and Germany, but also against the "democratic" imperialism of England, France and the United States must be our tactic.