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NEW STATESMAN PAMPHLET

ABYSSINIA

THE ESSENTIAL FACTS IN
THE DISPUTE AND AN ANSWER
TO THE QUESTION — “OUGHT
WE TO SUPPORT SANCTIONS?”

By
Vigilantes

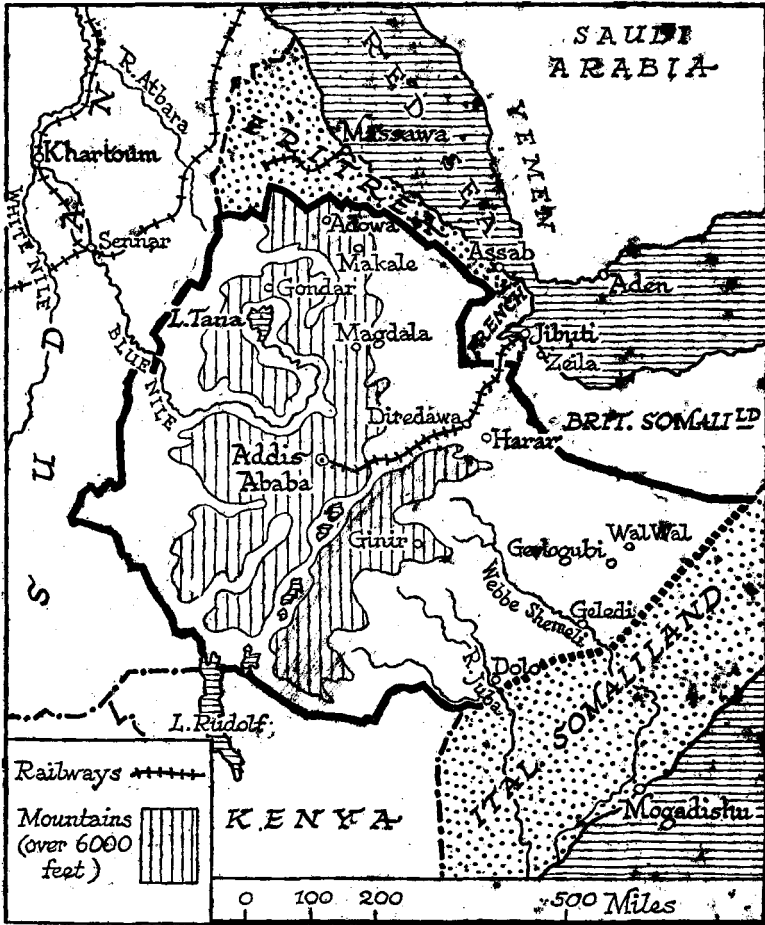
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INTRODUCTION

At the time of the writing of this Introduction Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia appears imminent and inevitable. In a few months or weeks this country will, in all human probability, and with varying degrees of support from France and other Members of the League, be applying League sanctions against Italy, to which Italy may reply by war. What is more, the overwhelming majority of public opinion will unhesitatingly support the Government, for the alternative is to pave the way to Armageddon by allowing Mussolini to murder the League of Nations.

But how and why is it that four years of the National Government's foreign policy have ended in this? Was it really impossible to foresee, and foreseeing, to prevent, Mussolini's bloody adventure? Is the collective peace system really so clumsy that it can do nothing to preserve peace, but only compel us to stop a war after it has begun, at the cost of going to war ourselves?

These are questions which the people of this country are already asking. They will be asked with ever greater insistence as the portentous events that are now preparing roll over the world and take their toll in anguish and death.

The full answer requires an analysis of the whole of the Government's foreign policy since 1931. Mussolini's adventure would have been inconceivable without the failure to stop Japan, the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference, and the course taken by the European negotiations. It would have been impossible if the British Government had not, throughout the crucial first seven months of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, continued what Mr. Garvin has called the 'half-hearted and half-headed' policy it has pursued on every major international issue since 1931. That policy was based on ambiguity about our sanctions obligations that can be compared only to Sir Edward Grey's ambiguity in July 1914 about whether Great Britain would declare neutrality or fight Germany.

This pamphlet describes and analyses the record of the Government in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. It shows how peace could have been preserved with virtually no risk by applying the Covenant at the outset of the conflict as it was meant to be applied. It reveals how the policy actually pursued has made this war inevitable, and why nevertheless a policy of sanctions must be supported, not because of any national loyalty to the rulers who have brought us to this pass, but because of our international duty to the League.

The authors of this pamphlet were responsible under the pseudonym of 'Vigilantes' for the pamphlet, *The Dying Peace*, published by the *New Statesman and Nation* in September 1933. They are now preparing a book that they hope to bring out early in the new year. The book analyses the National Government's international record; surveys world developments in the last four years; and erects the structure of the policy and political faith to which the authors believe the people of this country must dedicate themselves if the world is to have peace.

We are almost certainly on the eve of a war in which this country will have to take part and which is a judgment on the National Government's foreign policy as final as that passed by the Great

War on the policy of Sir Edward Grey. This time it is not likely to be a great war, for thanks to the existence of the League and the cause it represents there will be such moral, economic, and social as well as military forces arrayed against Mussolini that we may reasonably expect the Fascist regime to founder in a few months; if it takes the field it will be alone and against a host of enemies, both domestic and foreign.

But the victory of the League over Italy and the ensuing collapse of Italian Fascism will release still greater forces. This pamphlet is intended to help prepare the people of this country to understand and to keep their heads in the ordeal that is immediately before us. The book is designed to equip its readers to face the vast new needs, new dangers, and new opportunities that will rise before us in the swift-moving period which we are now entering.

VIGILANTES

THE BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

The effect of a war between Italy and Abyssinia would, in our view, be wholly bad. Whether the war be long or short, whether the victor be Italy or Abyssinia, the effect would be harmful beyond exaggeration to the League and all that the League stands for. The attempt that we have made in the post-war world to substitute peaceful settlement for the arbitrament of the sword would have been frustrated. The small weak countries of the world would see the protection upon which they have been depending gravely endangered. The pacts that have been laboriously concluded for the greater security of Europe would seem little more than scraps of paper. . . .

Outside Europe, the reactions, though they may be not so immediate, will be no less deplorable. For a generation past we in Great Britain and our friends in France have been engaged in a wise and generous policy of eliminating issues between the white and the coloured races. We do not believe in the inevitability of these colour clashes. We have worked not to dig a gulf but to build a bridge between Europe and Africa and between Europe and Asia. . . . A war that claimed to be a war between the white and black races would throw intolerable obstacles into this path of reconciliation and mutual understanding. . . .

If the Italian Government have complaints to make against the Abyssinian Government, let them make those complaints in the proper and regular manner. They will find the League ready to give full and impartial consideration to the case which they put before it. But these are issues which can be settled without recourse to war. Above all, they are issues that can be settled without recourse to a war which would inevitably lead to confusion in Europe, to the serious weakening and perhaps the destruction of the forces of peace, and to the formidable unsettlement of the great coloured races of the world.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE *in the House of Commons, August 1, 1935.*

ABYSSINIA is the last surviving independent African State. Many and determined attempts were made during the heyday of Imperialism and the scramble for markets at the end of the nineteenth century to divide Abyssinia among the Great Powers. The country survived only through the fighting qualities of its population, aided by the climate and the mountains and deserts behind which they lived. Italy concluded a Treaty with Abyssinia in which, in the Italian text, Abyssinia agreed to resort to the good offices of Italy in her relations with other Powers, whereas the Amharic text merely said that Abyssinia could, if she chose, resort to the good offices of Italy for this purpose. The difference between the two texts was the difference between a Protectorate and independence, and led to the war in which the Italians were decisively defeated at Adowa in 1896 and subsequently recognised Abyssinia's independence.

The attempts to establish spheres of influence in Abyssinia continued and resulted, on December 13, 1906, in the so-called Tripartite (London) Agreement between Great Britain, France and Italy. This was a typical pre-war Treaty, such as the agreements between France and Great Britain over Morocco, and between Russia and Great Britain over Persia. The Tripartite Agreement began by guaranteeing the independence and integrity of Abyssinia, and then specified the way in which it would in due course be divided up between the contracting parties. The preamble to the Agreement declares :

It being the common interest of France, Great Britain and Italy to maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia, to provide for every kind of disturbance in the political conditions of the Ethiopian Empire, to come to a mutual understanding in regard to their attitude in the event of any change in the situation arising in Ethiopia, and to prevent the action of the three States in protecting their respective interests, both in the British, French and Italian possessions bordering on Ethiopia and in Ethiopia itself, from resulting in injury to the interests of any of them—the Government of the French Republic, the Government of His Britannic Majesty and the Government of Italy have assented to the following Agreement.

THE AGREEMENT OF 1906

Article 1 of the Agreement states that 'France, Great Britain and Italy shall co-operate in maintaining the political and territorial *status quo* in Ethiopia as determined by the state of affairs at present existing and by the following Agreements.' (Here are specified nine several agreements and protocols between the contracting parties with respect to Abyssinia or between one of them and Abyssinia. The protocols go back to one of 1891 recognising virtually the whole of Abyssinia as an Italian sphere of influence.)

Article 2 binds the three Powers when demanding agricultural, commercial, and industrial concessions in Abyssinia 'to act in such a way that concessions which may be accorded in the interest of one of the three States may not be injurious to the interests of the other two'.

By Article 3 they pledge themselves to non-intervention in Abyssinian internal affairs, and by Articles 6 and 7 to prolong the Jibuti railway to Addis Ababa and to arrange that an Englishman and an Italian, as well as a representative of the Emperor of Abyssinia, shall be appointed members of the French Railway Company, and that the British and Italian Governments shall put a Frenchman on any boards they may form to build railways in Abyssinia.

Article 4 says that:

In the event of the *status quo* laid down in Art. 1 being disturbed, France, Great Britain and Italy shall make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia. In any case they shall act together, on the basis of the Agreements enumerated in the above-mentioned Article, in order to safeguard:

(a) The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile Basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in 8(b);

(b) The interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the *hinterland* of her possessions and the territorial connection between them to the west of Addis Ababa;

(c) The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali Coast, the *hinterland* of their protectorate and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa.

Abyssinia protested against this Treaty at the time, saying that as she was not a party it had no binding force, and that the three Great Powers had no right to dispose of the future of Abyssinia.

ABYSSINIA ENTERS THE LEAGUE

During the War Italy had to be lavishly bribed by France and Great Britain to abandon Germany and to come in on the side of the Allies in 1915. The bribe included generous but unspecified promises of colonial concessions in Asia Minor and East Africa, which the Italians have ever since regarded as including moral and diplomatic support for helping themselves to Abyssinia. In 1919, at the time of the peace negotiations, the Italian Government pressed for the implementing of these promises, but could not win British assent, for reasons that will be made plain in a moment.

In 1923 Francè, with Italian support, took the initiative in bringing Abyssinia into the League. The moving spirit in this matter was M. Hanotaux, who was then French Foreign Minister and who had been Minister of Colonies at the time of Fashoda. The bringing of Abyssinia into the League was looked upon by the French and Italian Colonial Ministries as a clever move to frustrate what were believed to be British designs on Abyssinia—for such was the interpretation put upon the agitation that had then begun in Great Britain against slavery in the country.

The British delegate expressed doubts as to whether Abyssinia should be admitted. These doubts were not shared by Signor

Mussolini's representative, Count Bonin-Longare, who, according to the Minutes of the Sixth Committee of the Assembly:

considered that Abyssinia's request constituted a tribute to the League of Nations. This tribute was of great value as coming from a distant nation which had hitherto remained outside the great international movements, but which, by the remarkable tenacity with which it had been able to preserve its religious faith and national character throughout the ages, had acquired titles of nobility to which due justice must be paid.

M. de Jouvenel, the French delegate, repeated the arguments of his Italian colleague as to the efforts being made by the Abyssinian Government to suppress the slave traffic and the beneficial effect Abyssinia's entrance into the League would have on this question. He added:

As to the question of domestic serfdom, it must be confessed that many Governments found themselves faced with similar difficulties in their African territories. Such was the case in the French colonies, the Belgian Congo, etc.

All these considerations led to the conclusion that . . . the Committee ought to recommend the Assembly to admit Abyssinia to the League, and that any delay in the admission of that country might prejudice the cause of peace and prestige of the League. If an incident were to take place within the coming year on the frontiers of Abyssinia and it was settled by force, the League would be blamed for such recourse to force because it had failed to come to a decision in time.

Abyssinia was finally admitted on her Government's undertaking to do their best to end the slave trade and slavery. The Slavery Report of the League (1935) gives credit to Abyssinia for the progress it has made in this matter, and incidentally points out that conditions akin to slavery prevail in the adjacent Italian colony of Eritrea. Authorities agree that determined efforts have been made by the Emperor to reform and modernise his country; and that the greatest obstacle to reform in the last two or three years has been the growing danger of an Italian attack, which has necessitated concentration on the question of national defence and made it impossible for the Emperor to carry out reforms that would irritate the military and conservative elements in the country.

BRITAIN AND ITALY IN 1925

Two years after Abyssinia's admission to the League there was an exchange of Notes between Italy and the Baldwin Government. On December 14, 1925, Sir Ronald Graham, British Ambassador in Rome, wrote to Signor Mussolini. Beginning with the vital

importance to Egypt and the Sudan of maintaining the flow of water from the Blue and White Niles, he referred to the so far fruitless attempt to obtain a concession for a barrage on Lake Tana. He recalled that in 1919 Italy had offered co-operation in this enterprise, together with support for Britain in the effort to secure a motor road between Lake Tana and the Sudan. Italy in return asked for British support in her plan for a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, passing to the west of Addis Ababa, with free passage across the motor road. Italy demanded an exclusive economic interest in West Ethiopia and the whole territory crossed by the railway, and a promise of support for all requests to Ethiopia for economic concessions regarding the Italian zone.

The above offer, it was recalled, had not been entertained in 1919, since strong objection was felt to a foreign Power's establishing any sort of control over the head waters of the rivers. But the British Government was desirous of further friendly co-operation with Italy, and they recognised that the Italian offer was not in contradiction of the London Agreement (1906), since its object was to maintain the *status quo*. They now welcomed the offer, provided that it could be accepted without prejudice to the paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan. The British Government accordingly asked for support at Addis Ababa in the matter of the barrage concession; and in return they would support the Italian plan for the railway and were prepared to recognise an exclusive Italian economic interest in the zone above referred to.

Signor Mussolini replied on December 20, 1925, noting in particular that the proposals of 1919 were now acceptable, and expressing the hope that friendly co-operation might be further extended so as to cover all Italian and British interests in Ethiopia. The Duce promised support for the dual British plan of barrage and road, in return for British support of the railway project. He added that in the event of either Government failing to secure a concession, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax their efforts on behalf of the other. The Duce remarked in this Note that the proposals of 1919 formed part of 'a wider negotiation of a colonial character' arising out of the Treaty of London, 1915. This reference was, of course, to the attempts made at the Peace Conference to give effect to the sweeping annexationist demands in the secret treaties—the bribe for bringing Italy into the War.

THE PROTEST OF 1926

The next public development came on June 19, 1926, when the Emperor addressed a protest to the Secretary-General of the League for circulation to all Member States.

The Emperor said that his Government had been profoundly moved by the conclusion of the Italo-British Agreement, without their being consulted or informed. On admission to the League Ethiopia had been told that all nations were to be on a footing of equality within the League, and that their independence was to be universally respected. One of the subjects covered by the Agreement had already been discussed between Ethiopia and Britain, and been left undecided. The people of Abyssinia were anxious to do right, but throughout their history they had seldom met with foreigners 'who did not desire to possess themselves of Abyssinian territory and to destroy their independence'. Prudence, therefore, was needed if the people were to be convinced that foreigners seeking concessions were genuinely innocent of concerted political aims; 'nor must it be forgotten that we have only recently been introduced to modern civilisation'. The Emperor, then, wished to hear from members of the League.

On August 3, 1926, the British Government addressed a Note to the Secretary-General of the League. They regretted that the purport of the Agreement should have been misconstrued by the Abyssinian Government. There was nothing in the Anglo-Italian Notes to suggest coercion or the exercise of pressure. The two Powers had no intention of dividing the country economically. Of course, the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia. The Note concluded with a statement to the effect that Sir Austen Chamberlain would be happy to repeat these assurances at the League Council.

The Italian reply to the Emperor was dated August 4th. It affirmed that the Emperor's Government had not understood the letter and spirit of the Agreement, in which there was nothing to justify apprehension on the part of Ethiopia.

The Emperor's rejoinder was sent to the Secretary-General on September 4th. It urged that the procedure of the two Powers, in making an agreement without the knowledge of Abyssinia, was incompatible with the terms of the Covenant, 'since it constituted an indirect threat to the secular territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia. . . . In our view, under Art. 20 of the Covenant, they had no right to contract such an agreement.' The Abyssinian Government would have felt no further apprehension

had not the two Powers brought the agreement officially to their notice on the same day. The Ethiopian Government took cognisance of the announcement that the Notes exchanged were to be deposited with the Secretariat of the League, and requested that their letter of protest be likewise registered and published, in order that the public might be acquainted with Ethiopia's views on the Notes and with the reassurances given by the two Powers.

In 1928 Italy concluded with Abyssinia a treaty of amity and conciliation. By Article 5 the parties agree to submit any dispute not settled by diplomatic means to conciliation and arbitration, and not to have recourse to force. By Article 2, 'each Government undertakes not to engage under any pretext in action calculated to endanger or prejudice the independence of the other'.

One of the Italian grievances is that instead of allowing Italy to step in and develop the country, the Emperor has actually been himself attempting to civilise and modernise his own people, and has in this connection devoted special attention to making the national defence more effective.

THE OUTBREAK AND COURSE OF THE CONFLICT

With this background it should have been clear to the British Government from the first that the Italo-Abyssinian conflict was of the most serious character. The ostensible cause was a frontier incident—one of many—at Wal Wal, between Italian native troops and an Abyssinian force. But it so happened that just before the incident an Anglo-Abyssinian Boundary Commission had been on the spot. The British members of the Commission, in signed letters and affidavits which were communicated to both the British and Abyssinian Governments and transmitted by the latter to the League, declared that the Italian troops at Wal Wal were on Abyssinian territory, and that their behaviour was provocative. The British Commissioner, Colonel Clifford, added that as far back as 1932 the local Italian Commander had sent a communication implying a claim to Wal Wal to the British Somaliland Administration, which the latter had refused even to answer on the ground that the claim was inadmissible.

At the end of July 1935 Mr. Vernon Bartlett, in a series of despatches to the *News Chronicle*, reported that the preparations for the conquest of Abyssinia, for which the Wal Wal incident merely served as a pretext, had been begun by Signor Mussolini in July 1934 when he gave Marshal Badoglio and an Italian military com-

mission the task of proceeding to Eritrea to investigate and report upon the prospects and nature of a campaign. The reports were of an exceedingly discouraging character, as were the subsequent reports of the General Staff.*

As far back as September 1934 the Italian Emigré paper *Giustizia e Libertà* wrote:

We have received information from Italy that the Government is said to be preparing a military movement in Abyssinia.

Facts were adduced in support of this statement. Later, on October 12, 1934, the same paper (No. 22) printed a letter from Rome saying that:

[In spite of official denials, and in spite of statements made to one another in Rome by the Abyssinian chargé d'affaires and Mussolini, talk of a military expedition to Ethiopia continues. It is said that operations are prepared down to the smallest detail. It is said, too, that the military expedition would be entrusted more especially to the air force and to contingents of colonial troops. General de Bono would leave the Ministry of the Colonies, the management of which would be taken over by Mussolini, and would have the high command of the colonies with wide powers.]

By January 1935 the Italian Colonial Office vote had been heavily increased; Signor Mussolini had made himself Colonial Minister, and Marshal de Bono, a notorious fire-eater and advocate of a war of conquest upon Abyssinia, had been appointed Governor-General of 'Italian East Africa' (a new title, suggesting the union of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, which happen to be separated by Abyssinia). The Italian Press explained that the object of this appointment was to settle once and for all the whole question of Italo-Abyssinian relations. The flow of Italian troops and war material through the Suez Canal began in the last months of 1934, and swelled steadily.

The Italian Press in the first months of the affair boasted of the fact that the Italian Government were keeping close touch with the British Government and informing them of their views and plans.

In short, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Foreign

* We are reliably informed that Signor Mussolini tore up the General Staff report in a fury when he received it. He began with the assumption that 70-80,000 men and a maximum of 200,000,000 to 250,000,000 lire a month would be sufficient for the expedition; by May 1935 his General Staff had convinced him that 3-400,000 men and a correspondingly greater expenditure would be necessary.

The duration of the war is reckoned by Italian military experts at two years; by most foreign experts at at least four years, followed by guerrilla fighting for an indefinite period.

Office and the Government were very well aware from the outset of what Italy's violent reaction to the Wal Wal incident portended.*

Nevertheless, when Abyssinia brought the matter before the League in January under Article 11 of the Covenant the Baldwin Government brought the strongest pressure to bear for Abyssinia to enter into direct negotiations with Italy. These negotiations were to be conducted in the spirit of Article 5 of the 1928 Treaty. The Italian contention from the first was that the question of the right of the Italian troops to be at Wal Wal should be ruled out, that the Abyssinians should apologise, salute the Italian flag and pay an indemnity, and that no other issue should be discussed except that of responsibility for the Wal Wal incident. The Abyssinians demanded arbitration, not only on this incident, but on the question of where their frontier with Italy should run, and on any other issue that Italy chose to raise. In addition to offering arbitration on all issues they undertook beforehand to accept any decision of the Council.

ENTER THE LEAGUE COUNCIL

As the situation went from bad to worse Abyssinia in March

* Definite proof of this statement is afforded in Signor Mussolini's interview in the *Morning Post* of September 17, 1935. The Duce states, and the fact has been admitted in the British official reply to the interview, that he informed the British Government of his plans in Abyssinia on January 29th, and offered to do a deal with Great Britain. He complained that he received an evasive reply. The British people will echo this complaint. The reply should have been that Great Britain and Italy were both bound by Article 10 of the Covenant and that we were determined to uphold that Article. The *Morning Post* of September 18th publishes an article by its diplomatic correspondent recalling the comments on this interview from 'authoritative quarters' (i.e. Foreign Office and Government circles), which contains the following passage: 'The inconclusive conversations to which Signor Mussolini refers are interpreted as being the conversations he had with Mr. Anthony Eden in Rome in June. In these conversations it is understood that Mr. Eden pointed out that the situation had developed to a point at which British policy was no longer founded upon considerations of British colonial interest; but upon such wider issues as maintenance of the peace in Europe and of the authority of the League of Nations.' This authoritative admission that British policy was 'founded upon considerations of colonial interest' instead of upon the Covenant until June is certainly remarkable. Moreover, as this pamphlet makes clear, British policy in the Mussolini-Eden conversations and for months later paid only lip-service to the League, said nothing about our duty to oppose aggression, and was concerned primarily with trying to do an Imperialist deal with Italy at the expense of Abyssinia. Hence the present situation.

invoked also Articles 10 and 15 of the Covenant and begged for speedy measures to put an end to the danger of war.

The British and French Governments met Signor Mussolini at Stresa in April. The British delegation brought along an Abyssinian expert, but did not pluck up courage to mention the subject to the Duce.

Abyssinia's appeal to have the matter discussed at the special Council Meeting in April (where France, Great Britain and Italy joined in condemning Germany's failure to abide by her treaty obligations and swore to uphold the Covenant) was rejected.

At the regular Council meeting in May a formula was devised which again postponed the whole issue and left it to two Italian and two Abyssinian conciliators to discuss the question of responsibility for the Wal Wal incident, on the basis of ambiguous terms of reference which left open the question of whether the Commission's terms of reference should, or should not, include the question of whether the Italian forces at Wal Wal were on Abyssinian territory. No method was even suggested of dealing with the general issue of the relations between Italy and Abyssinia, although by that time it was clear that the Wal Wal incident was a mere pretext and the officially controlled Italian Press was openly stating that Italy's object was the conquest of all Abyssinia.

Fresh urgent appeals from Abyssinia, including an offer to pay for neutral observers to be sent to the spot by the Council, were ignored. The ambiguity in the terms of reference of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission duly resulted in a deadlock and in a breakdown of the negotiations. This made the Council meeting at the end of July unavoidable. Just before it there was much brave talk in Press and Parliament as to the determination of the National Government this time to brook no further delay, but to insist on the whole question being taken up by the Council, even if it meant a break with Italy. But when the Council met Mr. Eden, collapsed and a formula was found which was even worse than that of the May meeting. It provided, on the one hand, that the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission should resume its work on the basis of accepting the Italian view as to its terms of reference (i.e. excluding the highly relevant issue of whether or not the Italian troops at Wal Wal had invaded Abyssinian territory). The meeting of the Council to take up the whole question was postponed from August 25th to September 4th. The three Great Powers, France, Great Britain and Italy, were then to endeavour to come to an agreement as to the future of Abyssinia, in negotiations without

Abyssinia and based, not on the Covenant, but on the 1906 Treaty.

In these negotiations the British and French Governments proposed to Mussolini concessions in Abyssinia that were a violation of their obligation under the Covenant to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence, and were prepared to let Italy use war as an instrument of national policy to secure these concessions if the Abyssinian Emperor refused to yield. The only result was to encourage Mussolini in his bellicose intransigence. The Paris negotiations accordingly broke down.

BRITISH CABINET'S FEARS

The Cabinet thereupon held an extraordinary meeting in August, to which Mr. Baldwin hurried from Aix and on the eve of which Mr. MacDonald announced that this was the gravest crisis since 1914. In one respect the 1914 precedent was followed, for the Cabinet left public opinion and the Governments of the world as uncertain as they had been on the crucial point of what, if anything, Great Britain would do if war broke out contrary to our obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant. The failure to decide what we would do for the collective defence of Abyssinia against aggression was accompanied by the decision to continue denying her the means to defend herself—i.e. to prolong the illegal and immoral embargo on the export of arms to Abyssinia. The fresh postponement in August of a decision on the point on which the Government should have made up their minds last January—namely, on the application of sanctions against the aggressor in this conflict—was explained to public opinion as being dictated by the desire not to act before the League had taken a decision as to who was the aggressor. This is to stand the Covenant on its head. As the Assembly stated in its resolution of 1921: 'It is the duty of each Member of the League to decide for itself whether a breach of the Covenant has been committed.' In a report adopted in 1927 the Assembly said: 'It has been suggested that a State should not be allowed to intervene until the League itself has given its opinion. This would be questioning a right which States clearly derive from the Covenant.' The Assembly further pointed out in 1921 and emphasised in 1927 that it is the duty of a Member State, when it believes there is danger of aggression, to summon the Council *before* war has broken out, in order to secure agreement on *preventive*

action, including the threat and even the application of sanctions such as withdrawal of diplomatic representatives and a partial or even complete boycott, in order to secure compliance with the League's proposals for putting an end to the danger of war.

This official interpretation of the Covenant is binding on the British Government. It also corresponds to the common sense of the situation, for (a) prevention is better than cure; (b) the League not being a super-state cannot act over the heads of its Members, and can move only in response to the decision of some Member State to take the initiative in calling for action—i.e. in proposing a policy and announcing its readiness to pursue such a policy in company with the rest of the League. It is natural for every reason, geographical (our command of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, etc.), military (the British navy's command of the Mediterranean) and political (Great Britain is a permanent Member of the Council, the strongest Power in the League and in Africa, with the most influence on Italy and with the greatest interests at stake), that France and other League Powers should wait upon our lead. If we lead, the others will follow: if we announce what policy we have decided to pursue, the others will co-operate. Until Sept. 11th the Government shirked the duty of leading. The trouble is that inaction is as fervently desired by some members of the Government as it would be deplored by other members, and that a compromise between those who want to act and those who do not once again led to a mere pretence of action and then to action which was half-hearted, half-headed and . . . too late.

'CONCILIATION' AND THE 1906 TREATY

The extraordinary fact is that the British Government have from the outset been prepared to negotiate with Italy on the basis of their repudiation of the Covenant. In the early stages the Italians kept reminding the National Government of the 1906 Treaty and its various nineteenth-century Protocols, as well as of the pledges given in the 1925 Exchange of Notes. They pointed out that Abyssinia in May 1935 (soon after the Council meeting) withdrew her objections to granting to Great Britain her dam-building concession on Lake Tana, and urged that Great Britain should consequently support Italian claims (beginning with a railway joining Eritrea and Italian Somaliland across Abyssinia, and an economic sphere of influence).

Mr. Eden was sent to Rome to suggest the lines of an offer of

this kind which was to be sweetened as regards Abyssinia by giving her a small strip of British territory and a port. The effect of this offer on Signor Mussolini was made plain at the time in a despatch from the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, saying that the Italian Government were not satisfied with the cession of some of the desert country in the lowlands, but wanted the fertile uplands of Abyssinia (i.e. the whole country). The Italian Press has been insistent on the point that half measures were useless; it did not want merely a railway zone patrolled by Italian troops, for if Abyssinia were compelled to alienate half her independence she would be discontented and continually try to get back what she had lost. Therefore half measures were no use; Italy must make a complete job of it and take the whole.

In other words, by tacitly agreeing with Italy that the Covenant is academic nonsense and does not apply, that Great Powers are free to do business outside the League at the expense of a weak Member State, we have merely confirmed Signor Mussolini in the belief that since he is offered some 10 per cent of what he wants as a result of merely threatening war, he is free to help himself to the rest by actually making war. The moment we abandon the ground of the Covenant the whole issue is reduced to Imperialist bargaining. The Powers have applied not the Covenant, but the pre-war 1906 Treaty, which is for the most part wholly incompatible with the letter and spirit of Article 10 of the Covenant—by which we are bound to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence.

The only public man who has shown any appreciation of what the procedure of Great Power negotiations on the basis of the 1906 Treaty means is Mr. Lloyd George. His remarks (reported in the *News Chronicle* of August 14) are worth quoting:

[Negotiations are going on in Paris to try and avert a war. The whole object of the Covenant of the League was to prevent wars in future between nations. We set up at enormous expense an elaborate organisation at Geneva, representing almost all the nations of the world, for that purpose, and one of the conditions of the negotiations at the moment is that the very body which has been set up to try and substitute methods of conciliation for methods of bloodshed should not be called in at all. Signor Mussolini said: 'If the League of Nations is brought in, I do not appear.' They had accepted that, and immediately that was accepted they wiped the League out as an authority on peace and war.

The very country whose integrity and independence have been challenged has been ruled out from a conference that is discussing its very existence as an independent State. . . . What are they discussing? Are

they discussing how they are to prevent Signor Mussolini from destroying the independence of a friendly Power which is a Member of the League? Not at all. They are just discussing what measure of economic and strategic and political control can be given to Italy without war. How they can deliver Abyssinia on the cheap to Italy—that is the question which is being discussed. ↓

As an inevitable result, the Italian Press has made no secret of its conviction that when it came to the point Italy would be just as free to do what she wanted and had just as little to fear from Great Britain as Germany or Japan. In private, Italian diplomats have gone farther and deplored the Italian adventure, which they say may be ruinous for their country, adding with bitterness that Mussolini would never have gone to such lengths unless he was convinced of Great Britain's complacency.

The mischief, as Mr. Dell, the Geneva correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, pointed out on August 3rd, was that the Italians had never taken the British Government seriously—that is to say, they never believed that the British Government would resort to energetic measures to prevent an Italian attack on Abyssinia. He then quoted Signor Forges-Davanzati, the editor of the *Tribuna* and an Italian senator, who broadcast from Rome on the wireless to the effect that he had just returned from a visit to London, and could assure Italians that they had nothing to fear from England. Mr. Dell summarised the Senator's broadcast conclusions in these words: 'Look at the success that Japan and Germany have had by leaving the League of Nations. They have done just what they pleased. We have only to follow their example and the British Government will offer us concessions to get us back to Geneva just as it has to Hitler.'

THE ARMS EMBARGO

Abyssinia appealed to the Great Powers through the League to preserve her territorial integrity and existing political independence against Italian aggression, as they are bound in honour to do under Article 10 of the Covenant. She offered arbitration on all issues; she undertook beforehand to accept any decision of the League Council; she begged that neutral observers should be sent by the League to the spot and offered to pay for them; she urged the League (i.e. the Great Powers) again and again to put a stop to the grave danger of war; she even offered to cede part of her territory and to give Italy an economic sphere of influence for the sake of peace.

Signor Mussolini rejected arbitration on all but a minor issue,

and then only on his own terms; he refused to recognise the League's authority to take up the dispute at all; he spurned the Abyssinian offers with contempt; in his public speeches and through his controlled press he vehemently announced his intention to wage a war of conquest against Abyssinia in order to convert this Member of the League into an Italian colony; he has for months been pouring troops and munitions through the Suez Canal (chiefly controlled by the British Government) into Eritrea, as part of his elaborate, far-reaching, and public preparations to launch his war of conquest the moment the rainy season stops.

In face of this situation our National Government have for many months repeatedly shirked the duty to decide to apply the Covenant against the aggressor. That left them no alternative but to endeavour to placate the aggressor at the expense of his intended victim. The blessed word 'conciliation' has been worked to death to camouflage this process. But conciliation based on foreknowledge in the potential aggressor that Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant will unhesitatingly be applied if he resorts to war, is one thing. 'Conciliation' which is based on the would-be aggressor's tranquil certainty that the British Government cannot make up their minds to apply the Covenant in case of war, is something very different.

The latter is the type of 'conciliation' practised until September by the National Government in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, just as it was in the case of China and Japan. The bitter and ignoble fruits of these methods are Mussolini's growing arrogance and war preparations, the wasting of the precious months that could have been used to prevent this wicked and gratuitous war, and the prostitution of the League to give moral authority to the efforts of Great Britain and France to do an imperialist deal with Italy which Abyssinia was to be compelled to accept under threat of war.

Because they were unwilling to stand by the Covenant at the risk of incurring Mussolini's displeasure, the National Government felt obliged to yield to the Italian demand that we should refuse licences for the export of arms to Abyssinia, although this happened to be a breach of our obligation in the 1930 arms traffic treaty with Abyssinia to allow the Abyssinian Emperor to supply himself with the arms he needs in self-defence. 'Conciliation', of course, was dragged in again to justify this embargo, which applies 'equally' to Italy (who manufactures her own munitions) and to Abyssinia (who possesses not a single munitions factory). The argument is that by denying Abyssinia arms 'conciliation' is more likely to succeed, for

Italy will be pleased and Abyssinia will be less likely to resist whatever 'raw deal' the three Great Powers may concoct.

What answer could be given to the Note of August 14th from the Abyssinian Government to the League?

The Royal Italian Government is continuing to send troops and ammunition to East Africa. It is ceaselessly manufacturing arms and implements of war, with the openly avowed intention of using them against the Ethiopian Empire. There is no manufacture in Ethiopia, either public or private, of arms and munitions of war. The Imperial Ethiopian Government to-day finds it absolutely impossible to obtain means of defence outside its own frontiers. Wherever it attempts to obtain them it meets with prohibitions and export embargoes.

Is that real neutrality? Is it just? Will the Council remain unmoved in face of this situation, which is steadily growing worse? Will it allow this unequal contest to continue between two members of the League of Nations, one of which is all-powerful, is in a position to employ, and has declared that it is employing, all its resources in preparing for aggression, while the other, weak and pacific and mindful of its international obligations, is deprived of the means of organising the defence of its territory and very existence, both of which are precious to it? Will the Council assume responsibility in the eyes of the world for allowing preparations to continue unchecked for the massacre of a people who constitute a menace to none?]

Ironically enough the ethics of the matter have never been better stated than in the official statement of the Italian Government's position on the general principle of an arms embargo made on February 25, 1935, by Admiral Ruspoli, the Italian delegate on the League Committee for Regulating the Traffic in Arms.

In the Italian delegate's view, it was essential that States should be able, in case of necessity, to buy war material from foreign countries. . . .

He did not think that even the most extreme supporters of the League of Nations could contend that if, say, a powerful State tried to force a passage through the territory of a weaker State, or committed some such evident act of aggression as that, the ideals of the League would oblige them to place an embargo on the war material being manufactured for the weaker State that was being attacked. If so, it would obviously be a case of *summum jus summa injuria*, and if that were established, if there were merely the suspicion that in the case of war they would wash their hands like Pontius Pilate and treat the attacked and aggressor in the same way, it would, he thought, undermine the whole idea of the League of Nations and the mutual trust that they wanted to establish between nations.*

* From the Minutes of the twenty-third meeting. To do the gallant Admiral and his Government justice, they had clearly forgotten Abyssinia and were thinking of Italy's freedom to export arms to Paraguay and Hungary.

CONSEQUENCES OF AN ITALO-ABYSSINIAN WAR

Some of the dangers of this war were indicated by General Smuts in an interview on August 12th.

This adventure cannot be looked upon as an isolated move. I think it will shake the whole system of civilisation to its foundations should the League fail at this critical moment. . . . Europe will go back to the pre-war system of alliances, and will divide into hostile camps, wherein anything might happen. It is possible that Great Britain may be able to keep out of this so far as Europe is concerned. But a great conflict in Africa must have serious repercussions on British territories such as the Sudan and Egypt. There is no doubt that the invasion of Abyssinia by Italy will arouse anxious feelings all over Africa between white and black, and may have serious results.

The African does not yet look on the European as an enemy, but this trouble may raise intense racial and colour feeling and make the position of the European much more difficult. It may spread all over the African continent, and you may find that every African will sympathise with Abyssinia. . . . The danger is from dictators who are in a tight corner everywhere creating diversions by launching out on foreign adventures of this kind.

There is ample evidence from all over the coloured world—including Arabs, Indians, American and African negroes from Zululand to the Gold Coast—that General Smuts was not exaggerating. But he was unduly optimistic in his belief that Britain could remain unaffected by the ensuing European complications. If the League is destroyed, the world will return to the Balance of Power, to general rearmament and general war.

Meanwhile, Hitler watches and rejoices. A recent despatch from the Berlin correspondent of the *News Chronicle* graphically sums up Nazi Germany's attitude.

Official Germany is wondering what concrete effect a war between Italy and Abyssinia would have on:

- (1) The future of collective security;
- (2) The future structure of the League;
- (3) Britain's role in future European conflicts;
- (4) Italy's interest in Austrian independence.

It cannot be too strongly stressed that Britain's behaviour during the present crisis will have a profound bearing on the methods Germany will employ when she starts to pursue her foreign policy aims vigorously in the future.

Germany is well aware that her hand in Central Europe will be strengthened if Italy is weakened by a protracted struggle in Africa.

Sir Samuel Hoare's officially expressed sympathy for Italian colonial aspirations naturally pleases Germany, for it fits in with her own desire for colonies or territorial expansion.

Italy's proposed absorption of Abyssinia does not arouse horror here, but on the contrary awakens a sympathetic response in the German militaristic Press.

The only comment required is that (a) this 'militaristic Press' is officially controlled and writes only what it is told to write by the German Ministry of Propaganda, and (b) this same Press has repeatedly and gloatingly expressed its satisfaction at the prospect of the Italo-Abyssinian war completing the destruction of the League that was begun by Japan and Germany, and thereby giving Germany a free hand in her policy of territorial expansion in East and Central Europe, coupled with demands for colonies.

WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE

When Abyssinia appealed to the League under Article 11 in January 1935, Italy's war preparations had been already in progress since September and her designs against Abyssinia were common knowledge. It was therefore the duty of the Government to refuse to accept the Italian plea that the Council should wash its hands of the matter, and that Abyssinia should be told to negotiate with Italy. We should have told the Italians that we could not regard as satisfactory even the application of the conciliation and arbitration procedure in the 1928 Treaty unless

(a) it were extended to cover the whole of the dispute between the two countries;

(b) time limits and procedure were fixed for the application first of conciliation and then of arbitration under the Treaty as well as for the appointment of the arbiters;

(c) military preparations ceased and both parties accepted obligations not to resort to force and to establish a neutral zone supervised by League agents.

If the Italian Government had objected to such terms we should have said that if they refused them we had a duty to Abyssinia under Article 10 of the Covenant which the Government were determined to fulfil. As regards the 1906 Treaty and the 1925 Exchange of Notes they must be considered as invalid in so far as they were inconsistent with the obligation under Article 10 of the Covenant to respect and preserve against external aggression Abyssinian territorial integrity and existing political independence. By Article 20 of the Covenant its provisions override and supersede all other Treaty obligations and the British Government were determined to remain faithful to the Covenant.

Within those limits they would do everything in their power to promote a general settlement with Abyssinia on the basis of technical assistance by the League in carrying out the Emperor's policy of modernising and developing his country.

There are many instances of the League's work—in Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, China—for the working out of such a scheme, for its application through the League's technical organisations and for general supervision through a Committee of the Council, on which Italy, France and Great Britain, as well as Abyssinia and one or two neutrals, could be represented. Moreover, the British Government would co-operate in devising any safeguards that might be considered necessary to protect Italy's colonies and Abyssinia against each other as well as to give League assistance to the Emperor in putting down slavery and the slave trade.

At that time France, the Little Entente and Italy were all very much exercised about the problem of Austria and Germany. France and Italy had not come to any agreement with each other, and both were extremely anxious for British support. The Balkan Entente looked with suspicion and dislike on Italian designs because they had not forgotten the attempts of Italy to interfere in the Balkans and to wreck the new Entente, nor had the Turks ever forgotten that Signor Mussolini in one of his inspired moments had declared that Asia Minor was the promised land for Italian expansion.

If the British Government had in January taken a strong, clear and constructive line based on loyalty to the Covenant and coupled with readiness to take an active part in the organisation of collective security in Europe, we should have had the support of the whole Council. It is inconceivable that Italy would have resisted, for at that date Italian preparations had not gone so far as to create any irretrievable situation for the regime, and the whole enterprise was thoroughly unpopular in influential Fascist circles, not to mention the General Staff, the King and the Italian people.

But suppose that Mussolini had broken with the Council rather than give way? If so, it would have been physically impossible for him to go to war for nine months because of the rainy season in Abyssinia. The mere fact of the break with the Council would have meant that during those nine months Italian war preparations would have had to be carried on with the certain knowledge that if the war came it would involve a conflict not only with Abyssinia but with the other Great Powers. In such circumstances Italian

stocks, shares and currency would have started dropping, and the unpopularity of the whole adventure would have become so tremendous in Italy that Mussolini would have either had to give way or face the danger of his regime collapsing within a few months. It is about as certain as anything can be that if the Government had taken this line last January the conflict would have been over by now.

The programme of European negotiations agreed upon by Great Britain and France on February 3rd in London was defective because the British Government refused to take an active part in the general organisation of security in Europe. It should have agreed to do this in return for a firm Anglo-French agreement as to upholding the Covenant against Italy in East Africa. There is no doubt whatever that France would have agreed to this condition in the circumstances.

THE STRESA MEETING

But let us for the sake of argument admit that there was something to be said (although it is difficult to see what) for postponing the issue at the January Council meeting and for not raising it at the Anglo-French conversations on February 3rd. What, then, should have been done at the Stresa meeting in April? By that time Abyssinia had appealed to Articles 10 and 15 of the Covenant as well as to Article 11, and the gravity of the situation had become plain to all except the wilfully blind. At Stresa the French and the Italians, acutely anxious about the menace to their safety presented by German designs on Austria, and by the announcement of German rearmament, were desperately eager for British support in the more effective organisation of collective security in Europe. The British Government could have refused to agree with these Powers as to what should be done in Europe except on the basis of their agreeing to some such programme as that outlined above for settling the Abyssinian dispute. France and Italy were so apprehensive and felt so directly threatened by Germany that the British Government had all the cards in their hand and could have driven a hard bargain. As it was, although the British delegation brought along an East African expert, no one dared to broach the subject to Signor Mussolini. The plan of the moment was an anti-German Entente which, like the pre-war Entente, had to be cemented by Imperialist deals at the expense of 'colonial' peoples. Before the War the victims were Morocco and Persia. To-day the architects of the old pre-war Entente are arguing that the 'Stresa Front' as the embryo of the new pre-war Entente must be pre-

served by turning it into a Covenant-breaking front through an Imperialist deal on the basis of the 1906 Treaty that will give Italy a free hand in Abyssinia. The Italian argument that has been used most persistently and with the greatest effect in Paris and London, and has even been broadly hinted at in the Italian Press, is that Italy must have a free hand to conquer Abyssinia in the next two years in order to forestall the danger to her rear from Germany inciting Abyssinia to attack the Italian colonies. Therefore, runs the argument, this preliminary war against Abyssinia is necessary in order to enable Italy to throw all her forces into the European war which may be expected in three or four years' time.

THE MAY COUNCIL MEETING

Now let us suppose that the Government, while pursuing the disastrous course taken in January at Geneva, in April at Stresa, and again at the Extraordinary Council meeting in April, had subsequently become convinced that Britain must stand by the Covenant. In that case they could still have applied the policy outlined above at the Council meeting in May. This policy was more difficult and riskier by then. In the first place, Signor Mussolini had been encouraged by British pusillanimity to commit himself so thoroughly to his war that it would take tremendous pressure to make him withdraw, and in the second place, the French had been so disappointed at our failure to take an active part in the organisation of European security that they were seeking an alternative in an Italo-French military understanding. But our position in May was still overwhelmingly strong, and we could have carried the day for a League policy if the Government had made up their minds to apply sanctions against Italy in case of war.

THE JULY 31ST MEETING

By the time the Council met again on July 31st the situation had become very grave. It had grown worse and more menacing after each postponement; whereas it would have been easy in January to prevent war, the problem was difficult in July. War propaganda and war preparations had gone so far in Italy that to back out now would mean the end of the Fascist regime and so would be unthinkable short of a public threat of overwhelming force against aggression. French opinion had passed from misgivings as to the readiness of our National Government ever to

honour any collective security commitments to fury at the betrayal of the collective system embodied in the Anglo-German naval agreement. The reactionary M. Laval had become Prime Minister and was relying more and more on a military understanding with Italy and on his East European allies as the basis of French security.

But in spite of all the propaganda in Italy the unpopularity of the whole adventure was still great. The Italian financial position had become positively alarming. M. Laval's position at home was weakening and the prospects of the 'Front Populaire' upsetting him by the end of the year were considerable. Opinion in Left circles in France was becoming extremely critical of the Laval policy toward Italy and voices were raised more and more insistently, warning against the danger of parting company with Great Britain and the League for the sake of the fickle favours of Signor Mussolini and his Abyssinian liability. We know of no informed person, British, French or 'neutral', who thinks that any French Government would hesitate for a moment if forced to choose between Great Britain and support of the Covenant on the one hand and Italy against the Covenant on the other. If the British Government had told M. Laval in July that we had decided that if Italy went to war sanctions must be applied and France must choose whether to stand with us (in which case the two countries would henceforth work hand in hand for the strengthening of collective security in Europe) or must take the responsibility at a public Council meeting of refusing to support our demand for the application of sanctions (in which case, for all practical purposes not only Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant, but the Locarno Treaties would become a dead letter)—if that issue had been put to M. Laval there is no doubt whatever that he would have promptly made up his mind to come down off the fence on our side.

Meanwhile British public opinion—through the vast Peace Ballot, through the Press, the offer of support by the Labour Party and through debates in Parliament—made it clear that the Government could count upon wholehearted and nation-wide support for any action that might be necessary in order to uphold the Covenant against aggression.

It was in these circumstances that the Cabinet met on July 24th. This time it did at least endeavour to face up to the question of what should be done if and when Mussolini went to war. But it failed to take any decision, and that failure was known in Paris, Rome and Geneva. A number of members of the Government, including what might be described as the old incorrigibles—

Mr. MacDonald, Sir John Simon, Lord Londonderry, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Lord Hailsham—were against any decision to apply sanctions. In the circumstances Mr. Baldwin found it impossible to make up his mind and resorted to his favourite expedient of adjourning the question. The Government dispersed to their holidays.

In the circumstances when Mr. Eden arrived in Paris he was unable to give M. Laval any convincing reason for coming down off the fence. When Mr. Eden arrived in Geneva he was equally unable to supply any answer to the Italian delegate's threat that if the Council did not give way Italy would walk out of the League. Therefore the proceedings of the July 31st Council meeting were turned into a prolonged attempt by Mr. Eden to save his own and his Government's face by camouflaging his capitulation to Mussolini's demand that the League should cease its attempts to interfere with the war he was preparing. A new formula was devised. It committed the Italians to nothing, and treated the Covenant as a scrap of paper until September 4th.

THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTY IN AUGUST

The August Cabinet meeting, after the breakdown of the Paris negotiations that should never have been begun, and after the cumulative effect of the blunders and crimes committed by the Government ever since January, was faced by the imminent danger of war and the plain duty to take one decision:—i.e. to decide at long last that if there were war in disregard of Article 12, 13 or 15 of the Covenant, Great Britain was determined to apply the sanctions of Article 16 against the aggressor, and to call upon France and other League Members to follow suit. This decision should not only have been taken but announced in the Press and communicated through diplomatic channels to Paris, Rome, Moscow and other European capitals. It should further have been announced that the Government were summoning the Council immediately in order (a) to call upon Italy to say whether she would abide by her obligations under Articles 10 and 12 of the Covenant to refrain from war and aggression, and if so whether she would accept measures under these Articles for putting an end to the present danger of war and would consent to Article 15 being applied to find a settlement. (b) If Italy refused and withdrew, to vote a resolution calling attention to the danger of war and holding Italy responsible for this situation, as well as advising

a general withdrawal of heads of diplomatic missions and whatever other measures seemed appropriate under Articles 10 and 11 of the Covenant (as interpreted in the de Brouckère report adopted by the Assembly in 1927). (c) Announcing that if war broke out Article 16 would be applied against whoever was the aggressor, and putting in hand the preparations to apply this Article. The Government should have made it clear in the Press, and conveyed officially to Paris, Moscow and the capitals of the Little Entente and of the Balkan Entente, that if the Covenant were successfully applied in this case, Great Britain would take a far more active part than hitherto in organising collective security in Europe and would not hesitate to accept whatever mutual assistance obligations were necessary for the purpose; on the other hand, if France refused to stand with us in upholding Article 16 of the Covenant, the British Government would denounce the Locarno Treaties. That would have been a strong, clear policy, and it would have enabled us to utilise whatever lingering chance might still have remained to prevent this damnable war. It would certainly have sufficed to rally France, the U.S.S.R., the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente to our side, and to clear the decks for prompt and effective action if war broke out.

THE REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PRESERVE PEACE

Why have the Government muddled along to disaster in this half-headed and half-hearted manner on the Italo-Abyssinian conflict as on every major issue in foreign policy that has arisen since they came into office? The failure is an undoubted fact. It is an equally undoubted fact that it is not due to any lack of desire for peace. The Government and their supporters, it must never be forgotten, want peace just as sincerely and detest war just as heartily as any of their countrymen (or, for that matter, as the great majority of the people of Germany or of Italy). What, then, is the explanation—why have we gone 80 per cent of the way to another world war since the Government came into office? Why is there such a gaping abyss between their words and their acts?

The reason is always the same. It is that there are two diametrically opposed views in the Government as to how to secure peace. The one, which makes nearly all the running in public speeches, relies on the League of Nations as the sheet-anchor of British foreign policy. The other view, which has hitherto always

determined the Government's policy when it came to the point, regards Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant as a dead letter, and the League as at worst a refuge for international cranks and a potential menace to the Empire, at best a modified revival of the pre-war Concert of Europe, a body for diplomatic deals between Great Powers and their clients, but not involving any duty to stop aggression.

The second view represents the policy which the Government have in point of fact pursued, for the simple reason that it corresponds to the prejudices and emotional loyalties of the great bulk of the Conservative Party, and indicates the line of least resistance resulting from the pressure on the Government of the various vested interests—the City, the F.B.I.,* the fighting services and the arms manufacturers—which it is the special concern of the Conservative Party to preserve and cherish.

TWO VOICES

It is sufficient to quote and to draw the obvious conclusions from two characteristic expressions of the opposing points of view within the Government. The first is from Mr. Eden's speech at East Fulham on May 16th:

* On May 8, 1935, the *Daily Herald* drew attention in a leading article to a violent attack in the official journal of the National Union of Manufacturers on the whole idea of economic and financial sanctions, which were vigorously condemned on the ground that they would interfere with the pursuit of profits. On August 31, 1935, the City page of the *New Statesman and Nation* reports that: 'It is futile to canvass political opinions in the City of London. The disinterested view does not exist. They do not talk about the peace of the world; they talk of the peace of the stock markets. Since everyone has a direct or indirect interest in the Stock Exchange, every international move which threatens the market value of securities is anathema. For Great Britain to stand by the League Covenant is considered mad; to stand up to Italy is considered madder. Because it is believed that France does not want collective action against Italy under Article 16, this is regarded in the City as a heaven-sent opportunity for Great Britain to sneak out of the League of Nations, retire into splendid isolation, and build up such a vast armament of battleships and aeroplanes that British investors will never fear, and iron and steel, shipbuilding, aircraft and armament shares will boom for ever. If you want to meet living embodiments of Rothermere and Beaverbrook, take a drink in any bar in the environs of Throgmorton Street.'

Time and Tide of the same date observes in the course of a leading article: 'The City, that amorphous bulk of Conservative opinion, is overwhelmingly against British participation in a quarrel over as obscure a tract of territory as was, say, the Sudan last century.'

It is clear that our part should be to pursue a foreign policy that is frank, stalwart, and above all firm in support of the League of Nations and of the collective peace system. . . . Our greatest commitment—and let us be in no doubt that it is a commitment—is our membership of the League. . . . What is really important is not that this country should shoulder new commitments, but that it should emphasise its determination to fulfil the obligations it has already undertaken. Nothing is more dangerous than an obligation half-heartedly assumed. It must be remembered that in the last resort the authority of a collective system must flow from the overwhelming potential force it is able to array against any would-be aggressor. Clearly the efficacy of such a deterrent must depend upon the known determination of the parties to fulfil their obligations. . . . We are not 'anti' any nation, but we should be, we must be, 'anti' any who might seek by force to break the peace. We shall always be found arrayed on the side of the collective system against any Government or people who seek by a return to pre-war politics to break up the peace which by that system we are seeking to create. And let us not forget that the Covenant itself provides the machinery by which the peaceful settlement of international disputes can be secured.

The second statement is that made by Lord Londonderry at Southampton on July 27th:

There was no doubt that the National Government's conception of the League of Nations differed widely from that held by the Socialist Party.

In the Government's view the League was no new federation or confederation of States for the purpose of imposing its will upon any single nation or group of nations by the exercise of physical force. It existed for the pacific settlement of international disputes, not for the abolition of war by means of war.

The pursuit and maintenance of peace were the joint and collective duty and responsibility of all States who were Members of the League. 'Geneva is a common Council Board to which the nations may resort in order to secure the settlement of their disputes, not by force but by agreement. If war breaks out, the League of Nations has failed in its primary object, though it can still be valuable as a mediatory influence, and as an influence to limit the extent of the disaster.'

On the other hand, the Socialists' view was nothing more nor less than the employment in the last resort of compulsion by force of arms. When moral suasion had failed they would arm the League and enforce its decrees. Once more war would be set up in the highest place as the instrument of policy. 'Under a system such as this there are no small wars, but every war is a world war. That is not collective security but the reverse.'

. . . There were, unfortunately, rumours of war about in the world. Of the actual dispute between Italy and Abyssinia he could say very little, because there would be a meeting of the Council of the League at Geneva, and he would not like any word of his to disturb all those good influences which were working for the purpose of averting the disaster which appeared to be threatening. All he could do was to assure them that the National Government, acting through the Foreign Secretary and

the Minister for League of Nations Affairs, would exert every effort they could possibly put forward to secure an honourable and peaceful settlement.

No one will deny that these two views are diametrically opposed. It is characteristic that the former view was expressed by Mr. Eden, who missed being made Foreign Secretary only because he was considered too 'pro-League' and therefore safer in an honorific but subordinate post, where he would take rather than give instructions. It is equally characteristic that the latter view was expressed by Lord Londonderry, the self-confessed wrecker of air disarmament and architect of the new arms race to ruin. Finally, it is characteristic that Mr. Baldwin has spoken like Mr. Eden, and even, under pressure from Mr. Attlee in the House of Commons, verbally threw over the statement by Lord Londonderry that has just been quoted.

But the great and tragic fact is that in action—or rather, in inaction—it is the Londonderry and not the Eden view which has invariably triumphed hitherto in the councils of the Government. It has been Mr. Eden's unhappy lot to embody in his own person the standing contradiction between the Government's brave words and their lack of deeds.

If the Government's policy in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict had borne the slightest resemblance to that outlined in Mr. Eden's East Fulham speech, it would at any time since last January have acted on the lines sketched in the preceding section of this pamphlet. It would have begun by making up its mind that if war broke out sanctions must be applied against whoever was the aggressor, and would have based the whole of its policy of conciliation and its efforts to preserve peace on that major decision, and on the knowledge of all concerned that the decision had been taken. That was a policy based on standing by the Covenant, and its end would have been peace.

Instead, the Government have proceeded throughout on the basis of inability to take a decision on the issue of what it would do if Mussolini went to war. That was interpreted by Mussolini as meaning that it would do nothing, that it had *de facto* adopted the Londonderry view of its duty to the League. In the circumstances 'conciliation' became a camouflage for capitulating to Mussolini's will to aggression. That was a policy based on running away from the Covenant, and its end is war.

It is a grim irony that poor Mr. Eden has had to act on instructions based on the Londonderry view and not his own. In

pursuance of these instructions he had to press for the January, April, May, and July postponements of consideration of the issue by the League Council, had to make the abortive offer to Mussolini in Rome of bits of Abyssinia on account as the price of peace, and had to embark on the Imperialist bargaining between the Great Powers in Paris on the basis of the 1906 treaty for dividing up Abyssinia between them, instead of insisting on League negotiations based on the obligation in Article 10 of the Covenant to respect Abyssinia's territorial integrity and existing political independence, and to preserve them against Italian aggression. None of these proceedings was compatible with Mr. Eden's view of our duties under the collective system. But they were all in perfect accord with Lord Londonderry's view and with his international outlook generally. And they have made inevitable an unnecessary and improbable war which could easily and without risk have been prevented.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

THE great and tragic fact is that it is now too late to prevent war. If there still was a last chance for prevention when the Council met on September 4th, it was well and truly lost by the Great Powers by their continuation of the policy that had resulted in throwing away all the previous chances. Baron Aloisi announced to the Council that the Italian Government had decided that Abyssinia must be outlawed because in the Italian Government's view it was incapable of performing the duties of a State Member of the League and so was not entitled to claim the rights of a State Member. Therefore the Italian Government considered that the Covenant did not apply to Abyssinia, regarded it as an offence to Italy's national dignity that the matter should be dealt with on the basis of equality of rights between the two parties, or indeed by the League at all, and reserved a free hand to settle the dispute by war whenever this seemed expedient. The Abyssinian delegate requested the Council to do its duty under Article 10 of the Covenant to preserve Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence against the aggression which Italy was openly threatening and to apply Article 15 of the Covenant for endeavouring to reach a solution of the conflict.

In the face of this situation it was the Council's plain duty to insist that this conflict must be settled by the application of the

Covenant and should not be settled by war. The Italian Government should have been summoned to give its consent to these propositions, and, if it had refused, should have been condemned then and there as a treaty-breaker and potential aggressor.

Instead of doing this, the blessed word 'conciliation' was invoked once more for running away from the Covenant; a Committee of Five was appointed without specifying under what article it was operating and without meeting the Italian challenge. The Italian delegate abstained from voting when this Committee was appointed, refused to sit in the Council when the Abyssinian delegate spoke, and adopted the attitude that he could not negotiate with the Committee of Five because he did not recognise its existence nor the Council's right to concern itself with the dispute. In these circumstances the work of conciliation, as may be imagined, was not brilliantly successful. The only result was that more time was wasted when time was precious and that ambiguity was prolonged when clarity was indispensable and urgent.

GREAT BRITAIN'S LEAD

The first public and unmistakable notification that Great Britain was prepared to apply the Covenant against aggression did not come before September 11th. But when it was made in Sir Samuel Hoare's excellent maiden speech in the Assembly, it received instant and overwhelming support not only at home but abroad. Country after country rose in the Assembly and promised support. In some cases these promises were mingled with regrets at the way past chances had been missed and with warnings against carrying conciliation to the point where it became connivance at aggression. Thus M. Sandler, the Socialist Foreign Minister of Sweden, deeply regretted that the Council had consented to repeated adjournments instead of taking charge of the situation from the outset, and in particular that it had failed to apply the resolution approved by both the Assembly and Council in 1927 and pledging the latter to put a stop to military preparations threatening peace the moment a dispute was brought to its attention. He warned against the danger of sacrificing justice to the desire for peace. The Portuguese delegate declared himself opposed to what he called 'spoliation by procedure'. But M. Sandler, like the Portuguese delegate and the other speakers, nevertheless promised full support in upholding the Covenant even at the cost of participation in measures to stop the war which the Great Powers had so signally failed to prevent.

It seems as certain as anything can be in human affairs that Mussolini will launch his long-prepared war of conquest against Abyssinia, and that when he has done so, Great Britain will propose to the Council that it should act on Abyssinia's request to apply the sanctions of Article 16 of the Covenant. There is no reasonable doubt that this proposal will meet with well-nigh universal agreement and that for the first time in the League's history Article 16 will be applied. The chances are that it will be applied according to the methods proposed in the Assembly report and resolution of 1921 and set forth in various League documents (see Assembly Report A 14, 1927). Mild measures such as a partial boycott on exports and imports to and from Italy will probably be the first step, possibly accompanied by general withdrawal of the heads of diplomatic missions. But matters will not remain long at that point, for either these measures prove ineffective, in which case it will be necessary to go further in order to stop Italy's Covenant-breaking war, or else they will exert such pressure on the Italian Government as to make it clear that if they continue the war will be lost and the Fascist regime will collapse. In either case it is altogether unlikely that Signor Mussolini will passively endure the economic and financial sanctions of the League after they begin to embarrass him. He has already publicly threatened that sanctions mean war. It would be as rash to believe he was bluffing as it has proved to be foolish to regard his Abyssinian war plans as nothing but bluff and blackmail. The prospects are therefore that this country, with the support of France and other Members of the League, will within a few weeks or months find itself at war with Italy.

THE ISSUE OF SANCTIONS

This situation confronts the people of this country and particularly those who have worked and striven for peace with a fearful dilemma: on the one hand it is impossible to overlook that this war is the direct result of four years' shocking disregard of our solemn treaty obligations under the Covenant by the National Government, beginning in the Far East, continuing at the Disarmament Conference and in the European negotiations, and culminating in the attitude adopted by the Government throughout the crucial first six months of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.

The chief reason the Government have tardily become converted to League action in this case is that Italy's projects and attitude

happen to threaten first-class Imperial interests connected with the route to India, and with our dominion over the coloured peoples in Africa and elsewhere, so directly and obviously that the fact has finally penetrated even the minds of Tories and Imperialists, and overcome their inveterate habit of regarding the League as a piece of international quixotry wholly unconnected with British Imperial interests. The bulk of public opinion is sincerely concerned with upholding the Covenant as a bulwark against war. But if the pressure of public opinion had not been supplemented by the last-minute conversion of Tories and Imperialists in the Cabinet and in the Press, the Government would not have acted. It would be worse than folly to imagine, for instance, that the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Express* would support League sanctions in this matter for any but reasons of power politics and Imperialism.

According to the best evidence available, the Nazi Government are neither materially ready nor have they sufficient confidence in the morale of the German people to seize this opportunity for going to war. But the risk remains nevertheless, and it is possible that the situation will be exploited to carry out a Nazi *Putsch* in Austria and to impose a Nazi solution of the Memel difficulty.

Finally, whatever may be the motives with which a Government enters into a war—and the motives in this case, as we have seen, are mixed—war itself is such a beastly and destructive means that it has a way of perverting the ends for which it was undertaken. It is notorious that men tend to become like the enemy they are fighting, and there is grave danger lest this conflict should end in an Imperialist peace in which France and Great Britain fall heirs to Italian pretensions in Abyssinia and to Italy's Imperial aims in East Africa, as well as embark on an even fiercer arms race, supplemented by an alliance directed against Germany, and falsely justified as the strengthening of the collective system.

These are formidable reasons for heart-searching and misgivings at the situation in which we find ourselves. It would indeed be an intellectual paradox and a moral tragedy if the war in which the National Government's foreign policy threatens to land us should be exploited in order to whitewash the Government's shocking peace record which has made this war inevitable. The gravest and most immediate danger is that the country should go Jingo and, while using all the blessed words about the League and the collective system, should in fact go back on everything for which these words stand, and return, without knowing it, to power politics, alliances and Imperialism.

THE ALTERNATIVES

On the other hand, the alternatives now being suggested in various quarters can scarcely withstand the test of facts. These alternatives are the pacifist position and revolutionary resistance to any and every 'capitalist' war.

The former alternative means repudiating Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant. But if the obligation to take collective action against aggression be repudiated, the obligations to renounce war and to settle disputes by pacific means will follow it into limbo, for the different parts of the Covenant form a connected whole and the Members of the League have made it clear again and again that they will not consider themselves bound by arbitration, renunciation of war, and disarmament if the sanctions provisions of the Covenant are not made a reality. In other words, the pacifists, if their view had any influence, would be helping the Imperialists and Isolationists to plunge the world back into international anarchy, and if they succeeded it is fairly clear that it would not be they, but the believers in power politics and a race in armaments that would gain the upper hand. In the present case the pacifists would have us become accessories after the fact to Mussolini's Covenant-breaking war of aggression by allowing Fascist Italy to supply herself with the sinews of war in the markets of this country and to use the Suez Canal as her line of communication. Characteristically enough the pacifists are being driven by the logic of facts either to say that they maintain their position regardless of consequences—that is the Rev. 'Dick' Sheppard's position—or else are frankly advocating an Imperialist deal with Italy. Dr. A. P. Laurie, for instance, in the *Manchester Guardian* of August 26th writes:

Italy wants her place in the sun. Why should not England and France meet these necessities by handing over to her certain of the mandated territories in Africa? . . . As a matter of business, quite apart from fair play, why can we not offer her compensation for abandoning her attack on Abyssinia which may apply a torch to all Africa?

Dr. Laurie is very near to endorsing the various 'conciliatory' offers of Great Britain and France to Italy at the expense of Abyssinia. This position is logical enough to those who refuse to contemplate coercing an aggressor, but it is, to say the least, morally dubious and its practical effect in the present conflict has been not to prevent war, but to help Mussolini produce the situation in which war has become inevitable.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE'S POLICY

The 'revolutionary' position of, e.g., the Socialist League will really not do either, for it rests on contradictory propositions: it is proposed that the Labour Movement should resist by a general strike any and every war by a non-Socialist Government, including participation in collective action to uphold the Covenant. At the same time it is proposed that Great Britain should remain in the League, utilise the League to the utmost and conclude mutual assistance obligations with the Soviet Union and other Socialist States. Now the U.S.S.R. is already bound by Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant and by mutual assistance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia; therefore it is impossible to conclude mutual assistance obligations with that country which are not in conformity with the sanctions obligations of the Covenant, and without *ipso facto* committing ourselves to mutual assistance with regard to France and Czechoslovakia, which are not Socialist countries. The only other Socialist Governments in the world, namely those in the Scandinavian countries, will not in any circumstances enter into agreements that are not at all points in conformity with the Covenant, for their membership of the League is the basis of their foreign policy, whatever party is in power. Nor can this country remain in the League and repudiate Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant, apart from the impossibility of concluding mutual assistance obligations with other States which are also Members of the League, except on the basis of these Articles. Finally, it is impossible to advocate remaining in the League and concluding mutual assistance obligations with other Member States on the one hand and on the other to ask for a general strike against the enforcement of League sanctions. The Socialist League has made a praiseworthy attempt at basing its proposals on an analysis of the present situation. But its analysis is doctrinaire; it fails to understand the present situation and the implications of the U.S.S.R.'s entry into the League and the withdrawal of Germany, Japan and Italy. It is no longer correct to think of the League as simply a 'capitalist' League. It is nearer the truth to regard it as a League of Socialist and democratic States banded together against the menace of Fascism. The Soviet Union is one of the three Great Powers left in the League. When Great Britain has a Labour Government the League will come virtually under Socialist direction, for close co-operation with the U.S.S.R. is a cardinal point in the Labour Party's policy, and France and the

smaller Powers will always follow a joint Anglo-Soviet lead. The Socialist League have again and again pointed out with perfect truth that Capitalism can ultimately survive only through destroying democracy and going Fascist. But they must accept the logic of that argument, which is that States which remain democratic are potentially Socialist, i.e. are countries in which the Socialist parties are either in power or are a legal opposition, enjoying freedom of speech and association, and recognised as the alternative Government. The truth has been acknowledged by the Komintern, which has recently proclaimed that Communists must join with Socialist and even left-wing middle-class parties in the defence of 'bourgeois' democracy, as it is a guarantee against Fascism, and keeps the door open to the advance toward Socialism. In the same way the Soviet Union, when entering the League, recognised that the latter was dominated by those capitalist States which at the present stage of their development desired peace and welcomed Soviet co-operation for the purpose of preserving peace. These are fundamental facts about the present world situation which any realistic Socialist analysis must allow for. The practical result of the Socialist League's proposals would be to put the Labour Party on the side of Mussolini and international anarchy against the Soviet Union and the collective system, and to make them accessories after the fact to an Imperialist war. If we do not apply economic sanctions, we provide Mussolini with the sinews of war from British markets. If we do apply economic sanctions we incur the risk of war with Italy.

But what, then, is the way out if we reject the 'pacifist' and 'revolutionary' solutions and at the same time feel it impossible, without selling our souls, to fall back on the patriotic duty of backing the Government, irrespective of its past record and the merits of the present conflict?

THE LABOUR PARTY'S POLICY

The only way out of the dilemma would appear to be to apply to the present situation the doctrine of 'Covenant-loyalty before Government-loyalty' to which the Labour Movement has officially pledged itself and which has won recognition and support far outside the ranks of Labour. This doctrine is contained both in the 'War and Peace' memorandum adopted by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Annual Conference in 1934 and in the Labour Party's official statement of policy contained in

For Socialism and Peace. Its meaning is expounded as follows in Mr. Arthur Henderson's book, *Labour's Way to Peace*, which is a semi-official explanation and elaboration of the Labour Party's policy:

Our country, through its membership of the League, is an integral part of an organised community of nations pledged to certain common duties as regards the preservation of peace. Labour contends that it has consequently become the moral and political duty of all good citizens to regard the Covenant of the League as a world constitution which is a prolongation of our national constitution. The Covenant, we hold, is binding not only on the Government, but on the Opposition and on every individual citizen. We are all of us responsible for the way in which our country discharges the duties it has assumed, as a member of the League, with regard to the preservation of peace. For, in virtue of our country's membership of the League we are in some sort world citizens who owe a direct loyalty to the League on the issue of preserving peace that comes before any other public duty. We are not only members of our town, our county, our nation, or even of the British Commonwealth of Nations, but also citizens in the world-wide League of Nations which, in Labour's view, is the beginning of a Co-operative World Commonwealth. . . .

We cannot make the collective peace system a reality unless we bring about profound changes in traditional views as to the rights of the State over the individual in war-time, the duties of citizenship and the nature of patriotism. So long as the real belief of politicians and the man in the street is that patriotism means 'my Government right or wrong', all pacts and treaties will be mere scraps of paper. In the conditions of international anarchy the natural and spontaneous feeling of love of country was worked up into a blind and exclusive fanaticism, for citizens were taught that their supreme duty was to obey the Government whatever happened, even on the life and death issue of war. In England and America, it is true, an exception was allowed on religious grounds for conscientious objectors. But so long as there was no higher political authority than the State there could be no duty of citizenship which could call for the use of private judgment by the citizen as to whether or not the Government were justified in resorting to war. It was the duty of citizens, on the contrary, blindly to submit even to being conscripted.

The existence of the League and our membership of the League, Labour claims, has transformed the situation. Specifically it means that loyalty to the world community on the issue of peace overrides any national duty, and notably our duty to the Government in war. It can no longer be postulated that citizens owe a blind and unquestioning allegiance to their Government on the issue of war—'their's not to reason why, their's but to do and die'. It is the duty of citizens, in virtue of their direct world peace loyalty, to judge for themselves in the light of the nation's peace undertakings and obligations whether or not the Government has been faithful on this supreme issue to the overriding world authority of the League.

Our world citizenship is strictly limited in nature owing to the limited character of the treaty obligations that bind us to the rest of the world community. Therefore our world peace loyalty comprises only three

duties of citizenship. But these duties rank first of all the duties of good citizens. They are:

- (a) Arbitration-insistence—the duty to insist that our Government settle all its disputes by peaceful means and eschew force;
- (b) Sanctions-assistance—the duty unflinchingly to support our Government in all the risks and consequences of fulfilling its duty to take part in collective action against a peace-breaker with the sole object of restoring the rule of international law;
- (c) War-resistance—the refusal to accept our Government's unsupported claim to be using force in self-defence; insistence on submitting this claim to the judgment of the world community or to the test of willingness to arbitrate; refusal to serve or support the Government in any way, either by military service or work of national importance, or the payment of taxes, if it were ever condemned as an aggressor by the League, or designated itself as an aggressor by becoming involved in war after refusing arbitration.

These are the duties which Labour considers are already binding on all citizens in virtue of our country's membership of the League. There is scarcely likely to be any controversy about the first two duties. As regards the third, it may be pointed out that Labour's position had been previously adopted in principle by the League of Nations Union, which has declared that it is its duty to refuse to countenance any war undertaken in disregard of the Covenant. In 1930 the Lambeth Church Conference declared: 'When nations have solemnly pledged themselves by treaty, covenant and pact to the pacific settlement of international disputes, the Conference holds that the Christian Church in every nation should refuse to countenance any war in regard to which the Government of its own country has not declared its willingness to submit the matter in dispute to arbitration or conciliation.'

The Labour Party has simply drawn the logical conclusions from principles the justice of which, it will be seen, is admitted far outside its ranks. Labour believes that the responsibility for stopping war ought not to be placed upon the Trade Union Movement alone. Every citizen who wants peace and every other section of the Labour Movement must share the responsibility of any organised action that might be taken to prevent or stop war, in pursuance of the three duties of world citizenship by which the people of this country are bound. Labour is fully cognisant of the various implications of the general strike against war. In order to give the lead to the organised workers and to all other citizens as to how the three peace duties enumerated above are to be applied in case of an emergency, the present Standing Order VIII (h) of the Trades Union Congress states that a special congress is to be called in the event of there being a danger of an outbreak of war.*

* This Standing Order reads as follows: 'In order that the Trade Union Movement may do everything which lies in its power to prevent future wars, the General Council shall, in the event of there being a danger of an outbreak of war, call a special congress to decide on industrial action, such congress to be called, if possible, before war is declared.'

The immediate task to which the Labour Movement will devote itself is to make the meaning and vital importance of the three world peace duties, and of the world peace loyalty from which they spring, understood and accepted by the public opinion of this country and particularly by the organised workers. This will give the maximum guarantee that any Government will observe its League obligations in spirit and in letter, and will make highly improbable the occurrence of a situation in which a British Government would be tempted to resort to war in defiance of its pledges to keep the peace. But lest any Government should ever be tempted to do so, it is necessary to make it perfectly clear that the Labour Movement is determined that Great Britain's pledge to renounce war as an instrument of national policy shall be honoured to the full, and that if any Government should ever seek, in violation of that pledge, to involve Great Britain in war, it will be opposed by the united strength of the whole Labour Movement with all its resources.

It may be said that the great mass of the people of this country is already instinctively acting on this view of the situation. The Labour Movement, through the joint resolution of the Executives of the Labour and Socialist International and of the International Federation of Trade Unions meeting at Geneva early in September, has already proclaimed the international duty of the workers to support the League against Fascism and, if necessary, to compel their Governments by direct action to apply the Covenant by stopping the supply of war materials to the aggressor. The Archbishop of York in his striking broadcast address, the League of Nations Union, and innumerable expressions of opinion have all promised support to the Government out of loyalty to the League. The Trades Union Congress at Margate, Mr. Herbert Morrison and Mr. Lloyd George have all promised support to the Government on this issue while strongly critical of their peace record. There are millions in this country who feel that, while they are profoundly unhappy about the Government's past policy and regard the possible future developments of its policy with deep suspicion, it is essential to save the League by backing the Government to the limit in applying the Covenant against aggression.

THE TRUE OBJECTIVES

What is necessary now, it may be suggested, is to crystallise this sentiment into a set of definite proposals resting on a clear and conscious world peace loyalty. There is no doubt that the pressure of public opinion, as expressed through the Peace Ballot, the Labour Movement, the Churches, the League of Nations Union and the Press, played a considerable part in pushing the Government into tardy action in support of the Covenant. But if the action is

not to degenerate into an Imperialist war followed by an unjust peace and the reversion to power politics, the pressure of public opinion must not be relaxed, but on the contrary increased and armed with a set of definite and constructive proposals which it would urge on the Government. The following are tentative suggestions as to the nature of such proposals. They are put forward in the hope that they may serve as a basis of discussion and help to focus public opinion on the problems with which we are faced and on the need for meeting them in a spirit of bold and enlightened realism:

(1) The British people, who are now called upon to pay a heavy price for the mistakes of their rulers, are entitled to know just how we reached the present pass. This information is also necessary in order to form correct judgments about our policy during and after this conflict. For these reasons the Government should be urged without delay to publish a White Book containing all its diplomatic correspondence and negotiations with the French, Italian and Abyssinian Governments, not only since the outbreak of this conflict, but from and including the Tripartite (London) Agreement of December 13, 1906. Special attention should be paid to the secret treaties with Italy and the negotiations accompanying their conclusion in 1915 (so far as these have not already been published); the Italian proposals in 1919; the Anglo-Italian exchange of Notes in 1925 and the discussions accompanying these events; Col. Clifford's reports at the time of the Wal Wal incident in December 1934, and any reports from British Somaliland or Addis Ababa as to Italian designs and activities in and about Abyssinia in the last three or four years. The first thing upon which the British people must insist is full light upon all the events leading up to this abominable and unnecessary war.

(2) But while light is necessary, it cannot alone make a clean sweep of Imperialism and all its works. It has throughout been the root vice of the National Government's foreign policy that it has tried to combine pre-war Imperialism and post-war internationalism. It was this vice that led to the shameless prostitution of the noble word 'conciliation' to justify the attempts in Rome, Paris and Geneva to barter away Abyssinia's territorial integrity and political independence as the price of peace. Those attempts have by no means been abandoned. On the contrary, the diplomats and colonial officials who wanted to use Italy's threat of war as an instrument of policy to extort concessions from Abyssinia through

the League that would have made her virtually an Italian economic sphere of influence, if not a protectorate, are hoping that a few Italian military victories, after the campaign has started, will induce Abyssinia and the League to come to terms on conditions satisfactory to Mussolini, or at least to the three Great Powers jointly. 'Conciliation' would once more be invoked to cloak the attempt to use the League as an agent of Anglo-Franco-Italian Imperialism. This will not be easy owing to the presence of the Soviet Union and of the small Powers in the Council, and to the fact that once the Abyssinians start fighting and feel the League is applying sanctions on their side, they are likely to insist upon respect for their rights under the Covenant as the price of peace. But such intrigues should be made impossible at the outset. We should insist upon our Government entering this struggle with clean hands. Therefore we should demand that, in pursuance of Article 20 of the Covenant,* the Government should declare that the 1906 Treaty and the 1925 Anglo-Italian exchange of Notes, and all the protocols and arrangements to which they refer, are abrogated in so far as they are inconsistent with the obligation in Article 10 of the Covenant to respect and to preserve against external aggression Abyssinia's territorial integrity and existing political independence. This declaration must be made in order to cut the ground from under the feet of all the Imperialist bargaining that has disfigured British policy from the outset of the conflict, that has made this war inevitable, and that still threatens to culminate in a war-breeding Imperialist peace. Abyssinia protested against the 1906 Treaty at the time of its conclusion and vigorously protested against the Anglo-Italian exchange of Notes in 1925. Those protests were justified, for the whole spirit and purport of these arrangements is alien to the principles of the Covenant.

(3) But it is not even enough to let in the light and to make a clean sweep of all the old Imperialist deals and bargains. Something different and better must be substituted. British public opinion should press the Government not only to publish a White Paper and to declare abrogated its pre-war and anti-Covenant treaties, protocols, and notes with Italy, but also to announce that it will insist in the peace settlement at the end of this conflict upon the conclusion of a treaty with Abyssinia that will put her relations with the outside world upon a new basis—a post-war basis compatible with her status as a Member of the League. The nearest

* See Appendix I.

precedent for such a treaty is the Washington Nine Power Treaty of 1922. Appendix II contains a rough draft of a treaty based on the provisions of this instrument, but with the following improvements: (a) The treaty is placed under the guarantee of the League. (b) Any dispute as to the interpretation of the treaty may be referred by either party to the Court. (c) The treaty provides for League assistance to Abyssinia in the development and modernisation of the country. Some such treaty is essential if organised international co-operation based on equality of status is to be substituted for attempts at Imperialist exploitation in the relations between Abyssinia and her fellow Members of the League.

(4) Egypt is deeply interested in the settlement of this conflict, because of the vital importance to her of the Lake Tana dam project. When sanctions are applied a situation is almost certain to develop that will embroil Egypt. Egyptian public opinion is strongly sympathetic to Abyssinia's struggle against Imperialism and the embers of Egyptian nationalism are being fanned into flame (partly by Italian propaganda) as a result of this conflict. It is anomalous that Abyssinia should be a sovereign State and a Member of the League while Egypt is virtually a British protectorate and is being kept out of the League because Great Britain opposes her admission until 'outstanding issues' have been settled by direct negotiations between the two countries. Egyptians deeply resent the anomaly of their status and the prolongation of what they regard as an illegal and unjustified British occupation. The outstanding issues relate to questions of defence, the functioning of the law courts, and the treatment of foreigners and foreign business enterprises. They are all issues that can be settled on the basis of international arrangements within the League.

In one way or another the Italo-Abyssinian conflict is going to make acute the whole issue of Egypt's relations to this country and to the League. If that issue is not settled on an international basis it will be settled on an Imperialist basis. The British Government should be urged to invite Egypt to apply immediately for admission to the League. The Government should undertake to support this application, and if necessary to secure the summoning of a special Assembly for the purpose. The Government should further promise that after Egypt had become a Member State outstanding issues would be settled through the good offices of the League Council. In return Egypt should promise to respect all the obligations of the Covenant, should become a party to the

Optional Clause in the Statute of the Permanent Court, and should take part in the application of sanctions against Italy. Naturally, Egypt would become a party to the treaty with Abyssinia mentioned in (3) above. In this way Imperialism would be scotched and the foundations for a new and better order of things would be laid in the Near East.

(5) The Italian adventure following upon Japan's and Germany's revolt against the collective system has raised in an acute form the question of peaceful change of the international *status quo*. The public discussion of this subject began with treaty revision, but has of late tended to emphasise the questions of colonies and of access to raw materials.

In proportion as the question of treaty revision as a contribution to solving the problem of the *status quo* has been discussed, it has become clear that the only part of the peace settlement which has not been revised or is not obviously capable of revision through the existing machinery is territorial frontiers. It has further become evident that there is no way of altering the existing frontiers of Europe that will not create as many grievances as it remedies, and that the real solution lies not so much in shifting frontiers between sovereign States as in making frontiers invisible by adjusting the relations between the political and economic regimes on both sides of the frontiers. Decent treatment of minorities, reasonable tariff and transport arrangements, special international agreements to cover areas where economic, ethnic, and political frontiers fail to coincide—these, together with the habit of co-operation and the gradual levelling of the artificial barriers to human intercourse raised in the name of sovereignty, are the true solution.

COLONIES AND MANDATES

It is already becoming apparent that to attempt to redistribute colonies is to create difficulties rather than to solve them. Indeed, the whole concept of using colonies—not to mention Mandates—as counters in a bargain between Great Powers is reactionary, for it is based on the view that colonies are the property of the Governments administering them, and that their inhabitants are without rights and may be bought or sold regardless of their preferences, like so much cattle.

Here too the true solution lies in a fuller application of the international idea. The Labour Party has already long adopted as its official policy the putting of the non-self-governing parts of the

Empire under the Mandate system. This means that there would be full equality of opportunity for trade and investment to all nations, and that the administration of the colonies would be concerned primarily with the welfare of their inhabitants, according to the international standards laid down in Article 22 of the Covenant and subject to the international criticism and supervision of the Mandates Commission. If the Mandates system were universalised it is clear that the Mandates Commission itself must be enlarged and strengthened and its powers increased. The ultimate object should be to provide for the training of an international civil service which should administer the colonies directly as the agents of the League. That is an idea that was put forward by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, E. D. Morel and others many years ago. It was always sound, is already feasible, and will shortly become obviously necessary.

As regards raw materials, it has already been pointed out that it is impossible to maintain the distinction between 'colonial' and other raw materials, and that the question of freedom of access does not mean that foreign countries are debarred from buying raw materials by export duties, quotas, or prohibitions.

Such obstacles to international trade in raw materials exist, but they are of minor importance. The main obstacle is that created by economic nationalism and it is twofold: on the one hand tariffs and import quotas prevent States importing each other's products and thereby make it difficult to find the foreign money with which to purchase raw materials from abroad. Ultimately goods are paid for only by other goods and services, and if the flow of these is checked in one direction it will correspondingly diminish in the other.

In the second place economic nationalism is heavily charged with political nationalism and the desire to be self-sufficient in case of war. This means that States want to have raw materials not only within their own currency and tariff area, but under their own political control. The economic depression has accentuated the tendency toward monopolistic and semi-governmental control of trade and industry on a nationalist basis and largely for political ends. It may be predicted that in proportion as economic and financial sanctions are applied against Italy, the States applying them will, on the basis of § 3 of Article 16 of the Covenant,*

* This paragraph says, 'The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimise the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures.'

subject their mutual economic and financial relations to forms of joint control. This, it may be suggested, shows the lines on which the problem of raw materials should be tackled; national planning and control should be widened into international planning and control as fast and as far as proves feasible. But this, it will soon be found, requires some sense of common loyalty and common purpose as well as common advantage between the nations concerned. It is a political even more than an economic question.

This cursory examination has shown that there can be no solution of the problem of changing the international *status quo* through devising machinery for shifting frontiers and redistributing sovereignties and imperialisms. That is an altogether impracticable enterprise, for the desire to stereotype frontiers is but one aspect of the desire to preserve sovereignty. It is the existence of sovereignty and imperialism which is in itself a cause of war, and not any particular pattern or allocation of existing sovereignties and imperialisms. The only way of changing the international *status quo* that will make for peace instead of merely changing the incidence of the next war is a move in the direction of world government based on economic internationalism and social justice, and applying the principle of international trusteeship and the open door to all non-self-governing territories.

NATIONALIST DICTATORSHIPS

If space permitted, an analysis could be given of the conditions in Germany, Italy and Japan that would fully bear out this general statement. But we must confine ourselves to a brief and bald summary of conclusions. The desire of the regimes in these three countries to change the international *status quo* is merely part of the desperate attempts of these regimes to stereotype their domestic *status quo*; all three regimes came into power in response to a demand for sweeping social change. All three proceeded to cheat the revolution complex which brought them into power by converting it into a war complex, since they were in fact reactionary regimes which were out not to destroy but to preserve the old order. That is why these regimes are becoming steadily more extreme. War preparations constitute the backbone of the economic recovery of the class which the regime serves, and the war spirit is the drug with which they must inoculate the minds of their people in order to stultify the demand for sweeping social change which they cannot satisfy. In Russia, on the other hand, the

Bolsheviks did carry out a true social revolution; they did satisfy the demand for fundamental change and have therefore converted the revolution complex not into a war complex but into a reconstruction complex. The withdrawal from the League and the growing menace to world peace of the nationalist dictatorships are the direct result of the internal structure of the German, Italian and Japanese regimes; Russia's coming into the League and the rallying of the Communists to the defence of 'bourgeois' democracy, as well as the gradual but genuine development of a peculiar form of democracy in Russia itself, are equally direct results of the internal structure of the Soviet regime.

In some quarters the discussions on changing the *status quo* take the form of suggesting that would-be aggressors should be bought off by concessions. This method was tried in the case of both Japan and Italy, and failed. It is a policy not of peace but of Danegeld. Its ultimate result would be to make of the British Empire a sort of international blackmailee, surrendering piecemeal to the demands of gangster Governments using threats of war as an instrument of national policy. Peace is not for cowards!

The proposal to link concessions to the nationalist dictatorships with their return to the League and acceptance of an effective collective defence system constitutes an advance toward realism. But experience has shown that no conceivable concession compatible with League membership or with the collective system would even be considered, e.g., by Japan or Italy. The Nazi Government have made it clear that they wish to use their rearmament in order to extort colonies and a free hand to make war in East Europe from the Western Great Powers, and will not even consider returning to the League until these demands have been satisfied; Hitler has also plainly repudiated any collective defence obligations, which would of course be incompatible with the free hand against Russia and the programme of territorial expansion in East Europe which are basic elements in Nazi foreign policy.

In short, the attempts to discuss the problem of peace in terms of collective defence and changing the international *status quo* are abstract and unreal, because they attempt to solve on the plane of two dimensions a problem that is real and solid precisely because it possesses a third dimension, namely, the question of the internal social structure of the States concerned.

The constitution of the International Labour Organisation expressly declares that social justice is the necessary basis of world peace, and it has become quite impossible to be realistic about

the organisation of peace unless we admit its inseparable connection with the social struggle going on in every country and assuming revolutionary forms in the nationalist dictatorships.

DEFENCE AGAINST AGGRESSION

(6) It is already clear that at the end of this conflict the question of making the system of collective defence against aggression more effective will be taken up, in the light of the conditions created by the conflict. And it is already plain that the dominant elements in our National Government are still sincerely convinced that the way to solve this problem is to remain vague about the sanctions of the Covenant in general, but to contract geographically limited obligations that in practice will be difficult to distinguish from alliances. Specifically, they will go no further in Europe as a whole, but they will remake Locarno, with the help of the proposed Western Air Pact, into what will be virtually an Anglo-French alliance against Germany. That will see us well on the way back to the Balance of Power, and will give a fresh impetus to the arms race. The one argument on which the whole Government Press are already concentrating is that this conflict justifies arming Great Britain to the teeth—the idea that we should strive to settle it on terms making possible a reduction and limitation of armaments never seems to enter their mental horizon.

The Government should be urged to make the Covenant an effective reality in Europe by (a) offering to conclude a non-aggression pact, clarified by a definition of aggression on the lines of that proposed by the U.S.S.R. and adopted by a Committee of the Disarmament Conference, and linked to the sanctions system of the League by the definition of Article 16 of the Covenant contained in Annex F of Locarno (in which Great Britain, France, Germany, and the other Locarno Powers declare they consider that Article 16 means the duty of every Member of the League to co-operate loyally and effectively in resistance to any act of aggression to the extent made possible by its geographical situation and its military position). This treaty should be open to any European Member of the League, but come into force when ratified by at least ten States, including two permanent Members of the Council of the League.

(b) In addition to this treaty we should propose the conclusion of an all-European air pact, providing for the abolition of national air forces, the internationalisation of civil aviation, and the creation

of an international air police force. This pact, too, should be open to any European Member of the League, but come into force when ratified by at least ten States, including two permanent Members of the Council.

The coming into force of these two treaties, following upon a settlement of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict on the lines sketched in (1)-(4) above, and a tackling of the questions of colonies and raw materials as indicated in (5), would, it may be confidently expected, make many people in Germany feel that to remain out of the League is a handicap and not, as they had been led to believe, an asset. It would begin to dawn on the Nazis that the dream of world-power through blackmail and sabotage of the collective system was over, and that it is not the nationalist dictatorships but the ideals of the Western democracies that are going to have the last word on the future of civilisation. So soon as these things have come to pass and these truths begin to penetrate the mists of propaganda and illusion in Germany, there may be some chance of events occurring that will open the door to limitation and reduction of armaments. In the meantime the offer of all-round disarmament and re-entry into the community of nations should be made to Germany as part of the general settlement and new start after the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. This offer should be kept open, but pending its acceptance we should continue developing and strengthening the League and the collective system. We should make it clear that we want equality with Germany, but on the basis of our principles, not Hitler's, and that the longer he stays outside the stronger the League will become without him.

A NEW START WITH THE LEAGUE

(7) From what has been said it is clear that the Italo-Abyssinian conflict will not leave the world as it found it, but on the contrary is already raising and making acute a number of issues that must be settled as part of the outcome of the conflict. It is further plain that the cumulative and combined effect of settling these issues on the right lines will be to make a new start with the League of Nations. That new start was in any case becoming a matter of urgent necessity on wider grounds. The present constitution of the League is based on four assumptions by which the framers of the Covenant were guided, namely, that political democracy would be the prevailing system of Government, that reduction and limitation of armaments would become an accomplished fact soon after the

Peace Conference, that the League would be universal, and that the economic system based on private enterprise would continue to function much as it had before the war. So long as those assumptions held good the League, as a loose association of independent States bound by the unanimity rule, could function; but none of those assumptions holds good to-day, and the need for the transformation of the League has become patent to all students, and indeed to anyone familiar with the history of the last four years. The semi-official British commentary issued with the Covenant when it was first published in this country in 1919 said that the framers of the Covenant had deliberately left 'the hands of the statesmen of the future as free as possible', in order to 'allow the League as a living organism to discover its own best lines of development'.

In the last four years the world economic depression has given rise to a world-wide nationalist reaction in our own and other countries, which has resulted in Governments abusing their freedom of action under the present loose Covenant to go a long way back toward the Balance of Power, sustained by a new arms race. In some countries the reaction has gone to the length of Fascism, of secession from the League, and of erecting the cult of war into the religion of the State. But the difference between the nationalist dictatorships and the reactionary Governments in the Western democracies is a difference of degree rather than of kind, for both exist in order to preserve the existing economic order, and both have fallen back on nationalism and the fear of war as their last refuge and psychological barrier against the demand for sweeping social change.

This process works in a vicious circle. The growing fear of war engendered by the new arms race and the gradual disintegration of the League has been used to justify further increases in armaments and a more open return to balancing alliances. The failure to prevent Mussolini's war is the first result of the progressive breakdown of the collective system. The war itself will release forces which will either take us a further stage along the road to the next world war or revive the collective system by making a new start with the League. The initiative can come only from this country, and it will come only if public opinion exerts an overwhelming pressure on the Government. For whereas the nationalist dictatorships are fanatical in their calamitous beliefs, the reactionary Governments in the Western democracies are pusillanimous because they are hybrids, torn between those who at heart agree with the

statecraft and doctrines of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese militarists, and those who are prepared to take their stand on the new principles and new faith implied in the collective system. Therefore these Governments are half-headed and half-hearted, incapable of leadership but susceptible to the pressure of public opinion. But let us never forget that they are apt to go wrong, either by mere drift or in more active ways, the moment that pressure is relaxed.

The limits of this pamphlet do not allow of giving more than the very briefest outline of the proposals for a new start within the League that Great Britain should make at Geneva when the Covenant has been vindicated and Italian Fascism has collapsed. The discussions on the organisation of collective defence as well as on the questions of economic and colonial policy raised by the Italo-Abyssinian conflict will, it may be predicted, reveal the fact that not all States will be ready to accept equally far-reaching obligations, that the necessity for going ahead at once with those who do will be urgent, and that it will therefore be necessary to revive the idea of different degrees of organisation and obligation within the League which was put forward in the French security plan for 'three concentric circles' of States at the Disarmament Conference, and which underlies most of the proposals for continental or other regional groupings within the League.

WHAT GREAT BRITAIN SHOULD DO

Great Britain should therefore propose the formation of a Peace and Pooled Defence Group within the League on the basis of Article 21 of the Covenant and open to begin with to any European Members of the League which would accept the terms of membership. The latter would comprise:

(a) Complete mutual renunciation of war within the group, made effective by an all-in undertaking to submit to the Permanent Court every dispute that had not been settled by diplomacy, conciliation or the Council of the League within the space of one year, and by instructions to the General Staffs, Admiralties, and Air Ministries in the group to scrap all plans based on the contingency of war against any Member of the group.

(b) A complete system of pooled defence, made effective by instructions to the Defence Ministries of the group to concert plans for collective defence of the whole group, which should look ultimately to pooling all the land, sea, and air forces of the group into a single international defence and police force.

(c) The joint control of all 'inter-State' transport and communications within the group by land, sea, or air, by post, telegraph, telephone, and wireless.

(d) The nationalisation and organisation under joint control of the arms, munitions, and aircraft industries of the whole group.

(e) The pooling of the State debts, central banks and gold reserves of the group, the establishment of a common currency and of international investment, marketing and planning boards, coupled with arrangements for the progressive reduction of tariffs and quotas with the object of their gradual abolition within the group.

(f) Common social and health policies through close co-operation and ultimately joint control of the Labour and Health Ministries of the group.

(g) The Mandate system would be applied to all the non-self-governing territories of the group, which would further be pledged to establish as rapidly as possible a completely international administration for these territories based on the open door and the principle of trusteeship.

(h) The treaty or constitution binding the group together should pledge these States as their common objective in foreign policy to bring all nations into a World Commonwealth. The League should be declared the instrument of this policy and the Covenant its basis. Within each country a Peace Act of Parliament based on identical principles should establish a legal and psychological connection between these pledges and commitments and the national constitutions of the respective countries.

(i) The members of the group would further be pledged to arrangements for constant consultation and co-ordination of their foreign policies, similar to the arrangements obtaining within the British Commonwealth or the Little Entente or the Scandinavian countries.

(j) The terms of the old Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* might serve as a model for the relations between the legislatures of the group. If this be considered too ambitious to start with, there should at least be some form of common consultative parliament to which the national legislatures of the group would elect delegations on the basis of proportional representation and which, without having any executive powers, should have full freedom to debate and pass resolutions upon all the affairs of the group. (This, it will be observed, is a revival of an idea long ago put forward by Mr. H. N. Brailsford in connection with the League.)

A group of this sort would grow out of the present League some-

what as the Constitution of the United States of America emerged as the result of the defects discovered by experience in the original Articles of Confederation. (Only we must imagine the process complicated by the fact that the slave-owing States had seceded from the Confederation before the task of making the United States Constitution was begun!)

A NUCLEUS IN THE LEAGUE

A group of this sort forms the only realistic answer to the problems of the *status quo* and of collective defence, for it recognises that they are as much social as international. Membership of the group would always be open to all States, and its relations with the other Members of the League and with the outside world in general would be based on scrupulous respect for the provisions of the Covenant. But in practice its membership would at first be composed of democratic and Socialist States, although it would be so overwhelmingly strong that the remaining Members of the League would be anxious to come to terms with it on the basis of the Covenant. This group would recover the initiative in world affairs which has since 1931 been lost to the nationalist dictatorships by the pusillanimous reactionary Governments of the Western democracies. It would virtually control the League and make it so strong and valuable that the United States would soon be anxious to co-operate and might even become a Member. It would constitute an impregnable defence against the nationalist dictatorships and at the same time an irresistible attraction to the oppressed peoples within those dictatorships. It would constitute a nucleus to which more and more States would rally, and a proselytising force which from the outset would tend to demoralise and disintegrate all militarist and Fascist regimes, for it would sound the death-knell to their hopes of successfully using war as an instrument of national policy, and these regimes would be destroyed from within in a few years (not later than the next great capitalist slump) if deprived of the prestige they have hitherto enjoyed through successful aggression and blackmail.

We are entering on a period of great and rapid change. The repercussions of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict are going to throw a large part of the world into the melting-pot again. In those conditions we shall, if we have in our minds a clear picture of the kind of world we want, discover innumerable opportunities for remoulding the crumbling scheme of things nearer to our heart's

desire. It would take only about two years of brain-trusting, propaganda and spade work, utilising to the full the driving-force of the desire to be delivered from war, before this country would be ready to make such an offer as that indicated in (7). And if agitation on these lines begins here there will be parallel developments in other European democracies and the U.S.S.R. will be ready to join the group when the time is ripe for action.

This is an age of transition and of great possibilities. But it is also a dangerous age. If we are apathetic or woolly-minded we shall become the dupes and tools of the militarists, Imperialists, and other wild asses of the devil, who have been kicking up their heels since 1931 and are now looking to the Italo-Abyssinian conflict to provide them with fresh woods and pastures new.

CONCLUSION

IT has been shown how this war has come upon us chiefly because our rulers, although sincerely desiring peace and filled with the best intentions, are men who believe in sovereignty, Imperialism, and uncontrolled armaments, and who conceive their mission in public life to be the protection of a social order that is rotten with vested interests in international anarchy and war. Under the overwhelming pressure of public opinion, and partly for dangerous reasons, the Government have at last decided to stop the war which they shrank from preventing while there was still time. That almost certainly means that this country will shortly be itself involved in war and that we are on the eve of developments that will face the world with terrible dangers as well as with vast new opportunities.

In this situation it is above all desirable that a clear-headed, informed and resolute public opinion should support the Government so long as they are upholding the Covenant against aggression, and should combine this with the maximum pressure to prevent them settling this conflict on terms that will push the world further back toward power politics and Imperialism. This pamphlet has tried to suggest the attitude that public opinion should adopt.

It may be hoped that the Labour Party will give a lead to the country. This hope is justified by Labour's fine record on peace

and because there is nothing in the proposals made in this pamphlet that is not in consonance with Labour's traditions and commitments. Indeed, all the proposals made by us are either explicitly stated or implied in Labour's colonial and foreign policy as adopted at Southport and expounded at length by Mr. Arthur Henderson in *Labour's Way to Peace*.

The Labour Party can give a lead in three ways :

(1) By adopting and expounding the proposals of this pamphlet and by preaching the world peace loyalty and the attitude to the Government underlying those proposals.

(2) By promising the Government every support in upholding the rule of international law, but demanding in return that the Government should pledge themselves at least to the first four of the proposals contained in this pamphlet and that they should promise favourable consideration to the remaining three.

(3) The Labour Movement could do much to secure the adoption of a similar attitude by the Socialist Parties of the Continent and so prepare the way for an international settlement on these lines, when the will of the League has been imposed on Mussolini and Italian Fascism collapses.

But although political action must in the last analysis depend upon political parties and Governments, it cannot be effective unless it is prepared and supported on a much wider basis. Is there anything in these proposals, and in the view of the situation and of our international duties that underlies them, which cannot be supported by the Liberal Party, by Mr. Lloyd George's Council of Action, and by the Young Conservatives and other supporters of the Government that co-operated to produce that remarkable book *The Next Five Years*? Is it not the duty of the League of Nations Union to preach a loyalty to the League in preserving peace and defeating aggression, transcending, although it does not contradict, patriotism? Do not all the proposals of this pamphlet follow inevitably from dedication to an over-riding world peace loyalty and the substitution of post-war internationalism—i.e. the League—for pre-war Imperialism? Does not this pamphlet show how the many millions who answered "Yes" to all five questions in the Peace Ballot can translate their wishes into a practical policy in the present emergency? Should not the organisers of the Peace Ballot and the Peace Movement generally begin taking steps immediately to enlighten the people of this country as to the facts of the situation and the dangers and opportunities that are opening out before us?

The end of this business may either be a further and well-nigh final plunge downward toward Armageddon or the beginning of the end of the great nationalist reaction that arose like a poisonous exhalation from the decay of the economic system and has brooded like a nightmare over the world since 1931. If this country cannot give the lead out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, no other country will. The Nazis and the Fascists believe in their national mission and have the courage of their disastrous convictions. The Russian Revolution has spent its proselytising force and fallen back on the slogan of 'Socialism in One Country', although still ready to follow a strong lead from outside. Let all of us who in this country are not willing to let Socialism and Democracy go by default realise that we too have an historic mission, but that ours is a world and not a national mission. Let us have the courage of the conviction that we have an opportunity to lead the world toward a better civilisation, flourishing in a classless and warless world of racial justice, social equality and political freedom. In the long run, the alternatives are a World State or the collapse of civilisation in a World War. We can win through to the former if we choose, and it is our job to lead the world.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ARTICLE 20 OF THE COVENANT

1. The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof.

2. In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

APPENDIX II

(Draft Treaty between Abyssinia and the Members of the Council of the League of Nations. This Treaty should be concluded in the first place between Abyssinia and the present Members of the Council, but should be open to accession by any Member of the League and by the United States, and should come into force when ratified by, say, ten States, including two permanent Members of the Council.)

The High Contracting Parties,

Desiring to adopt a policy designed to stabilise conditions in East Africa, to safeguard the rights and interests of Ethiopia, and to assist the efforts of the Ethiopian Government to promote the development of Ethiopia and the intercourse between that country and the other Powers upon the basis of equality of opportunity and in conformity with the principles of the Covenant of the League of Nations;

Have resolved to conclude a treaty, and for that purpose and to that end have appointed as their respective Plenipotentiaries:

Article I

The H.C.P., other than Ethiopia, agree

- (1) To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of Ethiopia;
- (2) To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to Ethiopia to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government;
- (3) To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of Ethiopia;
- (4) To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in Ethiopia in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of

subjects or citizens of friendly States, or which would be injurious to the rights of Ethiopian subjects;

(5) To use their influence for the purpose of securing the acceptance by the Council of the League of Nations of a plan of technical co-operation in national reconstruction between the Ethiopian Government and the League of Nations, based on the proposals contained in the Annex to this Treaty.

Article II

The H.C.P. agree not to enter into any treaty, agreement, arrangement, or understanding, either with one another, or individually, or collectively, with any Power or Powers, which would impair the principles stated in Article I.

Article III

With a view to applying more effectually the principle of the Open Door or equality of opportunity in Ethiopia for the trade and industry of all nations, the H.C.P., other than Ethiopia, agree that they will not seek, nor support their nationals in seeking—

(a) Any arrangement which might purport to establish in favour of their interests any general superiority of rights with respect to commercial or economic development in any designated region of Ethiopia;

(b) Any such monopoly or preference as would deprive the nationals of any other Power of the right of undertaking any legitimate trade or industry in Ethiopia, or of participating with the Ethiopian Government, or with any local authority, in any category of public enterprise, or which by reason of its scope, duration, or geographical extent is calculated to frustrate the practical application of the principle of equal opportunity.

It is understood that the foregoing stipulations of this Article are not to be so construed as to prohibit the acquisition of such properties or rights as may be necessary to the conduct of a particular commercial, industrial, or financial undertaking or to the encouragement of invention and research.

Ethiopia undertakes to be guided by the principles stated in the foregoing stipulations of this Article in dealing with applications for economic rights and privileges from Governments and nationals of all foreign countries, whether parties to the present Treaty or not.

Article IV

The H.C.P. agree not to support any agreements by their respective nationals with each other designed to create Spheres of Influence or to provide for the enjoyment of mutually exclusive opportunities in designated parts of Ethiopian territory, and to regard all past agreements of this character with or in respect to Ethiopia, whether concluded between any of themselves or their nationals, as being inconsistent with the terms of Article 10 of the Covenant and so abrogated under Article 20 of the Covenant.

Article V

Ethiopia agrees that, throughout the whole of the railways in Ethiopia, she will not exercise or permit unfair discrimination of any kind. In particular there shall be no discrimination whatever, direct or indirect, in respect of charges or of facilities on the ground of the nationality of passengers or the countries from which or to which they are proceeding, or the origin or ownership of goods or the country from which or to which they are consigned, or the nationality or ownership of the ship or other means of conveying such passengers or goods before or after their transport on the Ethiopian Railways.

The H.C.P., other than Ethiopia, assume a corresponding obligation in respect of any of the aforesaid railways over which they or their nationals are in a position to exercise any control in virtue of any concession, special agreement or otherwise.

Article VI

The H.C.P. agree that this Treaty shall be placed under the protection and guarantee of the League of Nations, and that they will not interpret its provisions in any way inconsistent with the rights or duties of Members of the League.

They agree that this Treaty abrogates all previous treaties or agreements between all or any of the H.C.P. with or in respect to Ethiopia, in so far as the terms of such treaties or agreements are inconsistent with the terms of this Treaty.

Article VII

The H.C.P. agree that, whenever a situation arises which in the opinion of any one of them involves the application of the stipulations of the present Treaty, and renders desirable discussion of such application, it shall have the right to bring the matter to the notice of the Council of the League of Nations.

The H.C.P. agree to refer any dispute concerning the interpretation of this Treaty to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

Article VIII

The United States and all Members of the League of Nations not signatories to the present Treaty shall be invited to adhere to the present Treaty.

Article IX

The present Treaty shall be registered with the Secretariat and shall be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations.

ANNEX

(On the modern and enlightened international political basis provided by a treaty similar to the above draft the Annex would provide a series of detailed proposals for a scheme of advice and assistance by the League

to the Emperor of Abyssinia in his policy of modernising and developing his country and progressively extinguishing slavery and the slave trade. The League's own proposals in this dispute supply a basis of discussion, but are vitiated by undue concessions to Anglo-Franco-Italian Imperialism. The League's history contains many and varied precedents (e.g. Austria, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria), of which perhaps the scheme of technical co-operation with China and the proposals made to Liberia are the most pertinent. The general plan is a detailed scheme of advice and assistance, including the designation of foreign experts and the training of Abyssinian officials, worked out and applied by the technical organisations of the League, and placed under the supervision of a Council Committee on which Abyssinia and one or two 'disinterested' States (e.g. Sweden and Spain) would be represented, as well as France, Great Britain and Italy. The Lake Tsana dam project, and road-building, railway, irrigation and other development schemes would be carried out, under Abyssinian sovereignty, as a form of international public work schemes under League auspices.)

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