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ELLEN HØRUP

ETHIOPIA

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PREFACE

The Great Powers save Peace at the cost of Justice. They allow one robber after the other to make war and get away with his booty.

The Great Powers treated the Spanish rebels as if they were of the same status as the legal Government and agreed upon a so called neutrality treaty, while they allowed Mussolini and Hitler to support the rebels.

As the whole League of Nations sacrificed China and the Covenant, France and England sacrificed Ethiopia and Leon Blum and Baldwin the Spanish Government.

They save Peace by allowing wars and conquests.

But to save Peace at the cost of Justice is to put the cart before the horse.

We who want real Peace we fight for Right. Both Justice and Peace are far away, but we know that we shall never experience Peace until we have recognized the Right to live of every people, every race and every class.

19, rue Henri Mussard
Geneva.

Ellen HORUP.

Reprint of articles published in *Politiken*, the leading paper of Copenhagen.

THE COVENANT

On October 7th 1935, the League of Nations stated unanimously that war between Italy and Ethiopia was going on, although war had not been declared. And furthermore Mussolini was declared to be the aggressor. These are things known to the whole world, young and old. Yet it is well that the League knew it too, for then honour is saved, the Covenant¹ is established, and justice has been applied.

A sigh of relief escaped from all the League supporters, and the tension was dissolved in jubilation. The "Journal des Nations" was to the fore with the front page completely taken up by the Covenant and its most important articles. Finally it was evident that not only did the Covenant exist, but it could also be effective. .

How different it was in 1931. Then the League did not know that a war was going on between China and Japan although Japan conquered Manchuria and bombarded, killed and burned to do it. Then, the Covenant was not worth very much, nor was honour and justice.

But now the Covenant has been what it should have been from the very beginning, a golden cup, a Holy Grail, around which the League knights are guards, defending it by economic sanctions, and if necessary to the last drop of their blood by military ones, as written in the Covenant itself. And England's fleet, as a police force, sails the Mediterranean.

All the indignation about this war falls on Mussolini's head. No one denies that he is to blame for what is happening now. All his arguments, pretexts, and proofs have fallen to the ground, both in the League and outside it, but first and foremost in England. For Italy and England have met many a time on the Ethiopian battlefield. They know each other well, and England knows the game. Mussolini could easily find his moral accusations against Ethiopia, for they were all published in the English press shortly after 1918. At that time it was England who needed arguments. Everything was there, the slavery, the barbarism, the feudal system, and the need for Western civilisation and initiative. At that time Ethiopia was already divided up into three spheres of influence between England, France and Italy, but the fight over the concessions was going on all the time. The struggle had already begun in 1868 between England and Italy. England had been the first to introduce soldiers, but a year after Italy arrived on the scene with a commercial company. Territory was bought at Assab Bay, which in 1882 was made a colony by Italian law.

Not until 1885 did Italy bring in soldiers. One trick was as good as another. For example, in one treaty the Italian text spoke about Italy's protectorate of Ethiopia, while the Ethiopian text spoke about an adviser in foreign affairs.

Against the voracity and the intrigues of England, Italy and France succeeded in forcing Ethiopia into the League. Later on England and Italy conspired for mutual support when next the Negus should be pressed for concessions.

1 <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/ordbog/treaty/pact.pdf> -ht

And now Mussolini has made up his mind to put an end to this game of the three great powers in Ethiopia. But he has opened his mouth too wide. He boasted about something he called his right, and made himself ridiculous. He played all his trumps into the hands of the Englishmen, who had been playing the game for two hundred years and were experts at it. They mobilised public opinion, the League, the Covenant, and everything else, and came out with laurels on their heads.

While the whole Western world, drunk with joy over the salvation of the League and the Covenant, is on the verge of making a mistake as to the happenings in Ethiopia, and as to the aim of England's fleet in the Mediterranean.

It is forgotten that the cotton fields in the Sudan and Egypt are the property of British capitalists, and are irrigated by the Lake Tana in Ethiopia. Forgotten too, that British banks own the Bank of Ethiopia, and that the power who controls Ethiopia, controls the southern part of the Red Sea, and thereby the road leading from England to India.

But the East knows it all and makes no mistakes. It knows what the British fleet has to do in the Mediterranean, and also the value of a Western document. In "*La Tribune d'Orient*" as early as August 26th the following was printed in a leading article: "Don't let us forget that these Englishmen who were mute during the Sino-Japanese war, do not to-day support the League for the beautiful Covenant's sake, nor do they defend Ethiopia from love of its savages and negroes."

As soon as they could, they would take Ethiopia themselves, or divide it with Italy, provided that they got the lion's share, without bothering about the League, the Peace and the Justice and all the other fine words their mouth is filled with now. . .

We once marched for that Right and Justice, and after the victory and in spite of the promises, they turned their back to us in the name of that same Right and Justice. We don't march any more. We marched enough in the World War. Now we leave it to the Firebrigade on the other side of the Channel to fight for what they like: God, Devil or Humanity. We shall be moved no more by their sentimentality or their theatre making."

And while the great and the small powers in Geneva defend a piece of paper, which they tore to pieces in 1931, the people whom this paper ought to protect against war and injustice, are maimed and murdered, bombed and extinguished.

The Covenant has been saved, but Ethiopia has been sacrificed to the Great Powers.

SANCTIONS

According to its declarations, the League of Nations decided on October 7, 1935, to apply sanctions on Italy and sanctions became the watchword of the day. .

Everyone wanted sanctions. Pacifists and women wanted sanctions because they think sanctions will stop the war; supporters of the League of Nations because they think sanctions will advance the League; all right-minded people because they think sanc-

tions will procure Ethiopia her rights; all small and weak countries because they think sanctions will constitute an example such that later on a great power will think twice before breaking the Pact. Even socialists and communists wanted sanctions because they were directed against Mussolini and his fascism. The old leader of the Labour Party in England, Lansbury, was one of the few who spoke earnestly against them. He staked his position on sanctions and lost.

There is something about the word that people like. It signifies the vindication of justice, law and order, award and punishment. It rouses all good citizens, somewhat in the same way as the cry of "stop thief!" in the wealthy quarter. All take part in the hunt, no one asks if there really is a thief, what he has stolen and from whom. Those running after him are perhaps greater thieves than he after whom they are running, but that does not matter, justice must take its course.

First then was the export of ammunition and arms to Italy forbidden, then came financial sanctions forbidding the members of the League to lend money to Italy, and finally economic sanctions. If these various sanctions are to be effective it is of course a primary condition that those adopting them shall have the power to enforce them and that everyone joins in.

But the United States, Japan, and Germany are outside the League of Nations. Roosevelt first of all forbade the export of war materials and chemicals for the manufacture thereof to Italy, later the United States and Japan declared themselves neutral; and Germany has not yet come to a decision.

Within the League are three countries, i.e. Austria, Hungary and Albania who will not employ sanctions against Italy. Argentina cannot come to a decision before 6 months time when the government meets again. Until then Argentina will continue to send frozen meat to Italy. Switzerland only agreed to sanctions in so far as they did not interfere with her neutrality. And finally there was France who sought every means of slipping out. Thus Italy now lies surrounded by countries who are either not at all or only half taking part in sanctions and all her ports are open.

As to the prohibition of the export of arms, the 'bloody international', even during the war, sent goods across all frontiers from the factories of the Central Powers to the soldiers of the Entente and from the factories of the Entente to the German army; thus everyone can calculate what the prohibition is worth. Besides at the moment Italy does not need more war materials.

The matter of financial sanctions is still more vague. Even if the French banks cannot lend direct to the Italian government, no one can prevent them lending money to French industries and then, as the *New Leader* says, the French industries will put money in the Italian industries over which the government has the power of life and death. The money will come into the country and the raw materials for which Italy has use, will follow afterwards: In addition the co-operation between the French and Italian industries is well developed. The same men who are directors of the Italian chemical trust Montecatini sit on the committee of the branches of the French Comité des Forges.

The French financial paper *Information* for the first of August 1935 describes the splendid state of Montecatini specially in war-time: "The explosives department is running splendidly. In addition to the usual orders it is no secret that the present foreign policy of Italy is leading to orders which are not confined to explosives. There is no doubt that the importance of Montecatini is increasing especially since it is attempting to satisfy all Italy's industrial needs." Neither is Germany left out. The enormous German chemical trust I. G. Farbenindustrie long ago let out patents to and bought shares in Montecatini. *Information* mentions a group of banks headed by the Dresdner Bank that a short time ago bought up Montecatini shares to the amount of 500 million lire. Whilst Germans have been selling arms to Ethiopia, German industry has been investing money in the Italian warindustries.

England too has capital in Italy, first and foremost in the armament firm of Vickers & Armstrong's Italian branch, Vickers Terni. Financial sanctions will scarcely stop Italy's credit.

Economic sanctions are the only kind of sanctions which, if agreed to and loyally carried out by all, could in time exercise perceptible pressure upon Italy. The *New Statesman* considers that by an ordinary prohibition of the import of Italian goods they could be reduced to about 30 % of the normal. Eden is in favour, Laval against this. The fight between these two Great Powers is being carried on inside the League of Nations. Laval is trying to save France's agreement with Italy, Eden the interests of England in Ethiopia. There is not the least doubt that England has the best cards to play in the League of Nations, much better than the French ones. In the present situation, the breaker of the Pact is England's enemy but France's ally. Like the orange into Alladin's turban, the Pact has fallen into Mr. Eden's top hat, and surely he knows how to make use of it. With the entire body of the League of Nations behind her, England is now turning against Italy in order to defend her own interests. With the Pact as a weapon England is frightening the members of the League. Threats and pathos alternate and nearly all have submitted. Collective security is the slogan. First of all the three refractory members, Austria, Hungary, and Albania, were informed that "if they did not obey now then they would see what would happen to them later on." The threat to be sure did not help. These three independent members of the League of Nations were so economically and politically dependent on the Italian Empire that they would not be threatened by the British Empire into agreeing to sanctions.

Then there was France and she was considerably more important. She was the third Great Power in Ethiopia, the ally from Stresa where in the spring they had both tried to calm the lion, and where England had gone as far as she wanted and France a good bit farther; but without success. Mussolini needed a war and a victory in Ethiopia in order to buttress himself up in his own country. He wanted to conquer Ethiopia with all the war materials he had amassed and all the people whom he had educated and drilled to believe in war. He wanted to conquer Ethiopia, but that was the only thing England would not agree with and when all the same Mussolini began the war the English fleet of 144 warships totalling 800 000 tons sailed down to the Mediterranean.

That was on the 24th of September 1935, long before there was any talk of sanctions, long before, on this occasion, the Pact was brought into use. It was a little private sanction on the part of England as a single state against Italy. Therefore there was no talk of collective security and so they continued the customary diplomatic exchange of notes. It was England who first asked France whether she could reckon on the support of the French fleet in the event of an attack on the part of Italy. But England's interests are not those of France. Therefore Laval replied that it would be easier for him to give a confirmatory answer when England had reduced her fleet in the Mediterranean to normal strength. England answered Laval saying that as long as the cause of the presence of the fleet was not removed, neither would the fleet be. And again England requested a reply from France. In the newspapers of the 8th of October the reply was published: "The obligation of the support to which the two governments bind themselves must be mutual", and to that was added, "on land, on sea, and in the air", and for the sake of clarity, "also if the attack should come from a state who is not a member of the League of Nations. "

English imperialism is talking about the fleet, French imperialism wants information about strength on land and in the air, for as the New Leader puts it, German imperialism will not sail into Austria. All this took place just as in the old days when there was no League of Nations. France and England were haggling over war alliances just as before 1914. There was no collectivism in that, it only came later when England had got hold of the Pact, but then it did come.

Through *Havas* England says with pathos: "Under no circumstances will sanctions be applied against Italy by England alone. Every action in favour of security ought to be collective and not individual." And when at that time England was asked why the fleet had been sent to the Mediterranean, the answer said that the reason was the attack of the Italian press upon England! And the fleet remained in the Mediterranean. England clung to her little private sanction long after she had sworn to support collective sanctions and acquired the League of Nations as an ally. The right-minded women and pacifists who asked that they might live without war, protected by an international system of justice, were not to be put off by such a trifle but looked with pleasure upon the excellent co-operation between the League of Nations and the British Empire.

Thus Laval's proposal fell as a bomb among them. Was not France a member of the League and was it not Ethiopia's independence that the League of Nations was to secure?

Were not the rights of Ethiopia guaranteed by the League and was it not in order that Mussolini should be forced to relinquish unlawful booty that sanctions were applied? And then Laval offered Mussolini half Ethiopia.

The scandal was terrific, but the most scandalised of all was England. Supported by the British fleet in the Mediterranean, covered by the League of Nations, and with the Pact in his hands Sir Austen Chamberlain came forward and threatened Laval: "If you do not soon keep away from the law breaker Mussolini anti march heart and soul in step with England for sanctions then you can whistle for England when Germany attacks you." The right-minded, enraged, turned their backs on France and pressed

closer together round the League and the British Empire. They had forgotten that neither the one nor the other Empire had given a thought to Ethiopia's security or rights before the beginning of July. They had forgotten that:

None of them had had the least use for the League whilst Mussolini was accumulating war materials on the Ethiopian frontier; at Stresa none of them had threatened him with Article 16, if he did not leave Ethiopia in peace; Sir Samuel Hoare on the contrary had in the House of Commons told Mussolini that he admitted the necessity for Italy's expansion; he had calmed Mussolini by saying that of course he was for the League, but if no one else would do anything, then neither would England (New Leader), and they had forgotten that this was one of the reasons why Mussolini began the war.

What we have seen is the old conflict between the three Great Powers regarding Ethiopia. We have not seen the League of Nations prevent the war in Ethiopia. Neither have we seen them stop it, but we have seen it used as a first class weapon by the one Great Power against the other. We have also seen something for which perhaps we were less prepared, practically the whole of the working class as well as the right-minded women and pacifists close around the one Empire against the other. We have seen the working class voluntarily marching along behind imperialist canons.

Whilst the truth about the Ethiopian question is, as the *Sunday Referee* of the 13th of October 1935 puts it: There is agreement between Messrs. Eden, Laval, and Mussolini as to the rights of Ethiopia... The conflict is principally between Eden and Mussolini who both want that part which is at the same time both the most economically profitable and in the best strategic position.

THE CONFLICT

Imperialism and the League of Nations are to be harnessed together; these two contradictory principles are to be induced to pull in the same direction : the square peg shall be forced into the round hole.

The basis of imperialism is might over right and that of the League of Nations on the contrary is right over might. Imperialism is a recognition of the conqueror's right to the submission of a weaker nation, the League of Nations is an assertion of an international right between nations, great and small, strong and weak. .

The result was the Laval-Hoare proposals in December 1935.

Their aim was to divide Ethiopia, so that Italy who made the war, was to be rewarded with a third of the country. It was arranged that England should not be approached too close near Lake Tana and that Italy did not gain entrance to the high lands which could have been turned strategically into a second Gibraltar, dangerous to England's control of the passage to India. The two Great Powers, England and France were agreed as to the conditions and had every reason to think . that the third had smartness enough to accept them.

Mussolini rejected them. He did not see that, had he agreed immediately and then the proposals had come to nothing all the same, all the blame would have fallen on other shoulders and he himself would have been able to join in the chorus. Who were these noble gentlemen who made him offers that they could not substantiate? And who was it who wanted the war to end as quickly as possible?

The proposals were in agreement with all settlements in similar cases met with since the beginning of history until now and negotiations have all lain along the same lines. Beginning with Stresa the way led via Eden's visit to Rome and the offer of the Committee of Five direct, and as a necessary matter of course, to the Laval-Hoare proposals. But it had nothing to do with the League of Nations. Baldwin supported his Foreign Secretary and ratified them. Besides, as he later stated in the House of Commons, he had "not imagined that there were such deep feelings of honour and conscience among countless conservatives and the greater part of the people."

While indignant protests and telegrams rained upon Mr. Baldwin, his lips were tightly sealed. But he did not desert his Foreign Secretary, he was ready to take the full responsibility. What was Mr. Baldwin's secret that would be able to silence all opposition? We were told on the 19th during a debate in the House of Commons.

Sir Samuel Hoare was the first who spoke in order to defend his proposals. Among other things he informed the House that he had had a "twofold mission in carrying out our share of collective action and in finding a basis for peace." Therein lies the complete explanation of the formulation of the proposals and the only excuse which Sir Samuel could justifiably have made.

Ever since the English Government in September allied itself with the League of Nations and armed itself with the Pact, it has pursued a double policy which was bound to end as it did. On the one hand the negotiations were carried on between England and France mutually and with Mussolini on a purely imperialistic basis; one offer after another was made to Mussolini, each time more and more to the detriment of Ethiopia, e.g. more and more in the teeth of the League of Nations and the Pact. On the other hand both England and France pretended that all was in perfect order. "Only the League of Nations could draw up a settlement. All was to be collective and everything was to take place within the walls of the League of Nations." In other words Sir Samuel Hoare's problem could not be solved.

When under the leadership of England the League had adopted sanctions, then Sir Samuel and the English government had only one mission and only one basis could be found for peace. Their mission was by the help of sanctions to force Mussolini to stop the war and the basis for peace was the return of Ethiopia to status quo ante with the maintenance of the country's frontiers and independence. That was the mission of the League and of England also who, instead of settling the matter imperialistically, had left the settlement in the hands of the League of Nations.

Those interested made certain that these negotiations were in agreement with the spirit of the League. Its object was peace and it was just that at which the negotiations aimed. But for the sake of safety the necessary was gone through in the Co-ordination

Committee. The situation was, as the *Journal des Nations* described it, a perfect idyl. "It would have been as translucently clear as crystal, if the speech by the Belgian delegate has not laid a delicate veil over it. "

As usual it was Laval who got the idea. Sir Samuel Hoare accepted it. Belgium took over the chief role while Spain and Argentina seconded. The speech aimed at showing how unfortunate it was that the negotiations of the Great Powers were continuously carried on outside the League of Nations and that it would be far more in agreement with the idea of the League, if they were conducted within the League. So that the Great Powers, even if they were not in the League, would be treated as if they were. Thus the two Great Powers here referred to, had the wings of the League of Nations around them, when they were within its walls and were similarly protected when they went outside the walls. Or in other words the two Great Powers should be given a mandate to negotiate on behalf of the League.

Mr. van Zeeland's speech was heartily applauded by the two Great Powers concerned and by the two other characters; whereupon the conductor quickly declared the motion adopted and closed the meeting. No one had any time to notice that the Co-ordination Committee on Sanctions has no authority whatever to issue mandates on behalf of the League.

But Sir Samuel Hoare's problem was and remained just as insolvable.

As England's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs he had to see that Mussolini in Ethiopia did not encroach too near England's interests, but in other respects got what according to the customary imperial standards was to the advantage of those over-running another weaker country. As a member of the League of Nations he had to endeavour that Mussolini, in the face of imperialistic customs, got nothing. As England's Foreign Secretary he had first and foremost to preserve the good relations with France. As a member of the League he had, in opposition to the wishes of France, to endeavour that sanctions became so effective that they would prevent Mussolini from continuing the war.

When oil-sanctions had been reached and Mussolini had threatened war, Sir Samuel used this as a pretext for getting himself out of one of the difficulties. He let go the Pact, let the League alone, and sent the Laval-Hoare proposals in to Baldwin saying that by this he had saved the peace and the League of Nations. He concluded by saying that, since he obviously no longer had the confidence of the nation, he would resign.

Following Sir Samuel Hoare, the leader of the Labour Party, Major Attlee, spoke. He demanded that Sir Samuel, Mr. Baldwin, and the whole Cabinet should pack up and go. They had betrayed the electors by this proposal. He demanded to know how much there was in these threats of war which they used as an excuse. He was angry, as one always is, when one discovers that one has been led by the nose; especially so when the whole world has also discovered it. The Social-Democrats who had suddenly forgotten what the League of Nations represented and had backed sanctions, got, in the Laval-Hoare proposals what they needed in order to open their eyes. It was the

government that had set the trap but it was the others who had fallen into it. It was one of the reasons for the enormity of the offence and "the extraordinarily deep feelings of honour and conscience" among the inhabitants of the British Empire.

Just as in September 1931 England's policy was carried on along national lines. At that time it was the pound that had to be saved and all parties rallied round the Coalition Government and all policy became national. Shortly after the election the pound went off gold without anyone being particularly agitated about it.

This time the bait was called peace. Again it was hooked on with the League of Nations and the Conservatives again got a bite. The election of the 15th of November 1935 showed what the Labour Party had lost by falling into line with the League of Nations policy of the Conservative government. At each by-election during the last two years the conservatives have been beaten by the Social-Democrats. Now they have again suddenly got the wind in their sails and been returned with a majority of about 250. The first result of this was a huge increase in the Navy and the Air Force directly opposed to the Social-Democratic policy; the next was the Laval-Hoare proposals.

The English Prime Minister had no defence. Neither had he any secrets. The first thing he did, was to declare the proposals to be dead; the next to receive Sir Samuel Hoare's excuse: Mussolini's war threats. "There was something" said Mr. Baldwin solemnly, "that was higher than Ethiopia's rights or even the League of Nations and that was peace." But peace on any terms and at any price, that is not the peace which the League of Nations is working for. The kind of peace which Laval-Hoare-Baldwin propose must be concluded by these gentlemen with Mussolini outside the League of Nations. There is only one peace which the League can conclude, it is peace on the basis of the Pact. But not for one moment has it been the intention of the Great Powers to conclude such a peace and of this no secret was made either in Stresa or in Rome or in the Committee of Five.

The indignation over the Laval-Hoare proposals ought to have been started in Stresa; it will fall in full measure back upon all those who agreed to deliver up the League of Nation as a weapon in the hands of the one empire against the other.

As after Stresa they ought to have known that it was not a matter of the frontiers of Ethiopia and her independence but of an imperialistic peace concluded by the Great Powers at the expense of Ethiopia. With this peace no members of the League have anything whatever to do. Those who want to conduct an imperialistic war and conclude an imperialistic peace, must leave the League or else the League must perish.

If on the other hand they let themselves be used to take League of Nations action in favour of England against Italy, then it will lead just to the world war with which Mussolini threatens us. Then all members of the League will be forced into an imperialistic war which does not concern them in the least and which they otherwise would never think of mixing up in. Baldwin said straight out: "England will not alone go to war with Italy. England will fight collectively", but the dreadful danger with which Mr. Baldwin saw himself faced was that the other countries only "enter the war slowly and one by one." Therefore the 51 members of the League of Nations who had already

made an enemy of Italy through economic sanctions, ought to prepare themselves to fight as soon as possible. Not, mark you, in order to back up international law which secures their own frontiers and their own independence, but in order to support England against Italy.

On the 27th of December 1935 Laval stood in the French Chamber of Deputies and had to defend his proposals. He asserted that the proposals were in agreement with the Pact and the spirit of the League and in other respects brought forward the same arguments as the Englishmen. It worked no better in Paris than in London. Laval lost his position as the spokesman of France in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and he lost the mandate of the League of Nations which the manuvres in the Co-ordination Committee had procured him. Laval's power is a thing of the past.

After him the leader of the Social-Democrats, Leon Blum, spoke. He wittily said that "the only thing that was left of all that had existed ten days ago was Laval and that the only surprise was that Laval remained." Leon Blum was of opinion that the cause of the whole situation was lack of loyalty to the Pact and the League of Nations. But was it not rather the opposite? The change of front, reported in the world's press and which has been thrown in the face of the imperialistic governments, is that which Leon Blum and the Labour Parties in all countries have made. It is they who have suddenly wheeled round, or wise Leon Blum believed like the *Journal des Nations* that "sanctions mean peace". Did he not know that they could not be carried out and that it was not the intention either?

Sanctions were administered in drops a month after they were adopted and have hardly inconvenienced Mussolini greatly. Oil sanctions which all declared would stop the war and which therefore should be the first to be carried into effect, have not even been agreed to. When they come to them, they stop, not with the oil, but with sanctions. While England rigorously demanded that they should be carried through, oil from the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. was flowing straight into Mussolini's tanks, aeroplanes, and cars in Ethiopia. While Laval got them postponed, France in November exported 500,000 gallons more than the whole amount exported by France to Italy from January to November.

On the 4th of December news came from Rome of a contract between the Italian branch of the American Standard Oil Co. and the Italian government. As soon as oil sanctions came into force the company was to supply Italy with all the oil necessary in return for a 30 year monopoly on delivery. On the 29th England declared that oil sanctions were of no interest at the moment, since it depended upon the United States who would come to a decision thereon on the 15th of January. Mussolini need scarcely be afraid of the decision.

The events of the autumn have shown us financial imperialism hand in hand with political imperialism. None of the Great Powers have the slightest interest in overthrowing Mussolini. On the contrary, they all prefer fascism to socialism whether it be a question of Mussolini or Hitler. They are investing capital in the two dictator countries and supporting them economically even if they are apparently attacking them politically.

The action of the League of Nations was bluff, sanctions broke down. Mussolini's fear of oil sanctions was bluff; the Laval-Hoare-Baldwin fear of Mussolini's threats about war was bluff. And during all this bluff the war is being continued in Ethiopia unaffected, in fascist style with bombs upon the defenceless and unarmed, upon villages and Red Cross hospitals, while the next Laval-Hoare proposals are in the offing under another name.

Much however has been gained, if the workers have learnt from the events that fascism is not to be fought with imperialistic wars, but by international co-operation between all workers. If only they can see now that where imperialism enters, international justice goes out, so that they will no longer support a league dominated by imperialistic governments and which has never been and can never be a league of peoples.

THE POLICY OF THE GREAT POWERS

When the Laval-Hoare Proposals fell and Hoare with them, there was general rejoicing over the victory among all those who believed in the League of Nations or were against Fascism and Colonisation. It was obvious that the English people would not acquiesce in such a breaking of the Pact, and those who tried to do so, fell by their action. The English conservatives took part in killing the proposals, but from completely different hypotheses which had nothing whatever to do with love of the League of Nations or of Ethiopia. They were scandalised because the government had taken too little consideration of England's interests and it was they who carried the day, not the others. England's later policy has shown this clearly enough; it follows its course and steers towards its goal unaffected by the League of Nations and scandal.

Its goal, as always, is the preservation of England's supremacy in world politics. Its means, the suppression of every country whose power becomes so great that it threatens the national and imperial interests of Britain. Its alliances are concluded exclusively with that object in view.

For example in 1902 England concluded the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which in the first place was to be used to defeat Russia in the Russo-Japanese war, and later to defeat Germany in the Great War. But when in 1922 Japan had grown so strong as to become England's rival in the Pacific, the Alliance was rescinded on England's initiative.

The policy of England has not changed since the "mistake" of the Laval-Hoare Proposals. During the debate in the House of Common on 19th December 1935, Neville Chamberlain openly stated: "Although I today believe that the Proposals were a mistake, I cannot say that I would not make the same mistake again under similar circumstances." The foreign policy of France at the moment rather tends to insure France against a war and that the status quo be restored and Laval's policy tends both to save the relations with Mussolini and to obtain England's co-operation. It looks as if it has succeeded.

Hitler's refusal to sign the air-agreement which England proposed to him, has possibly been the cause of England joining France and the U.S.S.R. against Germany. The Laval-Hoare Proposals ought to have united the three Allies from Stresa against Germany's plans for expansion in Central Europe. Now Italy has dropped out and the U.S.S.R. has come in instead.

A telegram in the Washington Post of 7th, January 1936 confirms the Alliance : " The proposal that France should lend the U.S.S.R. 800 million francs, i.e. about 52,800,000 dollars, in order to make her a stronger military ally, was brought forward by Laval. The loan was to be spread over 3-4 years and the money used to renew the railway system on the Soviet's western frontier in accordance with plans that had already been accepted by the French and Soviet officials. And the Franco- Russian trade agreement was extended for one year." Then England assented to the proposal since Italy could no longer be reckoned with.

This loan means a set-back for Hitlers' plans in France.

His agents had the task of getting Laval to give Germany a free hand in the East, probably at the expense of the U.S.S.R., in return for Germany's guarantee of France's present frontier on the Rhine.

If this triple alliance were concluded it would naturally also be to the interests of the allies to prevent Mussolini and Hitler coming to an agreement. Therefore Mussolini was treated cautiously. Therefore Oil Sanctions wandered desolately from the Committee of Five to the Committee of Fifteen, from that to the so-called Co-ordination Committee which consisted of the Committee of Eighteen, and from there to the Committee of Experts, and it finally ended in two subcommittees from which it will hardly come out alive.

But then by the end of February, also the Manchester Guardian puts it to the Government that it realises that by Sanctions without Oil Sanctions they have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire: "A possible demand to relinquish Sanctions altogether will not perhaps be made by the majority of the Conservative Party, but however by not such a small section thereof which maintains that the half measures that have been chosen, are just as dangerous .as a genuine policy for or against Sanctions." Thus month after month the matter goes on while Mussolini boasts of having murdered Ethiopians by the thousand. But the worst thing that has happened is that the working class is supporting a League of Nations that is pursuing a purely imperial policy.

It is Fascism that has confused the issues both in the countries where it reigns and in the others where it is threatening. Agitation as to what it will do where it has the power and fear that it will obtain foothold in their own country, has made the working class bargain with its fundamental principles of international unity against capitalism and war. The delirium of nationalism has worked as a dissolving acid upon the labour movement. It has disintegrated into as many separate national political parties as there are countries. Mussolini's war in Ethiopia has added to the confusion. Hitherto the workers had known that the League of Nations was a forum for the imperially-

minded Great Powers where each Empire fought for its own interests. Now they suddenly let themselves be deluded into thinking that it was an assembly of noble government representatives believing in the League and who, in the name of justice, demanded the keeping of the Pact and the punishment of Mussolini for his lawless war. Although at the same time they had witnessed that the Great Powers had, without lifting a finger, let Japan conquer a district with 100 million inhabitants in China: a country that, just as Ethiopia, was a member of the League of Nations. And thus in every country they agreed as to the possibility of war between the one Empire and the other. Thereby the working class opposition to war was relinquished. The workers are also now willing to enter into a new war.

They will go to war against Fascism or on behalf of the Soviet, or for both reasons. In their hatred of Fascism they have forgotten that in every war they are primarily ordered out against their own partisans in the other country. They want to limit Fascism to the other side of the frontier, but they strike its victims without the least surety that they will also succeed in striking at Fascism itself.

They have forgotten that the working class of a country and the government of a country are two widely different things. While the workers are fighting for the socialist state against capitalism and imperialism, their government is fighting for power and profits on monopolies. If a democratic country is victorious over a fascist one, it will not be the workers who are victorious but the government of the country. The goal that is reached, if anything is attained, will not be that of the workers. It will not be the overthrow of Fascism but power and economic advantages for the capitalist upper class of the victors.

The workers have been enticed into joining the imperial governments in something that it christened 'collective'. It is called 'collective security' or 'collective peace', but in reality it is neither the one nor the other.

The collectivity that is the basis of the League of Nations, does not exist. If it were to be found, then the Pact would have been maintained, the Disarmament Conference would have led to the reduction of armaments, sanctions would have been carried through and Mussolini stopped in time.

Just as before 1914 war alliances hold sway instead of collectivity. This means the temporary grouping of combatant powers with a view to the coming war. Within this grouping the Powers are constantly changing places. The groups disband and arrange themselves in new positions like the pictures in a kaleidoscope which is being incessantly turned during the process of development and the play of force. This collectivity by which the working classes have let themselves be duped, is merely 'war-alliances', bearing the label of the League of Nations.

Ever since 1925, when the foreign ministers of the Great Powers took over the leadership of the League of Nations, its policy has been just the same. It is the policy of the Great Powers, i. e. that of the saturated among them. The whole sanctions-swindle goes to show this just like all the words that are spoken in order to conceal the truth. Sometimes however even the "Journal des Nations" can not preserve the

solemnity.

When the 90th session of the Council had begun, the paper wrote that technically it could last until May: "And if secret diplomacy had not done anything between now and May then the rainy season would very willingly help the men of the Council to the solution which they both could and wanted to find." In the meantime events saved the good men in the Council both from awaiting the rain in Ethiopia and finding the solution that was beyond them. Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland gave the political kaleidoscope a fresh turn and the picture changed. The war in Ethiopia disappeared and the European conflict between the Great Powers appeared.

Thereby the last chance for a better peace than the Laval-Hoare proposals is precluded. The English and the supporters of the League of Nations will forget the scandal, Ethiopia will be divided between the Great Powers and Italy rewarded for her killing of the population of Ethiopia.

While the representatives of the Great Powers in the League of Nations are engaged bartering with Mussolini as to the price of peace at the expense of Ethiopia, the Little Powers are beginning to realise that they have fallen out of the fryingpan into the fire, with this League of Nations. It does not protect them against attack. On the contrary. It first delivers them mercilessly to the modern weapons of destruction of the Great Powers and then lawlessly to their principles of violence. .

But that is not all. The Italo-Ethiopian conflict has shown to what the mock collectivity of the League of Nations can lead. Instead of protecting them against war, the League of Nations drives them along with it into the conflicts of the world in which they will be crushed by the Great Powers' implements of war like corn between millstones.

Both the Norwegian Minister Halfdan Koht and the former Prime Minister Mowinckel have seen the danger. In the debate on foreign affairs on the 5th of March 1936, Mowinckel declared: "that we can picture a war between the Great Powers through a breaking of a treaty with which we have not had anything whatever to do, and in which we can see no reason for the interference of the League of Nations. In such a situation can we be forced to enter the conflict or can we choose to remain neutral?"

The breaking of the Pact by Italy and England's use of the League of Nations to force the members into collective sanctions shows that there is no choice. The question therefore is : would not the Little Powers do better in leaving the League of Nations and surrendering the field of battle at Geneva to those who have the instruments of war and are willing to use them?

ETHIOPIA AND COLLECTIVITY

If there is anything that makes for strength, it is the feeling of 'share and share alike ' when things go wrong. The consciousness that all are prepared to go to the stake for what they all consider to be right. And if there is a place where such cohesion is valued, it is Geneva. And rightly so. The basis of all activities in both the old and the

new Palace of the League of Nations has been the Pact. And the Pact is based upon Collectivity. If there is no Collectivity, there is no Pact, and without the Pact there is no League of Nations.

If one were to imagine the League of Nations without Collectivity as the Journal des Nations was tempted to do in a moment of desperation, then, as that paper says, the League of Nations would become nothing more than a letter-box in which the aggrieved put in their complaints and the accused disregard them. And this letter-box would not excel in the rapid collection and delivery of the modern postal system. Ethiopia complains. Italy repudiates. The League of Nations postpones, postpones everything without exception: Meetings, Sanctions, Decisions.

In the meantime Mussolini is slaughtering in Ethiopia. Preferably with gas which blinds, suffocates, and burns people internally and externally. But Collectivity has never been at such a high premium at Geneva than precisely during the Italo-Ethiopian war.

France was the first to realise the significance of Collectivity. Ever since the Great War the French policy might be described in one word: Security. To begin with France saw Security in the disarmament of Germany. Later, when Germany turned Nazi, left the League of Nations, and armed openly, France saw that Security rested on Collectivity. If not in Collectivity, then in nothing. When France talks about Security, she has her eyes turned towards the Rhine. Collectivity on the other hand is not so easily located.

To begin with, while Mussolini was preparing for the war against Ethiopia, things went well enough. France, England, and Italy took care of the Collectivity at Stresa, in Rome, on the Committee of Five, and lastly in the Hoare-Laval Proposals. Altogether a thoroughly imperialistic Collectivity at the expense of Ethiopia.

Throughout the entire conflict France has made no secret of what she wanted. She had struck a bargain with Italy and wanted the conditions to be kept. Italy became the ally of France against Germany and in return obtained a freehand in Ethiopia. When this secret bargain had been clinched, the Manchester Guardian of the 16th of January 1935 wrote that one arrangement or another concerning Ethiopia must have been included in the agreement. France's policy aimed at supporting Mussolini in Ethiopia in order to preserve the alliance and strengthen the allied.

France's tactics consisted in opposing everything that might hurt Mussolini and in protracting everything which she could not prevent. With a supreme contempt for all that is called International Law or "peace concluded within the framework of the League of Nations and in the spirit of the Pact", she did not even simulate. Reluctantly and under constant protest she let herself be drawn into Sanctions because England demanded it. And France was right. England's Sanctions had as little to do with the rights of Ethiopia and the spirit of the Pact as France's resistance thereto.

The English policy in Ethiopia had many objects. First and foremost, the securing of the national interests in the country itself. The secret running through all the

negotiations was that Italy must keep at a safe distance from Lake Tana. Apart from this England had begun to agree with France that there was no objection to Mussolini being allowed to try his hand in Ethiopia. This was clearly shown in England's attitude to the Wal-Wal question. At the request of Italy, the Arbitration Commission on which England sat, stopped every discussion regarding the side of the frontier where the encounter had taken place.

With Mr. Eden's unsuccessful visit to Mussolini in Rome, the relations between England and Italy cooled. According to what rumour said, the Italian dictator did not show the Representative of His Britannic Majesty's Government that respect to which he was accustomed. At all events, Mussolini rejected Mr. Eden's offer with the greatest contempt.

However, England's attitude to the Ethiopian question did not change in essentials. This was very evident by the proposals made to Mussolini in August in Paris, by the report of the Committee of Five on the 18th of September 1935, and by the Hoare-Laval Proposals in December. They were all to the same effect, to make a speedy end of the matter by offering Mussolini as much of Ethiopia, as England and France had agreed upon to give him. English benevolence was farreaching but England in all her peace proposals to Mussolini added the phrase: "with Ethiopia's consent". That was England's bow to the Collectivity of the League of Nations. It looked well and it cost nothing.

In Mr. Eden's report of the 4th of September 1935 of the Paris Negotiations, he informs us "that England and France have brought forward a plan for the complete re-organisation of Ethiopia to be carried out by the Three Great Powers... with particular regard to the special interests of Italy".

In "*Geneva 1935*" the English League of Nations Union writes about the report of the Committee of Five: "This plan was not ill devised. It was also exceptionally thorough as regards the wiping out of Ethiopia's independence. It allowed no political or economic sphere in Ethiopia to be untouched by foreign control. The only thing remaining however would be the religion."

After Mussolini had also rejected this last peace proposal, it became obvious to all in the beginning of December that a change had taken place at the seat of war. Mussolini's army had come to a standstill. What Mussolini called 'a necessary pause' had occurred. And the English policy was now faced with a new problem: The prevention of an Italian defeat in Ethiopia. Partly because England could not, as a representative of the White Race, acquiesce having to bow down to the black Ethiopians, as the results issuing there from would be incalculable among the other coloured peoples, not only in Africa but in India and the Colonies; and partly because the English Conservative Government was not keen to see Mussolini and his Fascism perish after having been defeated in Ethiopia. The result was the Hoare-Laval Proposals.

On the 11th of December 1935 Sir Samuel Hoare assured the delegates at Geneva "that egoistic and imperialistic motives had not entered into their heads". The Daily

Telegraph of the same date thus defends the Hoare-Laval Proposals: "Ethiopia has not suffered any considerable defeat... but Italy on the other hand is in possession of Ethiopian territory of whose re-capture there is no possibility. These two facts are deciding factor in the situation... A rigid insistence on a return to status quo as demanded in certain quarters, is no road to peace."

The relations between England and Italy were now manifest. England had no objection to Italy's getting her share of Ethiopia but, note well, getting it from England and upon certain conditions. If Mussolini really had in mind to take Ethiopia and should he be lucky enough to do so, then for the sake of all emergencies, the English Fleet continued to lie in the Mediterranean.

Already on the 25th of October, Winston Churchill gave in Parliament an account of the situation: "The League of Nations captured all hearts and Toused everyone's loyalty. The reason why it has now become a reality is because the British Navy has stood behind it... If any practical lesson is to be learnt from our personal experience, it is that, immediately and notwithstanding any obligations which may arise in the North Sea, we must endeavour to secure and stabilise our command in the Mediterranean." In this instance England's loyalty to the League of Nations meant that she had in her own interests assured herself of the Collective Action of the Mediterranean Powers against Italy on the basis of the Pact of the League of Nations.

But before the end of February the situation had again changed. Italian announcements of victory and reports of the advance of troops presented England with a calamity diametrically opposed to the first: The actual conquest of Ethiopia by Italy. Thereupon the mockery began again in the Committee of Thirteen. Ever since the 19th of December they had at the request of the League of Nations" studied in the spirit of the Pact, the situation in its entirety", in order to find a basis for the peace negotiations. On the 23rd of January they reported having found nothing. When things went badly for Mussolini in Ethiopia, there was agreement between England and France and consequently quiet in the Committee of Thirteen. When things were going well, England brought forward Oil Sanctions and France immediately got the matter withdrawn by proposing a further communication to the combattants in order to enter upon negotiations for peace.

On the 3rd of March 1936, therefore the communication was despatched and by the 9th both their answers had been received; Ethiopia's in the spirit of the Pact, Italy's without it.

Two days prior to the 7th of March, the picture at Geneva changed again. As on a revolving stage the Italo- Ethiopian conflict with Mussolini and the Emperor had turned quickly and noiselessly out of sight and Hitler with his troops and . occupation of the Rhineland had come into view.

With this event the last remnant of the transparent veil of the Collectivity of the League of Nations fluttered off in the fresh spring wind. The two Great Powers were left behind standing as Our Lord had made them in all their imperialistic nakedness.

France sat on the Committee of Thirteen and declared it to be of no account that Mussolini had broken the Pact and attacked Ethiopia, that he had broken the Geneva Protocol (Gas Convention), and conquered the country by gas-poisoning the unprotected population, and that he had bombarded Red Cross Stations and Hospitals. France demanded that Sanctions should be withdrawn. It was now only a matter of making an end of the affair as quickly as possible so that France's ally could get her troops back to Europe and range herself at the side of France against Germany. .

At the meetings of the Locarno Powers it was however not a matter of no account; there the treaties concerned were sacred and inviolable. There it was declared that Sanctions should be brought into force at once and that Collectivity should be kept up. Each for all and all for each; for now it concerned France's enemy Germany.

England who was not Germany's neighbour, found it almost ludicrous to sit at meetings of the Locarno Powers and talk about Sanctions against Germany because German troops had occupied German territory and thereby broken a treaty. Besides, England had invested large sums in Germany and was not in the least keen to hamper German industry and trade.

On the other hand, at the meeting of the Committee of Thirteen it was England who brought up oil sanctions again when the Italian troops had reached Lake Tana, and when it would seem that Italy would capture Ethiopia on her own account so that she could intervene in England's means of communication with India. And then after having delayed six weeks, Mussolini replied as follows to the communication of the Committee of Five: Direct negotiations between the conqueror and the vanquished, no interference from the League of Nations and no armistice before Ethiopia's resistance was broken. Negotiations outside Geneva, possibly at Ouchy.

The Manchester Guardian settled the relations between France and England thus: "France charges us with supporting the League of Nations in order to protect our own interests in Ethiopia towards the South and East, while we charge France with no supporting it because for them it means a canon that can only be discharged against Germany."

Lord Hugh Cecil writes in the *Times*: "We (the English) do not like the French way of treating the League as a special sort of umbrella that shall be opened when it rains upon France but closed when they themselves do not need it." But when Lord Cecil adds that "if France had supported the authority of the League heart and soul then it would have won," he is mistaken. In order that the League should win, England also would have had to support it heart and soul.

As things are at present, everyone shouts 'collectivity', but every time it is to be employed, it is seen that there is a French kind of collectivity and an English kind and thus in reality all are shouting 'collectivity', but not the same kind of collectivity.

The outcome of this co-operation in the spirit of the Pact was the 91st extraordinary meeting of the Council of the League. There it was confirmed that Italy had used poison gas. They were informed by - the Italian delegate that his country's conquest of

Ethiopia was in agreement with the Pact and nobody made any protest whatever. He further said that this conquest was only the beginning of a yet more glorious unfoldment of Italy's fascist dynamics.

In the disgraceful resolution of the 20th of April 1936, the Council placed the robber and murderer, Italy, on a level with the attacked, Ethiopia, and reproved both for breaking the Geneva-Protocol (prohibiting the use of poison gas) and the Conventions on the laws of war which the Ethiopians had broken in their treatment of Italian prisoners.

What furthermore were served up at the meeting were merely show-dishes: 1) The maintenance of sanctions which are already very much on the wane and which, as Vernon Bartlett says in the News Chronicle, will last no more than a week or so longer; and 2) the Council which, after another 20 days of continued massacring in Ethiopia, will meet again on the 11th of May.

At the concluding meeting the Ethiopian delegate protested against the resolution. "Is this the real help to which the members of the League have pledged themselves under Article 16 of the Covenant? Is this the fulfilment of the promise which the League gave in October that country which was the victim of the attack? Does the League bow in submission to the accomplished fact, because it has been presented by a powerful country and because the victim stands alone?"

Herewith the action of the League of Nations on behalf of Ethiopia can be looked upon as being at an end. Abandoned is Ethiopia, abandoned yet again are justice and the Pact. The collective security, the indivisible peace, sanctions used against the aggressor, are altogether nonsense as long as they are not based upon a law which all respect. International law remains where it has always been; in the hands of the strong.

TREATIES

There is much on this earth which is based on a misunderstanding; much more than people know of. For example, there is now the honest indignation over the breach of a treaty.

That is one of the few matters on which people can agree. It is indeed the duty of every upright person to feel this indignation, and in this he is supported by the press, the politicians and the governments. One has thus something to hold on to, and if this something is not the treaty itself, it can still be the indignation over the fact that the treaty has been broken.

Nevertheless this is a misunderstanding of the position.

The reason is that a treaty between nations is not the same as a contract between good citizens who sign their names and are obliged to honour their signatures if they wish to continue to be regarded as good citizens. An international treaty is something quite different. It has not the least to do with Right and Honesty. Whether it is called

a Military or Defensive Alliance, a Non-Agression Pact or Collective Peace is a matter of indifference. It all means the same thing, and it all comes into existence in the same way.

An international treaty is an expression of the momentary grouping of the military Powers in relation to their interests and their military strengths, with their eyes fixed on the next war. A community of interests of the parties can exist, owing to the fact that at the moment they regard a certain Power as their common enemy. The treaty can also be forced upon the weaker Powers by the stronger ones, or it can be a coalition against that one Power which is growing so strong that it threatens to displace the equilibrium.

An international treaty or alliance is an experimental deployment of two hostile groups on a front, distinguished by the alliance. With the slightest displacement of interests or of relative strengths, the alliance breaks up and the front is shifted. This is exactly what has happened with the Treaty of Versailles and the Pact of Locarno.

As an act of vengeance the Treaty of Versailles was forced upon a starved, beaten Germany, which was compelled to sign it. Everybody, whose vision was not blinded by the war, could see how hateful, stupid and dangerous that was. Many, however, entertained the sincere but naive hope that this dictated peace would lead to general disarmament, as was the presumption. This hope was disappointed, and the 56 million Germans, in their disarmed and humiliated country, had naturally only one thought: revenge for their defeat, consolation for humiliation, and first and foremost, the obliteration of every trace of the treaty of Versailles.

As soon as Germany was strong enough, she left the League of Nations and now quite openly concentrated her energies upon rearmament, thus breaking the Treaty of Versailles dealing with this point. Shortly after the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, "Germany demanded in cold blood", as the New York Times wrote (on the 2nd of February), "to occupy the Rhineland with troops and to fortify it, in direct contravention of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno. The next thing is Germany's claim to her East African Colonies, which, as Bismarck said, were "not worth the bones of one Pomeranian Grenadier".

They were taken away from Germany however, by the Treaty of Versailles, and they must be won back again - little by little - as Germany's military strength increases. It is a mistake to think that an international treaty has anything to do with sympathy or antipathy, with right or wrong. Neither is any treaty considered as lasting for ever. Whether it is expressly stipulated, how long it is to be valid or not, a treaty can be denounced at any time whatsoever, as for instance, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, which was concluded in 1902 to last until 1921 being in force during the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and during the World War, but which was not denounced by England until 1922, when Japan became too strong a competitor in the Pacific Ocean. A treaty can be broken by the strongest party when it suits his purpose. Thus Mussolini broke the Treaty of Friendship with Abyssinia which was signed in 1926, and was to last for 20 years.

That treaties are handled in the way they are, is due to the fact that no international Right exists, when it is a question of war or peace for the Great Powers. None indeed can exist.

In a world of imperialistic Powers which are competing for monopoly profits, war can never be excluded. It is for this reason also that things went with the League of Nations as they did. If the capitalistic countries cannot abolish war, neither can their representatives do so. They are wolves, which are all enemies of one another. They rend one another because there are no more lambs. No alliance whatsoever between wolves can safeguard us against war. No treaty whatsoever, which wolves conclude with one another, can bring us peace.

Let us not waste our indignation over the treaties, but rather let us apply the axe to the root of the tree.

TWO PACIFISTS

Romain Rolland lives in a quiet cottage at Villeneuve, far above the main-road with its hooting cars and ringing trams. The Lake of Geneva lies below, the snow-clad Alps are just opposite.

When I visited Romain Rolland for the first time, a couple of years ago, with Dr. Ansari, the leader of the Indian Mohammedans, he made almost as great an impression on me as Gandhi. The spiritual was so marked in both of them that one rather felt than saw them.

I sat on a sofa by the side of Rolland and had, just as with Gandhi, an extraordinary feeling of being so completely filled with another person's entity that I ceased to exist as an individual. I could not say a word, not even thanks for a telegram he had sent to our Indian Conference.

But there the likeness between the two who have made the greatest impression in my life on me stopped.

It is quiet in Gandhi's atmosphere. Everything sinks to rest in oneself. One is drawn into the equipoised, all-embracing peace which is Gandhi's. One sits on the floor by his side, one acquires his slow movements, one speaks in his immutably even, passionless tone. As Gandhi, one knows that India will be free. As Gandhi, one can wait, although it may not happen in this century. All impatience vanishes. One becomes timeless, as Gandhi himself.

It is the reverse with Rolland. He fills the space about him with a peculiar vibration, a painful tremor, an expression of a never resting striving for a juster world. A spiritual aspiration to reintegrate what the world has forfeited, and to do it at once before more is destroyed.

I did not look once at Romain Rolland as he sat by my side, wrapped in his large gown. I felt his deep humanity, his unsubdueable craving to fight for those who suffer

injustice, who are down-trodden and exploited. His personality acted as a call, an appeal, that made me quiver like the air around us.

The last time I visited Rolland was in January. He had married a Russian with an expressive, vigilant face and vivacious eyes. This time I looked at him. He was extraordinarily young, although he would be seventy in a few days. Tall and erect, with fine handsome features, his eyes burning brightly under thick bushy eyebrows. Suffering from a nervousness that seemed to come from an inner fire that at once consumed his strength and nourished it.

The conversation turned to the labour parties that had supported sanctions and backed the League of Nations against Italy. It seemed to me to be the worst of all, and Romain Rolland nodded: "The effects were not long delayed. Baldwin's speech on the wireless was a declaration of war to the Labour party".

We spoke about the Franco-Russian Alliance. Romain Rolland defended it. The Alliance was a necessity for France.

"What I predicted has come to pass. The Treaty of Versailles has had its effect. The leaders that have known enough to give flesh and blood to the Demon of Revenge and National Pride are those who now have power in Germany, and are misusing it. That country lies like a mighty burning torch in the middle of Europe, and threatens to set the world on fire."

"What can we do to stop the fire?"

"Let all those of us who want peace combine. Make a vacuum round the torch. There is no more time for discussing revision of treaties. It would not even be good for the cause of peace if it were to be done now. It would look like weakness and not like justice".

"But can the Powers be brought together to form this vacuum?"

"England, France and Soviet Russia must stand together.

When the torch has been extinguished it is France's turn to reorganise European peace and to rectify the crimes and follies that have been perpetrated against justice and sound commonsense." Madame Rolland said that her husband had just sent a great article to the new democratic paper "Vendredi" in which he has given a detailed reply to his old friend Felicien Challaye, who is the leader of the absolute pacifists.

"Romain does not agree with them", she added.

"And so not with Gandhi, either!" I asked Rolland.

"I honour and adore Gandhi. He has made the experiment with his people, and he will hardly give up his nonviolence. But he has not been successful in getting anywhere with it. And how much better placed was he with his 300 millions, accustomed for centuries to Ahimsa (to do no harm), than we!"

I said good-bye to Romain Rolland and his wife and was promised an introduction to Félicien Challaye. Soon after, I went to Paris.

There I read Romain Rolland's article in "Vendredi" which had been printed together with Challaye's reply in his paper "Le Barrage" in "Journal des Nations" and in many other papers. Rolland defends the "indivisible peace" "the united efforts of three great nations, because lasting peace is, for various reasons, a vital necessity for all of them". England, France, Soviet Russia united against the peace-breaker.

We are faced with the menace of a scourge, akin to a catastrophe. Enormous powers let loose in the world but having no connection with political reason. A delirium of pride, despair, rage and misery. And the victorious Allies are responsible for a great deal of it".

European countries must give one another their hands until that incendiary torch, as Rolland calls Nazi Germany, is extinguished.

"Let us form the circle, the circle of peace. And woe to him who disturbs it! We do not forbid you, Germany, not at all, we invite you to be in it with us... We do so to save peace. We are not closing our eyes to Germany's violation of human rights... But we could never think of waging war to get rid of its present masters." So I looked up Félicien Challaye at his home in the district behind Sacre Cœur. Challaye is Chairman of the International League of the Champions of Peace. He and his paper take the same point of view as Bertrand Russell: "Not one of the evils that we want to get rid of by means of a war is so great an evil as war itself". That is the motto of "Le Barrage" and the point of view of the absolute pacifists in all countries.

Challaye's friends, among them Andre Gidé and Rolland, have just published a book of his in honour of his 60th birthday, "Souvenirs sur la Colonisation". Challaye has been all round the world and in the colonies of every nation more than once.

We immediately found a bond in our common sympathy for the colonized races and in the shame we had both experienced in the colonies on behalf of our race.

I asked Challaye if he knew de Lille, the Belgian mayor, who once said "If anyone were to come to me and say "De Lille, you must send your children to fight or you must become English" I would not let one of my children be shot for that reason"?

Challaye smiled. "Even on the scaffold I would maintain that the only thing to benefit my own people and the whole world is to take no part in any war. Not because I believe, as Rolland writes, that my passive resistance can stop the attacker, but because occupation by a foreign power will never mean so many deaths, so much destruction, so much human suffering, as the war that would help us to avoid it. And I also believe that it is easier to organise revolt in a subjugated city than in one that has been blown to bits by the enemy's bombs and guns".

"What do you think of the alliance between England, France and Soviet Russia?"

"Well, what is it but the pre-war armed peace and its war alliances?"

"And what does it lead to but militarism, and militarism but to war. The more money spent on guns the more power the generals have and the less the population."

"Yes, criticism of the military is becoming high treason. Our children are to have a military education and nothing is to be said about our colonies. We must keep together, Rolland says. Look here". Challaye showed me " Vendredi ". "The two hostile parties, the Nationalists and the Internationale, have, by a momentous accident, become united. Everyone who loves France knows that she has no more deadly enemy than Hitler-Germany. And this Germany, thirsting for revenge, is equally the sworn enemy of both the Socialist and the Communist Internationales. But this holy alliance can quite easily lead to the generals in Paris and in Moskva agreeing to a war.

It would be certain to be called preventive." Challaye again gave his Buddha smile, as Rolland called it.

"Do you mean a war to defend the indivisible peace?"

"Exactly. The intelligent patriots, as Rolland calls them, always have their eyes on the arch-enemy, and the Soviet would certainly also like to do away with Fascism, which is the Soviet's worst enemy. But I would never agree to such a war."

Madame Challaye now came in and greeted me. There is something quiet and strong about both of them.

"What we want" concludes Challaye "is a fight against Fascism and the Nationalists whom we will never consent to considering as our allies, against war-industry, against the press, which is mercenary, and against the exploitation of the natives in our colonies. But within the boundaries of our own countries, nevertheless.

The most important thing in the fight against Fascism is and will be to distinguish between the inner and the outer. Against the inner it is the civil struggle, idea against idea, and we accept that. The fight against Hitler and Mussolini is, for a Frenchman, the fight against Colonel Count de la Rocque and against Charles Maurras. It is the National front we want to defend against Fascism. The fight against the outer Fascism can never come to anything but war. And we will not have that, even though it be dubbed antifascist and revolutionary. Robespierre said " Liberty can be brought to no people on the point of a bayonet".

Externally we want an understanding with all, especially with Germany even though we are nauseated at its internal politics. But only on the condition that the understanding has no sting in it for any other country. And then revise the treaties as soon as possible".

"You can surely leave that quietly to Germany herself".

"Yes. But can it be understood that Rolland, who has been fighting for this revision for

15 years, does not now think that there is time to repair the injustice! Rolland says that he has not changed his point of view. At all events we absolute pacifists have not done so. We have stood for thirty years where we stand to-day. None of us will have war, and when Rolland constantly insists on what he previously asserted "that it is not war, but peace, that is fatal for Hitlerism" then we are certainly all at one."

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