

On receipt of this Note, Ras Tafari protested to the League of Nations* that pressure was being brought to bear on him, and that the freedom and self-government of Ethiopia, a member of the League of Nations, was thereby endangered. The British and Italian Governments replied that Ethiopia's liberty of action was not being assailed, but that the two Governments had agreed not to compete with each other in the matters in question.

* Thus commenced the long struggle of Haile Sellassie I to maintain the independence of his country. Subsequently when the Ethiopian Government considered engaging the White Engineering Company of U.S.A. to build a barrage on Lake Tana and the extraction of petroleum from Ethiopian sources by a subsidiary company of the United States Standard Oil Company, diplomatic pressure was applied to nullify these projects by the three Powers who were the signatories of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906. Then followed the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

From this summary of the series of events arising from the agreement by three Powers to reserve the greater part of Ethiopia for economic exploitation by one of their number, an agreement to which Ethiopia was never a party, it may be readily deduced that if an agreement were made to allow Italy the exclusive exploitation of any of the ex-Colonies, the latter would be faced with the impossibility of making contracts for public works and of obtaining capital investment except in Italy, a nation unable to export capital. The power to direct commerce which governments exercise through currency control and export and import licences would be used to prevent commerce except with or through Italy. Obviously the former Colony might become a dumping ground for inferior goods, whilst materials of self-defence might be found unobtainable, and there might be discrimination between the Italian and native purchasers of agricultural and industrial machinery and all articles in short supply.

* See official Anglo-Italian Agreement, registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, July 2, 1926. *Journal of the League of Nations*, November, 1926, pp. 1,518, 1,520, 1,523; also House of Commons Official Report, August 2, 1926. See also "Le Conflit Italo-Ethiopien," by A. de la Pradelle, 1936, pp. 111-138.

II—ITALIAN POLITICAL RETROSPECT

A member of the old political class of Italy from the defences of whose rule Italy slid under Fascist dictatorship, Count Sforza was a follower of the so-called Democratic Liberal, Giovanni Giolitti, for many years declared to be the "Master of Italian Politics." Don Sturzo has described Giolitti as "devoid of scruple as of idealism," adding that "by his long tenure of power and his ascendancy over the political class, the harm he did to the public life of Italy was considerable." He reduced the political class to "a strong nucleus centring round himself, and upholding at all costs his disguised dictatorship; while he, in return, was strong in friendship and in enmity." Sforza, on the other hand, has eulogised his old leader.

The career of Giolitti reveals something of the turgid aspects of Italian politics. He was obliged to resign the premiership and to retire from political life for some years, on account of the support he had given, as Prime Minister and previously as Finance Minister, to Tanlongo, the Director-General of the Banca Romana, who had issued 62,500,000 lire of duplicate bank notes. beside heavily subsidising the Press and making considerable loans to Parliamentary Deputies and Ministers*. On regaining the premiership Giolitti waged the unprovoked war of conquest in Libya in which the Banca di Roma was heavily involved.

Sforza, in praising Giolitti, fully admits that his leader "welcomed" the appearance of Fascism "as a counterpoise to Socialism."† As a matter of fact Giolitti took the Fascists, who were then waging war on their political opponents, into his electoral bloc, and thus assured them an entry to Parliament which they could not otherwise have gained. Sforza did not himself, it seems, wholly disapprove of Fascism, for he asserts that in the beginning it was not lacking "in a certain idealistic passion for renovation,"‡ and also that it wished to be "generous."

Sforza, at the rise of Fascism, had been concerned with the Foreign Affairs of Italy for more than twenty years. He entered the diplomatic service in 1896, the year of Ethiopia's victory over Italian aggression at Adowa. He was Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey during the Italian naval demonstration of 1910 which led up to the unprovoked war of conquest in Libya, ruthlessly waged by Italy in 1911. After the World War he was successively High Commissioner in Turkey, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

* See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1947, vol. 10, pp. 360-1, vol. 12, p. 797.

† "Makers of Modern Europe," Elkin Matthews and Marrot, p. 245.

‡ *Idem*, page 317.