

THE FIRST SANCTIONS

The Governments that have approved sanctions against Italy at Geneva, find themselves, when it comes to the point of putting theory into practice, in the strange position of having adopted measures not yet agreed on, or, in other words, of having pledged themselves to apply sanctions which they have not previously approved. The Assembly thus nominated the Committee of coordination on sanctions before defining them. This so-called work of coordination has been undertaken on the basis of the anti-Italian measures prepared in advance by the British government, and subsequently supported by Bolshevik Russia. But the measures to be applied against Italy, if they serve on the one hand the cause of British imperialism and on the other that of demoralization by bolshevism, will affect, instead, the interests of all the other countries called on to enforce them. The interruption of economic relations with Italy, entails the loss of a market of 44 million people. If this is injurious to each of the countries interested in that market, it is also a general loss to all, especially in these times of crisis and of trade barriers when it is not only difficult to find markets but also to keep them. This is why the efforts of many countries to reconcile the application of sanctions with their own interests, often end by rendering the sanctions themselves ineffective. In theory we have sanctions, in practice exceptions. And here we have in sight yet another cause for disagreement between countries which will mean the weakening of continental unity in Europe. This may be advantageous to British imperialism whose desire for domination would be facilitated by a divided Europe, and bolshevism which lies in wait for every opportunity for fanning a conflict favourable to revolutionary disturbances. This explains British insistence on sanctions, and it also explains the Soviet move for enforcing them also against those countries which are opposed to League action, that is to say to Anglo-Soviet policies in this matter. One wonders not only how far the different countries will be able to follow this path they have entered on, but also how far collaboration will be possible between two such different forces as British imperialism and Russian bolshevism inevitably fated to strive one against the other (notwithstanding this momentary agreement, accounted for in Eden and by the desire to strike a blow at the growing power of Italy, and in the U. S. S. R. by the hope of overthrowing Fascism.) Eden has certainly found a dangerous ally in Litvinov. Each is trying to use the other for his own ends, but before long they will again be adversaries, as their respective natures require.

The French intellectuals who signed the manifesto against sanctions, noted in this struggle against Italy a serious sign of mental disease in Western civilization of which we can see symptoms in the formation of the anti-Italian front which is the result of a strange union between conservative interests, such as those of British imperialism, and the destructive interests such as those antifascist forces in general.

Meanwhile, it is becoming more and more evident that sanctions are substantially contrary to the spirit which ought to animate the League of Nations. The decision to enforce them was arrived at by forcibly disturbing League procedure and trampling on the rights of Italy. And now in their desire to strike yet another blow at her, they have achieved the essentially anti-League result of rendering yet more difficult the economic life of the Nations which are called on to apply sanctions against her.

The first sanction agreed on, which

raises the embargo on arms for Ethiopia, while applying it to Italy, is the assertion of an anti-Europe principle in obedience to which Europe is arming a conglomeration of African tribes against a European nation. No comments are necessary!

At any rate, this measure has a political value, but no one can believe that it answers the purpose of placing Ethiopia in a position to defend her sovereignty, as sovereignty can only be pleaded in the case of a real State, and Ethiopia cannot be described as one. This was shown not only by the Italian Memorandum but by the League of Nations itself when it proposed international control over Ethiopia. It is moreover proved by the fact that as soon as military operations started, influential Abyssinian chiefs, with all their followers and the land under them, came over to Italy, as they realized that an Italian occupation alone would enable Ethiopia to enjoy the benefits of a real government. Sanctions can have only one practical effect: that of prolonging the war and causing more blood-shed; an effect which is evidently not in keeping with the pacifist principles boasted by the League of Nations. The difficulties arising from the heavier armament of the Abyssinians will be unable to have a decisive effect on Italian military action.

The financial and economic sanctions find Italy ready and prepared to resist; they will entail sacrifices, but she is fully decided to accept them.

Even before the decisions taken at Geneva, Great Britain and some other countries had placed a veto on all loans or commercial credits to Italy, and Italy replied by paying in cash. For the immediate future, the Government disposes of large hidden reserves in the shape of foreign securities and credits held by Italian citizens and surrendered by them to the Government. It should also be noted that Italy's share of the loans made more especially to Central Europe, issued mostly in London after 1918, amounts to 18 million pounds sterling. The social assets and the economic financial equipment created in 13 years by the Regime, along with the deflationary policy followed and the abstention from incurring those foreign loans which have become so customary elsewhere, enable Italy to say in answer to these sanctions: "We shall continue to ask for nothing, and therefore there will be no opportunity for refusing us what we do not ask for." And here we would note as symptomatic of the full support given to the Government, the spontaneous and conspicuous offers of gold made to the State by private citizens and organizations, thus reinforcing the national reserves.

A foreign telegraphic agency recently gave out the information that well-informed international financial circles recognize the fact that Italy has no need for credits.

The economic sanctions (reduction or interdiction of exports to Italy of raw materials, and boycotting of Italian exports as desired by Great Britain) have produced a first moral reaction which is summed up in the statement made by the "Giornale d'Italia": "They are the definite proof of Italy's need to break through the barriers of steel which enclose her within territories poor in natural resources, barriers erected by the great Empires rich in colonies and raw materials." This means renewed determination to carry this African enterprise through to the end thus securing for Italy those natural resources and the field for expansion she so greatly needs and to which she is entitled.

Undoubtedly, from the point of view of international justice, these sanctions are outrageous; they have been agreed on in the belief that they

will be effective because Italy is a poor country, while they would have no effect whatever if applied against well-supplied countries such as those which proposed, or rather, forced them through. On the other hand, they are a weapon which only rich countries can adopt, and serve only to perpetuate great international inequalities and to solidify the privileges enjoyed by rich countries over poor ones. The League of Nations could not have conceived anything more anti-League in its spirit and essence.

Italy can defend herself by buying from countries outside the League and from those which have not voted the sanctions, by putting into effect the modern discoveries of her national technique, thanks to which — 23 are assured — wonders will be accomplished. For instance, the production of synthetic wool from milk waste has already reached the stage of industrial production, and the same may be said for the production of carbides from beet alcohol; "gasogone" is also being used as a substitute for petrol, and hemp will take the place of foreign textile fibres. The use of coal will be reduced by employing electric energy, and the coal, heretofore purchased from Great Britain, will in the future be bought elsewhere. And as for wheat, the supplies required for national needs have been assured.

The "Tribuna" rightly remarks that for the last ten months Italy has been economically mobilized thanks to a series of measures approved and applied independently of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute and of the anti-Italian measures. This was done to meet the policy of closed markets and the import quotas, a "policy of sanctions before the letter which exists in the relations between States." These measures, systematically organized, afford a basis for a defensive action which will be no less effective in the present circumstances. Italy is therefore prepared to answer League economic sanctions, and Geneva knows it as is shown by the fact that the several countries have not yet succeeded in coming to an effective agreement for the application. But the economic regime that Great Britain, acting through the League, claims the right to force on Italy cannot but lead to more or less serious consequences for other countries, because, given the importance of the Italian market the enforcement of sanctions will disturb the entire system of international commercial relations. Echoes of the uneasiness felt in many States that supply the Italian market have also reached Geneva. The economy of these States will be sensibly affected by these sanctions which imply the loss of the Italian market.

Italy, for her part, is watching and is resolved later on to revise all her international trade relations in accordance with the action taken by each single country towards her. Economic sanctions are a two-edged sword. The "Tribuna" sums up the unanimous sentiment of the Italian people as follows: "Those traditional trade currents which may be held up by those mad and useless sanctions, and replaced by others, must be considered as having come to an end, never to be revived again." These words do not express simply the desire for legitimate retaliation, but must be considered as part of a well devised programme of action, which Virginio Gayda, director of the "Giornale d'Italia", summed up as follows: "The Italian nation, now made aware of the possibility of being besieged and blocked, must provide not only for the present, but also for the future, by detaching itself from international economic life and devoting all its efforts towards securing that economic self-sufficiency over which it can exercise an ever greater measure of control".

Misrepresentations A FALASHA SEU

Editor, "il Bollettino" Sir:-

The following article which appeared in the British publication, "The Patriot", on December 5th, 1935, may be of interest to your numerous readers:

"New York— A black-skinned princess who observes Kashruth and the Jewish Sabbath, who claims to be a Falasha (Abyssinian) Jewess and a cousin of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, is now visiting in New York on a good-will mission for her country. Clothed in a blend of Oriental and American clothes, the swarthy damsel, who calls herself Princess Rasari Heshla Tamania, is staying at the ultra-orthodox Central Hotel at Broadway. When interviewed by the Jewish press, she declared in a mixture of German, Hebrew and English that her mother and the Emperor's father were brother and sister. In other words, the Emperor of Abyssinia is also a Falasha Jew. The Princess explained that he is posing as a Christian for political reasons, but that he nevertheless observes the Jewish dietary laws and the Sabbath." "—We have an instinctive feeling that the Abyssinians would have fared much better had they kept the fact that their King is descended from Solomon by the Queen of Sheba a dead secret.—In the meantime, one considers it very unparliamentary for Abyssinia to have so embarrassed the League of Nations. A descendant of Solomon should have been wiser." Through the fog of misrepresentations and hate created by interests inimical to Italy, intelligent Britishers are slowly but surely discerning important facts and truths whereby they can explore the Italo-Ethiopian situation in the light of reality.

"FIAT JUSTITIA" Woodstock, Ontario

LE SCHEDE ELETTORALI

Nell'ultima votazione per le elezioni municipali, come nelle precedenti, abbiamo dovuto fare un'osservazione che vale la pena far conoscere agli interessati. Nelle schede sono elencati generalmente due, cinque, dieci nomi, dei quali bisogna scegliere uno (come per il sindaco), quattro (come per i controllori), due (come per gli aldermen), ecc. Scommettiamo che il cinquanta per cento degli elettori non sanno con esattezza quanti nomi hanno il diritto di votare, cioè di apporre la croce e nel dubbio si limitano ad uno. Questa la ragione perché una grande quantità delle schede non sono complete, cioè invece di votare per quattro controllori hanno votato per uno o due e così di seguito.

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Un treno di emigranti verso il Canada

Recentemente è stato pubblicato dalla Casa Editrice Ceschina di Milano, un libro: "Troppo Grano Sotto La Neve" di G. G. Napolitano. Parleremo di esso più particolareggiatamente, intanto diciamo che è il primo libro italiano dedicato al Canada. Vi sono le impressioni di viaggio con molti nomi. Per Toronto, ad esempio ci parla di Goggio, Grittani, Sansone, Mari, Perilli, Missori, Marocco, Scandiffio, padre Truffa, del Circolo Colombo, ecc.

E' un libro interessantissimo. Stralciamo un capitoletto perché nel momento attuale serve a dimostrare come si sono comportati gli italiani del Canada, quando si trattò di andare a difendere gli interessi britannici; quando gli italiani non erano gli indesiderabili; quando la voce della Patria si fece sentire.

Gli italiani che leggono queste brevi pagine si ricordino di esse e si ricordino che, dopo di allora, essi furono classificati tra gli indesiderabili.

La stessa notte ripartii per Winnipeg. Mentre mi preparavo i bagagli, venne a trovarmi Scandiffio. Era molto timido e commosso.

Vi ricorderete di Toronto? mi disse. Vi ricorderete del quartiere italiano? Poi mi confidò che la sua casa era sotto il piano regolatore; doveva venire abbattuta. Era una costruzione di legno, dove aveva abitato vent'anni. Quella notte mi raccontò la storia del treno degli italiani. Il treno degli italiani partì da Vancouver per Montreal qualche tempo dopo il 24 maggio 1915. L'entrata in guerra dell'Italia significò per gli emigranti molte cose; sopra tutto li riabilitò ai propri occhi. L'Italia combatteva al fianco della Gran Bretagna e della Francia. Il treno dei richiamati lasciò il Pacifico, raccolse per via contadini, muratori, ferrovieri, manovali, terrazzieri. Sul treno montarono gli italiani che avevano lasciato le foreste e le miniere della Columbia Britannica, gli italiani della prateria, farmers e domatori di cavalli, gli italiani dei pozzi di petrolio dell'Alberta, quelli che lavoravano sui cantieri delle ferrovie. Il treno era enorme, a ogni stazione raccoglieva volontari e richiamati, gli italiani riempivano ben presto di vino e di canzoni; col gesso e il carbone scrissero sui vagoni le iscrizioni leggendarie: "Torniamo in Italia", "Andiamo a fare la guerra", "Andiamo a prendere Trento e Trieste", "Britanni cocci qua". Iscrizioni in inglese, in italiano, in francese, l'ortografia non sempre si salvò, il patriottismo sì.

Per tutta la durata di quel viaggio gli emigranti si sentirono padroni del Canada, pari fra i pari; molte umiliazioni furono cancellate, in poche ore; i 'dagoes', i 'whops', andavano a combattere per la causa comune.

Un rispetto enorme; una commozione profonda, salutarono il passaggio di quel treno. Chi non poteva tornare, o non doveva, lasciò casa e affari, la prateria, la segheria, la fattoria, la miniera, la fabbrica, il cantiere, la foresta e la bottega per andarlo a salutare.

A stazioni perdute del West e del Middle West il treno si fermava per raccogliere sia pure un uomo valido. A quelle stazioni le società di mutuo soccorso, le logge, le confraternite, i circoli italiani erano presenti con le bandiere, le insegne, le musiche, e i discorsi. Britannici, scozzesi, francesi, e insomma canadesi festeggiarono quel treno; qualche volta a denti stretti.

L'Italia! La voce della grande madre degli emigranti era arrivata sino ai ghiacci della Baia di Hudson, sino alle praterie, dentro le foreste,

sui laghi. A quella voce rispondendo gli emigranti alzarono il volto libero. Alcuni partirono per fare la guerra, per riscattarsi degli anni di umiliazione patita sui cantieri, anni di fatiche, di lotte di liti feroci in cui il sentimento della patria era ingigantito alimentato dall'odio e dall'incomprensione straniera.

La patria era stata rivelata agli emigranti durante quegli anni sofferenti nel lavoro e nella solitudine lontani da lei. Avevano dovuto difendere il suo nome selvaggiamente, come quello di una madre insultata. Ora quella stessa patria li chiamava. E la benedissero per questo: perché la guerra li fece uomini e liberi. Durante la sosta del treno alla stazione di Toronto, Scandiffio vide un enorme taglialegna friulano scendere dal treno, con una pagnotta e un coltello a serramanico in mano. L'uomo era stanco del lungo viaggio, sporco e barbuto. Si avvicinò a una fontanella a bere. A uno straniero, non si sa come, venne in mente di additare al taglialegna quel coltello.

"You've got a knife?" — gli chiese con un sorriso di scherno. — Che hai il coltello?

Scandiffio vide il friulano rialzarsi dalla fontanella, impallidire, la barba ancora stillante d'acqua.

— Adesso c'è il fatto (faith-letta) — si disse Scandiffio.

L'italiano guardò fisso lo straniero, alzò il coltello in un silenzio improvviso, fece l'atto di vibrare il colpo: una finta, fini' per tagliare una fetta di quel pane.

"You were afraid, you sun of a gun", — disse — Hai preso paura, figlio di.....? — E scoppio in una fragorosa risata.

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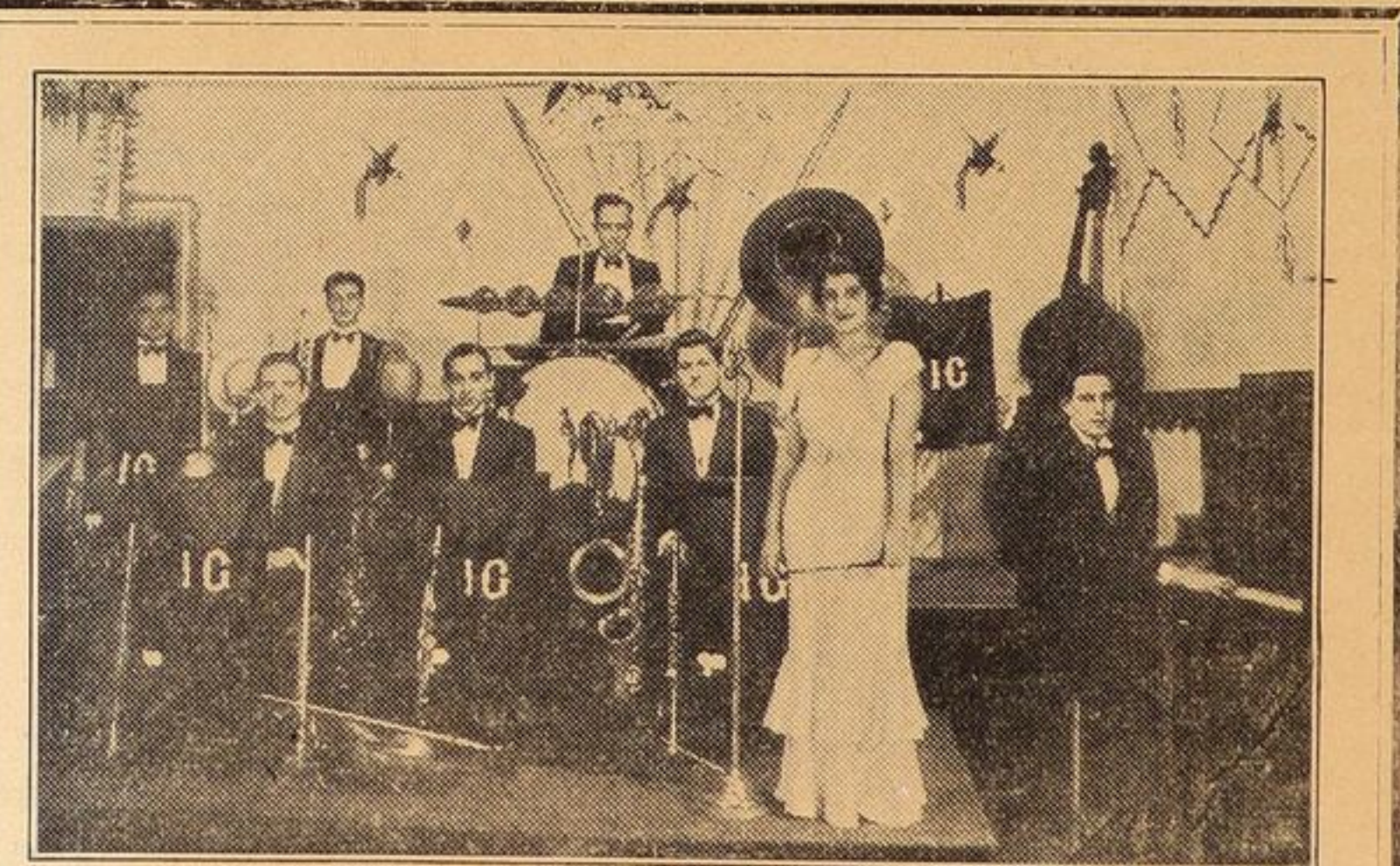


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