

War Fears in Italo-Ethiopian Rift

Possibilities of Conflict in Africa Are Discussed in America by Mussolini's Countrymen and Negro Admirers of Haile Selassie



Italian troops boarding a transport at Naples for Africa

In New York City, where there are more Italians than in Rome, and where there are more Negroes than in Birmingham, Alabama, the chief topic of conversation among all classes of these people in recent weeks has been whether Italy and Ethiopia (or Abyssinia, as it is better known) really were going to war.

The dispute arose over alleged trespasses by the Ethiopians on Italian possessions in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, in East Africa. Among the Italians, barbers, boot-blacks, business men, and professional men and women gave the prospect earnest consideration and excited discussion.

Among New York's great negro population, everybody from elevator-boys to jazz-orchestra leaders was equally disturbed and anxious about the future. Negro newspapers published in Harlem made scathing attacks on Premier Benito Mussolini for having brought about the crisis which began last November in a clash of troops over undefined boundaries in the Abyssinian area.

Mussolini's Communiqué

In Italy, mothers and fathers worried and prayed as they read that more than 10,000 of their soldier-sons had moved aboard a fleet of six ships toward Africa in the last days of February. They feared more soldiers would be required, and also they doubted whether it was wise for Premier Mussolini to send large bodies of troops to Africa when the European situation was so uncertain.

They held that the services of these men might be required elsewhere almost at any moment. By way of reassuring his anxious fellow citizens, Premier Mussolini issued a communiqué.

The communiqué said that, according to Italy's new military-service laws, making all able-bodied Italian males between eighteen and fifty-five liable to service in war time, the country would have a total of between 7,000,000 and 8,000,000 soldiers

War Fears

available for an emergency. In view of this showing, Rome dispatches pointed out, the forces sent or to be sent to Africa lost significance, because they amounted to less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 per cent. of the entire Italian strength.

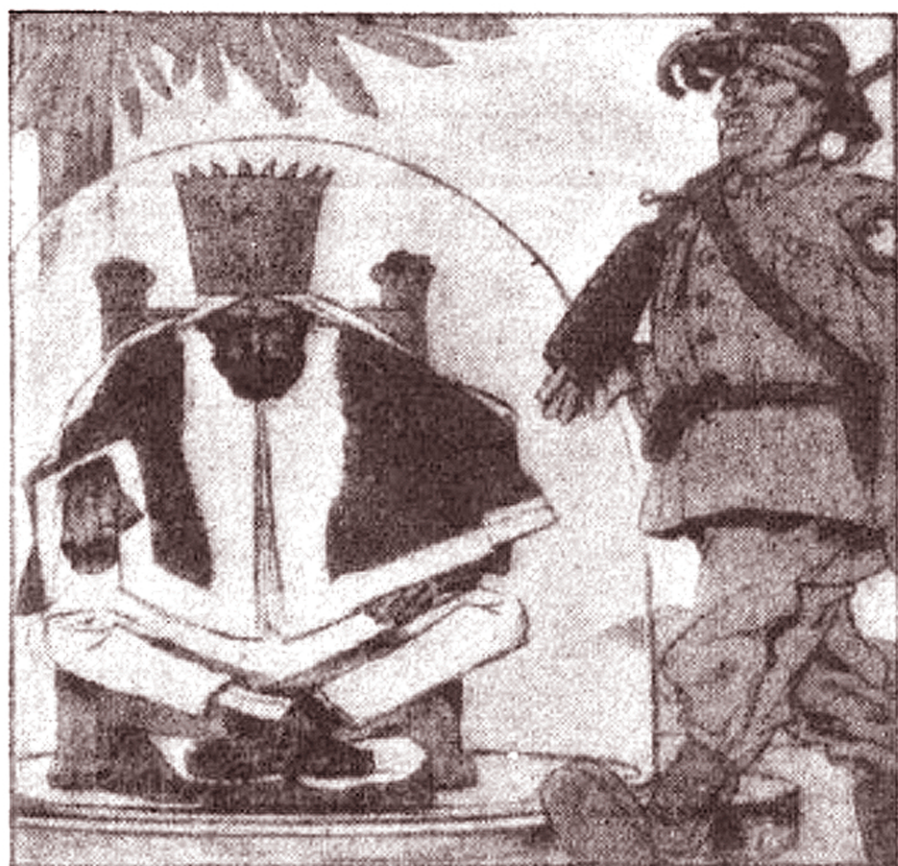
Premier Mussolini also assured the Italian people that no European complications were foreseen at present, and that they were becoming more unlikely day by day, as a result of the Rome-Paris understanding which was reached by Premier Mussolini and Foreign Minister Pierre Laval of France last January.

A solemn declaration of Abyssinia's peaceful intentions toward Italy was read in broken but emphatic Italian to representatives of the foreign press in Rome by the nervous and impassioned Negradas Yesus, Abyssinian Chargé d'Affaires. In fervent tones he asserted that Abyssinia's intentions were so peaceful "that if Italy remained without a single soldier and without a single gun in her colonies, Abyssinia would not touch a single stone."

Arbitration Urged

Abyssinia would like the whole matter submitted to arbitration, he said, and if it should appear she had molested Italians, she was ready to comply with any reasonable demand that might be made.

In well-informed Italian circles, the statement made by M. Yesus was taken as showing that Abyssinia's Emperor Haile Selassie was beginning to realize the peril he had incurred by refusing to reach an understanding with Italy. Negotiations had dragged out twelve weeks, it was declared, without the Emperor having given proof of the peaceful intentions he proclaimed.



Abyssinia and Italy Get Nearer

—*Kladderadatsch*. (Berlin)