

Italy Alive with Unrest on Eve of African Conflict

West Coast Notes

By EARL LANE

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 20.—Pacific coast longshoremen began voting today on the question of handling scab cargo from British Columbia ports where the longshoremen are on strike.

On this question hinges the fate of the present working agreement which expires September 30. Notice of renewal or abrogation of the agreement was due today but I.L.A. officials asked for and received a ten day extension of the time limit.

The Maritime Federation of the Pacific has already voted to sustain the embargo.

Action of the Pacific coast executive board of the I.L.A. headed by William J. Lewis, in ordering a referendum independent of the Maritime Federation can only be construed as an attempt to split the I.L.A. away from the Federation and thus materially weaken the ranks of the maritime unions in the face of the attacks of the bosses.

The truck drivers of the Meier and Frank's department store, largest in the Pacific Northwest, are on strike for union wages and union recognition.

This establishment has as one of its partners former governor Julius Meier, who called out the national guard at the request of the waterfront employers last summer in an effort to break the maritime strike.

Portland workers are once again getting a practical lesson in the role of the state through the fact that a policeman is riding in every truck that makes a Meier and Frank delivery in order to protect the scab driver.

Longshoremen are refusing to handle any merchandise shipped to this establishment.

Organized labor joined ranks with the unemployed and the veterans in a militant protest against the \$19 to \$94 WPA wage scale, on Saturday, August 17.

A parade through the main streets of the city was followed by a mass meeting in Plaza Park which lasted for several hours.

Organizations which participated in this thrilling demonstration of the growing militancy and solidarity of labor here in this city were: the National Welfare Federation, affiliated to the Workers Alliance; Central Federation Against Unemployment, affiliated to the National Unemployment Council; Portland Central Labor Council, comprising 88 local unions, Veterans Union, and the Oregon Truckmen's Association. The demonstration was endorsed by the convention of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, which adjourned the day before the demonstration.

Don't Get Old in Missouri

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was intended it should. No doubt other states will make similar qualifications. The tremendous population shifts which have taken place as a result of seven years of devastating and unprecedented capitalist crisis will thus play right into the hands of the boss class and its instrument, the capitalist state. Workers who have all the "rights" accorded to "citizens" under "constitutional" law will find that their "citizenship" and "constitutional rights" aren't worth a damn when they apply for relief or a share in the New Deal "social betterment" plan which capitalism has prepared for them just as they have found them worthless in other fields of class struggle.

The labor states would have us believe that this starvation program for the working class aged is so much better than relief. When a bare subsistence rattle dole is dignified with the title "old age pension" that is supposed to make a difference. There is an old saying that "a rose by any other name is just as sweet." To which we would add that a lemon by any other name.

Duce Marches Full Speed to War in Africa

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appears that it is acting as a steady influence on the iron and steel markets. The possibilities inherent in a conflict between those two nations have not been lost on those close to the trade. Because of difficulties in financing orders, Italy, formerly one of the heaviest importers of American scrap steel, has been absent from that market lately. However, it is indicated that the Mussolini government will return here for its metals—and with funds to finance its purchases.

No laws on the books of capitalism have as yet been enacted to keep steel manufacturers from selling their product.

War Preparations Everywhere. Coincident with the events in Europe and East Africa the U. S. military machine is going through the most stupendous maneuvers ever undertaken in peace time. Blue armies equipped with all the accoutrements of modern warfare, ten-wheel tanks, poison gas, radio cars, bombers, etc. are fighting imaginary Red armies in an effort to test the war time strength and capacity of the standing army. Austria is already pledged to stand by Italy and has declared its readiness to stave off an attack by Hitler.

The question of utmost importance is: Can Italy withstand a protracted and long drawn out conflict? Elsewhere in this issue there is an analysis of the internal regime in Italy on the eve of the conflict. The misery of the Italian masses is unparalleled. The hunger belt cannot be squeezed any tighter. Add to that the horrors of war and the Italian masses may yet awaken and take advantage of Mussolini's desperate adventure in Ethiopia and put an end to fascism in Italy forever. But for that more than despair is needed. The masses indeed are desperate. What is needed is guidance and help from the outside world.

The Italian Workers Must Act
The cause of the people of Ethiopia is the cause of the Italian laboring masses. There is no conflict between them. Their goal is the same—liberation from fascism and imperialism. The Italian proletariat is being armed with physical instruments of destruction; to these arms must be added the arms of revolutionary ideology. Let the workers and peasants of Italy learn to use these arms against their own oppressors, their own exploiters—the ruling class of Italy.

It is necessary to show the Italian masses they are not alone; that the international working class will be behind them in their efforts to slough off the fascist scourge. Powerful demonstrations against fascism must be organized to bring this message to the exploited of Italy. In this connection it is necessary to speak out against the shameful manner in which the Socialist party, through its intermediary Valente, has permitted the united front movement against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia to peter out. The efforts of the Communist party on behalf of Ethiopia—setting aside days of prayer, etc.—are too disgusting to be worthy of too much comment here. The spectacle of Negro workers breaking up meetings of working class organizations speaking in the name of communism because of Litvinoff's despicable role in Geneva is Stalinism's contribution to the Italo-Ethiopian dispute.

A mighty united front movement must be set up to stem the fascist march on Ethiopia. The international boycott against fascist Italy must get under way. Time is short. Speed and decision is necessary. To the Italian masses we say: Turn Mussolini's war against Ethiopia into a civil war—the enemy is in your own country.

**PUSH THE CLUB PLAN.
SUPPORT THE EIGHT-PAGE**

Mussolini Embarks on Campaign Against Ethiopia to Sidetrack Attention from Poverty and Discontent at Home

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world. The unity of the Italian state was consummated in 1870 under the impulsion of the Northern industrial bourgeoisie. Because of its very weak specific gravity the industrial bourgeoisie could safeguard its hegemony and control over the political and economic life of the nation only by "authoritarianism," i.e. reactionism, methods. The regime of Crispien (1887-1896) witnessed the first adventure in Abyssinia. The cities and villages of Italy were still seething; the peasants of central Italy and the workers of the Northern industries were rising, rebelling against the state. Crispien was the "strong" man of the bourgeoisie. He "energetically" suppressed in blood every insurrectionist attempt. Then came Adowa (March 1, 1896). Two Italian generals, 4,000 soldiers and officers were killed there. Others were taken prisoner. The Negus Menelik defeated young Italian imperialism. For five ensuing years the bourgeoisie tried to rule by terror. After the bloody repression of the peasant movements in Sicily (1893) came the repression in Milan in 1898. At the dawn of the 20th century Humbert the 1st was assassinated by the anarchist Bresci. A new period opened. Capitalism was in full bloom. Social reformism flourished from 1900 to 1910. The "revolution" took the road of legality. But not for long. The worker-bourgeois bloc represented by the reformist-Giolitti bloc lost its effectiveness. The worker and peasant masses once more directed their fire at the state. The revolutionary current strengthened and developed. This was the period of Mussolinism, of Mussolini, the "revolutionary" leader. "Red week" (June 1914) found Mussolini at the head of the insurrectionist movement. But with such "leaders" the movement was bound to fail—and in fact, it did fail. This was before the war. From 1915 to 1918 Italy participated in the slaughter. In 1917 we see Caporetto and the revolt in Turin against the war. The revolution was not dead. "Victory" found Italy in complete chaos. The masses of the North and the Center once again rose against the state. Through the mistakes of the leadership the revolution was once again defeated. **Came Fascism.**

Fascism attributed the cause of the economic and financial crisis to the workers' strikes, the very heavy taxes, the very high prices and the misfortune of the peasants, to the workers also. What has it done? It slashed the wages of the workers to a level below that of the pre-war period; it developed the industrial apparatus, but by that it increased the disproportion between the capacity of production and the possibilities of consumption, thereby diffusing even further the general impoverishment of the population. It prohibited the right to strike, but chaos in production increased at the same time. Taking 1929 as an index, the year when the last crisis began, production fell to 70 percent at the close of 1934. In many branches of industry, particularly textile, machine capacity dropped to 40 percent of capacity. Despite the introduction of the 40 hour week the unemployed were far from absorbed into production. Even at the end of June of this year despite the mobilization of soldiers and workers for the Ethiopian adventure there were more than 700,000 unemployed.

Peasants Impoverished
If one wishes to establish what Fascism has given the peasants it is sufficient to take note of the resolution passed by the leadership of the (fascist) Syndicate of Agrarian Technicians of Treviso.

"1) From the agrarian point of view there is an obvious regression in productive activity, particularly aggravated in recent years and made obvious by an inferior cultural activity, a diminishing use of fertilizer, inferior production and an impoverishment of the offspring in livestock; 2) from the economic point of view, a growing pauperization and indebtedness of the big and small farmers on the one side and of the landed proprietors on the other, and of a lack of profit in stables, when there is no loss; 3) from the demographic point of view, a disproportion between the labor force of the families of the farmers and the extension of the land, and a lack of equilibrium between the number of families and the available property, which is the cause of 687 families of the province remaining without land."

Multipled by 92—for there are 92 provinces in Italy—the above figures give a real picture of the grim misery of Italian agriculture. The peasant who had a bit of land

and who out of fear of "Bolshevism" augmented the ranks of Fascism in 1921-1922, saw all his property disappear with the seizure of power by Mussolini. Deprived of his bit of ground he is forced today to beg for his existence. The same applies to the small storekeepers and the small manufacturers. Fascism has lost its social probum. But the most disturbing problem for it is the disturbing of the youth.

Youth Rebellious

The young generation, raised in Fascist surroundings, is demanding its right to live. Games, sports, fascist festivals cannot fill the belly. The youth, returning home from the demonstrations, finds neither bread nor cigarettes and is forced to demand his place in the sun. Unconsciously he is carrying on the class struggle. Corruption and disease have gone to such lengths that Mussolini and his lackeys are compelled to refer in their speeches to the "system," to "capitalism," which has outlived its usefulness. But if anti-capitalism in the mouth of Mussolini is only demagoguery, the young people do not stop at formalities; they demand deeds. And it is not without importance that in the ranks of Fascism itself, despite the violent suppression of all class spirit, anti-capitalist tendencies are everywhere gaining ground. Together with the old Marxists being sent to the deportation camps are seriously the anti-capitalism of the functionaries of the corporations. A new spirit breathes in the Fascist "jail." The young unemployed graduate, the young worker and the young peasant absorbed in the search of a piece of bread, who in the capitalist countries where fascism is only a threat, constitute the source of eventual recruits which enlarge the ranks of fascism—in Italy, where fascism has ruled for 13 years, they can find an issue for their difficulties and their discontent only on the road of revolution. The bellicose solution is presented to the discontented and aroused youth as the antidote to revolution. Thus the Italian bourgeoisie is doubly interested in supporting the Italo-Ethiopian campaign. 1) because the latter appears as a possible source of loot; and 2) because it offers a "safety valve" for discharging the forces of "revolution" which once again have made their pressure felt in Italy.

Capital Frightened

However, capitalism itself is constantly disturbed by this solution. Where will it lead to in the end? Will not contrary results arise than those desired? Profit is the raison d'être of capitalism. Now, after thirteen years of fascism, the Italian capitalist is full of anxiety for his money. Wasn't fascism to give him peace, and security of investments? But, he finds, on the contrary, that the fascism which he supported and helped to place in power, is very costly. Fascism takes the lion's share. What more will it devour? Every form of capital investment gives rise to fear among the money holders. Fear of inheritance taxes turns away investment in real estate. Similarly, the fear of taxation on dividends and rendering deeds nominal makes investments in such fields insecure. The rate of profits on investments in Italy, is besides, very low. A very significant symptom of the state of mind of the Italian capitalist, is found in the fact that from 1928 to 1934 the reserves of the Bank of Italy fell from 12,106 million to 5,832 million lire. That is to say about 7 millions took flight abroad before draconian measures were taken to stem the flight of gold and currency (arrangements governing the movement of capital; defense against exporting money in bank notes or in checks; rigid monopoly of trade in the means of payment, etc.). Equally significant is the general fall of state debts. The ex-consolidate 5 percent converted by authority into "redeemable" at 3.5 percent and which was 88 in December fell to 77 last April and is now 68!

Are we to believe by this that the bourgeoisie is withdrawing its confidence in its fascist "agent"? Undoubtedly a revolutionary crisis will not unfold without extreme manifestations of panic in the proletariat classes. However, we are still far from that. The bourgeoisie has not forgotten 1919-1920, it fears the proletarian revolution at the same time that it is discontented with fascism, which costs very dearly and it already feels the drain of usury. And that is a symptom which must be taken into account in the development of the situation.

For the present, the bourgeoisie and fascism remain solidly attached to each other. In spite of

everything, the solution by war in Abyssinia opens a road. But it is a road which can precipitate a catastrophe. This eventuality is not only not excluded but appears very probable.

Even Victory Fatal

Even on the supposition that Mussolini will carry through a victorious war and that this war will be very brief, from September to March, the results may be very disastrous for Italian imperialism. The slipping of the lira, already begun, will assume a dizzy pace. Even if the industries are worked to full capacity for the war, even if the peasant receives a hundred percent more for the sale of his products, the growing devaluation of the lira because of the growing inflation which will be necessary to cover the expenses of the war, will end by creating a situation which will come very near to that in Italy in 1919-20 and that in Germany in 1923. The wages of the workers, the salaries of the employees, fearfully reduced by thirteen years of fascism will be utterly incapable of meeting the feverish rise in prices (although war operations have not yet begun, the prices of fruits and vegetables have already risen 100 percent). The peasant also, in exchange for his products, will receive money which depreciates from day to day. And then, in order to pillage the Abyssinian territories, it will be necessary to impose draconian measures on the entire nation so that speculation, which is protected by fascism and even nourished by it, will not fail to garner its profits. The famous queues known in the last war will appear again before the stores. Strikes will reappear. They are already reappearing.

But the war will neither be short nor very easy. Abyssinia, which defeated the troops of Crispien, will not fail to offer a very hardy resistance to Mussolini's troops. The difficulties Italy will face in fighting Ethiopia are enormous if one considers that it will take place in a territory where the Abyssinian mule is the best means of conveyance. Therefore, it can be foreseen that the economic, financial, political and social repercussions of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict will be a thousand times more serious and acute in the interior of Italy.

If one considers only the first reactions to the mobilizations of Mussolini, it is to be foreseen that the hostility of the people towards the bandit war in Abyssinia will become much greater when the operations begin.

Populace Panicky

The fascist press would have us believe that there is enthusiasm for war in Italy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here is what a correspondent from Italy writes in an emigre periodical (Nuovo Avanti, July 13, 1935) on the state of mind of the masses in face of the war:

"Enthusiasm is conspicuous by its absence... while calls to service are confined to the centers of Italian mobilization, opposition to the war has not assumed in general the forms of rebellion except in isolated cases. In Forlì, for example (Mussolini's home town), the women attempted to prevent the departure of the reservists; there were also an important number of deserters, who were easily captured, and also some violent opposition to public force. In Cagliari (where Mussolini came in person to deliver a speech) a reservist committed suicide because he was refused permission to visit his sick wife. The barracks mutilated and it was necessary to use bombs and tear gas to quell the mutiny.

"Many desertions took place in South Tyrol, with attempts at assassination; but here," the correspondent notes, "there exists a strong Hitlerite movement, the kind that would come from this district, but must be analyzed from another standpoint.

"The reservists called to service, both officers and soldiers, showed the most obvious signs of rebellion when they were about to leave for Eastern Africa.

"A clear symptom in the new situation in the Italian army can be seen in the negligence in external formalities between officers and soldiers! A great disregard of discipline is rife among the volunteers. The chaotic composition of these corps, in which individuals of the most varying ages and the most diverse physical constitutions are thrown together, has made the antagonism between the army and militia very acute.

"The militia (fascist) has stirred up a lively resentment against itself in the population

Congress Passes Harmless Social Security Program

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because of its undisciplined acts and its vandalism. "Besides, a state of constant vigilance is being born. Rumors, often exaggerated, are current on the sanitary conditions among the troops in Africa. No one believes the official reports. Though in fact, the latter proclaims human losses from unimportant ailments as true.

"This state of mind agitates the fascist regime, which is seeking by every means to stifle news and rumors. They have banned all publicity to mourning caused by the Abyssinian adventure. In Turin, for example, they forced a merchant to remove a notice carrying the legend: 'Closed because of sons in Abyssinia.' The communications of death are now laconic and read as follows: 'It has been communicated that your son (or husband, etc.) is deceased. . . . In a note there is a warning not to give publicity to the news.'

If fascism fears publicity of a few deaths from sickness in Africa, what will it do when the list of dead stretches out once the operations begin? For we are inclined to believe that the Abyssinians are also good shots. They have demonstrated that very well in 1896 in Adowa. In the wars conducted by "democracies" the so-called "free press" had this advantage over fascism: it could deceive its readers who believed even in its lies. The fascist press is "suspect": the people do not read it and do not believe it. This is an enormous disadvantage for fascism in a war. A dispatch made with the aim of quieting the populace gives rise to vigilance and agitation. This is very significant for the application of the attitude prevalent among the Italian masses: an attitude of violent which will end with direct explosions. In the degree that this state of mind tends to become general and active, it can transform itself into a truly revolutionary spirit. The strength of fascism arose especially from the inertia of the masses pulverized by violence and terror. Fascism, by the war in Abyssinia, itself is about to give the masses the opportunity lost for years of communicating among themselves and of feeling and wanting the same thing at the same time: the fall of the regime.

A Vanguard Needed!

What is lacking to prepare, to orient, to guide the masses seeking another road than the bellicose solution of fascism and capitalism, their road, a revolutionary road, is an organized vanguard.

The party of the proletariat, the Communist party constituted at Livorno in 1921, has been reduced to complete impotence under the blows of the fascist reaction and Stalinism. The Socialist Party, the old party of Turati, has been reduced, in emigration circles, to a fragmentary carcass. In the emigration circles the fragments of both the Italian Stalinist and Socialist parties have constituted, as a reflection of what is happening in France, a "pact of unity of action." But this "pact" remains without real importance for the masses in Italy. The lack of an organized vanguard, the political and organizational liquidation of the Communist party indubitably represents the weakest side of the Italian situation. On the other hand it cannot be separated from the international situation.

The task of the Italian Marxists today is a double and a single one: the struggle for the constitution of the Italian and international party of proletarian revolution. To aid the Italian masses defeat fascism we must throw all our forces in the balance for the defeat of Italian imperialism in Abyssinia. That depends on the Italian masses in the interior, on the active and conscious opposition which must be organized in the interior against the war, but it also depends on the cooperation of the international proletariat.

Without the victory of Hitler in Germany, Mussolini today would not have been able to embark on a war today. A working class policy, a revolutionary policy, today, in London, Paris and Moscow can be of tremendous assistance to the Italian masses in reforming its battalions of world revolution. But it would be futile to expect this cooperation from the two dead Internationals, the Second and the Third. We must appeal directly to the working class of these countries. And we can and we must do it only in the name of the Fourth International. Such action will open a way into the hearts of the Italian workers. It is not without significance that the only initiative in organizing the international boycott of imperialist and fascist Italy at the outbreak of war in Abyssinia has come from the Bolshevik-Leninists. The banner of Lenin today bears the name: the Fourth International.

possibility of emancipation by the Supreme Court remains. Thirdly, the increased costs of production may always be passed on to the consumer. Fourthly, new machinery, more intensive methods of production to keep down the cost of social legislation for the employer, can and will be resorted to.

In any case the taxes will be comparatively small, 3 percent of the payroll for unemployment insurance and a maximum by January 1, 1940, of 3 percent for the old age pension system. The exchange of a few million dollars in social security benefits for a cut of billions of dollars in the wage bill is decidedly "good business." Let Ma Perkins, Eleanor Roosevelt and the rest of the social workers have a fling. Finally, an experience in other countries has conclusively demonstrated, it is always possible, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, to effect a cut in the munificent benefits due under these social insurance programs.

Perkins Waxes Eloquent
It is important to note the philosophy back of this legislation. It is based on the concept that the present "revival" in business, the upturn on the stock exchange etc. is the beginning of a real capitalist boom. In a feature article in the New York Times Frances Perkins states:

"The cost of social security will be comparatively small for some years to come. This was deliberately arranged by the committee for the President in order that the incidence of tax might be gradual, as business and workers will be paying this tax in the early years of recovery from depression and before the full prosperity level has been reached."

She becomes positively eloquent in painting the figure of the U. S. under liberal capitalism.

"The foundation has been laid. On it will be reared a structure, through the experience of the years to come, which will prove a haven for the nation's workers in times of economic distress and when they become old and feeble. It will be a refuge also for widows and dependent children. In achieving such results it will likewise benefit all employers and investors by promoting and stabilizing mass purchasing power."

The intelligence displayed by economists, business men, workers and Congress in the passage of this legislation and "the intellectual courage and human insight of the President" have brought "a renewal of faith in the possibilities of life in this great nation as broad as a continent."

Of course, as per the formula of liberal capitalism, this prosperity is to be made "permanent and real" by achieving a balance of consumption and production by "the promotion and stabilization of mass purchasing power without which the present economic system cannot endure."

No Revival at All
The fatuous exponents of liberal capitalism continue to hold forth this hope and doubtless in many instances actually to believe it themselves, in spite of the real facts about the present "revival" of business, etc. as set forth, for example, in the statistics of the U. S. Dept. of Commerce itself. These indicate that there was an increase of about 5 billions in the national income for 1934 as compared with 1933 but when relief wages are eliminated the net share of labor in 1934 was only 64.2 as compared with 65.5 in 1933. This does not take account of the fact that prices during the period rose as fast or even faster than wages so that the real wages of labor have decreased.

According to the same report the dividend and business profits rose sharply from \$7,365,000,000 to \$8,103,000,000 between 1933 and 1934. Wage earners in 1934 received only 52 percent of their 1929 income. Property owners received 61.4 percent and men in business for themselves 65.2 percent of their 1929 income. Thus all the indications are that both earned and unearned incomes above \$5,000 are going up and that incomes below \$5,000 are going down.

Nothing has taken place in these closing days of Congress to cause any change in the program of the masses of workers and farmers, namely, Fight against the Roosevelt wage-cutting program, against the entire WPA set-up, against fake social security, for substantial protection against the risks of sickness, accident, old age and unemployment, at the cost of employers and government. Above all, organization to achieve power and thus to end, before it inflicts still further misery upon the masses, a system whose most liberal and humanitarian exponents can do no better than the Roosevelt "social security" program.

Pioneer Publishers Move to New Quarters Announce Publishing Program

Pioneer Publishers, formerly located at 96 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. C. have moved to their new and more spacious quarters at 100 Fifth Ave. where they will be better able to devote themselves to the ambitious publishing program they have now undertaken.

They plan to issue an edition of the SELECTED WORKS OF LEON TROTSKY, six volumes of which are scheduled for publication during 1935-36. The volumes as listed are: 1. The Third International After Lenin. 2. The Stalin School of Falsification. 3. The Revolution of 1905. 4. The Revolution of 1917. 5. Seven Years of World Politics. 6. Problems of the Chinese Revolution—II.

Also included in the publishing program are the selected writings of Franz Mehring and George Plekhanov, a volume on Marxism and Art and the Selected Correspondence of Lenin.

To finance this undertaking a special Publication Fund is being established through the sale of Pioneer Publishers Certificates at \$10 each. The holders of Pioneer Certificates, in addition to being contributors to this essential work, also have an opportunity to purchase books at low cost. Pioneer publications will be made available to them at a discount of 30 percent and books of other publishers at 15 percent.

A prospectus with complete details will be sent on request by writing to PIONEER PUBLISHERS, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

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