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1936  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
L-150  
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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Communicated to the Council  
and Members of the League.

C.168.M.104.1936.VII.

Geneva, April 17th, 1936.

DISPUTE BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ITALY.

Communication from the Ethiopian Government.

(Translation)

Geneva, April 16th, 1936.

To the Chairman of the Committee of Thirteen,

I would ask you to communicate to the Committee of Thirteen the following declaration, confirming and amplifying the reply already given to the Italian proposals transmitted by you.

1. On March 3rd, 1936, at Geneva, at the very moment when the Committee of Eighteen was about to apply the oil sanction to the aggressor, it was proposed, and agreed by the Council, that a final urgent appeal should be made to the two belligerents, with a view to securing, within the framework of the League of Nations and in the spirit of the Covenant, the prompt cessation of hostilities and the definite restoration of peace.

The Ethiopian Government at once responded to this appeal in the very terms in which it had been issued.

The Italian Government merely accepted in principle.

The Ethiopian Government promptly called the attention of the Committee of Thirteen and of the League to the ambiguity of the Italian reply (Declaration of March 21st, 1936, at London; Verbal Declaration of March 24th, 1936, at London). The Ethiopian Government emphasised the fact that the Italian Declaration was contradicted by Italian action and had been followed by redoubled atrocities in the conduct of the aggression.

At the beginning of April, the Ethiopian Government once more presented a historical survey of the conflict, in order to show that the Italian Government's constant policy for sixteen months past had been to delay and prevent the effective intervention of the League, until it could fling aside the mask and confront the League with a fait accompli.

II. At its meeting on April 10th, 1936, the Committee of Thirteen deferred until after Easter, as requested by the Italian Government, its hearing of the delegate of that Government who should give its reply.

III. To-day the Italian Government feels strong enough to announce that reply openly. 1. It proposes that negotiations be open directly between Italy and Ethiopia, without the active co-operation of the League, which would merely be informed of their progress. 2. It proposes that the negotiations take place elsewhere than in Geneva. 3. It will not state its peace terms until the first two conditions have been accepted by Ethiopia.

IV. The Ethiopian Delegation relying upon the actual terms of the appeal addressed to it by the Council, has rejected and still rejects these proposals. It protests most strongly; it denounces the dangerous precedent which threatens to be thus created, and which would seriously influence the destinies of all States, especially the small States Members of the League.

In asking that the Ethiopian people be abandoned to its aggressor, the Italian Government is in reality merely fixing its price for a bargain, whereby Italy would give her support in a European dispute in return for the removal of sanctions and for the League's indifference to the Italian aggression. Was it to bring about such a bargain that, in October 1935, fifty-two nations declared the Italian Government guilty of aggression in breach of the Covenant, and proclaimed their fidelity to that instrument?

P.T.O..

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939  
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