

Out of the Ashes



African American Responses to the Second Italo-Ethiopian War

Richard Blake Romines
The University of Oklahoma
Dr. Robert Griswold

Writing in 1938, two years after Fascist Italy conquered Ethiopia, the eminent African American intellectual and columnist George S. Schuyler proclaimed the *Rise of the Black Internationale*. Having faced the travails of white imperialism for over a century, Schuyler wrote of a new Negro, a more informed Negro, that is “no longer blindly worshipful of his rulers...” and went on to conclude that, "He has fewer illusions about the world.”¹ Schuyler looked forward to the future by looking back into the past, that is, the not too distant past. Three years before writing this particular article, in October 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, the last independent nation of Africa. While the world powers watched, African Americans united behind the cause of Ethiopia. African Americans formed committees, filled newly created political and diplomatic spaces with nascent leaders, opened up grass roots fundraising, and thus, in a sense, became aware of their political and social power, aware of their place in world society. Furthermore, Schuyler wrote that the new Negro “believes that to combat this white internationale of oppression a black internationale of liberation is necessary... He [the new negro] sees and welcomes a community of interest of all colored peoples.”²

In a sense, Schuyler got it right. The responses and lessons of the Second Italo-Ethiopian War (1935) had a significant impact on the future of the African American community in every dimension. In the social sphere, African Americans united to a common cause against white oppression in a distant land and discovered their grass roots fundraising ability. Protests, both written and tangible, as well as prayer vigils, captured the sentiment and spirit of African Americans domestic response to the fascists of Italy, the contemporary poster boy of white imperialism. In the political sphere, and despite the United States government's attempt to stifle efforts to become involved in the war, African Americans did not relent in their efforts to offer a hand, whether financial or political. Furthermore, new African American leaders arose to

conduct diplomacy on the world stage and one African American, ingeniously nicknamed the “Brown Condor,” even fought alongside his Ethiopian brothers in the face of the United States mandate banning such activity by any American citizen.

This relentless attitude, this awakening of sorts, signified the reality of Schuyler’s Black Internationale, both illuminating and adding depth to the roots of the movement that took shape in the 1950s. While the actual results of these reactions to war did not amount to much in the way of helping Ethiopia, the reactions did however serve a greater purpose.³ Thus, the efforts of the African American community in the mid-1930s played a pivotal role in the development of what Schuyler called the Black Internationale, and what later African American intellectuals called Black Power. While not minimizing the pan-Africanist slant of African American’s reactions, this paper focuses on the social and political importance of their reactions and seeks to draw a connection between these newly developed postures and their influence on the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, and the *Rise of the Black Internationale*.

One month before the fascists invaded Ethiopia in 1935, African Americans broadcasted their voice through newspaper op-eds.⁴ The planned invasion was obviously no secret. The voice of African Americans overwhelmingly took a defensive and confident tone. Charles Lynch wrote in the *New York Amsterdam News*, “When Italy announces war against Ethiopia, she’ll be undoubtedly lighting a match which she cannot as readily put out... and, whereas she has designs against Ethiopia, these, too, have designs against her.”⁵ In March 1935, the same newspaper referred to Mussolini as “a modern Caesar” and claimed he would have a tough time in defeating Ethiopia.⁶ All this overflowing confidence reveals a community in transition from being the stereotypically outcast, segregated community of ex-slaves to a community of enlightened and increasingly involved citizens.⁷ This attitude was part and parcel of African American’s response

to the invasion; an attitude of almost blind confidence in the abilities of the ancien régime of Ethiopia to repel the coming invasion. Although an overconfident attitude might be perceived as a weakness by some, their supreme confidence anchored their spirits and pushed them forward in the struggle of the “New Negro.”

Partly because Ethiopia found herself in a dangerous spot, the United States saw a rebirth of Pan Africanism. This event opened up a new political space that benefited African Americans more than it did anyone else. This space provided African Americans in particular a political *raison d'état*. Prior to the invasion any political activity was brutally suppressed by white supremacist groups. With the war so far away, and the United States uninvolved, African Americans could more securely protest in this space. A white country invading a black country was powerful symbolism. A cause worthy of protest that shows African American's discontent on the subject without inciting white backlash. The war looming over Ethiopia juxtaposed with the world's lack of movement to do anything made this space in the United States possible. Because the threat was an external one, unrelated to the majority, the African American community moved to occupy this space by using the media available to them; by hailing nascent leaders to put public faces with the long discarded voice. African Americans thus held this space by using socio-political powers newly acquired. Protesters of the war so far away deemphasized potential racial and political issues at home.

Inspiration to move toward this space flowed from more than one outside source. George Schuyler wrote in the *Pittsburgh Courier* on August 3, 1935, two months before the fascists invaded Ethiopia, hailing perhaps the most influential humanist and rebel leader of the twentieth century as a symbol of resistance. Of course, he spoke of Gandhi.⁸ The use of Gandhi as a

symbol and a model signify a growing international awareness of culturally distinct ideas, and the adoption of those ideas. In practice, Gandhi's use of non-violent protest was a keystone in Martin Luther King's tactic for protest. More important for this history, non-violent protest was used on a massive scale in Harlem to protest Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. Hence, in between Gandhi and the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans reacted to the fascists by using non-violent protest. This signifies a valuable connection between the invasion and the Civil Rights Movement.

Central to understanding Schuyler's evocation of Gandhi, it is important to know that prior to Italy's invasion and subjugation of Ethiopia, African American's reactions were characterized by overconfidence in, and the mythical perception of, Ethiopia as a sacrosanct nation stemming from their place in biblical history.⁹ Thus, Schuyler was essentially saying through his evocation of Gandhi two things. First, Schuyler wished to inspire hope and present a "colored" model for those of African American descent to hold up. Second, that political power can be amassed and used through group solidarity and unity, and furthermore, that through these non-violent methods of protest success can be achieved.

At the outset of the invasion, African Americans perceived the war as nothing more than white, greedy heads of state conspiring together for land and resources. In a newspaper article, the author uses the Ethiopian route of an Italian army at the beginning of the twentieth century as a symbol of past Ethiopian power and European greediness. The article used the old incident of Adowa to explain current Italian greediness. In Adowa, at the end of the first Italo-Ethiopian War, the Ethiopians destroyed an Italian army and treated with Italy. Hence, the article perceived nothing more than old fashioned European politics and scheming by Italy to get revenge against

Ethiopia for Adowa.¹⁰ The African American press perceived the motives of the war as base and ignoble, nothing more than a white country scheming to control the last independent African country.

In early December 1935, the emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie lodged a complaint to the League of Nations. This complaint proved to be revealing of not only the manner in which the Italians sought to wage the war, but the resolve of the leader of the African country. Once the Italians obtained a foothold in Ethiopia, they immediately sought to enforce their rule in cities and villages they sacked. Of course, rapine, pillage, and martial law are part of warfare and the Italians were no strangers to savagery.¹¹ However, the complaint lodged by the emperor revealed a most brutal dimension of Italian warfare. On December 7, 1935 Haile Selassie complained that Italy had relentlessly bombed the defenseless town of Dessye, including the hospital, Red Cross building, and an imperial palace. No doubt the Italians hoped to catch Haile Selassie in residence.¹²

One can imagine the fervor spreading across the African American communities at the news of Italy's *planned* invasion of Ethiopia and the sanguine discourse of leading African American intellectuals in the papers. If Ethiopia could not completely help herself, then something must be done. A lone African American man took the onus on himself. In fact, a New York high school teacher, in an exquisite example of modeling and pedagogy, took himself out of his environment and into the fray.

Dr. Willis N. Huggins: doctor, teacher, and nascent diplomat, took time off from work and bought tickets to Paris, London, and Geneva. Huggins hoped to drum up political support and donations for Ethiopia's cause. He visited political leaders, exiled anti-fascist groups, and

black organizations.¹³ Dr. Huggins met with some highly ranked officials in England during the last week of July 1935, obtaining “full diplomatic instructions in regard to... the situation, having received them as a result of his contacts in London, Paris, and Geneva.”¹⁴ Representing the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, Dr. Huggins asked the world for support. In Geneva at the League of Nations in early August 1935, Dr. Huggins pleaded with the members of the council to intervene if Italy invaded Ethiopia in the months ahead.¹⁵ Obviously the League’s response was hesitant and shaky, for Italy invaded, destroyed, and subjugated Ethiopia despite the League, England, France, or the United States.

Dr. Huggins also partook in speaking at public rallies and protests. In early December 1935, Huggins spoke before a modest size gathering in a junior high auditorium about how the war might be framed. Huggins insisted that the war was a test for Blacks and Whites. Dr. Huggins insisted that Blacks were not prepared for the test, but that “This war is dangerous not for its surface complications...but because it is arousing colored people all over the world...”¹⁶ This observation is parallel to the concept of the Black Internationale posited by Schuyler in 1938. This energy, then, was felt as a rising tide of confidence and awareness swept over the African American community in late 1935.

Simultaneously, while Dr. Huggins parleyed in Europe, back home in the United States African American men and women took to the volunteerism spreading across their communities. Recruitment to the cause of Ethiopia began almost immediately. In late July 1935 about 200 men and women volunteered either to go help or fight in Ethiopia. Marching drills and group meetings filled their days.¹⁷ Five hundred New York men were rumored to have enlisted in the Black Legion to go fight. Sufi Abdul Hamid, known as the “Black Hitler of Harlem,” proclaimed

that “they stand ready at any time to renounce citizenship and go to their mother country.”¹⁸ However, the United States had other ideas in relation to Italy and Ethiopia.

The State and Justice Departments commanded recruitment to halt, using a law almost as old as the nation to justify their decision. A law from April 20, 1818 prevented United States citizens from engaging themselves with any foreign country at war unless one was working in tandem with the US Government. A guilty charge brought a one thousand dollar fine and three years in prison.¹⁹ Furthermore, shortly after Hamid remarked about recruiting and fighting, Ethiopia’s consul general in the United States mysteriously pleaded for all recruiting and fundraising to end.²⁰ The United States position in this conflict was clear. Neither the government nor its citizens were going to involve themselves on either side, but the laws of neutrality no doubt benefited Italy over Ethiopia.²¹ On October 5, 1935 President Franklin D. Roosevelt released a five page presidential proclamation prohibiting the sale of any implements of war. The proclamation also prohibited any citizens from travelling on belligerent’s vessels during war.²²

Preceding the United States ban on foreign recruitment, however, African Americans took to the streets in protest. Around March 2, 1935, the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia called for a mass protest against fascist Italy. The provisional committee used the African American newspaper, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and twenty black organizations representing nearly 15,000 people to promote the protest.²³ African American protest for a cause greater than any one person really coalesced in this period of Black history.²⁴ It is plain that the protest movements and organizers of the 1950s and 1960s were influenced by the reactions and success of African Americans in 1935 and 1936.

On August 3, 1935, mass protest was again organized through the *New York Amsterdam News*. War inched ever closer; Italy became ever more obstinate in international relations. Again the protest was promoted by the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia among several other Black organizations including church groups, fraternal organizations, and Father Divine's Missions. Interestingly, Rev. William Lloyd Imes – chair of the Committee for Ethiopia – urged that no recruiting or fundraising activity take place during the protest.²⁵ It would seem that this calculation meant to reassure the United States whose side the protesters were on. In other words, that the protesters would play by the stated rules handed down by the government, but that they were not going to remain quiet, stand by, and do nothing in the way of helping the cause of Ethiopia.

On the same day that the mass protest in Harlem occurred, thousands of ministers proclaimed that Sunday August 18, 1935 would be a day of prayer and protest against war in Ethiopia.²⁶ This one unifying religious force or sentiment present in almost every great epic of our history, good and bad, informs us of its significance.²⁷ Religion stirs the emotions, influences the motivations of people, and encourages people to follow the leader(s). A day after Italy invaded Ethiopia, on October 5, 1935, several African American leaders stepped up their efforts to arouse public action in order to aid Ethiopia through mass vigil-protests.²⁸

Interestingly, the African American leaders and their various committees intertwined religion and protest by including various ministers as speakers at these protests and church groups as donors. At these protests, many clergy spoke to the emotional crowd of people between marches. Alternative opinions expressed by youth organizers and communists presented themselves to the masses, but were a small minority of alternative opinions in comparison to the

ministers.²⁹ However, communist speakers were fewer by far than the religious officials involved in organizing and speaking at these protests. On another dimension, the act of recruiting men to go fight in a foreign army all but diminished with the government's evocation of the 1818 law prohibiting such actions and the executive branch's proclamations. This law, however, did not convince African Americans to desist in their efforts. Urging African Americans to continue to help Ethiopia, Dr. George E. Haynes proclaimed, "We can help Ethiopia and the cause of interracial peace through medical aid and by agitation to stop hostilities."³⁰

However, one African American did not follow the same logic. In fact, he took a more active stance to help Ethiopia. The most fascinating story to come out of the African American community in relation to the war happened to be the amazing "Brown Condor." Colonel John C. Robinson, an African American male from St. Louis, Missouri, built his first airplane and shortly after sought to escape the ban on foreign recruitment set up by the United States to go fight in Ethiopia. Making contact with Emperor Haile Selassie's nephew Dr. Malaku Bayen, Robinson successfully made it to Ethiopia. Through a series of loopholes, Bayen successfully recruited Robinson as an engineer, rather than an air force pilot.³¹ Robinson became the Emperor's "personal pilot and dispatch bearer."³² Despite numerous injuries and being attacked with gas, Robinson stayed until the end of the war in 1936.

Back in the United States, the African American public viewed Col. Robinson with an eye of admiration; as a symbol of African American prowess and heroism. For Robinson was the only man successfully to have left the States to fight on behalf of the last, and most holy, African nation against a white power who sought imperial might. On Robinson's return from Ethiopia, several thousand starry-eyed African Americans welcomed him at the airport. Subsequently,

Robinson spoke to a throng of twenty thousand.³³ To inspire that much admiration and fascination speaks to something greater. Out of the ashes of the second Italo-Ethiopian war, the masses of African Americans half a world away suddenly became conscious of the struggle for freedom worldwide; they became aware of their social and political power despite the Depression and their segregation.

The protests in the streets and to the League of Nations did not stop at the conclusion of the war. The destruction wrought by Italy in Ethiopia is well documented, as it was then. The African American press evoked a sense of morality by relating Ethiopia to a woman, insisting that she had been ‘raped’ by Italy.³⁴ We see the same symbolic evocation today.³⁵ On January 25, 1936 Henry Rockel wrote in the *Chicago Defender* a scathing attack on the European powers entitled “The Rape of Ethiopia: An Indictment Against Italy, France, and England:” “The record has been written and such is the punishment when black rapes white. Let us turn a page of history and learn what occurs when white rapes black...by one in a position of high political power.”³⁶

Rockel’s analysis reflected the sentiments of the African American press and their initial perceptions concerning Italy’s motives. That is, Ethiopia bore the brunt of the consequences of a European game of power politics. Leading up to the war and after the war, the idea that Ethiopia got caught as a pawn in European power politics differed only in that the latter was charged with a moral tone. In that sense, African American’s perception of world powers slightly worsened. Yet African American worldviews increased tremendously from the war and the idea of raping was further contrasted with opposing opinions.

Although the war officially concluded, Ethiopia was on fire and Italy held the only extinguisher. War or no war, the African American community carried on the diplomatic and political fight from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. On May 30, 1936, several African American ministers of the Springfield Ministers Association lodged a protest against the mayor for granting the Italian War Veteran's Association a permit to celebrate fascist Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, as the Italian Americans had styled it.³⁷ In contrast, the African American press styled it a rape of Ethiopia. The pattern of morality evoked by the raping of a woman began to inflect the titles and articles of the African American press immediately concluding the war. This symbolic evocation would be enough to anger any moral human being.

With a high moral tone added to the press coverage of the conclusion of the war and protests in full force, fundraising also took a step forward. On August 29, 1936 Chester C. Holder wrote an op-ed in the *New York Amsterdam News*. Holder argued that "The League of Nations and all the white powers of the world sold out Ethiopia to Italy, Britain and France, although they boasted about fair play in the past."³⁸ Furthermore, Holder proposed in this op-ed that ten committees be established across the region to collect funds to be sent to the Ethiopian legation holed up in London, England in order to continue the fight, although hopeless by this point. Holder proclaimed, "These are days for more action and less talk."³⁹ In mid-May 1936, African American protesters burned in effigy Mussolini, and the organization United Aid for Ethiopia cabled the League of Nations calling for sanctions and Ethiopian independence.⁴⁰

In contrast, opposing talk continued to surface in the African American consciousness at the conclusion of the war in 1936 as well. W.E.B. Dubois, a prominent African American intellectual writing in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, relentlessly beat the drum of pacifism, despite his

overt misgivings about the outcome of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. Dubois debated with himself about what it meant to be a pacifist and how societies might use war to deter rather than to conquer and shed blood.⁴¹ Dubois also claimed that it "is time for Pan Africa to begin...moving toward understanding and co-operation among colored folk..."⁴² Although WEB DuBois took part in the creation of the first Pan African congresses decades earlier, the general population of African Americans started paying attention, and reacting, to the world in a powerful way during and after Italy's invasion in 1935.

Thus, DuBois's words in mid-1936 probably resonated much more with his readers than ever before. The overlap between religious sentiment and mass protest; the fundraising of obstinate African Americans during a time of depression and segregation; the nascency of African American leaders and proto-diplomats all served to move Schuyler's concept of the "New Negro" to the "understanding and co-operation among colored folk" in the United States that DuBois urged. The vision of the African American struggle for freedom, so aptly embodied in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1950s, contained all of these elements.

These elements consisted of a unity not quite witnessed before, a common cause and a common goal; religious support systems and justifications for action; a common understanding and co-operation; resistance and perseverance, despite, or perhaps in spite of, the numerous state governments' attempts to stifle desegregation, non-violent protest, equality, and voting rights. Thus, the elements displayed by the African American community during the Italo-Ethiopian war, an external event, suddenly became palpable and relevant to their internal struggle for freedom at home between 1945 and 1970.

The reactions of African Americans to Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 had a profound socio-political impact on the development of the struggle for freedom. It is to the elements observed in the African American community in 1935 that the Civil Rights Movement owes a great deal. In every dimension of social and political consciousness, African Americans benefited from their unity in response to Italy. The benefits of the social and political achievements transformed contemporary African American culture. African Americans found themselves reciprocally compelled by and receptive to foreign ideas framed in a vocal and tangible manner. In the social dimension, African American's unity was made manifest through their implementation of fundraising and, at first, recruitment.

Furthermore, African Americans displayed an overwhelming sense of superiority and confidence in Ethiopia and then in their own abilities to effect the war effort. In the political sphere, their unity coalesced around their efforts at protestation and diplomacy. African Americans showed an implacable determination vis-à-vis the obstacles placed about them by authority figures such as the US government and the League of Nations; by economic hardships like segregation and the Great Depression; and even in defeat African Americans persevered and continued to insist on protests and fundraisers.

The Italian invasion opened up a political space in the United States that African Americans filled quite readily. Italy's blatant racism and brutality in Ethiopia served to unlock this space. This space pushed forward hopes and bolstered African American's sense of the possible. The actions of Dr. Willis N. Huggins and Col. John Robinson signify the ascension of African Americans to this space. Prior to these events, African Americans on the whole found it difficult to stand up to their oppressors, conditions, and environment. White supremacist groups

terrorized any and all men and women who sought to affect the status quo. Their achievement is even more impressive when considered through this lens. Hence, an implacable determination and confidence in themselves, in their belief, in their cause, revolutionized culture, or at least set it upon the path to revolution.

Thus, the experience of the Second Italo-Ethiopian War for African Americans was really about an evolution of a sector of American culture, social and political culture. I propose that the life supporting roots of the Civil Rights Movement lie in African American's responses to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. African American's unity in mass protest, religious justifications, diplomacy, foreign ideologies and models, fundraising, and recruitment should be considered when looking at the roots of the Civil Rights Movement. If World War II convinced African Americans that they deserved respect at home, then the Second Italo-Ethiopian war provided the community with the experience and the socio-political tools necessary to wage that battle.

Cover Photo: Archibald John Motley Jr., *Self-Portrait*, c. 1920, oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 22 1/8 inches (76.3 x 56 cm), Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois.

¹ George S. Schuyler, "Rise of the Black Internationale," *Rac[e]ing to the Right*, Ed. Jeffrey B. Leak. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 35.

² Schuyler, "Rise of the Black Internationale," 36.

³ For instance, we do not know exactly how much money was donated to Ethiopia, who collected it, and who ended up with it. The point is that the sentiment of doing so in a time of depression and suppression served to unite a community. A very power sentiment that would make its presence felt twenty years later under the auspices of Martin Luther King Jr.

⁴ There was a contrary voice I discovered looking through these papers. This voice wanted to work on his own community first. Emmett Parker, president of the Newark branch of an African American organization, said "We are going to put our own house in order first. We are going to get rid of the beggars among our race, and make every man self-respecting... Then our unemployed can go down to relief headquarters and have their names taken off the rolls." "200 Mobilized for Abyssinia," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 27, 1935, p. 16.

⁵ Charles Lynch, "Italy and Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 31, 1935, p. 10.

⁶ "Italy and Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 2, 1935, p. 8.

⁷ It is commonly accepted that right up through this period African Americans were seen by the dominant social group as incapable of intellectual, social, and political thought and organization as evidenced by their segregation, exploitation, and obstinate marginalization in politics by the dominant group, (notwithstanding the small handful of African American intellectuals like Schuyler and DuBois who blatantly disproved this notion). For a glimpse into the prevailing white attitudes and behaviors toward African Americans in the late 1930s see: Ralph Bunche, *A Brief and Tentative Analysis of Negro Leadership*. ed. Jonathan Scott Holloway. (New York: New York University Press, 2005). ALSO see the story of Mr. Sam Jones of Seaport – pp. 106-118.

⁸ George Schuyler, "Schuyler Reveals Gandhi's Power," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 3, 1935, p. 1.

⁹ "Ethiopia Picked to Defeat Italy: Pastor Gives a Vivid Picture of African Scene of War," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 19, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁰ "Ethiopia War Result of Land Greed," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 12, 1935, p. 10.

¹¹ "Reports Tell of Cruelty of Italy in Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 5, 1936, p. 6. Also see, "Blood Purge for Ethiopia Was Hateful," *New York Amsterdam News*, April 24, 1937, p. 3.

¹² "Bombing Protest is Radioed to League Heads," *Atlanta Daily World*, December 7, 1935, p. 1. Also see, "Destroy Red Cross Unit in Ethiopia," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 6, 1936, p. 1.

¹³ "New York Man Sails to Work For Ethiopia," *New Journal and Guide*, August 3, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁴ "American Who Seeks To Settle Italian-Ethiopian Fray Has Success In Europe" *New Journal and Guide*, August 24, 1935, p. A1.

¹⁵ "To Seek Aid of League For Ethiopia," *Chicago Defender*, August 3, 1935, p. 2. Also, "In Geneva," *Chicago Defender*, August 24, 1935, p. 23.

¹⁶ "Declares War in Ethiopia is Test for Whites and Blacks: Italy Scored By Speakers," *New York Amsterdam News*, December 7, 1935, p. 16.

¹⁷ "200 Mobilized for Abyssinia," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 27, 1935, p. 16.

¹⁸ "500 New Yorkers Enlist To Fight For Ethiopia," *New Journal and Guide*, July 27, 1935, p. 8.

¹⁹ "Enlistments in Alien Army Are Alleged," *New Journal and Guide*, July 27, 1935, p. 8.

²⁰ "Move to Halt Recruiting For Ethiopia is Launched," *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 27, 1935, p. 1.

²¹ This statement was elaborated on in some length at the beginning of the article. Ethiopia was clearly outmatched by Italy in the sphere of technology and war machines. The United States reluctance to intervene in the war, to send war implements of any kind, obviously benefitted Italy, the more aggressive, the more industrial power in the conflict.

²² President Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Export of Arms, Ammunition, and Implements of War to Ethiopia and Italy," FDR Presidential Proclamations, October 5, 1935. Can be accessed online through FDRs presidential library.

²³ "Harlem Plans Mass Protest Against Italy," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 2, 1935, p. 1.

²⁴ I make this statement based on the lack of evidence in the African American press between 1900 and 1930 of mass protesting in the streets by African Americans. There is plenty of evidence suggesting other forms of protest, such as gaining signatures in protest of some crime for instance. The papers reported police cover-ups and lynchings. However, I could not find any organized protests in the streets for any reason until I dug through the papers relating to the invasion of Ethiopia. Albeit the protests and gatherings took place more in Harlem than any other place. Nonetheless, organized gatherings, rallies, and protests did take place numerous times between 1935 and 1936 in numerous places throughout the Eastern and Southern United States.

²⁵ "Will March Today in Protesting War in Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 3, 1935, p. 3.

²⁶ "Thousands of Ministers Pledge Sunday of Prayer Against War on Ethiopia by Italy," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 3, 1935, p. A10.

²⁷ E.g. The Crusades, The Crusader States, Spanish colonization of the New World, the myriad inquisitions, the colonies of North America in the 17th century, and most relevant here: the Civil Rights Movement. While all these I list here are examples of Christian religiosity, Islam and Judaism also hold many examples. The point, however, is simply to show the power of religiosity as an historical force.

²⁸ "Leaders Urge Negroes Here to Aid Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 5, 1935, p. 1.

²⁹ As recently hinted, a major obstacle to this line of thought relates to the event's inclusion of communist party speakers.

³⁰ "Leaders Urge," *New York Amsterdam News*, p. 1.

³¹ Joseph E. Harris, *African American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 56-57.

³² "Life Story of Colonel John C. Robinson, Brown Condor: Returns to U.S.," *Atlanta Daily World*, June 2, 1936, p. 2. ALSO in, Joseph E. Harris, *African American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994).

³³ David W. Kellum, "Twenty Thousand Greet 'Brown Condor' On Return: Local Flyer In Ethiopian War Lauded" *Chicago Defender*, May 30, 1936, p. 1.

³⁴ "Rape of Ethiopia," *Chicago Defender*, December 28, 1935, p. 18. "Rape of Ethiopia Rapped at Confab," *Chicago Defender*, May 16, 1936, p. 17.

³⁵ e.g. The 2007 documentary film *The Rape of Europa* documents the Nazis plundering and looting of Europe's collection of fine art during the war, particularly in France.

³⁶ Henry L. Rockel, "The Rape of Ethiopia: An Indictment Against Italy, France, and England," *Chicago Defender*, January 25, 1936, p. 11.

³⁷ "Protest Italian Celebration of Rape of Ethiopia," *Chicago Defender*, May 30, 1936, p. 17.

³⁸ Chester C. Holder, "Appeals for Ethiopia," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 29, 1936, p. 12.

³⁹ Holder, "Appeals," p. 12.

⁴⁰ "Thousands in Protest Here Against Italy," *New York Amsterdam News*, May 16, 1936, p. 1.

⁴¹ Dr. WEB DuBois, "Forum of Fact and Opinion," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 16, 1936, p. A1. Also, Dr. WEB DuBois, "Forum of Fact and Opinion," *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 6, 1936, p. A1.

⁴² Dr. WEB DuBois, "Forum of Fact and Opinion," *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 4, 1936, p. A1.

