

Draft

To:-

The Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,
His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Office,
Downing Street,
S.W.1.

Sir,

In further reference to the letter of 21st July, 1941, which the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society addressed to you on the subject of slavery in Ethiopia, and to your reply of 2nd August (2411/1028/1), I am directed by the Committee of the Society to ask your consideration of the following.

2. The Treaty concluded between the Governments of Great Britain and Ethiopia on 31st January, 1942, whereby Great Britain recognises Ethiopia as an independent State and grants financial aid towards re-establishment of government in that country, is welcomed by the Committee. Satisfactory as the conclusion of that Treaty is, it is, however, not so much an end as a beginning of a new and complicated situation

3. In the debate on the Treaty in the House of Lords on 4th February, Lord Hailey, one of the greatest living authorities on Africa, said that Ethiopia is the "one remaining part of Africa where civilisation is practically unknown save in name" and other speakers reminded us of the grave risk that there might be a return to "the abuses which were unfortunately so legitimate a subject of criticism before the Italian conquest in 1936" and were used by the Italians among their pretexts for invading the country. Against these abuses, however, the Emperor, Haile Selassie, was beginning to struggle with success. The Committee nevertheless believes that there is definite danger of a return to the old régime and that "there may be a tendency on the part of the forces of reaction, as represented by certain chieftains of the old régime, to exploit the situation for their benefit".

(Quoted from Mr. Eden's letter to Lady Simon).

(Quoted from Mr. Eden's Letter)

→ as per quoting your own words

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The Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P.,
Foreign Office,
Downing Street,
S.W.1.

Sir,

I am directed by the Committee of the Society to ask your consideration of the following:

1. The treaty concluded between the Government of Great Britain and Ethiopia on 28th January, 1942, whereby Great Britain has recognised Ethiopia as an independent State and has renounced all her claims and rights of administration in the territory of Ethiopia.

2. The fact that the treaty is, however, not so much an end as a beginning of a new and complicated situation. In the debate on the treaty in the House of Commons on 27th February, Lord Selkirk, one of the greatest living authorities on Africa, said that Ethiopia is the "one remaining part of Africa which civilisation is typologically unknown and in name and other speakers reminded us of the grave risk that there might be a return to the abuses which were unfortunately so

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4. Not least among those abuses were slavery and forced labour (known in Ethiopia as the Gabar system). They are interwoven in the social economy of the country and are supported by its national church - the most powerful organisation in the country - as well as by a majority of the Rases. Both you and the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Lord Cranborne, have stated that the Emperor of Ethiopia will enact laws abolishing the status of slavery and forced labour. But institutions so deeply rooted as they are in Ethiopia will not be uprooted merely by the making of laws.

5. The Committee deeply regrets that the Treaty is completely silent on the steps to be taken to abolish slavery and forced labour. They had hoped that greater "endeavour would have been made to prevent those abuses arising in the future" by providing in the Treaty for the participation of Europeans in services for the suppression of slavery similar to the provisions made for their participation in the administration of justice and in legislation.

(6) They appreciate that the Emperor, Haile Selassie, is not only "an enlightened prince who desires the modernisation of his country, but that he realises that it can only be achieved with outside assistance" and they ventured to hope that he would have been as ready to accept the services of European officers experienced in suppressing slavery, as he has been to accept the services of British judges and advisers on legislation. They also realise that the Emperor is a proud prince who rules an arrogant people, the Amhara, and that ~~they~~ are deeply suspicious of European ideas, are resentful of criticism from outside, and little disposed to mend their ways which are criticised. The Committee therefore views with disquiet the absence of any reference to slavery in the Treaty and interprets its exclusion as studied indifference to European anxiety on the point. Having regard to the slow progress made towards the abolition of slavery in Ethiopia between the admission of that country to the League of Nations and

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the Italian conquest, as shown by the Reports on slavery suppression made by the Government of Ethiopia to the League of Nations, the Committee feel that the indifference to the abolition of slavery shown by the Treaty augurs ill for energetic action with that aim by renascent Ethiopia.

7. The Committee hope, nevertheless, that they are mistaken in that surmise. They know that the negotiations which resulted in the Treaty were long and delicate ones and recognise that assurances may have been given which are not contained in the Treaty. If any such unpublished assurances were given, they venture to hope that assurances on the suppression of slavery and forced labour were among them, and they would welcome information that this is so.

8. If, however, no such assurance has been given, they trust that the matter may be made the subject of a separate treaty.

9. While the Ethiopian Government may be over-sensitive on slavery because its prevalence was urged firstly against the admission of Ethiopia to the League of Nations, and secondly by the Italians as one of the pretexts for their aggression, there is abundant precedent for the making of slavery suppression treaties between the rulers of independent States. More than one Emperor of Ethiopia in the past has made a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade within his Empire. In more recent times, namely in 1925, the ruler of Saudi-Arabia made a similar treaty with Great Britain, and as late as 1934 the ruler of the Yemen did likewise. It ^{not,} could/therefore be contended with justification that a slavery suppression treaty would be calculated to humiliate one party to the treaty.

10. While the British have not undertaken any political responsibility under the treaty, our re-establishment of a Government which, before its defeat in 1936, fell so short of

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were given, they venture to hope that assurances on the
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9. While the Ethiopian Government may be over-zealous
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of Bechuanaland made a similar treaty with Great Britain, and
as late as 1924 the ruler of the Yemen did likewise. It
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suppression treaty would be calculated to facilitate one party
to the treaty.

10. While the British have not undertaken any political
responsibility under the treaty, our re-establishment of a
Government which, before its defeat in 1936, fell so short of

civilised standards, would redound to our discredit if there should be a recurrence of maladministration. British money has been promised to help in regenerating Ethiopia. The historic tradition of Britain is sensitive to slavery and British people will wish to know that part of their contribution towards the regeneration of Ethiopia is being applied to abolish the most serious abuse known to exist there.

11. It may be that the Ethiopians may need British support of claims which they may advance to the restoration to them of territory in Eritrea taken from them by Italy before 1936. For the rape of that territory Britain was in no way responsible, and if British support of those claims is given it is hoped that it will be conditional (alternatively) on adequate assurances being given by the Government of Ethiopia that a slavery suppression service will be maintained under European guidance and that slavery and forced labour will be brought to an end throughout the Ethiopian Empire within a reasonable time.

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2. The Agreement concluded between the Government of Great Britain and Ethiopia on 31st January, 1942, whereby Great Britain recognises Ethiopia as an independent State and grants financial aid towards re-establishment of government in that country, is welcomed by the Committee. Satisfactory as the conclusion of that Agreement is, it is, however, not so much an end as a beginning of a new and complicated situation.

3. In the debate on the Agreement in the House of Lords on 4th February, Lord Hailey, one of the greatest living authorities on Africa, said that Ethiopia is the "one remaining part of Africa where civilisation is practically unknown save in name" and other speakers reminded us of the grave risk that there might be a return to the abuses which were unfortunately a legitimate subject of criticism before the Italian conquest and were used by the Italians among their pretexts for invading the country. Against those abuses, however, the Emperor, Haile Selassie, was beginning to struggle with success. The Committee nevertheless believes that there is definite danger of a return to the old régime and that the Central Government may be unable to control the reactionary tendencies of some of the Rases, less enlightened than the Emperor and his advisers.

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5. The Committee deeply regrets that the Agreement is completely silent on the steps to be taken to abolish slavery and forced labour. They had hoped that greater endeavour would have been made to prevent those abuses arising in the future by providing in the Agreement for the participation of Europeans in services for the suppression of slavery similar to the provisions made for their participation in the administration of justice and in legislation.

6. They appreciate that the Emperor, Haile Selassie, desires to reform his country and to advance it in conformity with civilised standards, and his request for European advisers indicates that he realises that it is only with the help of Europeans that he can attain his goal. They ventured to hope that he would have been as ready to accept the services of European officers experienced in suppressing slavery, as he has been to accept the services of British judges and advisers on legislation. They also realise that the Emperor is a proud prince who rules an arrogant people, the Amhara, and that they are deeply suspicious of European ideas, are resentful of criticism from outside, and little disposed to mend their ways which are criticised. The Committee therefore views with disquiet the absence of any reference to slavery in the Agreement and interprets its exclusion as studied indifference on the part of the Government of Ethiopia to European anxiety on the point. Having regard to the slow progress made towards the abolition of slavery in Ethiopia between the admission of that country to

the League of Nations and the Italian conquest, as shown by the Reports on slavery suppression made by the Government of Ethiopia to the League of Nations, the Committee feel that the indifference to the abolition of slavery shown by the Agreement augurs ill for energetic action with that aim by renascent Ethiopia.

7. The Committee hope, nevertheless, that they are mistaken in that surmise. They know that the negotiations which resulted in the Agreement were long and delicate ones and recognise that assurances may have been given which are not contained in the Agreement. If any such unpublished assurances were given, they venture to hope that assurances on the suppression of slavery and forced labour were among them, and they would welcome information that this is so.

8. If, however, no such assurance has been given, they trust that the matter may be made the subject of a separate Agreement, providing for a Slavery Suppression Service under European guidance with adequate powers and an efficient staff.

9. It may be that the Ethiopians may require more financial aid from Britain or need British support of claims which they may advance to the restoration to them of territory in Eritrea taken from them by Italy before 1936. For the rape of that territory Britain was in no way responsible, and if more British money or British support of those claims is given it is hoped that it will be conditional on adequate assurances being given by the Government of Ethiopia that a slavery suppression service will be maintained under European guidance and that slavery and forced labour will be brought to an end throughout the Ethiopian Empire within a reasonable time.

10. While the Ethiopian Government may be over-sensitive on slavery because its prevalence was urged firstly against the admission of Ethiopia to the League of Nations, and secondly by the Italians as one of the pretexts for their aggression, there are precedents for the making of slavery suppression agreements between the rulers of independent States. More than one Emperor

of Ethiopia in the past has made an Agreement for the suppression of the slave trade within his Empire. In more recent times, namely in 1925, the ruler of Saudi-Arabia made a similar Agreement with Great Britain, and as late as 1934 the ruler of the Yemen did likewise. It could not, therefore, be contended with justification that a slavery suppression Agreement would be calculated to humiliate one party to the treaty.

11. Although the British have not undertaken any political responsibility under the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement, their re-establishment of a Government, which, before its defeat in 1936, fell so short of civilised standards, would redound to our discredit if there should be a recurrence of maladministration. British money has been promised to help in regenerating Ethiopia. The historic tradition of Britain is sensitive to slavery and British people will wish to know that part of their contribution towards the regeneration of Ethiopia is being applied to abolish the most serious abuse known to exist there.

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Foreign Office,
S.W.I.

24th July, 1935.

Dear Lord Noel-Buxton

Thank you so much for your letter of July
22nd enclosing a letter and memorandum from
Professor Stanley Jevons. I received at the
same time a letter direct from Professor Jevons
and I am sending you herewith a copy of my reply.

Yours sincerely

Arthur Eden

The Right Honourable
the Lord Noel-Buxton.

Voltaire Hotel,
Paris.



24th July, 1933.

Dear Mr. ...

I thank you so much for your letter of the 17th and for sending me a letter and a photograph of the ... I received of the ... and I am sending you herewith a copy of it.

Yours sincerely,
Alfred ...

ALFRED ...

The Right Honorable
the Lord-Lieutenant

24th July, 1935.

Dear Professor Jevons,

Thank you so much for your letter of July 22nd. I have to-day received a letter from Lord Noel-Buxton enclosing a letter and memorandum by you suggesting a possible solution of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

I shall examine this suggestion with care, but I feel I should remind you of what I said in the course of the debate on July 11th, namely, that our offer to cede British territory at Zeila was in no sense a precedent for future occasions.

Yours sincerely

(Sd.) ANTHONY EDEN.

Professor H. Stanley Jevons.

24th July, 1955.

Dear Professor Levens,

Thank you so much for your letter of July 22nd. I have to-day received a letter from Lord Noel-Buxton enclosing a letter and memorandum by you suggesting a possible solution of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

I shall examine this suggestion with care, but I feel I should remind you of what I said in the course of the debate on July 11th, namely, that our offer to cede British territory at Zeila was in no sense a precedent for future occasions.

Yours sincerely,

(Ed.) ANTHONY EDEN.

Professor H. Stanley Levens.

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(J 1055/1028/1).

Foreign Office,
S. W. 1.

2nd May, 1941.

(My dear Lady Simon),

I have now had time in which to think over at leisure your letter of the 16th April about slavery in Ethiopia. Needless to say I am fully aware that enlightened opinion in this country is preoccupied over the danger that on the conclusion of the military operations now proceeding in that country, and on the restoration of the Emperor to the throne, there may be a tendency on the part of the forces of reaction, as represented by certain chieftians of the old regime, to exploit the situation for their benefit. May I, however, assure you that His Majesty's Government are under few illusions on this score, and that from the moment when the Italian aggression in June 1940 made it necessary for us to work actively against Fascist rule in East Africa, we have kept prominently in mind the sine qua non that there can be no return to the abuses which undoubtedly existed in 1935-1936, and against which the Emperor was equally undoubtedly beginning to struggle with success? The campaign which, immediately prior to the Italian war, Haile Selassie was conducting against slavery was indeed one of the several factors which influenced His Majesty's Government in supporting his claim to the restoration of his throne. Experience has proved that here is an enlightened native prince who not only desires the modernisation of his country, but realises that it can only be achieved with outside assistance. You will recall that I referred to this desire on the Emperor's part in my statement to Parliament on the 4th February, and indeed it is my hope that once the war is over such assistance to Ethiopia may be organised on a wide and constructive international basis.

In the meantime, however, military operations are, as you are aware, still actively proceeding in Ethiopia and as a result there will inevitably be a period, the length of which cannot be foreseen, during which large areas of the country will be under British military occupation. This will be carried out in co-operation and consultation with the Emperor and our military authorities will naturally do their utmost to ensure that the rights of the people - including those of non-Amharic minorities - will be protected. At the same time you will, of course, appreciate that there is considerable effervescence among the native population, and that having regard to the weight of our military and other responsibilities elsewhere, we cannot while the war endures undertake obligations that

Foreign Office
S. W. 1.

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 considerable effectiveness among the native population, and that
 having regard to the weight of our military and other responsibilities
 elsewhere, we cannot while the war endures undertake obligations that

might necessitate the maintenance of so large a garrison in Ethiopia as might militate against our efforts in other zones. Apart altogether from this, we cannot be certain yet that the collapse of organised Italian resistance will necessarily mean that there will be no more danger of serious fighting in Ethiopia. We may have to reckon for some time with the menace of German intervention through the use of air-borne troops from some advanced African base.

In the light of all these considerations you will, I am sure, agree that all I can safely say at the moment is that our military authorities, who are fully briefed on the subject, will exert themselves to the utmost to prevent any return to those abuses which were unfortunately so legitimate a subject of criticism immediately before the Italian conquest of 1936.

(Yours very sincerely)

(signed) ANTHONY EDEN.

The Viscountess Simon, D.B.E.,

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(Yours very sincerely)

(signed) ANTHONY BURN

The Viscountess Simon, D.B.E.,

Balkan.
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Dear Eden,

May I trouble you with a word on the question of war policy in regard to the Balkans ?

As Chairman of the Balkan Committee I venture to say that the Committee, which has had some influence in the Balkans and especially in Bulgaria for the last forty-two years, would, of course, be very glad to be at your service if it was able to help in your policy.

There is already a movement in Bulgaria towards supporting Marshall Tito in view of his advocacy of a federal system of Macedonian autonomy, and as I presume you wish to encourage this movement as tending to encourage the pro-Russian and anti-Axis forces in Bulgaria so as to bring about the detachment of the

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Bulgarian Government from the Axis,
with all the valuable effect which
this would have on the attitude of
Germany's satellites.

The Balkan Committee, though it
may not have the influence which it
once possessed, would no doubt carry
some weight, and I should like you
to know that we desire to be useful.