

SECOND SERIES - VOLUME XX

July 26, 1886 and July 30 1887

THE KING OF THE SCIOA, MENELIK, TO THE REGENT THE CONSULATE IN ADEN, V.  
BIENENFELD

L. Entotto. July 17, 1886.

How are you? By the grace of God I'm fine and so are my armies. Since we have not received any news from Europe up to now, I am sending you Giuseppe, kindly send me all the news that I am aware of.

I am also sending it to see if all the ivory has made it to Assab.

I recommend it to you so that he can return to good health and soon.

ANNEX The

King Menelik and Antonelli find themselves in Entotto. Ras Darghiè, uncle of King Menelik, transferred to the Galla Arussi country eight days from Scioa with about twenty thousand men, of which about two thousand with rifles. Then there is a second expedition commanded by degiac Wolde Gabriel with about eight thousand men, most of them armed with rifles; these are found in the Ittu galla.

Wolde Gabriel wrote to the Emir of Harrar that he intended that the emir would bring him the tribute due to the king of Shioa. The emir replied that he would neither bring nor send him. Wolde Gabriel wrote to King Menelik about the Emir's refusal. The king replied that the season was too late for him to wait for the rainy season to pass and that in November he would make a decision. It is believed for certain that Menelik himself will go to conquer the Harrar.

It came to the king's ears that Italy was preparing to make an expedition against the Emir of Harrar, as soon as he heard of it he ordered Gabriel not to enter Harrar, but to wait, sending to ask the Emir only for the tribute. Meanwhile the rains came. If the news of the Italian expedition had not reached the Scioa by now, the Harrar would have already been occupied by Wold Gabriel.

The commander of Obock wrote to King Menelik that he took all the villages of the coast and bought all the land of the salt plain as far as Farré, that is, for about eleven days' march from the coast.

The king was furious when he heard this news and would like to know what's true. King Menelik also wishes to be immediately informed of the intentions of the Italian government regarding Harrar, desiring to act in agreement with him. I am in charge of waiting for the news and then immediately leave for the Scioa.

VE will see that these communications regarding the Harrar combine with those received from Harrar's Sacconi.

*82 1 Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, cit., Pp. 342-343.*

THE REGENT THE CONSULATE IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD, TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER,  
ROBILANT

RSN Aden, January 24, 1887 (for February 6).

My representative in Zeila sent me via Perim a telegram concerning the occupation of the Harrar by His Majesty the King of the Scioa.

I have the honor to add the original telegram to the present one, it is dated 23 but it was delivered to me only on the 24th morning 1 • I immediately went to the local governor, to find out if his news agreed with mine, but not having it found at home I then decided, so that the news (which I believe to be of the utmost importance) does not arrive too late to your VE to telegraph it to him as I had received it using the cipher. In the afternoon I saw General Hogg who told me that precisely at that moment he was preparing to send for me to give me the same news.

The dispatch received by the local government says that the emir fled to Hegadin and that the troops of King Menelik respected the lives and possessions of the population, finally that King Menelik certainly freed Ali Abu Beker (uncle of the emir) from prison and appointed him governor of Harrar. Having received a few hours later telegram from

VE 2 which asked me to repeat my 3 and knowing that the news had already been telegraphed in Europe leaving no more doubt about its veracity, I thought to avoid new telegraph errors to telegraph clearly.

I believe my appointee made a mistake by telegraphing me that the emir was expelled by King Menelik, being more likely to have fled.

More details are missing, but await today or tomorrow.

Major Hunter and the French consul will have learned the news upon their arrival in Zeila. The major calculated that King Menelik could not take the Harrar before April; I think he will be very disappointed and France will too.

I have no news of Count Antonelli, rumor has it that King Menelik was accompanied by some Italians; I believe that if Count Antonelli had entered the Harrar with King Menelik, he would not have failed to let me know by express courier. If he's at the Harrar, I'll know in days. Regarding Ali Abu Beker, I can assure you

VE that he is in favor of the Italians and if the king of Scioa leaves the administration of Harrar in his hands, the Italians will find in her a protector.

When this Ali Abu Beker was led by Major Hunter as a prisoner in Aden, so that he could not with his influence harm the Emir, I had occasion to know him, and as soon as he obtained freedom from the local government and permission to return to the Harrar, he came to see me and told me that he was free, but without means. I thought it right to give him a thousand lire, but in return I asked him for his word of honor, that if fate smiles on him and one day, by some combination or other, he is called to power, he should not forget that this help will be given to him.

2 The telegram is not in the outgoing telegram register.

3 T. 94, not published, but cf. n. 445.

I gave on condition that all the Italians who would settle in Harrar would find in him all sorts of facilities in their trade and purchase of land. As soon as he arrived at the Harrar the emir took him prisoner. I believe that, if King John of Abyssinia does not come to give orders to King Menelik to expel Europeans from his states (which unfortunately he can expect), both King Menelik and Ali Abu Beker will do everything possible to help the Italians at the Harrar. .

It is probable that more news will arrive from Zeila before the post leaves, in which case it will form the subject of another letter of mine.

*448 I Not published but cf. n. 445.*

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THE VICE CONSOLE IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETIS I

RSN Aden, July 20, 1885 (for August 2).

Following mine of 11 July<sup>2</sup>, I hasten to report to Your Excellency that I have asked Major Bunter if, now that the Kedivié Company has finished its travels between Zeila and Aden, we will be left without commercial communications. He replied no because the British Government chartered a steamer in England which will come shortly to continue those voyages.

Going from one speech to another, as usual, we ended up talking about the Barar. He began by telling me that it is really a pity that that country is so abandoned because he, as he already said and wrote, is convinced that well administered it is a country of great resource. Those soils can produce anything you want, coffee, cotton, cereals, indigo, vanilla, etc. etc. in short, everything that India produces can be had at the Barar.

I believe that, if Major Bunter could, he would have him occupied by England, but he finds opponents of his policy and especially in the local governor who seems to want to plan a war on the ideas of the aforementioned. I told him there was a rumor that the French would probably have occupied Barar via Obock if they could not get Zeila; he replied: «I do not believe so for now, but it is certain that no one could prevent them unless the Italian government prevents them, what they could do on via d'Assab: t. I replied that I do not know the intentions of my government, but that I would be the first to advise him against occupying the Barar without having Zeila. Then he added: «but I don't think there are so many difficulties; I am convinced that in London they will let you do it and I don't think you need to worry about what Turkey will say; you will always have the good excuse to make that, due to the Egyptian evacuation, part of your subjects have to leave the Barar; that the government of that country in the hands of the emir does not present enough guarantees and that you, in order for those and other Italian shopkeepers to go and settle there, were obliged to occupy it and that of course having to occupy the bar it was a necessity to occupy also Zeila ».

I pointed out to him that the Emir of Barar would certainly have a bad eye on a foreign occupation; he replied: «It is true, but perhaps he is already expecting it, you would do well to introduce yourselves to the Harar as friends and inform him that your only intention is to speak under Italian protection. When you have taken possession you will offer him good conditions, you will fix him an annual income and that young man (the emir is now 18 years old) will be happy ».

Finally he told me that he is leaving with the next Rubattino who, not being able to go to Rome, would have liked to see someone in Naples appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I told him that I thought it difficult as much as perhaps

26 Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, c! T., Pp. 8-9.

• See no. 16.

the steam will arrive in Naples in quarantine. Then he pointed out to me that if I can give him a letter of introduction for our ambassador in London and if the Italian government wants to have exact information, he will go to the embassy at the invitation of our ambassador and they will be able to talk about any point. I told him that indeed I wanted a person as competent as him to supply all the details on the subject to our ambassador who would communicate them to the Government in Rome and that I would give him the letter requested. He assured me that if the desire of the Italian government is to occupy Zeila and Harar, he will make all his influence available to Italy to succeed. Major Hunter will be in London in late August or early September.

It would be fortunate to be able to send some of those poor soldiers who are so sick in Massawa to freshen up in the Harar. Major Hunter does not think it necessary to offer money to Turkey; he says: «you take and allow yourself to be protested. The thirty Egyptian men who are in Zeila are sent to Suez as those of Beilul were sent to Massawa» 3

THE VICE CONSUL IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETIS I

RSN Aden, 9 August 1885 (for 23).

I have the honor to confirm my letter of the current 4 2 •

The day before yesterday Major Hunter came to visit me and told me that, having broken out in Marseilles instead of leaving with the Messagerie Maritime, he decided that he would leave the day after tomorrow with P. and O. via Brindisi directly for London. I have the honor to telegraph to VE3 to send Captain Carini

• -With R. sn of August 4, unpublished, V. Bienenfeld had reported an interview with Major Hunter on the Harar. • -T. 1216 of 10 August, not published.

act meet him in Brindisi from where they will be able to continue a stretch of the journey in the same train and thus will have more time to talk about the subject.

Since in the previous conversation I had with the aforementioned major I told him that if the Harar is not sold to Italy it will soon be positively occupied by France via Tagiura or Obock, remembering my prediction, he asked me if I persisted in being of that opinion. : I answered him more than ever, and that the vote of the French Chamber concerning Obock and Tagiura should convince him that that Government is dealing with it. He asked me if my Government had written to me that France had made him any communication on the subject. I told him that my government wrote to me nothing about this, but that I did not believe that France thought I would inform about its intentions. After that it seemed to me that Major Hunter assumed a thoughtful aspect and, in doubt that he was hiding anything from me, I hastened to tell him that I did not understand the reason for his concern once he had assured me that England did not care about the Harar. Then as a person who makes a resolution he said to me: «I want to speak to you in all frankness. You know that I wanted the Harar to be occupied by England, until now I was annoyed by my Government's too many worries about other issues and by other oppositions so that I ended up proposing that if they did not want to grant me money and soldiers they would surrender to Italy. Now my Government is calling me to London; I will be obliged to say everything I think about it; I cannot assure you that England does not end up agreeing to occupy it. If London continues in its decision of not wanting to know, as I have reason to believe, then rest assured I will plead in your favor. I want to believe that if it comes to having to pay pounds sterling from 14 to 20 thousand, Italy will not be dismayed by this ». I replied that the Government of Rome will decide on this, but that if the sum is not greater, I hoped it will be easy to agree.

Ascending me, he risked the following question: "Why do you persist in staying in Massawa which does not present you with a certain future?" I told him that by now I believe my Government has no intention of axing it, that I would not even recommend it now that it costs a lot to have it and that, on the other hand, it is also a

question of self-love. Then he added, "What if it was an exchange with Zeila?" ". To this I replied: "I trust that we will have Zeila without having to surrender Massawa."

I then ended up begging him to keep our ambassador in London informed, for whom I gave him a letter, of what he could have done with his Government in our favor, reminding him once again that if England does not want to occupy that point, it is to be hoped. who will understand the convenience of not letting him take it from France.

He ended up assuring me that Italy enjoys his sympathy and that as far as he can he will always try to be useful to us as long as the English interests are not compromised.

If Italy were lucky enough to be able to occupy the Harar, I would no longer advise your VE to trust the information of Major Hunter on the ease of understanding with the emir present because if he had the courage just risen to power to intercept and destroying the letters that went to the coast is not too good a symptom of the docility of that young emir. It is probable that he will begin to believe himself something great already and would prefer to fight rather than surrender to fine words. Given this assumption, one should not be caught off guard and it will be better to prepare as if a fight were to be inevitable; if things are done peacefully, as I hope, so much the better. Notice in the meantime

VE that the Harar is defended by two Krupp guns and about 300 indigenous soldiers armed with Remington and that the emir holds a deposit of another 200 rifles with which he could arm as many men.

This information I received from my agent in Harar, perhaps they are not exact and therefore it will be good to consult Major Hunter in due time, who was always in charge of this whole affair4 •

*47 I Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, cit., Pp. 16-17.*

THE REGENT THE CIVIL COMMISSIONER IN ASSAB, PESTALOZZA. TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETIS 1

R. CONFIDENTIAL 623. Assab, 10 September 1885 (for the 25th).

Count Antonelli dall'Scioa writes me that a letter from Mr. Henry, a French consular agent in Zeila and Harar, addressed to King Menelik to announce his appointment and his intention to create relations between the coast and the Harar, has set the alarm in the Scioa; King Menelik is very concerned about the Harar and now that Egypt has abandoned that country, he would like it to be his, and not only will he grudgingly see, but will be openly hostile to any foreign occupation, considering the Harar as a door to the Shioa. For this reason, Count Antonelli does not hide the fact that when the Royal Government had those ideas, it would do well to call the Italians who are in Scioa back to the coast, so as not to create serious embarrassments.

King Menelik, however, occupying the Harar himself, would gladly see Zeila and Berbera, that is the coast, in the hands of Italy, as his most faithful friend.

Count Antonelli suggests in this regard that the Harar, being already organized on the European system, it would be easy to obtain that the administrative part was entrusted to one of our residents and that all the government employees were Italian, and so would be done with the king. Menelik what the English established with the ancient emir today in power, securing, without great expense and without venturing too much,

influence and supremacy in that country, and consolidating our position in the Scioa and our relations with the interior and all the countries float.

Without wishing to comment on such a delicate subject, however, I believe that in any eventuality a combined action with the king of Scioa can only be of advantage to those who decide to occupy or better still to exploit the country of Harar and the galla; having in hand the outlets to the sea, it will always be easy to come to advantageous pacts and creating from the beginning every facility to attract the interior to its ports, when the current is formed and established, it will be enough, if necessary, to mention to stop it to embarrass, those who have become accustomed to the comforts of well-being or the profits of traffic2 •

*79 1 Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, cit., Pp. 34-35.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FOREIGNERS, MALVANO, TO THE VICE CONSOLE IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD1

DSN Rome, 24 September 1885.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the report dated 4 September2 on the Harar to Your Eminence and I thank you for the information contained therein.

I will repeat to every good end that so far no clue hints that England is willing to see with a favorable eye the establishment of an Italian garrison in Zeila, an evidently indispensable condition for a possible undertaking above the Harar, especially after the conditions of that country have changed as considerably as it appears from the most recent reports of VS

104 • T. 1461, not published. 106 Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, cit., P. 64.

• R. sn, not published.

THE VICE CONSOLE IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETIS1

RSN Aden, September 26, 1885 (for October 13).

In response to your precious sheet of 6 September2, I do not know what the indications given by Major Hunter to Captain Carini are, but it would seem strange to me that they could be such as to make Your Eminence defer the thought of wanting to take care of the enterprise more.

I do not deny that recent events suggested greater precautions and more soldiers than was originally supposed, but once the country was occupied, five hundred men would still be too many.

The emir today maintains order with only three hundred indigenous people and still finds a way to make war on neighboring tribes, this is enough to reassure us that all those tribes are not very fearsome.

The question of the population of the Harar itself would remain, this population is one of the most peaceful, and it is certain that it would not resist, especially since the emir did not know how to capture their souls and today they tolerate it only because he has three hundred guns, this fact is also quite reassuring on the doubt that

a stale revolution could break out, because if they do not have the courage to turn against three hundred men, it means that these people feel very weak or at least they are very cowardly.

I am well convinced that not only is there nothing to fear from the population, but not even from the three hundred indigenous soldiers, and I believe their commander would be the first to open the doors when he would know that the Italian commander can make friends in that way.

It is true that with my last reports I also advised your Eminence to consider the company with a certain seriousness, but this for the utmost prudence and I said it was to use precautions such as to make the company safe, wanting to foresee the most difficult cases. while it may be that there is no need to fire a single shot.

If your VE thinks it is easy to get the consent of England now or later, I would ask you to secretly send here one or two officers who will take care of getting them easily to the Harar by passing them off as shopkeepers or touristes. who can send you a

117 'Ed.! N Italy in Africa, Ethiopta-Red Sea, volume V, c! T., Pp. 64-65.

• See no. 73.

detailed report on the difficulties of employment as well as on the resources of the country and nature of the inhabitants.

I am persuaded that this report will persuade VE not only that the difficulties of the enterprise are exaggerated, but at the same time will serve to convince VE of the considerable convenience of the conquest.

The two officers could come from Massawa if your VE believes that it can be done so that the matter remains secret, otherwise they would have to be sent from Italy.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FOREIGNERS, MALVANO, TO COUNT ANTONELLP

D. CONFIDENTIAL SN Rome, 27 September 1885.

I have the honor to note the receipt to VS of the report dated 23 June<sup>2</sup> in which she was pleased to inform me that King Menelik had decided to move to the conquest of Barar. The SV sent me at the same time a letter that the king of Scioa wrote to Our August Sovereign on the same subject, it will be translated soon, and you will be answered in due time.

In the meantime, it seems appropriate that you should be informed how the Emir of Harar has recently taken an attitude of absolute independence, and has tried to close all communication with the coast. As for Zeila, it is still garrisoned by the British and nothing, for now, indicates that they intend to abandon it.

THE VICE CONSOLE IN ADEN, V. BIENENFELD, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETIS

RSN Aden, 8 September 1885 (for 13 October).

The steamer arrived today from Zeila and I hasten to send you a copy of the news sent to me by my agent, Mr.Gasconi from that port.

The latest news from HRAR is again not very reassuring. The emir is influenced by a Greek certain Mussaja, who spurs him to rebel against the English, the brother of this Mussaja to Zeila was chosen by the French consul Henry to represent him during his absence.

France is very active and the conquest of the Harar is its main concern<sup>6</sup>

127 'With this dispatch Malvano, on the basis of what he learned from Corti (cf. no. 65),. In Vitava Catalani "is clearly expressing, on every propitious occasion, our thought on the permanent nature of our occupation, both to investigate the precise intentions of this

Government in this regard " .

THE REGENT THE CIVIL COMMISSARIAT IN ASSAB, PESTALOZZA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN MINISTER AI, DEPRETISI

R. 645. Assab, 8 October 1885 (for 26).

From reading the latest diplomatic documents received, I note that Captain Carini's report on the conversation he had with Major Hunter persuades the Royal Government to renounce any idea of occupation of Zeila and all the more so of the Harar. Although extraneous to those questions, I only allow myself to recall the importance that Zeila could have for relations with the Scioa; and although difficult to land, due to low funds, I believe however its anchorage is preferable to that of Ambaddo recently occupied by the French. In Ambaddo it is too much depth that pays off

146 'Ed. In Italy in Africa, Ethiopia-Red Sea, volume V, clt., Pp. 71-72.

difficult to anchor. On the other hand, the French who have already done so have already done so

an important step towards Zeila they will not give up the hope of occupying this last point at the first favorable opportunity which would ensure them the monopoly of the countries galla and the Scioa. And here referring to previous reports of mine and of Count Antonellil, I recall that King Menelik would have seen with pleasure Zeila occupied by the Italians while he would have seized

of the Barar.

The occupation of Zeila would seem to be a complement to the Italian action in the Red Sea, with particular regard to its commercial purpose, and would greatly attenuate the effects of the considerable competition that from the Gulf of Tagiura threatens Italian interests in the Scioa and surrounding area<sup>3</sup>

THE MINISTER OF WAR, RICOTTI TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BY ROBILANT

CONFIDENTIAL NOTE 2179 AFRICA. Rome, October 19, 1885 (for the same day).

In returning to your Eminence the letter which you were pleased to communicate to me with the distinctive marginal note, I have the honor to let you know that for my part I would not be alien to sending two officers to the Harar for the purpose of studying and reporting in detail on that region; and indeed I intend to keep this question

a word with General Genè before his departure for Africa, so that he will let me know in due time his opinion on the convenience or otherwise of sending the two officers from Massawa or Assab to the Harar<sup>1</sup> •

• For the reply, cf. n. 174.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, OF ROBILANT, THE MINISTER OF WAR, RICOTTI

CONFIDENTIAL NOTE SN Rome, 20 October 1885.

With yesterday's note, n. 21791, VE informed me that it would not be alien to sending two similar officers to the Barar to carry out a detailed study of that region.

If this resolution were taken, it would be better that the mission be started without delay, since news received by this ministry suggests that the king of Scioa, Menelik, intends to invade the Harar. It would also be desirable that no precaution to ensure the utmost secrecy about the mission itself was neglected2 •

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, OF ROBILANT, TO THE SUPERIOR COMMANDER IN THE RED SEA,  
GENE'

D. 63. Rome, 4 December 1885.

Last September a letter from Count Antonelli, dated by Ankober 23 giugno, was sent to this ministry, which contained the news that the king of Scioa had decided to move towards the conquest of the Harar.

Count Antonelli sent us at the same time a letter directed by King Menelik to our August Sovereign to communicate his intentions to him.

From the documents of the XXIII series that were communicated to it, VS was able to reveal how the Harar was, on the part of the Royal Government, the object of aspirations which, however, never took a very concrete form. This was prevented by the evasive answers that were made to us by England every time she was questioned by us about her intentions regarding the future of Zeila, with whose possession the question of the Harar is entirely connected.

255 to T. 2125, not published.

• T. 2124, not published. 256 T. 2130 of 4 December (sent on 2 from Massawa), unpublished.

In the current state of things we could not regret that the Barar was occupied by the king of Scioa, since this would close the way to the aspirations of another Power that seems to tend to that region in another way, and with the possession of it it would acquire a position. preponderant in an area of Africa where we already have important interests.

This thought is inspired by the answer made to King Menelik by our August Sovereign, of which she can take notice of the copy which is also enclosed here2 • Without pushing that king to the enterprise, the answer contains nothing that could hint at a regret our part for his intention.

Please VS to convey this royal letter to r. commissioner in Assab so that he could go on to the further destination with the first sure chance.

The news of the Scioa announces the imminent return to the coast of Count Antonelli, and therefore we will no longer be able to use his work for the delivery of the letter itself.

It will therefore be convenient to leave to the appreciation of the r. commissioner in Assab if it is appropriate to send the Scioa together with the royal letter: a usual copy which, in practice, is transmitted to whoever is in charge of their delivery. This should be done only in the event that Count Antonelli had, in leaving, entrusted the task of a kind of unofficial protection of our belongings to a person on whom he can fully rely.

257 1 See Series II, vol. XVII-XVIII, n. 979.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, OF ROBILANT, TO THE AFFAIRMAN IN LONDON, CATALANS

D. 1030. Rome, December 22, 1885.

Aden makes itself known as the latest news from Zeila announcing the death of Abu Bekr pasha, and the persistent dissent of the French and English consuls. The French consul would do, not only in Zeila, but also in the interior ~ at; .. tivissima propaganda to induce the natives to become French subjects.

They take advantage of it and seek the protection of whoever pays them the most. The French consul being wider in granting money, he also grouped the greatest number of subjects.

The Harar news is peaceful. The emir, however, exhausted himself of financial means. His religious fanaticism makes him devote all the money that comes to him, to build mosques, and persuaded him to force the entire Mohammedan population, even by force, to spend half the day in prayer, giving only the other half to work. . He is flattered that by this means finances will become prosperous againl •

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, OF ROBILANT, THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND TRADE, GRIMALDI

NOTE SN Rome, February 22, 1886.

In response to the note no. 12367/3264 \ I have the honor to submit a

VE the following considerations suggested to me by reading a report by r. consul in Aden, received by the last courier2 •

The authorities of Aden cite the lack of security in that region and the dangers to which the members of the expedition would face as the reason for the obstacle affecting the departure for the Harar of the expedition directed by Count Porro.

In this state of affairs, the insistence that it be used by us to wrest from the English authorities that consent which is denied for certain reasons would imply, on our part, that grave responsibility which, in my view, the King's Government must not to assume, and which, as far as I am concerned, I do not intend to accept.

The offices that the r. consul in Aden will with the local authorities must therefore be subject to the condition that they cease to regard the expedition as essentially dangerous, and Cavalier Bienenfeld has instructions to do so.

*359 2 T. 360 not published. 360 1 Not published. Guicclardlni considered it obligatory for the Italian government to intervene with the English authorities to win any opposition to the Porro expedition. 2 R. sn of 10 February, not published. In reality it is the vice consul.*

COUNT PORRO TO THE SUPERIOR COMMANDER IN THE RED SEA, GENE '

L. Aden, March 10, 1886.

Major Hunter, whom I saw only yesterday as he had been absent from Aden, permits all the expedition commanded by me to go to Zeila and continue as far as Gildessa. The conditions of the Harar do not allow to go further, given the growing fanaticism of the emir; and Signor Sacconi himself will leave as soon as possible from that point, stopping at Gildessa. Mr. Hunter will give me a letter for Captain King of Zeila to supply us with an Indian escort to Gildessa.

I hope, also with the help of Sacconi, to attract many local products to Gildessa, paying well for the first goods; especially considering the impediments and the fear, which puts the shopkeepers afloat in the Harar, Emir Abdullay. And so I hope to partially resolve the commercial issue. As far as the military mission is concerned, being Gildessa only two stops from Harar, I will have studied much of the way. In Gildessa there are often good galla horses, the best in the country; if I manage to buy a couple of excellent ones and put them in

good condition, I will be able, in a few hours, to recognize the whole area up to beyond Egn, which is within sight of Harar. Now, as SV Illustrissima knows, the task given to me by HE the Minister of War is not so much related to the recognition of the land in its tactical conditions, but to the resources that the country can present, for an intrusive body; so that the Zeila-Gildessa march and a few excursions to Gildessa itself may be enough to have a just criterion of these resources.

The only difficulty that still presents itself to the expedition is the search for the means to go to Zeila, being busy with the change of garrisons, the only merchant steamer, which makes the Aden-Zeila service. However, I hope, by paying a certain fee, to divert that steam in its next run Aden-Berberah, or at worst I will leave with an elder.

I take this opportunity to thank you: Mr. General, for the many kindnesses used to me and my colleagues during our stay in Massawa ...

*391 1 Not published.*

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BY ROBILANT, TO THE AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, CORTI

T. 388. Rome, April 25, 1886, 12.30 pm.

Un télégramme d'Aden<sup>1</sup> announces that l'émir du Harar à massacré tous les européens à Harar, tué à Gildessa les membres de l'expédition italienne directing par le comte Porro et pris Gildessa faisant prisonnière la garnison anglo-indienne de cette likes. Veuillez dermander et me télégraphier les renseignements du Cabinet anglais à ce sujet, ainsi que les mesures que il compterait take, le cas échéant, en suite de cette affaire<sup>2</sup> •

*422 1 See no. 417. 423 l T. 818, same date, not published. 2 By T. 830 of April 26, unpublished, Corti replied that the English Cabinet was awaiting further news to decide the measures to be taken.*

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BY ROBILANT, TO THE AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, CORTI

L. STAFF. Rome, May 14, 1886.

The massacre of the Porro expedition gives me a great deal of harm, and it will give no less to my successor if the new Chamber wants to send me for a walk; but do not be under any illusions, you too will have quite a bit of trouble.

Mind that public opinion in Italy (and this time I don't know how to blame him) does not allow England to wash its hands in this circumstance. It is within certain limits morally responsible for the emir who installed the Harar and therefore owes us his concurrence today or tomorrow to take revenge. In the meantime, let's wait to see what our naval officers will tell us that we sent to Zeila to do. the investigation and then we will see: but remember that you must not in any way show that we accept and recognize the well founded of that disinterest that it affects; an attitude of expectation is what suits us. Note, however, that I have no idea at all of going on an expedition to Harar: as things are at present, it would be a dupperie, and therefore I am not at all moved by the exaltation of spirits in Italy. But it is no less true that the question of Harar will sooner or later impose itself on us. If the British gave us Zeila, I would not hesitate to make the expedition, but as this will probably not happen, it is up to them to act in some way, especially since if they leave things as they are, it will be France that will take care of carrying remedy to that impossible situation.

I thought it was good to tell you all this, so that you can adjust your attitude accordingly, and without raising the question, do not leave it. not even fall: r, adjusted in sum so that we can always resume the conversation on that subject on the day in which it will be of our convenience. The fact is that here public opinion is also excited against England, and this essentially because the very painful event happened precisely during the

electoral struggle, that is, at the most opportune moment to make it an easy party weapon. You may have noticed that it is. Bonghi himself in the New Anthology excites the Government to make an expedition to avenge the unhappy slaughtered.

Frankly then England should be willing to support us in this matter, while for our part we have given him the widest complete participation in the Greek dispute, despite the fact that the line of conduct, which I had to follow, also causes me not a few embarrassments in the present struggle electoral.

For now I won't add anything else, it is enough for me to have made you known on the street my way of seeing is very particular and confidential, in order to be persuaded that you will keep the attitude best suited to circumstances in this regard.

I have many letters to write and little time to give correspondence, finally then shaking your hand.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BY ROBILANT, TO THE AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, CORTI

L. STAFF. Rome, May 30, 1886.

Certainly if you have anyone who wants colonial expansion in Africa, that's not me. Likewise, no one more than me intends to resist the passionate current that would entice me to take revenge from the massacre of the Porro expedition; however, it is no less true that for the dignity of the country, as well as for many other considerations, they cannot close their eyes on what happened to the Harar

or undoubtedly make it pass into the domains of history. It is absolutely necessary that the resolution that the King's Government will be to take is based on well-established facts and such as to clearly specify the respective responsibilities. Now the fact is that we are still a long way from that result.

First of all I will not hide from you that the conduct of that Major Hunter seems to me louche rather than not, and the same is true of the other English authorities in those regions. Indeed, it is clear that the Hunter did everything possible to ensure that our gunship refrained from going to Zeila to get information. Nor can the English authorities decline the responsibility that belongs to them in not having allowed Count Porro to provide himself with his own well-armed escort, as he intended to do. And despite the massacre, relations between the English authorities and the emir are not only maintaining good, but indeed seem to be very good. On all this it will be agreed that the London Cabinet is persuaded that it is necessary that, on its part, a prompt and fairly impartial inquiry be made.

It is clear that a very hostile current to England will be pronounced in Italy. In this regard, I must not hide from you that the German press is blowing into the fire, exciting the Italians to embark on an expedition regardless of the possible opposition of England. I will add to what the Prince of Bismarck made me read a dispatch to Keudelp in which, while making me express all his sympathy for the mournful event, he makes me say at the same time that if we make an expedition to the Harar to avenge Porro and c8mpagni, he will declare himself ready to give us all his moral support so that we do not create obstacles from other Powers! Est-ce clair?

More than anything else, this must prove to you that I cannot be satisfied with Lord Rosebery's fin de non recevoir, since, if obviously I do not open my mouth to anyone about these overtures of the Prince of

Bismarck, it is not less true that sooner or later they will be known. , and then if we are satisfied with the somewhat cavalier procédés of England in our regard, in this circumstance, the consequences could be serious.

As I told you in the beginning, I will resist and will resist as much as possible to the current that would like the expedition to the Harar and to the excitements in this regard that with unclear purposes come to us from the North: but on the other hand leave that serious matter just as it is. currently, it is not even possible. In either case, our relations with England could pay the price, and frankly I do not like it to be restarted with England that game which has already been so successful with France on the subject of Tunis.

Without opening your mouth, of course, regarding the communication that the chancellor made me do, it will be good that you find with all the desired tact, the means of opening the eyes of Lord Rosebery on the movement that the Germanic press is giving to push. at the Harar. After all, I wanted to tell you all this to clarify my thoughts and thus give you a guide that can make you better understand the intentions that inspire and will inspire my subsequent official dispatches relating to this unfortunate business.

In the meantime, I will not hide from you that I am having all the military studies done, and the consequent financial calculations, relating to a possible expedition to the Barar. That work is first of all necessary for me to be able to respond to the House to those questions that will not fail to address my opponents and friends too.

455 I See no. 445.

#### *THE VICE CONSUL IN ADEN, BIENENFELD, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MANCINI*

*R. 158. Aden, November 4, 1884 (per. 17).*

*I have the honor to confirm my letter last October 28 (1). The purpose of this letter is to notify Your Excellency that some days it is the French Government, with the help of the Governor of Obock and the commander of the ship there from the station, officially taking possession of the port of Sagallo between Zeila and Tagiura. For all that concerns Sagallo, I refer to the letter that I had the honor of sending to Your Excellency on December 3, 1882 (2).*

*The French Government, regardless of the purchase made two years ago by its subject Mr. Solleyet, believed it better to negotiate directly with the various sultans and managed to buy not only Sangallo but also all the other points compromising the Gulf of Tagiura. , however, Tagiura always remains with Egypt, which, withdrawing from the Red Sea, also goes to cede this port to England.*

*Days ago I had the visit of the French consul who, speaking to me about their new possession, he added that he does not believe that his government will have any trouble from England, indeed according to him the local government saw this with a good eye because the first political assistant Major Hunter congratulated him.*

*Here it is rumored that one of the Danakil tribes, siding with Abu Bekr Pasha of Zeila, are protesting against the tribe that ceded Sagallo to France and are threatening to come to blows, these discontented people say that they are the true masters of Sagallo and that they intend to sell him to England; naturally these difficulties are influenced by Abu Bekr, pasha perhaps on behalf of the British government. All this, however, will be of little use, now that the French flag is flying on that ground.*

*It seemed to me from the conversation of the French consul that he also believed that the province of Harar would eventually fall into the hands of France.*

*I am going to write confidentially about it to Count Antonelli, so that he warns the king of Scioa, who immediately that the Harar will be freed from the Egyptian troops and that the English, as well as it seems they have left it, will want to carry out his ancient idea by making it master.*

*The Harar is very rich and if King Menelik takes possession of it, I am sure that the Italians will be able to make a good profit.*

(1) -Not published. (2) -Not published in vol. XV-XVI of the ! Eerie IL

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*THE REGENT THE CIVIL COMMISSARIAT IN ASSAB, PESTALOZZA, THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN MANCINI (2)*

*R. 578. Assab, June 21, 1885 (for July 5).*

*I do not believe out of the question of returning to EV a copy of a letter received the other from a certain Signor Rosa, an Italian merchant established in Harar; that letter mentions a situation that the EV does not ignore and in relation to which I believe it is useful to transcribe here some passages of a letter that Count Pietro Antonelli wrote to me from Scioa on April H.*

*The count says: 'Here has come the news of the evacuation of the Egyptian troops from the Harar and of no English interference; King Menelik returns to his ancient and cherished project to take possession of it and told me: «Italy should occupy Zeila and Berbera, leaving the Harar to me». I think the advantages of such a company would be many. A representative of ours could be put in the Harar for the protection of commercial interests and for everything to proceed according to our civil laws, always making the king of Scioa appear, sending there a good nucleus of our nationals for the various services to which they would not be acts the Abyssinians.*

*«In this way the very important road would open, Zeila, Harar, Ciarciar, Ittu Galla and Ankober, already all in the hands of King Menelik, but closed today due to the Egyptian occupation. From Harar to Ankober the country to cross is rich and healthy, so that one reaches Scioa having only about 200 kilometers of desert to do and the whole country is beautiful, rich in vegetation and very cultivated and inhabited ».*

*Already in my previous report no. 505 of 18 February (1) I mentioned the usefulness for Italy of combining something in Zeila and on the Somali coast in agreement with King Menelik. Knowing how much the Royal Government is interested in the question, I do not insist on the subject, hoping to see soon the completion of the work begun by the EV*

ATTACHED

OTTORINO ROSA, THE CIVIL COMMISSIONER AT ASSAB TO THE REGENT, PESTALOZZA

L. STAFF. Harar, May 18, 1885.

*In a few days the last soldiers of the Egyptian warrior will leave for Zeila, where they will arrive by the first half of next June. All the horseback riders and beasts of burden will be sold to Zeila, in a hurry and fury, before we take boarding for Egypt.*

*This will be an excellent opportunity to buy everything at a very convenient price; and since I know that our soldiers in Mass! liua need it for the expedition to Sanea4z, so I believe I will do something useful to notify the SV so that it can take advantage of it as much as it deems necessary. There will be a hundred horses, about sixty mules and as many camels.*

*The country is completely ruined. Trade is dead at all, Zeila's road impassable. Many caravans looted! Quarrels and many people killed. The English resident with Somali soldiers, unable to put order and security. The Emir and the Hararins who do not want to know about English authority; probable agreement between somali soJ.data and g11. harras all Muslim fanatics. A revolt with serious danger for the Europeans is foreseen. Whoever is able to save himself to Zeila with the Egyptian pasha.*

*As a final salvation, hopefully m a French occupation, since Italy does not want to know and prefers the ungrateful and arid countries to the very fertile and profitable.*

(1) -Cf. n. 961. (2) -Ed. in *Italy in Africa, Ethiopia - Red Sea*, volume V, c1t., pp. 2-3.

COUNT ANTONELLI, TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MANCINI (1)

RSN Ankober, June 23, 1885 (for September 26).

*At the beginning of last May a letter from Obock signed "Henry, consular agent of the French Republic in Harar and dependencies: ... This letter was only a simple participation that Mr. Henry gave to this king of his appointment and he prayed to notify the Danakil and Somali chiefs so that they would facilitate his mission which was to establish commercial relations by opening a way of communication between Obock Harar and the Scioa.*

*This fact was judged by the king and his leaders as a threat of a forthcoming French occupation in the Harar.*

*As I already mentioned in the EV in my letter of 11 April 85 (2), the king, hearing that the Egyptian garrison was abandoning the Harar, proposed to go and occupy it as soon as possible. Today it is believed that after the months of the great rains (July-September) the Shia expedition will take place without fail.*

*Seeing the resoluteness with which the king assured me that he wanted to carry out this ancient project of his, I thought it convenient to ask him to consult his friend and ally the Italian Government in this regard.*

*Today I received from Antoto, where the king is presently, a letter for SM which I am posting here enclosed to the EV (3) in which the reasons that led him to take possession of the Harar are explained as soon as possible.*

15 December 1893 -- Adua. March 31, 1895

**813**

**SECRET REMINDER 1**

Rome, January 5, 1895.

The action of British politics on the Somali coast of the Gulf of Aden and in the hinterland behind it certainly cannot be said to be in harmony with Italian interests in the Red Sea; it does not seem to take into account the advantages that Italy's political and military action has brought to the Anglo-Egyptians, threatened by the Mahdist invasion.

The story is well known. The British government advised Egypt, shocked by the events in Sudan, to abandon the province of Harar and the adjacent countries, an abandonment which, with the direct intervention of English officials, became a *fait accompli* at the end of 1884; he entrusted its government to the Emir Abdullay, who ruined the country with every way of arbitration and harassment, invaded by a morbid animosity against the European element, to the point of ordering and carrying out the massacre of a peaceful Italian expedition led by Count Porro.

Simultaneously with the eviction of the Egyptian troops, France placed its consular agent in Harar (November 1884), and, taking advantage of the moment in which the Egyptian garrison of Tagiura, isolated and unprotected, withdrew to Zeila, had the French flag hoisted in Tagiura, and declared his protectorate on the coast from Ras Ali to Ghubbet-Karab (January 1885).

The emir's bad government caused the coup of the king of Scioa, who in the first days of 1887 invaded the Harar and conquered it.

Thereafter, French activity in the coast of the Gulf of Aden and in the Harar took place in various ways, giving rise to the known incidents that preceded the Anglo-French agreement resulting from the notes exchanged on February 2 and 9, 1888, by virtue of of which, together with the port of Ras Djibouti (the safest anchorage along the coast between Bab-el-Mandeb and Berbera), France acquired the means of fighting more directly and more effectively the Italian influence in those regions.

Tunisian, cit., p. 130. 813 1 From a note in the margin it appears communicated in London, Berlin, Cairo, Baratieri, Ford and Biilow. Some elements are taken from a memo by Nerazzini, dated January 3, not published.

In that agreement, the two contracting parties undertook, as is known, mutually, not only not to annex, but also not to place the Harar under their protectorate, and also to prevent the slave trade and the importation of dust and weapons in the territories under their authority.

But the commitments undertaken have not been kept: France, while intending by all means to put the Harar under its influence, passes without obstacle, and continuously, through the Djibouti-Abassuin-Biacaboba route, cannons, machine gunner, weapons and ammunition of all kinds for Menelik.

And, while the British residents of Zeila have not improved the traffic and safety conditions of the Zeila-Menda-Biacaboba road (which is in the British sphere of influence and is the best in all respects), and they never neglect warn European traders how, beyond ten kilometers from Zeila, they assume no responsibility for either people or substances, the French attract traders to Djibouti by establishing a bi-weekly camel-riders service between that port at their own expense and Harar, and have obtained an order from Menelik which obliges all Abyssinian traders heading from Scioa to the coast, and vice versa, to abandon the English road that leads to Zeila, and instead take the French one to Djibouti, although it is longer, more expensive and less secure. The robbed caravans immediately receive adequate compensation from the French government, which pays in cash the value of the goods lost or stolen in the area of its influence.

All this assures to France the commercial monopoly with the Harar and the Scioa; all this constitutes a situation openly adverse to Italian interests, and facilitates the accelerated march towards the African centers of the Nation which tries in every way to deprive Italy of the advantages deriving from its legitimate position in Africa.

England, which cannot ignore the French program, openly confessed by that press, the expansion towards Harare Abyssinia, however, does not leave us the direct means of providing for our interests, and of averting, with an effective basis of operation in the Gulf of Aden, the danger that the Harar will in fact fall into the hands of the French.

On the contrary, he leaves them a free hand, renouncing the sending of the English delegate in charge of settling the questions of the frontier tribes with Makonnen, warning him, it is true, that the sending of the British delegate could give France an incentive to send, too, a mission in the Harar.

Thus, it sometimes seemed that London almost wanted to consider the situation of Italy in Africa as an obstacle to transactions between England and France, owing to the numerous colonial issues pending between those two Powers in the various parts of the African continent.

This would explain the long resistance found in London to define in agreement with Italy the respective spheres of influence in East Africa; as well as the no less lengthy negotiations that led to the two protocols of March and April 1891, and to that of May 1894.

The policy of agreements and transactions followed, especially now, by the London Cabinet towards France, certainly does not contribute to leading the latter to a disinterestedness from the Abyssinian countries, nor does it actually allow us to preserve, in the meantime, that limited sphere of influence recognized to us by the three aforementioned protocols.

Indeed, the French take advantage of the attitude of England to plot in Abyssinia to our detriment, which they have as centers of operation Obock, Djibouti, Barar and Scioa.

The same statement made by Lord Kimberley in Paris, with the instructions sent to the Marquis Dufferin on July 17, 1894, to consider in full force the agreement of 1888 relating to the Barar, while it tended, it is true, to respond to the objections raised by France following the Anglo-Italian protocol of 5 May 1894 and the attached declaration, it aimed, not to confirm, not to give support, not to give value to the declaration itself about the Barar, which, on the contrary, was kept secret upon request France, who wanted it to be dead, but only to ensure that France remained as long as possible in the terms of the Anglo-French agreement of 1888. Meanwhile, France, taking advantage of the condescension that

England showed her, subsidized and armed Menelik, and urged him to arrange an attack on the Italians with the Tigrinya leaders (we know the relative correspondences), contemporaneous with the first move of the dervishes.

It is not enough. Recently, a part of the English press denounced as an explanation of the Italian influence what was nothing but a French intrigue, when it attributed to the Italian government the project to push the emperor of Ethiopia to extend his dominions in the Niliaca region up to Fashoda, at the confluence of the Nile with the Bahr-el-Gazal<sup>2</sup>. The French aims and aims were exchanged and presented to the readers as Italian projects and intrigues.

After the defensive occupation of Cassala in accordance with the protocol of 1891, the French press itself insistently, with the help of some English newspapers, announced an Italian march on Cartum; and the French agents led Menelik to believe that England would be grateful to him to arrest, with an Abyssinian diversion, the supposed Italian enterprises in Sudan.

Other special facts are not lacking.

One can recall the permission granted to Messrs. Nolde and Kreutz (Russian expedition proper) by the Foreign Office to leave Berbera for an exploration, through Somali countries, to lake Rodolfo, with 200 rifles and 600 crates of ammunition, while it was evident (and it was also written to Sir Clare Ford) that in the current state of relations between us and Menelik, England, which, with Zeila, guards, so to speak, the gates of Barar and southern Abyssinia could, in our and his interest, take a different attitude.

In a very recent communication, the British Embassy in Rome, while asking us if we want the permission to import weapons from Zeila to be temporarily removed from Ras Makonnen, adds immediately afterwards that, however, in any case, this prohibition would be illusory, as the governor of Barar could procure weapons from French ports. The consideration is correct, but it must also be considered that the introduction of weapons into Abyssinia from an English port has a very different meaning in the eyes of those populations, as an indication that England is not a friend of Italy, from what it would have if it happened from the ports of our adversaries.

Hence the lack of a more defined and decisive attitude on the part of England in our favor, for Abyssinian things, gives rise to the conviction in Abyssinia

See n. 697.

that there is not in fact in Africa between England and Italy that commonality of views and interests which by now irrevocably inspired, with declarations to Parliament and with the attitude taken in Cassala, our colonial policy; indeed, that Great Britain is watching impassively at the provocative spectacle of the intrigues that the French arouse against Italy in all the regions whose protectorate was regularly recognized by Europe.

Evidence of the dispositions of the Abyssinian public spirit in this regard is evident in the recent direct dispatch of letters from Ras Mangascià to the Queen of England and to Kitchener Pasha. 4

The evidence of the facts is such that it cannot have escaped the British Government.

The action is known that, under the eyes of England, at its possessions of Zeila and Berbera, French agents directed by Mr. Lagarde, governor of Obock, are currently explaining from that port and from

Djibouti to the Harar, to the detriment of the interests of Italy and England. To demonstrate how the action of France in Abyssinia is in open contradiction with the political position that the Spuller dispatch of 20 October 1889 recognized us in Ethiopia, when we were notified of art. 17 of the Treaty of Ucciali of 2 May 1889, there is also the activity of those same French agents for whom every means is good to discredit our country before Menelik and his leaders and to excite them against us.

There was no lack of those who insinuated into Menelik's soul that Italy remained isolated in its political and military action in Africa, both in the face of the Mahdist invasion and in the face of the advance of France from the side of the Gulf of Aden, having England completely disinterested in this regard, allowing France to increasingly assert its influence against Italy, in a point of the coast contiguous to an English possession.

The French government allows Russia to exploit the Djibouti plant as a base of operations to push certain ecclesiastical and military missions into Ethiopia which more or less openly hint at assuming a political and official character; and public opinion already fits the concept of the cession of a port to Russia in the Gulf of Tagiura itself.

But one volume would not be enough to contain the long enumeration of the facts integrating the French action against Italy in Obock-Djibouti, in Harare in Scioa. As an example, the following may suffice:

conferral of Abyssinian decoration to Mr. Lagarde (March 1894), and of the cross of the legion of honor to Monsignor Taurin de Cahagne, head of the French apostolic mission of Harar, in reward for services rendered at Makonnen;

concession to the Franco-African company, directed by the French merchant Savouré, of the extraction of salt from Lake Assai, on which Menelik obtained, thanks to our action, the recognition of property rights, and next to which the Italian flag flew (March 1893 );

Ras Makonnen's trip to Djibouti by order of Menelik (April 1893) and subsequent conference with Lagarde on the question of borders, for the French railway Djibouti-Harar-Scioa, for the recognition of the French protectorate on the

missionaries from Harar, and to lay the foundations of a pact aimed at making Djibouti a supply port at the complete disposal of the emperor of Ethiopia;

an impediment to ras Makonnen from going to Zeila and Aden, as was his keen desire;

recent arrival in Djibouti of the French steamer "Pei-ho" with on board an inspector of the Maritime Messengers, to study the question of the transfer from Obock to Djibouti of the French agency and to prepare the ground for an active trade between the Scioa, the Harar and the French coast.

In Scioa the anti-Italian propaganda is also done on a larger scale; it can certainly be said that it is organized.

The shopkeeper Chefneux, the unofficial person in charge of France, the shopkeeper Savouré, head of the Franco-African Company, Mr. Mondon de Vidailhet, journalist, Menelik's informant, the engineer Ilg, not to mention others less important, have addressed the Court of Addis -Abeba a dense network of operations, which branch off from Scioa to Harar and extend to Tigrè;

the Chefneux and the Ilg endeavor in France and Switzerland to bring Menelik into the Postal Union; they have him, here to print stamps, there to mint coins (100,000 thalers) with his effigy (August 1894) which have already been sent to the emperor (November 1894); they send him weapons and ammunition (the last shipment was in October 1894); obtain the concession of a railway from Djibouti to Harar;

Savouré stipulates a contract with Menelik relating to transport by wagon between Djibouti, Harar and the Scioa (April 1894); the President of the French Republic sent an official letter directly to Menelik on 5 August 1894;

The LGW is going to Paris in these days on a political mission, and has very recent orders to send a supplement of weapons and ammunition to Menelik for Djibouti as a matter of urgency.

The political action of the French missionaries in Tigrè, Monsignor Coulbeaux and Monsignor Crouzet, who informed our enemies of the movements of the Italian troops and thus helped the Dogali massacre, is now matched by that of the French missionaries of Acrur, who ~ by voice commune of the Colony ~ pushed Batha Agos to rebellion. On the other hand, to the letters which in November 1893, February and March 1894, Messrs Mondon de Vidailhet and Chefneux sent from France to Menelik to give him false information about us and to push him against us, happens immediately afterwards, with admirable coincidence, Menelik's active correspondence with the Tigrin leaders, which had as its epilogue the defection and rebellion of the said leader of our Okulè-Kusai bands, Batha Agos, defeated and killed in Halai last December, and the threatening attitude of Ras Agos and Ras Mangascià, against whom we need to send reinforcements to Governor Baratieri. And the Ethiopian spirit has been so well aroused against us that it no longer takes into account the traditional hatred of dervishes; so much so that the latest information shows that Mangascià sent some of his messengers to Ghedaref, where they were well received by Ahmed Fadil.

England thus passively assists from Zeila to a coalition of the Abyssinians with the dervishes under Franco-Russian auspices.

The work of destruction, on the part of France, of our agreements with England of May 5, 1894, is now in fact carried out with the Russian military mission, intended: to effectively remove the Harar from any possibility of Italian protection; to establish an effective Franco-Russian protectorate in Abyssinia, giving military instructors to the soldiers of the negus, and establishing Orthodox missions among its clergy; to support the leaders of Tigray on a southern Abyssinia hostile to Italy, ready to attack Eritrea, whenever it is grappling with the dervishes.

The French government has guaranteed the Russian mission the safety of the road from Djibouti to the Harar. An upcoming event is openly announced in Paris, towards Tigrè

or towards Sudan, which puts an end to the policy of loyal intelligence with England, frankly proclaimed, which until now had no echo in London, by the present Italian Ministry.

*812 1 From Central Museum of the Risorgimento. Crispi Cards, small autograph; and. in SERRA, The question*

*813 2 See nos. 531 and 538.*

*813 4 See no. 721.*

**DOCTOR NERAZZINI TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BLANC 1**

MEMORY. Rome, January 26, 1895.

The victories of Coatit and Senafè, due to their political effects, must be considered from two points of view, one local and immediate, that is

566 refers to Tigrè; the other general, or rather Ethiopian, who has not yet had time to manifest himself. And this responds to the circumstances that gave rise to the new state of affairs represented by a local coefficient, that is, the rising into arms of Ras Mangascià with all he could gather of armed men in order to attempt a decisive blow, encouraged by the confidence that a large part of our forces were to remain committed against the hordes of the caliph; by a general coefficient, represented by the suggestive action of the emperor of Ethiopia, who, without going directly into the field, because he could not and perhaps never will, pushed Mangascià against the Italian forces. And this with a dual purpose to be achieved whatever the outcome of the enterprise; that is, or to make suffer a serious failure to

Ras Mangascià was defeated and his Tigrinya coalition destroyed: I say destroyed because, while Ras Mangascià could always freely withdraw from Adigrat to Makallè, and keep at least one prestige larva, he was reduced in the Tembien mountains like a bandit, who he can no longer hold the open countryside, and not as a sovereign trying to regain his strength and keep the trust of his subjects.

Due to the natural Abyssinian tendencies, where the masses generally follow the victorious and desert the fate of those who cannot give further advantages and material resources, a period of true dissolution begins in Tigrè; leaders who detach themselves from the main leader to offer themselves as our subjects, or to swell the forces of other leaders for whom they hope for the possibility of power; clergy who are agitated and moved as a factor of peace and forgiveness; farmers and merchants who run where there is greater traffic safety and greater defense from possible aggressions and raids. Result of this, ever greater weakening of their own Tigrinya forces, a growing need in the populations of a stable and strong government that protects their material existence,

And since the firm attitude of prudent recollection that General Baratieri assumed after his victories, the only one who can judge what to do, being in possession of all the elements of judgment, gives me courage to speak, so I speak, exposing how compliant it is. to my convictions this attitude of expectation for which we can lose nothing and much we can still gain, giving time to the natural evolution of Tigrinya things, to the clearer manifestation of Menelik's intentions, to the accentuation perhaps of a new and more powerful discord between the Tigrinya chiefs and the emperor, while we acclimatize the newly launched troops to the new environment and new contacts, we increase the cadres and the organization of those indigenous troops that alone lend themselves to movements in the periphery of our possession, and we are preparing for the definitive resolution of another problem, that of reducing to impotence the reaction that inevitably threatens us from the side of the dervishes.

The territorial expansion, so easily carried out at this time even with a limited number of forces, I do not know if it would produce for us the effects of greater solidity in our possession concerning the double problem we have to solve today, hostility against Abyssinia, hostility against the mahdism.

Since we have no way of expressing any military action in the south that objectively concerns the emperor of Ethiopia, it is no less true that we must not be disinterested in political action. As for the emperor, even assuming that the idea of the taking of arms of Mangascià was born from him, I do not believe that he can resolve to an effective action, at least for the present year, since all the information confirms that he is forwarded to the Galla countries of the south, while the season is too advanced to allow direct movements to appear on the front of our borders. Even the sudden appearance of Ras Alula in the Tigrinya field of action seems unlikely to me because he is as far away as the emperor, because coming from the Scioa he would have to bring a good backbone of troops with him, and as usual the distance is great and the season is well advanced. Since Ras Alula would then have to move on the initiative of the emperor, he might have already done so in order not to let Ras Mangascià fight alone. Ras Alula's appearance today would be belated as it would not be too easy to find many followers after such a complete defeat of Tigrinya weapons.

Personally, I repeat, I do not believe in Menelik's intervention for this year, and I think it is unlikely even for future years. Menelik has made a disastrous policy of expansion and the strength of his Empire is in inverse reason of the extension you want to give it. Moving troops from the rich villages of the Harar, the Ittu, and the other Galla provinces around the Scioa, would mean losing everything and losing the best for the uncertain and less good. At this moment, an unfavorable wind is blowing for Menelik, since the old Ethiopian conservative party reproaches him for his busyness with the European Powers, the treaties made and the new ones he intends to make; the projects of telegraphs, bridges, railways; its oscillation in pushing for friendship more of one than of another Power;

We must wait, and very carefully, what will be the effects of the news that the emperor will have on the defeat of Mangascià, since he will certainly have to assume a less nebulous attitude than usual, or boldly break off relations with the Italian government by giving himself an attitude undoubtedly hostile, or by disavowing what Mangascià did, which is more probable.

Meanwhile, since relations with Menelik are not actually broken, and since up to now we have always held an attitude towards him that made him imagine that his friendship and the confirmation of his Treaty of Uccialli were indispensable for our safety in Eritrea. . It would not seem out of place to us to give him the announcement of the victory, making him hear the real word, but with a new and unexpected intonation, almost in these terms:

«When my soldiers and my generals were busy fighting the infidels, our common enemies, Ras Mangascià and other leaders of Tigrè, breaking the friendship promised with a sacred oath, they raised their weapons against us. My army with three days of fighting won and destroyed them, and Divine Providence gave me the victory, allowing them to be punished by my hand.

those who break the sworn faith over the Holy Gospels. I am happy to send this news to Your Majesty, being sure to do her a great pleasure. "

This letter does not signify either Shana politics or an aggressive act towards the emperor: but for the emperor, who has a mind to understand it, it will have the strength to mean to him that we feel strong

in our rights, firm for any eventuality, and tired of the uncertainties of him and of the ingratitude shown towards a government that elevated him to the throne of Ethiopia.

One could almost do the same with ras Makonnen 2 with another purpose, that is to remove him from that reserved attitude to which he is held, knowing that a strong court party tries to compromise him towards the emperor, accusing him of agreements towards the Italian government in the event of future successions to the throne of Ethiopia. Our relations with Ras Makonnen have a double value; and for his personal position as a very strong leader, of royal lineage and therefore with the possibility of a dynastic succession; and as governor of a very rich province, the Harar, which has its political borders with two European powers, England and France, and therefore represents the way by which an antagonistic influence can appear in southern Ethiopia.

If the emperor can have absolute certainty about ras Makonnen's intentions and especially that his relations with the Italian government are broken, then he would acquire great freedom of action and movement. If he does not have this certainty, the emperor is absolutely immobilized in the geographical circle where he is now. Hence the absolute importance of our active policy towards the Harar and Makonnen; politics, which if it manages to bring Makonnen into the orbit of our interests, so much the better; and if it fails, let it at least achieve the purpose of compromising Makonnen in the eyes of the emperor.

Makonnen is not easy to open his soul, and in political negotiations he is of an unfortunate prudence. He rules in Harar with disastrous economic criteria, and perhaps, indeed certainly, he understands it himself. But he does it to meet the constant needs of the emperor who asks and always asks him for money and taxes, believing that the Harar is an inexhaustible source of wealth. If Makonnen did not pay the emperor even more than what the emperor asks, the party opposed to the ras would make Menelik believe that he is pooling money for his own account and for personal purposes, and therefore would risk losing the government of that province. Here are the reasons for the disastrous administration of Harar: the emperor has an insatiable appetite, and Makonnen feeds him by weighing his hands on the country he rules.

Makonnen's position towards Queen Taitù, who is Minerva's head in Shia politics, since Menelik acts only through her suggestion, is tense and extremely tense. There is a reason for deep hatred caused by domestic facts, and this tension that builds up will one day explode and explode with unexpected and violent facts. This must be held in high regard by us, and by watching, to wait for the events.

Now, in the current situation of things, it being neither possible nor opportune to take any official step towards Makonnen and much less to send anyone on our initiative, we must however offer him the means to keep in touch and in relationship with us. Not being able to act too much in Zeila, waiting for the English government to consent

in that port a modus vivendi more profitable for our interests, the appearance in those waters of one of our warships, which was held on a cruise between Perim, Zeila and Aden, would be very useful.

l) Why a warship in the waters of Zeila would have a moral effect on Menelik, who just today sends letters and gifts to the English government, assuming he is disinterested in our politics in Ethiopia: and knowing a ship of ours in Zeila would distract him from this opinion and again it would make him believe that there is always perfect agreement between our Government and the English one.

2) Because with a ship in that port it would be possible to establish an excellent information service, also for what is happening in Djibouti when the Russian mission is about to arrive.

3) Because, without giving suspicion and without inconvenience, a political agent of our Government could put himself in direct relationship with the unofficial agent of Harar, and then inform of everything quickly by means of the Perim telegraph cable both the governor of Eritrea, both the central government. So much the better then, indeed with the main purpose to be achieved, if this agent can put himself in direct relationship with Makonnen himself, and in certain eventualities when the course of things requires it, have a meeting with him.

A more detailed study can be made on how to reach in the most complete way the political aim that is to be inferred from the presence of an Italian ship in Zeila. However, in order for the matter to take on a more political nature, the English Government, CIO, would have to agree and consent to it, which would constitute a considerable progress in the definitive settlement of our interests in the Gulf of Aden '.

*880 1 See nos. 855 and 856. 881 1 Ed. In LV 92, pp. 5-9.*

*881 2 See no. 897.*