gives them an opportunity to make the League a stronger instrument of international action. If the League members resolutely pressed toward this goal, the cooperation of the democratic non-member States might be expected to do more than offset Italian non-participation.

Coming after three days of elaborate

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staging, Mussolini's fervid announcement last Saturday night of Italy's withdrawal from the League of Nations was almost an anti-climax. opinion, which had been told in loud impending official whispers of an epochal event, was a little let down when it learned that the anticipated decision of the Fascist Grand Council to quit the "tottering temple" Geneva was not coupled with some Even the other more startling move. Fascists who filled the Piazza Venezia are reported to have shown less than the usual enthusiasm exhibited for such occasions. Italy's formal resignation from the

League is, in itself, as informed British opinion construes it, "little more than de jure recognition of a de facto situation." For two years—since the League condemned Italy's invasion of Ethiopia —Italian representatives have been absent from all important League meetings, and Italian influence at Geneva has been used to sabotage the League's work. The interesting question, therefore, is: Why, after so long a time, should the open break come now? Doubtless for a number of converging Mussolini had become reasons. creasingly exasperated by the refusal of Great Britain and France and the other League members to recognize the conquest of Ethiopia. This failure "to make a gesture of reparation" he attributes, in part, to the "fatal atmosphere" of Geneva, in which forces "inimical to Italy and our revolution" thrive. Whatever the nuisance value to Italy of its League membership, there is no denying the expected psychological effect of this dramatic evidence of unison with its allies, Germany Mussolini's indignant deand Japan. nial that withdrawal was the result of pressure from Berlin is weakened by the statement in Col. Gen. Hermann Goering's National Zeitung "that Italy's future foreign policy had been framed in an agreement with Chancellor Hitler last September." There is the additional factor of the reported worsening of the Italian economic situation, a diversion from which may have been needed. The full effects of Italy's rejection of the League cannot yet be foreseen. Germany, rejoicing, considers it a re-

inforcement of the Fascist international. But that this single act will of itself matter greatly is doubtful. The League will not necessarily be weakened. On the contrary, Italy's absence may strengthen it by removing one of the chief obstacles to effective action at Geneva and diminishing the danger of defection by any of the smaller democratic States. None of them will wish to bear the onus of following the example of Fascist Italy. As for Great Britain and France, it is hardly to be expected that they will forthwith recognize Ethiopia. Nothing fundamental appears

have been changed by Mussolini's act. It closes no doors, because Italy, under the constitution of the League, cannot complete its withdrawal for two years. It establishes no new ties. more carefully Mussolini's resounding phrases are studied against the background of the diplomatic manoeuvres of recent months, the more does this latest move appear primarily as one more play in the Fascist game of bluff. But withdrawal from the League may self-defeating. frees the It **prove** democratic and peaceful States from the obstructionist tactics of the last of the Fascist Powers at Geneva, and