The League of Nations did nothing against Italy’s invasion of Abyssinia.’ How far do Sources A to D support this view?

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Q. B

Source A, a speech by the Italian dictator Mussolini given on 2nd October 1935. Mussolini was speaking shortly after the invasion and disagrees that the League of Nations did nothing to help Abyssinia. He states that there is talk of sanctions against Italy as opposed to the League recognising Italy’s rights to invade. Furthermore, it can be suggested that Mussolini was exaggerating the chances of the possibility of another war to gain support behind his invasion of Abyssinia. Mussolini is also thought to make Italy look like the victim as he says that they only got “a few crumbs” and that they were in the right to invade as they had been defeated when they invaded in 1896. Abyssinia He goes further to state that he does not believe that either France or Great Britain will agree on sanctions and risk putting Europe back into a catastrophic conflict or war. Mussolini quotes, “an African country universally branded as being without the slightest shadow of civilization.” This evidently means that he feels that nobody will be willing to help the small African nation of Abyssinia. He goes further to state that any economic or military sanctions placed on Italy will be met by retaliation.

Source B, are the measures taken by the League of Nations after the invasion by Italy of Abyssinia. It states that no arms, munitions or implements of war can be exported or re-exported to Italy. This means the League did implement sanctions against Italy. Although Italy was already well armed and such sanctions would do little to affect her power over the small nation of Abyssinia. Much stronger sanctions could have been implemented. For example, Britain could have blockaded the Suez Canal and prevented Italian troops invading through her colony Egypt. Economic sanctions on the import of oil could have been more affective. The weakness of the league was brought on by the fear of many European nations mainly Great Britain and France of the conflict escalating into another world war.

Source C, a speech given to the League of Nations by the Emperor of Abyssinia, Haile Selassie. He states strongly that the League did little or nothing to help his country from the invasion by Italy. He believes that small states have the right to their independence and should be protected through collective security led by a strong League. This was clearly not the case in Abyssinia where the larger nations for their own interests turned a blind eye to the invasion. Selassie is seen to almost beg for help with the knowledge that it will not be given as a weak ‘unimportant’ African country is not worth risking a world war for. Furthermore, it also implies that even though Britain and France believe that Abyssinia is pointless he still believes that they will help as he has got no one else to rely on and is