Haile Selassie, born Tafari Makonnen Woldemikael on July 23, 1892, in Ejersa Goro, Ethiopia, was a member of the Solomonic Dynasty, which claimed descent from the biblical King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. His lineage was a significant aspect of his rule, as it provided both a divine and historical claim to the Ethiopian throne. Selassie's claim to the Solomonic lineage was a central part of his imperial ideology and played a key role in the legitimization of his reign among his subjects and within the broader context of Ethiopian history. Crowned Emperor of Ethiopia on November 2, 1930, Haile Selassie's reign was marked by efforts to modernize the country. He implemented Ethiopia's first written constitution in 1931, which limited the powers of the nobility, created a parliamentary system, and codified a legal framework for civil rights. Despite these reforms, the power structure remained highly centralized under his rule. His modernization efforts extended to education, with the creation of the first university in Ethiopia, and to infrastructure, with the construction of roads and the introduction of modern technology. Haile Selassie is perhaps best known for his resistance against the Italian invasion in 1935. When Italy, under Benito Mussolini, attacked Ethiopia, Selassie appealed to the League of Nations for assistance. His eloquent speech in 1936, in which he warned that 'It is us today. It will be you tomorrow,' underscored the threat of fascism to global peace. Although the League failed to act effectively, Selassie became an international symbol of resistance against aggression, earning him Time magazine's Man of the Year title in 1935. During his exile from 1936 to 1941, after the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie spent his time in Bath, England, planning his return to power. He continued to lobby for international support and maintained the struggle for Ethiopian sovereignty. His efforts culminated in the successful collaboration with British forces during World War II, which led to the liberation of Ethiopia and his triumphant return to Addis Ababa in 1941. This period of exile did not diminish his resolve but instead strengthened his international stature. Haile Selassie's reign saw the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, with its headquarters in Addis Ababa. As a founding member, he was instrumental in its creation, envisioning it as a platform for African nations to resolve conflicts and coordinate efforts towards decolonization and development. The OAU, now the African Union, laid the groundwork for a continental unity that Selassie hoped would empower African nations on the global stage and promote pan-Africanism. The Rastafari movement, which began in Jamaica in the 1930s, venerates Haile Selassie as a messianic figure. This belief stems from a prophecy attributed to Marcus Garvey, a black political leader, who spoke of a future African king who would be a redeemer. When Selassie was crowned, many saw this as the fulfillment of Garvey's prophecy. Despite Selassie's own disavowal of any divine status, the Rastafari movement continues to regard him as the embodiment of God, or 'Jah,' and a symbol of African identity and pride. In 1960, Haile Selassie faced a coup d'état attempt while on a state visit to Brazil. The coup was led by the Imperial Bodyguard and was partly driven by demands for reform and discontent with the slow pace of modernization. Although the coup failed, it exposed the underlying tensions in Ethiopian society and the challenges Selassie faced in balancing tradition with modernization. The event led to some concessions, including the appointment of a new government that promised to accelerate reforms. Haile Selassie played a significant role in Ethiopia's church affairs. As a devout Ethiopian Orthodox Christian, he oversaw the church's independence from the Coptic Church of Egypt in 1959, which established the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church as an autocephalous institution. This move was not only religiously significant but also enhanced national identity and sovereignty. Selassie's involvement in religious matters was part of his broader effort to unify the country under a common national ethos. By the early 1970s, Haile Selassie's government faced mounting problems, including famine, dissatisfaction among the military, and student protests. The economic hardship, coupled with the perception of government inaction, led to increasing unrest. These issues set the stage for the 1974 revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of Selassie's government by the Derg, a military junta. The coup marked the end of the Ethiopian monarchy, which had spanned several millennia. After his deposition, Haile Selassie was placed under house arrest in his own palace, where he spent the last year of his life. He died on August 27, 1975, under mysterious circumstances. Official reports stated that he died of natural causes, but there has been speculation that he was assassinated on the orders of the Derg regime. His death marked the end of an era for Ethiopia, and he was buried in an unmarked grave. It wasn't until 2000 that his remains were given a proper burial in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa.