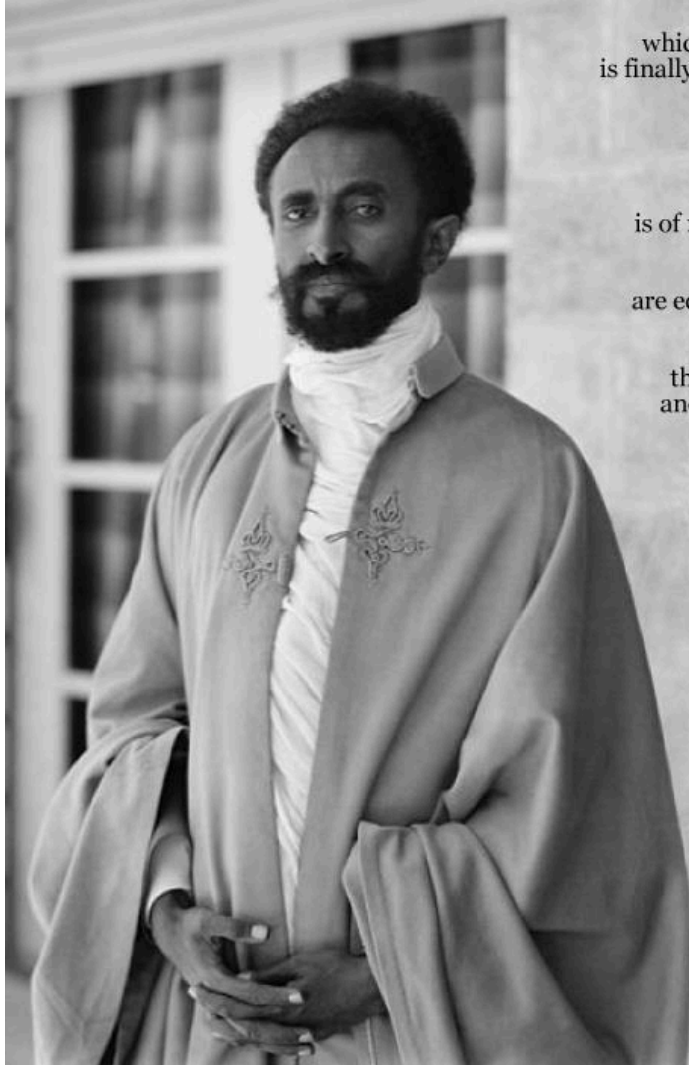


History



"...until the philosophy
which holds one race superior and another inferior
is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned:

That until there are no longer first-class
and second class citizens of any nation;

That until the color of a man's skin
is of no more significance than the color of his eyes;

That until the basic human rights
are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race;

That until that day,
the dream of lasting peace and world citizenship
and the rule of international morality will remain
but a fleeting illusion,
to be pursued but never attained;

And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes
that hold our brothers in Angola,
in Mozambique and in South Africa
in subhuman bondage
have been toppled and destroyed;

Until bigotry and prejudice
and malicious and inhuman self-interest
have been replaced by understanding
and tolerance and good-will;

Until all Africans
stand and speak as free beings,
equal in the eyes of all men,
as they are in the eyes of Heaven;

Until that day,
the African continent will not know peace.
We Africans will fight, if necessary,
and we know that we shall win,
as we are confident in the victory
of good over evil..."

H.I.M. Haile Selassie I

Haile Selassie I (Ge'ez: ሀይለ ሥላሴ ሳዊርዳን *qādamawi haylā səllasé*^[nb 1]; Amharic: [ha.ɪlɜ silːase])(23 July 1892 – 27 August 1975), born **Tafari Makonnen Woldemikael**, was Ethiopia's regent from 1916 to 1930 and Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974. He was the heir to a dynasty that traced its origins by tradition from King Solomon and Queen Makeda, Empress of Axum, known in the Abrahamic tradition as the Queen of Sheba. Haile Selassie is a defining figure in both Ethiopian and African history.

At the League of Nations in 1936, the Emperor condemned the use of chemical weapons by Italy against his people during the Second Italo–Ethiopian War. His internationalist views led to Ethiopia becoming a charter member of the United Nations, and his political thought and experience in promoting multilateralism and collective security have proved seminal and enduring/

Among the Rastafari movement, whose followers are estimated at between 200,000 and 800,000, Haile Selassie is revered as the returned messiah of the Bible, God incarnate. Beginning in Jamaica in the 1930s, the Rastafari movement perceives Haile Selassie as a messianic figure who will lead a future golden age of eternal peace, righteousness, and prosperity. Haile Selassie was an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian throughout his life.

Name



Haile Selassie was known as a child as **Lij Tafari Makonnen** (Amharic ሊጅ ሳዊርዳን ሳዊርዳን; *lij teferī mekōnnin*). *Lij* translates to "child", and serves to indicate that a youth is of noble blood. His given name, *Tafari* means "one who is respected or feared". Like most Ethiopians, his personal name **Tafari** is followed by that of his father Makonnen and rarely that of his grandfather Woldemikael. His Ge'ez name, **Haile Selassie** was given to him at his infant baptism and adopted again as part of his regnal name in 1930.

As Governor of Harer, he became known as **Ras Tafari Makonnen** . *Ras* translates to "head" and is a rank of nobility equivalent to *Duke*, though it is often rendered in translation as "prince". In 1916, Empress Zewditu I appointed him to the position of *Balemulu Silt'anEnderase* (Regent Plenipotentiary). In 1928, she granted him the throne of Shoa elevating his title to *Negus* or "King".

On 2 November 1930, after the death of Empress Zewditu, Ras Tafari was crowned King of Kings, often rendered imprecisely in English as "Emperor". Upon his ascension, he took as his regnal name Haile Selassie I. *Haile* means in Ge'ez "Power of" and *Selassie* means trinity—therefore *Haile Selassie* roughly translates to "Power of the Trinity". Haile Selassie's full title in office was "His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of Kings of Ethiopia, Elect of

God". This title reflects Ethiopian dynastic traditions, which hold that all monarchs must trace their lineage back to Menelik I, who in the Ethiopian tradition was the offspring of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

To Ethiopians Haile Selassie has been known by many names, including **Janhoy**, **Talaqu Meri**, and **Abba Tekel**. The Rastafari movement employ many of these appellations, also referring to him as **Jah**, **Jah Rastafari**, and **HIM** (the abbreviation of "His Imperial Majesty").

Early life



Ras Makonnen Woldemikael and his son *Lij* Tafari Makonnen

Haile Selassie I's royal line (through his father's mother) originated from the Amhara people, but he also had Oromo, and Gurage roots. He was born on 23 July 1892, in the village of Ejersa Goro, in the Harar province of Ethiopia. His mother was Woizero ("Lady") Yeshimebet Ali Abajifar, daughter of the renowned Oromo ruler of Wollo province Dejazmach Ali Abajifar. His maternal grandmother was of Gurage heritage. Tafari's father was Ras Makonnen Woldemikael Gudessa, the governor of Harar. Ras Makonnen served as a general in the First Italo–Ethiopian War, playing a key role at the Battle of Adwa; he too was paternally Oromo but maternally Amhara. Haile Selassie was thus able to ascend to the imperial throne through his paternal grandmother, Woizero Tenagne-work Sahle Selassie, who was an aunt of Emperor Menelik II and daughter of Negus Sahle Selassie of Shewa. As such, Haile Selassie claimed direct descent from Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon of ancient Israel.

Ras Makonnen arranged for Tafari as well as his first cousin, Imru Haile Selassie to receive instruction in Harar from Abba Samuel Wolde Kahin, an Ethiopian capuchin monk, and from Dr. Vitalien, a surgeon from Guadeloupe. Tafari was named Dejazmach (literally "commander of the gate", roughly equivalent to "count") at the age of 13, on 1 November 1905. Shortly thereafter, his father Ras Makonnen died at Kulibi, in 1906.

Governorship



Ras Tafari Makonnen, dressed in warrior garments

Tafari assumed the titular governorship of Selale in 1906, a realm of marginal importance but one that enabled him to continue his studies. In 1907, he was appointed governor over part of the province of Sidamo. It is alleged that during his late teens, Haile Selassie was married to *Woizero* Altayech, and that from this union, his daughter Princess Romanework was born.

Following the death of his brother Yelma in 1907, the governorate of Harar was left vacant, and its administration was left to Menelik's loyal general, *Dejazmach* Balcha Safo. Balcha Safo's administration of Harar was ineffective, and so during the last illness of Menelik II, and the brief reign of Empress Taitu Bitul, Tafari was made governor of Harar in 1910 or 1911.

On 3 August he married Menen Asfaw of Ambassel, niece of heir to the throne Lij Iyasu.

Regency

The extent to which Tafari Makonnen contributed to the movement that would come to depose Iyasu V has been discussed extensively, particularly in Haile Selassie's own detailed account of the matter. Iyasu V, or Lij Iyasu, was the designated but uncrowned Emperor of Ethiopia from 1913 to 1916. Iyasu's reputation for scandalous behavior and a disrespectful attitude towards the nobles at the court of his grandfather, Menelik II, damaged his reputation. Iyasu's flirtation with Islam was considered treasonous among the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian leadership of the empire. On 27 September 1916, Iyasu was deposed.

Contributing to the movement that deposed Iyasu were conservatives such as *Fitawrari* Habte Giyorgis, Menelik II's longtime Minister of War. The movement to depose Iyasu preferred Tafari, as he attracted support from both progressive and conservative factions. Ultimately, Iyasu was deposed on the grounds of conversion to Islam. In his place, the daughter of Menelik II (the aunt of Iyasu) was named Empress Zewditu, while Tafari was elevated to the rank of *Ras* and was made heir apparent and Crown Prince. In the power arrangement that followed, Tafari accepted the role of Regent Plenipotentiary (*Balemulu 'Inderase*) and became the *de facto* ruler of the Ethiopian Empire (*Mangista Ityop'p'ya*). Zewditu would govern while Tafari would administer.



Empress Zewditu with one of her trusted priests

While Iyasu had been deposed on 27 September 1916, on 8 October he managed to escape into the Ogaden Desert and his father, *Negus* Mikael of Wollo, had time to come to his aid. On 27 October, *Negus* Mikael and his army met an army under *Fitawrari* Habte Giyorgis loyal to Zewditu and Tafari. During the Battle of Segale, *Negus* Mikael was defeated and captured. Any chance that Iyasu would regain the throne was ended and he went into hiding. On 11 January 1921, after avoiding capture for about five years, Iyasu was taken into custody by Gugsä Araya Selassie.

On 11 February 1917, the coronation for Zewditu took place. She pledged to rule justly through her Regent, Tafari. While Tafari was the more visible of the two, Zewditu was far from an honorary ruler. Her position required that she arbitrate the claims of competing factions. In other words, she had the last word. Tafari carried the burden of daily administration but, because his position was relatively weak, this was often an exercise in futility for him. Initially his personal army was poorly equipped, his finances were limited, and he had little leverage to withstand the combined influence of the Empress, the Minister of War, or the provincial governors.

During his Regency, the new Crown Prince developed the policy of cautious modernization initiated by Menelik II. Also during this time, he survived the 1918 flu pandemic. He secured Ethiopia's admission to the League of Nations in 1923 by promising to eradicate slavery; each emperor since Tewodros II had issued proclamations to halt slavery, but without effect: the internationally scorned practice persisted well into Haile Selassie's reign with an estimated 2 million slaves in Ethiopia the early 1930s.

Travel abroad

In 1924, *Ras* Tafari toured Europe and the Middle East visiting Jerusalem, Cairo, Alexandria, Brussels, Amsterdam, Stockholm, London, Geneva, and Athens. With him on his tour was a group that included *Ras* Seyum Mangasha of western Tigre Province, *Ras* Hailu Tekle Haymanot of Gojjam Province, *Ras* Mulugeta Yeggazu of Illubabor Province, *Ras* Makonnen Endelkachew, and *Blattengeta* Heruy Welde Sellase. The primary goal of the trip to Europe was for Ethiopia to gain

access to the sea. In Paris, Tafari was to find out from the French Foreign Ministry (*Quai d'Orsay*) that this goal would not be realized. However, failing this, he and his retinue inspected schools, hospitals, factories, and churches. Although patterning many reforms after European models, Tafari remained wary of European pressure. To guard against economic imperialism, Tafari required that all enterprises have at least partial local ownership. Of his modernization campaign, he remarked, "We need European progress only because we are surrounded by it. That is at once a benefit and a misfortune."

Throughout *Ras* Tafari's travels in Europe, the Levant, and Egypt, he and his entourage were greeted with enthusiasm and fascination. He was accompanied by Seyum Mangasha and Hailu Tekle Haymanot who, like Tafari, were sons of generals who contributed to the victorious war against Italy a quarter century earlier at the Battle of Adwa.^[42] Another member of his entourage, Mulugeta Yeggazu, actually fought at Adwa as a young man. The "Oriental Dignity" of the Ethiopians^[43] and their "rich, picturesque court dress"^[44] were sensationalized in the media; among his entourage he even included a pride of lions, which he distributed as gifts to President Alexandre Millerand and Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré of France, to King George V of the United Kingdom, and to the Zoological Garden (*Jardin Zoologique*) of Paris.^[42] As one historian noted, "Rarely can a tour have inspired so many anecdotes".^[42] In return for two lions, the United Kingdom presented *Ras* Tafari with the imperial crown of Emperor Tewodros II for its safe return to Empress Zewditu. The crown had been taken by Robert Napier during the 1868 Expedition to Abyssinia.^[45]

In this period, the Crown Prince visited the Armenian monastery of Jerusalem. There, he adopted 40 Armenian orphans (ፋርፋ ልጆች *Arba Lijoch*, "forty children"), who had lost their parents in Ottoman massacres. He was a great man, a philanthropist;^[46] *Ras* Tafari arranged for the musical education of the youths, and they came to form the imperial brass band.^[47]

King and emperor

In 1928, the authority of *Ras* Tafari Makonnen was challenged when *Dejazmatch* Balcha Safo went to Addis Ababa with a sizeable armed force. When Tafari consolidated his hold over the provinces, many of Menelik's appointees refused to abide by the new regulations. Balcha Safo, the governor (*Shum*) of coffee-rich Sidamo Province, was particularly troublesome. The revenues he remitted to the central government did not reflect the accrued profits and Tafari recalled him to Addis Ababa. The old man came in high dudgeon and, insultingly, with a large army.^[nb 4] The *Dejazmatch* paid homage to Empress Zewditu, but snubbed *Ras* Tafari.^{[49][50]} On 18 February, while Balcha Safo and his personal bodyguard^[nb 5] were in Addis Ababa, *Ras* Tafari had *Ras* Kassa Haile Darge bought off his army and arranged to have him displaced as the *Shum* of Sidamo Province^[51] by Birru Wolde Gabriel who himself was replaced by Desta Damtew.^[48]



Cover of *Time* magazine, 3 November 1930

Even so, the gesture of Balcha Safo empowered Empress Zewditu politically and she attempted to have Tafari tried for treason. He was tried for his benevolent dealings with Italy including a 20-year peace accord which was signed on 2 August. In September, a group of palace reactionaries including some of the courtiers of the Empress, made a final bid to get rid of Tafari. The attempted *coup d'état* was tragic in its origins and comic in its end. When confronted by Tafari and a company of his troops, the ringleaders of the coup took refuge on the palace grounds in Menelik's mausoleum. Tafari and his men surrounded them only to be surrounded themselves by the personal guard of Zewditu. More of Tafari's khaki clad soldiers arrived and, with superiority of arms, decided the outcome in his favor. Popular support, as well as the support of the police, remained with Tafari. Ultimately, the Empress relented and, on 7 October 1928, she crowned Tafari as *Negus* (Amharic: "King").

The crowning of Tafari as King was controversial. He occupied the same territory as the Empress rather than going off to a regional kingdom of the empire. Two monarchs, even with one being the vassal and the other the emperor (in this case empress), had never occupied the same location as their seat in Ethiopian history. Conservatives agitated to redress this perceived insult to the dignity of the crown, leading to the rebellion of Ras Gugsa Welle. Gugsa Welle was the husband of the Empress and the *Shum* of Begemder Province. In early 1930, he raised an army and marched it from his governorate at Gondar towards Addis Ababa. On 31 March 1930, Gugsa Welle was met by forces loyal to *Negus* Tafari and was defeated at the Battle of Anchem. Gugsa Welle was killed in action.

¹News of Gugsa Welle's defeat and death had hardly spread through Addis Ababa when the Empress died suddenly on 2 April 1930. Although it was long rumored that the Empress was poisoned upon the defeat of her husband, or alternately that she died from shock upon hearing of the death of her estranged yet beloved husband, it has since been documented that the Empress succumbed to a flu-like fever and complications from diabetes.

With the passing of Zewditu, Tafari himself rose to emperor and was proclaimed *Neguse Negest ze-'Ityopp'ya*, "King of Kings of Ethiopia". He was crowned on 2 November 1930, at Addis Ababa's Cathedral of St. George. The coronation was by all accounts "a most splendid affair", and it was attended by royals and dignitaries from all over the world. Among those in attendance were George V's son Prince Henry, Marshal Franchet d'Esperey of France, and the Prince of Udine representing Italy. Emissaries from the United States, Egypt, Turkey, Sweden, Belgium, and Japan were also present. British author Evelyn Waugh was also present, penning a contemporary report on the event, and American travel lecturer Burton Holmes shot the only known film footage of the event. One newspaper report suggested that the celebration may have incurred a cost in excess of \$3,000,000. Many of those in attendance received lavish gifts; in one instance, the Christian emperor even sent a gold-encased Bible to an American bishop who had not attended the coronation, but who had dedicated a prayer to the emperor on the day of the coronation.

Haile Selassie introduced Ethiopia's first written constitution on 16 July 1931, providing for a bicameral legislature. The constitution kept power in the hands of the nobility, but it did establish democratic standards among the nobility, envisaging a transition to democratic rule: it would prevail "until the people are in a position to elect themselves." The constitution limited the succession to the throne to the descendants of Haile Selassie, a point that met with the disapprobation of other dynastic princes, including the princes of Tigray and even the emperor's loyal cousin, Ras Kassa Haile Darge.

In 1932, the Kingdom of Jimma was formally absorbed into Ethiopia following the death of King Abba Jifar II of Jimma.

Conflict with Italy

See also: Abyssinia Crisis and Second Italo-Abyssinian War

Ethiopia became the target of renewed Italian imperialist designs in the 1930s. Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime was keen to avenge the military defeats Italy had suffered to Ethiopia in the First Italo-Abyssinian War, and to efface the failed attempt by "liberal" Italy to conquer the country, as epitomised by the defeat at Adowa.^{[65][66][67]} A conquest of Ethiopia could also empower the cause of fascism and embolden its rhetoric of empire.^[67] Ethiopia would also provide a bridge between Italy's Eritrean and Italian Somaliland possessions. Ethiopia's position in the League of Nations did not dissuade the Italians from invading in 1935; the "collective security" envisaged by the League proved useless, and a scandal erupted when the Hoare-Laval Pact revealed that Ethiopia's League allies were scheming to appease Italy.^[68]

Mobilization

Following 5 December 1934 Italian invasion of Ethiopia at Walwal, Ogeden Province, Haile Selassie joined his northern armies and set up headquarters at Desse in Wollo province. He issued his famous mobilization order on 3 October 1935:

“ If you withhold from your country Ethiopia the death from cough or head-cold of which you would otherwise die, refusing to resist (in your district, in your patrimony, and in your home) our enemy who is coming from a distant country to attack us, and if you persist in not shedding your blood, you will be rebuked for it by your Creator and will be cursed by your offspring. Hence, without cooling your heart of accustomed valour, there emerges your decision to fight fiercely, mindful of your history that will last far into the future... If on your march you touch any property inside houses or cattle and crops outside, not even grass, straw, and dung excluded, it is like killing your brother who is dying with you... You, countryman, living at the various access routes, set up a market for the army at the places where it is camping and on the day your district-governor will indicate to you, lest the soldiers campaigning for Ethiopia's liberty should experience difficulty. You will not be charged excise duty, until the end of the campaign, for anything you are marketing at the military camps: I have granted you remission... After you have been ordered to go to war, but are then idly missing from the campaign, and when you are seized by the local chief or by an accuser, you will have punishment inflicted upon your inherited land, your property, and your body; to the accuser I shall grant a third of your property... ”

On 19 October 1935, Haile Selassie gave more precise orders for his army to his Commander-in-Chief, Ras Kassa:

1. When you set up tents, it is to be in caves and by trees and in a wood, if the place happens to be adjoining to these—and separated in the various platoons. Tents are to be set up at a distance of 30 cubits from each other.
2. When an aeroplane is sighted, one should leave large open roads and wide meadows and march in valleys and trenches and by zigzag routes, along places which have trees and woods.
3. When an aeroplane comes to drop bombs, it will not suit it to do so unless it comes down to about 100 metres; hence when it flies low for such action, one should fire a volley with a good and very long gun and then quickly disperse. When three or four bullets have hit it, the aeroplane is bound to fall down. But let only those fire who have been ordered to shoot with a

weapon that has been selected for such firing, for if everyone shoots who possesses a gun, there is no advantage in this except to waste bullets and to disclose the men's whereabouts.

4. Lest the aeroplane, when rising again, should detect the whereabouts of those who are dispersed, it is well to remain cautiously scattered as long as it is still fairly close. In time of war it suits the enemy to aim his guns at adorned shields, ornaments, silver and gold cloaks, silk shirts and all similar things. Whether one possesses a jacket or not, it is best to wear a narrow-sleeved shirt with faded colours. When we return, with God's help, you can wear your gold and silver decorations then. Now it is time to go and fight. We offer you all these words of advice in the hope that no great harm should befall you through lack of caution. At the same time, We are glad to assure you that in time of war We are ready to shed Our blood in your midst for the sake of Ethiopia's freedom...^[69]

Compared to the Ethiopians, the Italians had an advanced, modern military which included a large air force. The Italians would also come to employ chemical weapons extensively throughout the conflict, even targeting Red Cross field hospitals in violation of the Geneva Convention.^[70]

Progress of the war

Starting in early October 1935, the Italians invaded Ethiopia. But, by November, the pace of invasion had slowed appreciably and Haile Selassie's northern armies were able to launch what was known as the "Christmas Offensive". During this offensive, the Italians were forced back in places and put on the defensive. However, in early 1936, the First Battle of Tembien stopped the progress of the Ethiopian offensive and the Italians were ready to continue their offensive. Following the defeat and destruction of the northern Ethiopian armies at the Battle of Amba Aradam, the Second Battle of Tembien, and the Battle of Shire, Haile Selassie took the field with the last Ethiopian army on the northern front. On 31 March 1936, he launched a counterattack against the Italians himself at the Battle of Maychew in southern Tigray. The emperor's army was defeated and retreated in disarray. As Haile Selassie's army withdrew, the Italians attacked from the air along with rebellious Raya and Azebo tribesmen on the ground, who were armed and paid by the Italians.^[71]



When the struggle to resist Italy appeared doomed, Haile Selassie traveled to the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela for fasting and prayer.^[72]

Haile Selassie made a solitary pilgrimage to the churches at Lalibela, at considerable risk of capture, before returning to his capital.^[73] After a stormy session of the council of state, it was agreed that because Addis Ababa could not be defended, the government would relocate to the southern town of Gore, and that in the interest of preserving the Imperial house, the emperor's wife Menen Asfaw and the rest of the imperial family should immediately depart for Djibouti, and from there continue on to Jerusalem.

Exile debate



The emperor arrives in Jerusalem.

After further debate as to whether Haile Selassie should go to Gore or accompany his family into exile, it was agreed that Haile Selassie should leave Ethiopia with his family and present the case of Ethiopia to the League of Nations at Geneva. The decision was not unanimous and several participants, including the nobleman Page (*Blatta*) Tekle Wolde Hawariat, objected to the idea of an Ethiopian monarch fleeing before an invading force.^[74] Haile Selassie appointed his cousin Ras Imru Haile Selassie as Prince Regent in his absence, departing with his family for Djibouti on 2 May 1936.

On 5 May, Marshal Pietro Badoglio led Italian troops into Addis Ababa, and Mussolini declared Ethiopia an Italian province. Victor Emanuel III was proclaimed as the new Emperor of Ethiopia. However, on the previous day, the Ethiopian exiles had left Djibouti aboard the British cruiser HMS *Enterprise*. They were bound for Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine, where the Ethiopian royal family maintained a residence. The Imperial family disembarked at Haifa and then went on to Jerusalem. Once there, Haile Selassie and his retinue prepared to make their case at Geneva. The choice of Jerusalem was highly symbolic, since the Solomonic Dynasty claimed descent from the House of David. Leaving the Holy Land, Haile Selassie and his entourage sailed for Gibraltar aboard the British cruiser HMS *Capetown*. From Gibraltar, the exiles were transferred to an ordinary liner. By doing this, the government of the United Kingdom was spared the expense of a state reception.^[75]

[edit]Collective security and the League of Nations, 1936

Mussolini, upon invading Ethiopia, had promptly declared his own "Italian Empire"; because the League of Nations afforded Haile Selassie the opportunity to address the assembly, Italy even withdrew its League delegation, on 12 May 1936.^[76] It was in this context that Haile Selassie walked into the hall of the League of Nations, introduced by the President of the Assembly as "His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Ethiopia" (*Sa Majesté Imperiale, l'Empereur d'Ethiopie*). The introduction caused a great many Italian journalists in the galleries to erupt into jeering, heckling, and whistling. As it turned out, they had earlier been issued whistles by Mussolini's son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano.^[77] Haile Selassie waited calmly for the hall to be cleared, and responded "majestically"^[78] with a speech sometimes considered among the most stirring of the 20th century.^[7]

Although fluent in French, the working language of the League, Haile Selassie chose to deliver his historic speech in his native Amharic. He asserted that, because his "confidence in the League was absolute", his people were now being slaughtered. He pointed out that the same European states that found in Ethiopia's favor at the League of Nations were refusing Ethiopia credit and matériel while aiding Italy, which was employing chemical weapons on military and civilian targets alike.

It was at the time when the operations for the encircling of Makale were taking place that the Italian command, fearing a rout, followed the procedure which it is now my duty to denounce to the world. Special sprayers were installed on board aircraft so that they could vaporize, over vast areas of territory, a fine, death-dealing rain. Groups of nine, fifteen, eighteen aircraft followed one another so that the fog issuing from them formed a continuous sheet. It was thus that, as from the end of January 1936, soldiers, women, children, cattle, rivers, lakes, and pastures were drenched continually with this deadly rain. In order to kill off systematically all living creatures, in order to more surely poison waters and pastures, the Italian command made its aircraft pass over and over again. That was its chief method of warfare.^[79]

Noting that his own "small people of 12 million inhabitants, without arms, without resources" could never withstand an attack by a large power such as Italy, with its 42 million people and "unlimited quantities of the most death-dealing weapons", he contended that all small states were threatened by the aggression, and that all small states were in effect reduced to vassal states in the absence of collective action. He admonished the League that "God and history will remember your judgment."^[80]

It is collective security: it is the very existence of the League of Nations. It is the confidence that each State is to place in international treaties... In a word, it is international morality that is at stake. Have the signatures appended to a Treaty value only in so far as the signatory Powers have a personal, direct and immediate interest involved?

The speech made the emperor an icon for anti-fascists around the world, and *Time* named him "Man of the Year".^[81] He failed, however, to get what he most needed: the League agreed to only partial and ineffective sanctions on Italy, and several members even recognized the Italian conquest.^[66]

Exile



Haile Selassie in 1942

Haile Selassie spent his exile years (1936–1941) in Bath, United Kingdom, in Fairfield House, which he bought. The emperor and Kassa Haile Darge took morning walks together behind the high walls of the 14-room Georgian house. Haile Selassie's favorite reading was "diplomatic history." But most of his serious hours were occupied with the 90,000-word story of his life which he was laboriously writing in Amharic.^[82]

Prior to Fairfield House, he briefly stayed at Warne's Hotel in Worthing^[83] and in Parkside, Wimbledon^[84] A bust of Haile Selassie is in nearby Cannizaro Park to commemorate this time and is a popular place of pilgrimage for London's Rastafarian community.



Blue plaque commemorating Haile Selassie's stay at the Abbey Hotel in Malvern.

Haile Selassie stayed at the Abbey Hotel in Malvern in the 1930s and his granddaughters and daughters of court officials were educated at Clarendon School in North Malvern. During his time in Malvern he attended services at Holy Trinity Church, in Link Top. A blue plaque, commemorating his stay in Malvern, was unveiled on Saturday, 25 June 2011. As part of the ceremony, a delegation from the Rastafari movement gave a short address and a drum recital.^{[85][86][87][88][89]}

Haile Selassie's activity in this period was focused on countering Italian propaganda as to the state of Ethiopian resistance and the legality of the occupation.^[90] He spoke out against the desecration of houses of worship and historical artifacts (including the theft of a 1,600-year old imperial obelisk), and condemned the atrocities suffered by the Ethiopian civilian population.^[91] He continued to plead for League intervention and to voice his certainty that "God's judgment will eventually visit the weak and the mighty alike",^[92] though his attempts to gain support for the struggle against Italy were largely unsuccessful until Italy entered World War II on the German side in June 1940.^[93]

The emperor's pleas for international support did take root in the United States, particularly among African-American organizations sympathetic to the Ethiopian cause.^[94] In 1937, Haile Selassie was to give a Christmas Day radio address to the American people to thank his supporters when his taxi was involved in a traffic accident, leaving him with a fractured knee.^[95] Rather than canceling the radio appearance, he proceeded in much pain to complete the address, in which he linked Christianity and goodwill with the Covenant of the League of Nations, and asserted that "War is not the only means to stop war".^[95]

With the birth of the Son of God, an unprecedented, an unrepeatable, and a long-anticipated phenomenon occurred. He was born in a stable instead of a palace, in a manger instead of a crib. The hearts of the Wise men were struck by fear and wonder due to His Majestic Humbleness. The kings prostrated themselves before Him and worshipped Him. 'Peace be to those who have good will'. This became the first message.

[...] Although the toils of wise people may earn them respect, it is a fact of life that the spirit of the wicked continues to cast its shadow on this world. The arrogant are seen visibly leading their people into crime and destruction. The laws of the League of Nations are constantly violated and wars and acts of aggression repeatedly take place... So that the spirit of the cursed will not gain predominance

over the human race whom Christ redeemed with his blood, all peace-loving people should cooperate to stand firm in order to preserve and promote lawfulness and peace.^[95]

During this period, Haile Selassie suffered several personal tragedies. His two sons-in-law, Ras Desta Damtew and Dejazmach Beyene Merid, were both executed by the Italians.^[92] The emperor's daughter, Princess Romanework, wife of Dejazmach Beyene Merid, was herself taken into captivity with her children, and she died in Italy in 1941.^[96] His daughter Tsehai died during childbirth shortly after the restoration in 1942.^[97]

After his return to Ethiopia, he donated Fairfield House to the city of Bath as a residence for the aged, until modified in the 1990s where it is now used as a residential meeting centre.^[98]

1940s and 1950s



Newspaper comic drawn by Charles H. Alston for the U.S. Office of War Information Domestic Operations Branch News Bureau, 1943



Meeting with Crown Prince Akihito in 1955

British forces, which consisted primarily of Ethiopian-backed African and South African colonial troops under the "Gideon Force" of Colonel Orde Wingate, coordinated the military effort to liberate Ethiopia. The emperor himself issued several imperial proclamations in this period, demonstrating that, while authority was not divided up in any formal way, British military might and the emperor's populist appeal could be joined in the concerted effort to liberate Ethiopia.^[93]

On 18 January 1941, during the East African Campaign, Haile Selassie crossed the border between Sudan and Ethiopia near the village of Um Iddla. The standard of the Lion of Judah was raised again. Two days later, he and a force of Ethiopian patriots joined Gideon Force which was already in Ethiopia and preparing the way.^[99] Italy was defeated by a force of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Nations, Free France, Free Belgium, and Ethiopian patriots. On 5 May 1941, Haile Selassie entered Addis Ababa and personally addressed the Ethiopian people, five years to the day since his 1936 exile:

Today is the day on which we defeated our enemy. Therefore, when we say let us rejoice with our hearts, let not our rejoicing be in any other way but in the spirit of Christ. Do not return evil for evil. Do not indulge in the atrocities which the enemy has been practicing in his usual way, even to the last.

Take care not to spoil the good name of Ethiopia by acts which are worthy of the enemy. We shall see that our enemies are disarmed and sent out the same way they came. As Saint George who killed the dragon is the Patron Saint of our army as well as of our allies, let us unite with our allies in everlasting friendship and amity in order to be able to stand against the godless and cruel dragon which has newly risen and which is oppressing mankind.^[100]

On 27 August 1942, Haile Selassie abolished the legal basis of slavery throughout the empire and imposed severe penalties, including death, for slave trading.^[101] After World War II, Ethiopia became a charter member of the United Nations. In 1948, the Ogaden, a region disputed with Somalia, was granted to Ethiopia.^[102] On 2 December 1950, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 390 (V), establishing the federation of Eritrea (the former Italian colony) into Ethiopia.^[103] Eritrea was to have its own constitution, which would provide for ethnic, linguistic, and cultural balance, while Ethiopia was to manage its finances, defense, and foreign policy.^[103]

Despite his centralization policies that had been made before World War II, Haile Selassie still found himself unable to push for all the programs he wanted. In 1942, he attempted to institute a progressive tax scheme, but this failed due to opposition from the nobility, and only a flat tax was passed; in 1951, he agreed to reduce this as well.^[104] Ethiopia was still "semi-feudal",^[105] and the emperor's attempts to alter its social and economic form by reforming its modes of taxation met with resistance from the nobility and clergy, which were eager to resume their privileges in the postwar era.^[104] Where Haile Selassie actually did succeed in effecting new land taxes, the burdens were often passed by the landowners to the peasants.^[104] Despite his wishes, the tax burden remained primarily on the peasants.

Between 1941 and 1959, Haile Selassie worked to establish the autocephaly of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.^[106] The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had been headed by the *abuna*, a bishop who answered to the Patriarchate in Egypt. Haile Selassie applied to Egypt's Holy Synod in 1942 and 1945 to establish the independence of Ethiopian bishops, and when his appeals were denied he threatened to sever relations with the See of St. Mark.^[106] Finally, in 1959, Pope Kyrillos VI elevated the Abuna to Patriarch-Catholicos.^[106] The Ethiopian Church remained affiliated with the Alexandrian Church.^[104] In addition to these efforts, Haile Selassie changed the Ethiopian church-state relationship

by introducing taxation of church lands, and by restricting the legal privileges of the clergy, who had formerly been tried in their own courts for civil offenses.^[104]

In keeping with the principle of collective security, for which he was an outspoken proponent, he sent a contingent under General Mulugueta Bulli, known as the Kagneu Battalion, to take part in the Korean War by supporting the United Nations Command. It was attached to the American 7th Infantry Division, and fought in a number of engagements including the Battle of Pork Chop Hill.^[107] In a 1954 speech, the emperor spoke of Ethiopian participation in the Korean War as a redemption of the principles of collective security:

Nearly two decades ago, I personally assumed before history the responsibility of placing the fate of my beloved people on the issue of collective security, for surely, at that time and for the first time in world history, that issue was posed in all its clarity. My searching of conscience convinced me of the rightness of my course and if, after untold sufferings and, indeed, unaided resistance at the time of aggression, we now see the final vindication of that principle in our joint action in Korea, I can only be thankful that God gave me strength to persist in our faith until the moment of its recent glorious vindication.^[108]



Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, photographed during a radio broadcast

During the celebrations of his Silver Jubilee in November 1955, Haile Selassie introduced a revised constitution,^[109] whereby he retained effective power, while extending political participation to the people by allowing the lower house of parliament to become an elected body. Party politics were not provided for. Modern educational methods were more widely spread throughout the Empire, and the country embarked on a development scheme and plans for modernization, tempered by Ethiopian traditions, and within the framework of the ancient monarchical structure of the state.

Haile Selassie compromised when practical with the traditionalists in the nobility and church. He also tried to improve relations between the state and ethnic groups, and granted autonomy to Afar lands that were difficult to control. Still, his reforms to end feudalism were slow and weakened by the compromises he made with the entrenched aristocracy. The Revised Constitution of 1955 has been criticized for reasserting "the indisputable power of the monarch" and maintaining the relative powerlessness of the peasants.^[110]

Charitable gesture

He sent aid to the British government in 1947 when Britain was affected by heavy flooding. His letter to Lord Meork, National Distress Fund, London said, "even though We are busy of helping our people who didn't recover from the crises of the war, We heard that your fertile and beautiful country is devastated by the unusually heavy rain, and your request for aid. "Therefore, We are sending small amount of money, about one thousand pounds through our embassy to show our sympathy and cooperation."^[11]

1960s

Haile Selassie I



1st & 5th Chairman of the Organization of African Unity

In office

25 May 1963 – 17 July 1964

Succeeded by

Gamal Abdel Nasser

In office

5 November 1966 – 11 September 1967

Preceded by

Joseph Arthur Ankrah

Succeeded by

Joseph-Désiré Mobutu

Haile Selassie contributed Ethiopian troops to the United Nations Operation in the Congo peacekeeping force during the 1960 Congo Crisis, to consolidate Congolese integrity and independence from Belgian troops, per United Nations Security Council Resolution 143. On 13 December 1960, while Haile Selassie was on a state visit to Brazil, his Imperial Guard forces staged an unsuccessful coup, briefly proclaiming Haile Selassie's eldest son Asfa Wossen as emperor. The coup d'état was crushed by the regular army and police forces. The coup attempt lacked broad popular support, was denounced by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and was unpopular with the army, air force and police. Nonetheless, the effort to depose the emperor had support among students and the educated classes.^[112] The coup attempt has been characterized as a pivotal moment in Ethiopian history, the point at which Ethiopians "for the first time questioned the power of the king to rule without the people's consent".^[113] Student populations began to empathize with the peasantry and poor, and to advocate on their behalf.^[113] The coup spurred Haile Selassie to accelerate reform, which was manifested in the form of land grants to military and police officials.

The emperor continued to be a staunch ally of the West, while pursuing a firm policy of decolonization in Africa, which was still largely under European colonial rule. The United Nations conducted a lengthy inquiry regarding the status of Eritrea, with the superpowers each vying for a stake in the state's future. Britain, the administrator at the time, suggested the partition of Eritrea between Sudan and Ethiopia, separating Christians and Muslims. The idea was instantly rejected by Eritrean political parties, as well as the UN.

A UN plebiscite voted 46 to 10 to have Eritrea be federated with Ethiopia, which was later stipulated on 2 December 1950 in resolution 390 (V). Eritrea would have its own parliament and administration and would be represented in what had been the Ethiopian parliament and would become the federal parliament.^[114] However, Haile Selassie would have none of European attempts to draft a separate Constitution under which Eritrea would be governed, and wanted his own 1955 Constitution protecting families to apply in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 1961 the 30-year Eritrean Struggle for Independence began, followed by Haile Selassie's dissolution of the federation and shutting down of Eritrea's parliament.

In 1961, tensions between independence-minded Eritreans and Ethiopian forces culminated in the Eritrean War of Independence. The emperor declared Eritrea the fourteenth province of Ethiopia in 1962.^[115] The war would continue for 30 years, as first Haile Selassie, then the Soviet-backed junta that succeeded him, attempted to retain Eritrea by force.

In 1963, Haile Selassie presided over the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the continent-wide African Union (AU). The new organization would establish its headquarters in Addis Ababa. In May of that year, Haile Selassie was elected as the OAU's first official chairperson, a rotating seat. Along with Modibo Keita of Mali, the Ethiopian leader would later help successfully negotiate the Bamako Accords, which brought an end to the border conflict between Morocco and Algeria. In 1964, Haile Selassie would initiate the concept of the United States of Africa, a proposition later taken up by Muammar Gaddafi.^[116]

On 6 October 1963, Haile Selassie addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations, referring in his address to his earlier speech to the League of Nations:

Twenty-seven years ago, as Emperor of Ethiopia, I mounted the rostrum in Geneva, Switzerland, to address the League of Nations and to appeal for relief from the destruction which had been unleashed

against my defenceless nation, by the fascist invader. I spoke then both to and for the conscience of the world. My words went unheeded, but history testifies to the accuracy of the warning that I gave in 1936. Today, I stand before the world organization which has succeeded to the mantle discarded by its discredited predecessor. In this body is enshrined the principle of collective security which I unsuccessfully invoked at Geneva. Here, in this Assembly, reposes the best – perhaps the last – hope for the peaceful survival of mankind.^[117]

On 25 November 1963, the emperor was among other heads of state, including France's President Charles de Gaulle, who traveled to Washington D.C. and attended the funeral of assassinated President John F. Kennedy.

In 1966, Haile Selassie attempted to create a modern, progressive tax^[citation needed] that included registration of land, which would significantly weaken the nobility. Even with alterations, this law led to a revolt in Gojjam, which was repressed although enforcement of the tax was abandoned. The revolt, having achieved its design in undermining the tax, encouraged other landowners to defy Haile Selassie.



Haile Selassie on a state visit to Washington, 1963

While he had fully approved of, and assured Ethiopia's participation in, UN-approved collective security operations, including in Korea and Congo, he drew a distinction with the non-UN approved foreign intervention in Indochina, and consistently deplored it as needless suffering, calling for the Vietnam War to end on several occasions. At the same time he remained open toward the United States and commended it for making progress with African Americans' Civil Rights legislation in the 1950s and 1960s, while visiting the US several times during these years.

(source; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haile_Selassie_I)