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8 April 1966

ETHIOPIA: THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY

By

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Department of the Army, Civilian



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USAWC RESEARCH ELEMENT
(Thesis)

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
8 April 1966

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SUMMARY

Ethiopia has experienced an enviable degree of political stability during the reign of the present Emperor, Haile Selassie I. It is in the United States national interest that Ethiopia continue as a stable and independent nation and that the friendly relations existing between the two nations be maintained. The United States has an important communication center in Ethiopia and the strategic geographical position of the country makes it a lucrative target to the Soviets to obtain a foothold on the Red Sea and to serve as a focal point for possible penetrations into other parts of Africa.

This thesis evaluates the elements of power in Ethiopia and the influence of external forces to identify the areas that may threaten the stability of the country especially on the succession of Haile Selassie I. Conclusions are drawn as to United States policy that should be followed to help assure the continued stability of Ethiopia.

An evaluation reveals that the internal threats to political stability are from the social and political cleavages between the traditionist and reformist power groups, and from dissident Moslem elements in Eritrea who desire the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia. The external threats are from Somali Republic and possible Soviet political penetration especially during internal strife.

The Emperor has been able to maintain stability because of the controls he exercises over Ethiopia. Upon his succession a less experienced leader will have difficulty restraining pressures that are bound to develop because of Ethiopia's rather antiquated political and social order. In the ensuing struggle for power, four major political forces are likely to be involved: the aristocratic nobility, the Orthodox Christian Church, the armed forces and the educated elite. It is believed that the army will emerge as the key power in any political struggle.

The thesis concludes that the United States should continue to encourage Ethiopian political, social and economic development and continue to provide military and economic aid to assist in maintaining a stable and independent Ethiopia.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is a land of contradictions. It is the oldest independent African state yet one of the poorest. Its history as an independent nation dates over 3,000 years; however, it ranks low by all standards of modern learning and social progress. The country is the only surviving Christian nation outside of the Western world; the only non-Arab, non-Moslem state in North Africa. It is ruled by an absolute monarch, Haile Selassie I, who is trying to achieve modernization but has been hindered by resistance of the nobility and the Orthodox Church hierarchy and by the apathy of the masses. The view that a need exists for rapid reforms is held primarily by the educated elite; for most of the other people, "Ethiopia is no country which wants to be hurried even in the most advantageous economic circumstances."¹

The Empire of Ethiopia is located in northeast Africa just above the equator. Its area totals about 450,000 square miles or roughly equivalent to the combined areas of Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The population is estimated at twenty-two million with a population growth of 2% annually. Exact figures are unknown since there has never been a census.

¹Leo Silberman, "Ethiopia: Power of Modernation," Middle East Journal, Spring 1960, p. 144.

There is a marked diversity in the country's topography, climate, people, languages, and customs. The dominant feature of its topography is the high central plateau which is divided into two large sections by an enormous geological depression, the Great Rift Valley. This elevated tableland, varying in altitude from 6,000 to 10,000 feet, is virtually an island surrounded by desert area in the south, the Red Sea on its east, and highlands, which are least known parts of Africa, in the north and west.

The climate is temperate despite the proximity of the country to the equator because of the high elevation of the plateau. The average temperature of the highlands ranges from sixty to sixty-five degrees and there is little variation from month to month. There are two markedly different seasons: a rainy season which lasts from mid-June to about mid-September and a dry season which prevails during the rest of the year.

The United States has a strong national interest in Ethiopia because it contains an important United States communication center, occupies a strategic geographic position, and is influential in African-Asian affairs. Therefore, the United States is interested in the political, economical, social, and military development of the country to assure political stability and to prevent Communist penetration.

Ethiopia's strategic geographic position guarding the southern approaches to the Suez Canal has involved her with the political affairs of the nations bordering on the Red Sea, the

Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, Lake Tana located in the mountain area of northwest Ethiopia is the source of water for the Blue Nile which is vital to the life of the United Arab Republic and a large part of Sudan.

As the oldest nation in Africa, Ethiopia has become involved increasingly in the affairs of other African nations. It has been a leader in the Organization of African Unity whose headquarters is located in Addis Ababa. The capital also houses the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Haile Selassie has been an ardent champion of collective security through the United Nations despite the League of Nations failure to heed his plea against Italy's attack on Ethiopia in 1936.

An important United States communication center, Kagnew Station, is located at Asmara in the province of Eritrea. A twenty-five year lease on the base was signed with Ethiopia in 1952.² Asmara's altitude and weather makes it an excellent location for reception, relay, and transmission of communications. Most of the Pentagon-Japan radio traffic during the Korean War was handled through Kagnew. It has also been used to monitor American space flights.

The United States has been contributing to Ethiopia's economic development since 1951. To date over \$140 million has been contributed. Since 1953, the United States has been providing

²Smith Hempstone, Africa--Angry Young Giant, p. 91.

equipment, training, and technical assistance to the Ethiopian armed forces.

The Soviet Union has had an interest in Ethiopia since the beginning of this century. Addis Ababa has the largest Soviet diplomatic representation of any African capital. The Soviets have promised more economic aid to Ethiopia than to any other country in Africa except the United Arab Republic.

The purpose of my examination is to identify the areas that may threaten the stability of the country especially upon the succession of the present Emperor. This will be done in view of drawing conclusions as to the policies that the United States should pursue to help assure the future stability of Ethiopia.

In pursuing the examination, a brief history of the country will be presented in Chapter 2 in order to obtain a better understanding of present day Ethiopia. In the next three chapters the social, political, military, and economic power will be analyzed to identify areas that may threaten the political stability of the nation. An examination will be made in Chapter 6 of the external forces that may affect the stability of the country. Chapter 7 will contain an analysis of the prospects for stability and the conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

ETHIOPIA'S HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

An understanding of many aspects of present day Ethiopia is found in its past history. Ethiopia has had a long and continuous social order with no absolute break in its traditionalism. The traditionalism bears heavily on resistance to change so that many of the people do not readily fit into the structure of a modern state.

The Amharas and Tigras, a minority elite, have so great a pride in their history that they have arrogant tendencies in dealing with their neighbors and foreigners. They consider themselves to be descendants of Moses or Solomon and believe that they are the Chosen People.¹ Religion has played a dominant role in molding the values and thoughts of the people since the early history of the country. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has had a profound influence not only on the daily lives of the people but also on the affairs of the government.

KINGDOM OF AXUM

Ethiopian people had their origin with the influx of Semitic tribes from southern Arabia to the Ethiopian highlands during the

¹American University, Special Research Office, Foreign Areas Studies Division, US Army Handbook for Ethiopia, p. 9.

first millennium B.C. They brought with them a fully developed civilization. The use of metals, domestic animals, new forms of communal organization, and the art of writing were introduced. Through conquest and intermarriage with the Cushitic inhabitants they built a novel and distinctive civilization, founded the Kingdom of Axum and provided the forebearers of the Tigris and Amharas people.

The Kingdom of Axum flourished from about the first century A.D. until the seventh century. A high level of civilization is evidenced by numerous coins, monuments, inscriptions, and broken relics that have been found in the region by archeologists.²

The development of commerce brought the Axumites in touch with the outside world. One of the external forces that was most influential on the people was the Greeks. They affected the organization of commerce as well as that of the army, education, and administrative system.³ Christianity was introduced in the fourth century as a result of the relationship with the Byzantine Empire. "The conversion to Christianity was the most revolutionary event in the history of Abyssinia."⁴

TIDE OF ISLAM

A decisive turn in the history of Axum came in the seventh century with the birth and expansion of Islam. The spread of

²Ernest W. Luther, Ethiopia Today, p. 11.

³J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia, p. 35.

⁴Ibid., p. 4.

Islam severed the Axumite Kingdom contacts with the Byzantine Empire, Egypt, and Arabia. The Christian Kingdom of Axum was almost completely isolated for nearly a thousand years. As a result, contacts with the Greek and Semitic culture were lost. Native religious beliefs and older Cushitic, non-Semitic ethnic elements expressed themselves; thereby Christianity was influenced and transformed into an indigenous expression.

The expansion of the Beja nomadic tribesmen into the foothills of Eritrea during the seventh century along with the expansion of Islam drove the Axumite people southward to what are now the provinces of Tigray, Amhara, and Shoa. These Christian people spread their language, customs, and religion deep into the interior and there began the process of fusion which produced the Ethiopian nation. From the seventh century the Kingdom of Axum fell into obscurity and little was heard of the country until the coming of the Portuguese in the early part of the sixteenth century.⁵

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many campaigns were fought against the tide of Islam. News of the struggle of a Christian monarch against Islam reached Portugal which was interested in an ally to fight Islam. Portugal succeeded in establishing an embassy in Ethiopia, its first, in 1520; thus ending the isolation of Ethiopia.

⁵Luther, op. cit., p.11.

The pressure of Moslem aggression and encirclement has been the most important problem facing the Ethiopian people from early times after the rise of Islam to the present day. It reached its highest peak during the early sixteenth century when a very capable Moslem general, Muhammed Gran, succeeded in overrunning almost all of Ethiopia. With the aid of Portuguese forces, Gran was killed and Ethiopia recovered its lost territory.

After the Moslems were driven out, another menace developed by the movement of Galla tribesmen from the southeast toward the interior of the country. Their movement was massive and finally resulted in the settlement in the outer areas of the plateau and penetration into the provinces of Shoa, Amhara, and Lasta leaving only Tigre untouched.⁶ The Gallas today constitute the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The pagan Gallas were of a much lower level of civilization than the people whose land they invaded. As a result of their invasion, there was intermittent fighting, confusion, and political chaos for about three hundred years. At the end of the period there were at least six rulers reigning in different parts of the country each claiming to be the emperor.⁷ Out of the chaotic conditions a strong baron emerged who took the throne name of Theodore II. With his reign (1855-1868) the contemporary history of Ethiopia may be said to begin.

⁶American University, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷Luther, op. cit., p. 14.

THE MAKING OF THE MODERN EMPIRE

Theodore II reversed the decline of the empire and managed to reestablish a central government. He attempted to initiate a series of administrative, social, and religious reforms which were the first attempts of this kind in the history of Ethiopia. In contrast to his sound reform projects, he used extreme measures to convert Moslems and other non-Christians, to weaken the nobility, and to conquer the Gallas. These actions were intended to unify the country but instead produced opposite results. His actions became so extreme that they alienated most groups in the country and he also lost his hold on the military.⁸

John IV succeeded Theodore. During his reign (1868-1889) Egypt attacked Ethiopia on the Eritrean coast and drove as far inland as the Town of Harar. But the Egyptians withdrew when a revolt in nearby Sudan threatened Egypt. Another source of danger was Italy. She first seized the port of Massawa in Eritrea and gradually advanced inland, thereby establishing a foothold in the entire area of Eritrea. Thus Ethiopia was denied a coastal frontier until after World War II.

Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) was the chief creator of the modern Ethiopian Empire. He was a strong ruler who realized that the country had to modernize or fall prey to foreign influence.

⁸George A. Lipsky, Ethiopia; Its People, Its Society, Its Culture, p. 15.

He negotiated with the French to build the first railroad from Addis Ababa to the port city of Djibouti in French Somaliland. The first public schools, telephones, electric lights, and postal service were established during his reign.

Italian encroachments continued from Eritrea to the south. Menelik met and defeated the Italians at the major battle of Adowa. This was a humiliating experience for the Italians which was partially expunged in their victory against Ethiopia in 1936.

After the death of Menelik II, near chaotic conditions prevailed. Menelik's successor, Lidj Yasu, his seventeen-year-old grandson, was wild and irresponsible and leaned toward Islam. He was ousted in 1916 by an army raised by the notables of Shoa after a release of allegiance from the Emperor was granted to them by the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church.⁹ Zauditu, the daughter of Menelik II, was proclaimed the Empress and Ras Tafari was proclaimed regent and heir presumptive.

Ras Tafari was crowned Emperor on 2 November 1930. He took the throne name of Haile Selassie I claiming unbroken descent from the dynasty of Menelik I, supposedly the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The tempo of modernization started by Menelik II was increased by the Emperor. He gave Ethiopia its first constitution in 1931, created new ministries in the government, engaged foreign advisors, passed a new antislavery law, and opened new schools.

⁹Luther, op. cit., p. 19.

Haile Selassie's reign was interrupted by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935. The Emperor pleaded his case before the League of Nations, of which both countries were members, but was unsuccessful in checking Italy's aggressive intentions. In May 1936 the Emperor fled the country and took asylum in England. He returned to his country in 1941 after the British had succeeded in driving the Italians from Ethiopia.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIETY

Ethiopia is a land of many ethnic groups and tribes whose people speak over seventy languages. They profess two major faiths, Christian and Islamic. An estimated 35-40% of the population is Christian; 45-50%, Islamic, and the remaining are of other faiths or pagans. Nearly all of the Amharas, Tigras, and about 10% of the Gallas are members of the Christian Church.

The Amharas and Tigras groups dominate the country both politically and culturally. Although they constitute a minority of the total population (about 32%), they have generally been the ruling class. There is difficulty in distinguishing between the Amharas and Tigras as separate ethnic groups. They feel strongly about distinguishing themselves from the Negro people and regard their skin as being brown in contrast to the "red" skin attributed to the Europeans. Both groups are intelligent people with great respect and dignity; they place a high value on personal courage, independence, self-reliance, and self-assertiveness. The Amharas consider the Tigras to be shrewd, quick-witted, and impatient whereas they consider themselves to be more noble, slower in their manner of speaking, subtle, patient, and not as easily frustrated.¹

¹Lipsky, op. cit., p. 39.

As an agricultural people they value land above all other material things. They value their church, Orthodox Christian, highly and expect all to show the same respect.

The Gallas are the largest ethnic group in the country, comprising about 40% of the population. Through intermarriage and conversion to Islamic and Christian faiths, they have lost the internal cohesion that marks the other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Today an estimated 40% are Moslem, 10% are Orthodox Christian, and 50% are pagans. The Gallas are fundamentally a pastoral people whose main interest is in cattle although a number of them hold high positions in the government and are officers in the army.

Although a minority group in Ethiopia, the Somalis inhabit an extensive portion of the Horn of Africa. In Ethiopia there are a little over a million Somalis (about 6% of the total population) located primarily in the Ogaden area in Harar Province. They are a seminomadic people most of whom are Moslems. Traditionally they consider themselves as warriors. They are very individualistic and mistrustful of any authority except with those that they have a kinship.²

Other remaining groups are the Sidamos, Danakil, Gurages, and Shankella. Except for the Shankella, who are Negroes, all Ethiopians are part of the Mediterranean race.

²American University, op. cit., p.70.

The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic which is spoken by about half of the population.³ However, in the Eritrean Province, Tigrinya and Arabic are the official languages. English, the second official language, is taught in all government schools above the fourth grade. Because of the multiplicity of languages, the educated Ethiopian must be trilingual, possessing a knowledge of his tribal language, Amharic, and English.

About 90% of the Ethiopian people are engaged in agriculture. The remaining are principally functionaries of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, government employees, military personnel, or engaged in commerce and supporting service trades. Approximately 20,000 people are employed in industry and commercial activities which are dominated by foreigners.⁴

The Ethiopian society is still one largely based on status in which the monarchy, the traditional land-owning nobility, and the Ethiopian Church play the preponderant role. In the past decade a growing group of educated elite has developed, many of whom have high level positions in the government and form a large part of the young officer corps in the army. The influence and power of these various groups will be evaluated in subsequent paragraphs.

³Ibid., p. 77.

⁴I. William Zartman, Government and Politics in Northern Africa, p. 154.

A vast majority of the population are illiterate tenant farmers who toil on land owned by the Orthodox Church or nobility on a share crop basis. Their tools and methods of farming are elementary or primitive resulting in a very low crop yield. Most are unconcerned about progress and have little incentive for wealth.⁵ They generally resist modernization and find nothing wrong with the traditional concentration of power in the monarchy. They consider themselves to be far superior to the person who has no land to work but rather engages in a trade or as a laborer. Employment as a laborer is considered to be so degrading that if a person is forced to seek a laboring job in times of economic difficulty he will go far away from his community so that no one will know of his disgrace.⁶

Outside of the foreigners who are engaged in trade or commerce, a middle class does not exist.⁷ The social structure tends to be as rigid today as it was in the past. Social advancement other than during war time is very difficult and normally is limited only to those favored by the Emperor or high officials.⁸ During the war many people from all social levels were rewarded with land and titles for their dedicated service to the Emperor.

⁵Luther, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶Lipsky, op. cit., p. 66.

⁷Ibid., p. 67.

⁸Ibid., p. 66.

EDUCATION

Although there has been a considerable expansion of the government school system since 1940, formal education is available only to a fragment of the population. The illiteracy rate is estimated at 95% which is one of the highest in the world.⁹ The lack of progress is attributable primarily to the resistance to education by the clergy and nobility and the lack of qualified Ethiopian teachers. About half of the teachers have less than four years of elementary education.¹⁰ To alleviate the shortage of local qualified teachers, Ethiopia is relying heavily on foreign teachers. About 600 of the 700 United States Peace Corps representatives in Ethiopia are teaching in secondary schools.¹¹ Other factors contributing to the lack of educational progress are the numerous languages and dialects in use, many of which have no written alphabet, and the unfamiliarity by about half of the population with the official state language, Amharic.

Although considerable progress has been made in education, attendance by comparison with African standards is low. Approximately 5% of the six to eighteen year age group are attending public primary or secondary schools.¹² There is also a serious

⁹"The Atlantic Report: Ethiopia," The Atlantic, Vol. 217, Feb. 1966, p. 40.

¹⁰Helen Kitchen, ed., The Educated African, p. 116.

¹¹"The Atlantic Report: Ethiopia," op. cit., p. 42.

¹²US Dept of State, Agency for International Development, Country Assistance Program FY 1967 Ethiopia Part I, p. 27.

problem in retaining children in school. About 40% of the students who enter first grade drop out before their second year. The public school system provides free but not compulsory education through the university level. In general, the quality of instruction is low and there is very little uniformity of curriculum because of the varied background of foreign teachers representing over twenty-two nationalities.

For centuries before the establishment of public schools in 1906, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had the sole responsibility for education in the nation. Presently it still provides a significant amount of primary education. Although a record of enrollment is not kept, an estimated 100,000 boys were attending the church schools in 1960. Instruction is usually by the village priest whose intellectual ability has been judged insufficient for higher monastic studies. Estimates are that three or four years of attendance at a church school are equivalent to the first year in a government primary school. The government has tried to bring the church school curriculum to the level of that in the government school, but has been unsuccessful. The Emperor has not forced compliance to avoid offending the clergy in hopes that he will be able gradually to get their support for his educational reforms.¹³

In the field of higher education the first college, University College of Addis Ababa, was founded in 1950. Haile Selassie I

¹³Lipsky, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

University was established in 1961 incorporating the colleges that were in existence at that time in Addis Ababa. Current enrollment at the University and abroad is more than 3000 students. Since 1951 about 2000 students have studied in American and European universities.

POWER OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church has wielded enormous political, economical, and social power. It was the dominant force in the disposition of a monarch during this century who converted to the Islamic faith. The Church has been influential in rallying the people against aggression. As a large landowner it has had a profound influence on the economics of the country. Until this century the Church had the sole responsibility for education. It has been the focus of national and local community life. Although its political and economical power has been reduced and dissatisfaction with the clergy and Church policy is evident among some of its members, "the Christian Church can still make or break a leader and, conceivably, could even try to play the kingmaker."¹⁴ Estimates as to the number of clergy in the Christian Church vary; however, the number is immense in relationship to the population served. Considering that there are about 20,000 Christian Churches and each regardless of size has at least two priests

¹⁴Richard Greenfield, Ethiopia: A New Political History, p. 39.

and three deacons plus additional lay people, an estimate of 150,000 clergy would be reasonable.¹⁵

During the past three decades the independent power exercised by the Church has declined. This decline is primarily attributable to the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate, subjection of church administration to authority of central government, and competition between the Church and government schools.

The separation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from the Alexandrian Patriarchate has increased the prestige of the national church officials; however, at the same time, it reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group since the clergy are now subject to the power of the Emperor.¹⁶ Under the 1955 Ethiopian constitution, the Emperor has the authority to approve the selection of the head patriarch, or Albane, and other bishops and to promulgate decrees, edicts, and public regulations, excepting those dealing with monastic life and "other spiritual administration."

The pre-eminence of the Church is still powerful in political matters. Article 126 of the constitution states, "The Emperor shall always profess the Ethiopian Orthodox Faith."¹⁷

¹⁵Alphonse A. Castagno, "Ethiopia: Reshaping an Autocracy," African Report, Vol. 8, Oct. 1963, p. 5.

¹⁶Donald N. Levine, Wax and Gold, p. 181.

¹⁷Egyptian Society of International Law, Federations in the Middle East, Brochure No. 18, p. 77 (referred to hereafter as FME No. 18).

This rules out the possibility of a Moslem Emperor or one of another faith. Members of the Church hierarchy sit in the Imperial Parliament and are also represented in the Council of Ministers, an advisory body to the Emperor.

With the development of a government school system, the monopoly on education held by the Church has been broken. The clergy tend to be resentful of the government's expanding role in education. Their attitude to modern education is suspected to be one of opposition for invariably the educated take on government positions rather than serve the Church.¹⁸

The Church is one of the largest landowners whose land until recently was not subject to taxation. Her holding, estimated to be 20% of the nation's arable land, enables her to wield enormous social and economical power.¹⁹ Much of the Church lands are worked by tenant farmers.

The influence of the Church is the greatest in the countryside where the masses, like the Church, resist modernization.²⁰ Influence of the Church extends beyond the attendance of religious services. It is part of the daily lives of the people. Each family chooses a local priest who calls regularly to hear confessions, prescribe penance, and serve as an advisor.²¹ This

¹⁸Greenfield, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁹Castagno, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁰Greenfield, op. cit., p. 39.

²¹Lipsky, op. cit., p. 110.

close relationship between the clergy and the people enables the Church to provide the bond between the people and the Emperor.

Criticism is being leveled against the Church primarily by an increasing number of educated Ethiopians.²² They are most critical of the ignorance of many of the clergy especially those in rural areas and of the resistance by the Church toward modernization. Students have also expressed their dissatisfaction over the Church rules that require long periods of vigorous and compulsory fasting which are enforced by college authorities on orders from the Church and the government.²³ To provide an outlet for the students' discontent, the government fostered the formation of the Orthodox Students' Association whose membership is limited to Christians who have at least completed high school. Even the uneducated people in the villages have shown discontent with some of the clergy because of their failure to live by Christian concepts.²⁴

The greatest mass organization in the country today is and has been for generations the Church. Many times in the past it has been the only unifying force when political unity has collapsed. Today its political and economical strength has been reduced from that of its past. Some of its members, especially among the educated elite, have expressed dissatisfaction because

²²Ibid., p.112.

²³Greenfield, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

²⁴Lipsky, op. cit., p. 112.

of Church opposition to reform in such areas as education, land reform, and ecclesiastical practices. The Church has instituted some reforms of her rules in recent times, other reforms have been accepted with reluctance because of the Church's vested interests. The Church "is not very interested in fostering evolution and modernization."²⁵

POWER OF THE NOBILITY

Present day nobility consists of the leading families who have long held political and economic power in one of the Ethiopian provinces. Most of these families are Amharas and Tigras but there are a few from the Gallas ethnic group. Usually sons of the nobility are given the father's title when they inherit his land.²⁶

During the past century, the traditional feudal power controlled by the nobility which permitted them to collect taxes and raise an army has been subordinated by the central power of the government. It was not until after the restoration of Haile Selassie to power in 1941, that the Emperor was able to break down the autonomy of the nobility.²⁷ This was due mainly to three factors. One factor was the establishment of military force which included a national army, a separate air force, a

²⁵Zartman, op. cit., p. 156.

²⁶American University, op. cit., p. 306.

²⁷Levine, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

small navy, and the Imperial Bodyguard all under the control of the Emperor. Another factor was the establishment of a system of taxation requiring the peasant to pay a fixed quota in taxes to the government rather than to the landlord. This had the effect of restricting the income of the nobility to that produced from their own land holdings. The third factor was the reduction of power and prestige of provincial appointments. This was accomplished by making the governor and other provincial appointments ordinary employees of the Ministry of the Interior.

Nevertheless, the present day nobility retain considerable power. They live in the aristocratic style of their forefathers and are held in high esteem by the local populace.²⁸ The foundation of their power is in their large land holdings and the inherent control over the peasants who work the land. Although their power at the national political level is not as weighty as that of their forefathers, they maintain their traditional power below the top ruling level of the provinces. The government depends on the cooperation of the nobility to see that the Emperor's and governors' orders are carried out and taxes are collected. Dynamic agricultural and social development programs require the cooperation of local nobility to be successful. Without their support, the government would be unable to institute its programs.

²⁸Ibid., p. 180.

Although the nobility has lost its military prerogatives, memories of provincial levies marching against the capital persist, and the possibility of an armed uprising by a dissatisfied element of the nobility still remains a factor with which the imperial government must reckon.²⁹

Some of the nobility hold high level positions in the government. They are employed in ministerial positions and are members of the legislature and the Crown Council. The Emperor has used members as advisors and sounding boards of nobility opinions.

As a political element they are not united; they have no overall leadership nor are they homogenous. They include some who are strongly traditionalists as well as a few who are ultra modernist. However, they do appear to have a high degree of unity in regard to their relationship with the masses. They desire to maintain their traditional political, social, and economic prerogatives respected regardless of the other changes.³⁰ "Reduced to essentials, the greatest obstacle to the modernization of Ethiopia is the power position of the traditional aristocracy and the Emperor's dependence on it."³¹

There are many examples of the power of the nobility. In 1960, for example, students demonstrated in favor of what they thought would be a peaceful and successful coup d'etat. After the coup aborted, the student leaders received threatening letters from the leading noble families pointing out to them their

²⁹American University, op. cit., p. 307.

³⁰Ibid., p. 359.

³¹Castagno, op. cit., p. 4.

apparent indifference over the fact that representatives of some of the leading families were assassinated by the rebels. Although the students were forgiven by the Emperor, two and a half years later the relatives of nobles who lost their lives during the coup succeeded in permanently closing the school dormitories in Addis Ababa and narrowly failed in getting some of the expelled student leaders flogged.³² It was the leaders of the coup who condemned the whole system that allowed those who belonged to the noble families to abuse their power.

POWER OF THE NEW ELITE

Since World War II, a new status group of educated young men has emerged. This group consists of about 1500 college graduates who received their education abroad or in Ethiopia.³³ A majority of them live in the capital and nearly all of the others in the urban centers of the provinces. Most speak English and have adopted American or European manners. Virtually all of them work for the government in posts generally at the middle level of administration although some have departmental and ministerial positions. A small number are employed as legal advisors, engineers, and college professors. Most are from the ruling Amharas and Tigras; many are of noble landowning families.

³²Greenfield, op. cit., p. 107.

³³Levine, op. cit., p. 190.

They constitute an important force, but do not command the influence held by the Christian Church, army, or nobility.³⁴

The group is devoted to the idea of modernization for Ethiopia. They have, however, done very little towards the modernization of their country nor have they managed to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group.³⁵ Instead of being the leaders of a new era, they feel frustrated in attempting to live by modern standards in a country that has remained essentially traditional.³⁶ There is no real sense of cohesion in the group but rather they form cliques and factions. The several organizations that have been formed among the new elite are primarily professional or concerned with regional problems rather than with those on the national level.³⁷ Many of the educated elite, especially those who have received their education abroad, become frustrated in their work. Opportunities for employment in industry and commerce are very limited. The government institutions have not been sufficiently modernized to make use of their specialized skills. Many feel that they occupy simple administrative positions that can be handled by anyone with a little common sense.³⁸ Even those who find work broadly commensurate with their training, become frustrated with the inferior work

³⁴Castagno, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁵Levine, op. cit., p. 198.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Greenfield, op. cit., p. 456.

³⁸Levine, op. cit., p. 200.

facilities, incompetence of employees, archaic operational procedures of the Ethiopian administration, and lack of public concern of work time. Ethiopians are not geared to accomplishing their tasks on a rigid time schedule.³⁹

Many of this new elite group are critical of the Emperor and the manner in which he runs the government.⁴⁰ They are fully cognizant of the Emperor's desires for modernization and of the many reforms he achieved in the past. Included in his major accomplishments are his emphasis on modern education, establishment of a bureaucratic machinery, institution of a parliament and electoral procedure, and some progress in industrialization. The major element of dissatisfaction is that the Emperor has been unwilling or unable to take the next step which is "to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown."⁴¹ Thus, a traditional oligarchy has continued wherein the new elite have been restrained from asserting the dominant role in the modernization of the country.

The upper level of government administration is almost exclusively staffed by the traditional landowning nobility, the Emperor's personal family, or those rewarded for loyal service to the Emperor. Many of the elite feel that promotion to higher

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰American University, op. cit., p. 362.

⁴¹Levine, op. cit., p. 216.

position is thus barred to them. They assert that many senior government officials use their power for personal gain. In particular, they are critical of conflicts of interest involving land holdings and commercial authority. For example, many officials are receiving enormous rents from buildings constructed on land they have received from the Emperor prior to 1960 for faithful service. These rents are being paid by technical assistance organizations primarily those associated with the United Nations or the United States. There is no doubt that national interest could be better served if this capital was directed in other spheres. Furthermore, the government does not gain from profits realized on such annuities as above.⁴²

Many of the educated elite are very critical of the Emperor's failure to provide for land reforms and to abolish serfdom. They feel that land reforms are a must for economic development of the country. Student demonstrations have occurred in Addis Ababa calling for the abolition of serfdom and for land reforms.

Haile Selassie has sought to maintain a paternalistic relationship with the educated elite. Government pronouncements exalt the fact that the education they received was the result of the Emperor's generosity. This paternal control is coupled with more vigorous sanction such as a government policy of censorship which assures that nothing derogatory about the government

⁴²Greenfield, op. cit., p. 103.

is published. The Emperor's intelligence network restrains intellectuals from carrying on objective and critical discussions of the government and its policies which the intellectuals feel is their prerogative. These repressive measures plus the dominance of loyalty to the imperial government have caused a feeling of mistrust to develop between the government and the educated elite. The Emperor regards any criticism of the government "as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst signs of subversion."⁴³ The intellectuals have tended to assume that criticism of government is incompatible with loyalty to the regime. Expressions of distrust and antagonism against the government reached explosive proportions in the abortive coup d'etat of December 1960.

There are evidences of more restlessness among the students and more outspoken criticism of the Monarch; however, they lack leadership and are reluctant to defy their elders with positive programs of reforms. The majority do not oppose the monarchy as such, but object to the rigidity of the aristocracy and the Church and their resistance towards modernization.⁴⁴

⁴³Levine, op. cit., p.215.

⁴⁴Castagno, op. cit., p. 5.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS

POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Ethiopian government is an absolute monarchy wherein supreme authority is vested in the Emperor despite the existence of a written constitution.¹ Although the revised constitution of 1955 which Haile Selassie promulgated provides for a legislative body, it is in theory and practice subordinate to him. All of the major government appointments are made personally by the Emperor including the appointment of governors to the thirteen provinces of Ethiopia. He takes a personal hand in all of the major affairs of the government. In fact, the Emperor is consulted on many minor administrative matters which are handled routinely in the more advanced countries.

The 1955 constitution which revised and expanded the first constitution proclaimed by Haile Selassie in 1931 is divided into eight sections titled: The Ethiopian Empire and the Succession of the Throne, the Power and Prerogatives of the Emperor, Rights and Duties of the People, The Ministers of the Empire, The Legislative Chambers, The Judicial Power, Finance, and General Provisions.²

¹Luther, op. cit., p. 39.

²FME No. 18, op. cit., pp. 46-78.

There are thirty-six of the one hundred thirty-one articles in the constitution devoted to the imperial institution. The Emperor's power in traditional terms is embodied in Article 4:

By virtue [sic] of His Imperial Blood, as well as by the anointing which He had received, the person of the Emperor is sacred, His dignity is inviolable and His Powers indisputable. He is consequently entitled to all the honours due to Him in accordance with tradition and the present Constitution. Any one so bold as to seek to injure the Emperor will be punished.³

Sovereignty of the Empire is vested in the person of the Emperor. He is Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, convenes parliament and has the right to dissolve it, initiates legislation, and proclaims laws.

Tradition imposes on the Emperor power limitations which are more significant and have a greater influence on affairs of the government than those contained in the written constitution.⁴ Most notable are the entrenched interests of the nobility and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The nobility limit the action of the Emperor because of their control over the masses of peasants at the village level and the expression of their opinions through their large representation in the government. Likewise, the traditional minded hierarchy of the Church wield considerable influence on the Emperor. Their strength lies in the fact that about 40% of the people belong to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church;

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴American University, op. cit., p. 301.

it is the established Church of the Empire; the Albane is a member of the Cabinet and he consecrates the Emperor. As part of the coronation oath, the Emperor swears that he will profess and defend the Holy Orthodox Church.

Close cooperation is needed among the throne, the leaders of the nobility, and the Church. Historically, there are many examples where the lack of understanding resulted in an unstable condition. Since the constitution does not clearly define the method of the required teamwork, it contains the inherent danger of instability of the traditional system.⁵

Explicit provisions are contained in the constitution on succession. The successor to the throne "shall remain perpetually attached to the line of Haile Selassie I," and shall be by male line excluding illegitimate children.⁶ In those cases where the successor is a minor under eighteen years of age, a Council of Regency will take over the power and prerogatives of the Crown. If there is no male descendant who meets the requirements for succession to the throne, then the Emperor designates an "Heir Presumptive" from among his nearest relatives to succeed him.⁷

The constitution provides for a Parliament consisting of two bodies: the Chamber of Deputies whose 251 members are elected by the people and a Senate appointed by the Emperor whose membership is not to exceed one half of that of the Chamber

⁵Ibid., p. 304.

⁶FME No. 18, op. cit., p. 47.

⁷Ibid., p. 50.

of Deputies. Since the Emperor in reality enacts most of the laws, the Parliament is primarily a deliberating body.⁸

Political parties do not exist in the same sense as they are found in the Western world. Each of the candidates for the Chamber of Deputies runs as an individual, but some with official encouragement.⁹ In most areas, only a few voters have the education necessary to enable them to understand what is a parliament and an election. Most of the illiterate in the villages presumably voted as they were directed by the elders of their tribes.¹⁰

The part of the constitution concerned with the rights and duties of the people is most impressive; however, it has the least relevance to conditions as they exist. It guarantees the people, among other things, freedom of speech, press, religion, right of assembly, and freedom from censorship of correspondence. Yet newspapers are forbidden to discuss anything that is political, nor do they criticize any department of the government or its policies. Publications are subject to strict censorship. Public assemblies are forbidden by police and peaceful demonstrations are not allowed unless sanctioned by the government.¹¹

⁸Lipsky, op. cit., p. 180.

⁹Zartman, op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁰Luther, op. cit., p. 43.

¹¹Greenfield, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

EMPEROR, HAILE SELASSIE

To his subjects Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, is King of Kings, Elect of God, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Since 1930, except during the period of the Italian occupation of the country, he has ruled Ethiopia as "an absolute monarch with absolute power; but not one corrupted by it."¹² Although writers on present day Ethiopia have the tendency to either exalt or condemn the Emperor because of his remarkable improvements or lack of development, they seem to agree that Haile Selassie is the one to be praised or blamed for everything.

The Emperor believes in progress, but at a moderate pace. He is the only one who has brought about change for there are no elements strong enough to pressure the government to change.¹³ There have been, however, several events that occurred during the past five years that have accelerated the Emperor's notion of gradualism. One such event was the attempted coup of 1960 wherein the Emperor was criticized for the extreme backwardness of the country. Soon afterwards, younger employees were brought into the government, plans for administrative changes were announced, and a promise was made that a study would be conducted to determine the need for constitutional amendments. Another

¹²Leonard Oswald Mosley, Haile Selassie: The Conquering Lion, p. 269.

¹³Zartman, op. cit., p. 149.

event has been the indirect pressures exerted on Ethiopia by the outspoken leaders of the newly independent African states.

Haile Selassie is no doubt a man of great imagination. Although he is aware of Ethiopia's great need for reforms and economic progress, he is stubbornly convinced that only he has the capability to affect the necessary changes. He is reluctant to delegate responsibility; therefore, as a result, more ideas are produced than accomplishments.¹⁴

In order to prevent the attainment of power by individuals or various factions, the Emperor is constantly reassigning and transferring government officials.¹⁵ This prevents the formation of strong power groups, but it has the negative effect of reducing the efficiency of government bureaucracy. He applies the same neutralizing techniques in dividing control among foreign countries engaged on various projects and tasks. For example, the United States trains the army, Norway is training the navy, and the air force is being trained by the United States, Sweden, and Great Britain.

Emperor Haile Selassie is directly and personally involved in the formulation and execution of the country's foreign policy. He is determined to increase Ethiopia's prestige and his own stature as a leader in the affairs of Africa. He is especially

¹⁴Hempstone, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁵Jeanne Conti, "The Winds of Change and the Lion of Judah," Reporter, Vol. 24, 25 May 1961, p. 32.

interested in having Africa and the world know that he and not Nasser is the spokesman for the Horn of Africa.¹⁶

Security of the country and its resources has been the cornerstone of the Emperor's foreign policy. His main fear is not from communism, but fear of Islam. This was the main reason for the acquisition of Eritrea into the Ethiopian Empire. Presently, the Somalia Republic, which aspires to unite all of the Somali tribes in the Horn of Africa, presents a constant threat to Ethiopia. Virtually all of Ethiopia's Harar Province is inhabited by Somalis who profess the Islamic faith.

The Emperor is a staunch supporter of pan-African organizations and the United Nations. Addis Ababa is the seat of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Ethiopia contributed 3000 troops to the UN force in the Congo and had a battalion of troops in Korea during the Korean War.

Haile Selassie has maintained a policy of non-alignment in Ethiopia's relationship with Western countries and the Soviet bloc. Although he is friendly in his relationship with the United States, he has visited Russia and other Soviet bloc nations. He has accepted a \$100 million grant from the Soviet Union and a small grant from Czechoslovakia.¹⁷ Since the

¹⁶Hempstone, op. cit., p. 114.

¹⁷Raymond W. Logan, "Ethiopia's Troubled Future," Current History, Vol. 44, Jan. 1963, p. 50.

acceptance of the loan, Communist bloc economic and cultural penetration into Ethiopia has increased.

ERITREA

Of special consideration in the politics of Ethiopia is Eritrea, a former Italian colony which was federated with Ethiopia in 1952 and since 1962 has been incorporated into the Empire of Ethiopia as one of the thirteen provinces. Its population of 1.2 million is about equally divided between people of the Christian and Islamic faiths. In general, the Christians favor the unity of Eritrea with Ethiopia whereas the Moslems resent it.¹⁸

There have been signs of unrest among the Moslems who have been seeking autonomy.¹⁹ Reports indicated that arms shipments from Sudan and United Arab Republic have been made to the dissident elements. The United Arab Republic has been directing propaganda by radio broadcasts against Ethiopia wherein the Eritrean Moslems are described "as victims of black Amhara imperialists."²⁰

Following the federation of Eritrea, about 80% of the Italian residents departed. As a result, many plantations and businesses have collapsed, thus creating high unemployment and a notable decrease in economic conditions. The economic depredation and political unrest has resulted in an increased activity of the

¹⁸Hempstone, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁹Donald Louchheim, "Ethiopia-Somali Clash Feared," Washington Post, 26 Mar. 1965, p. A22.

²⁰Czeslaw Jesman, The Ethiopian Paradox, p. 23.

shifta, a term used in Ethiopia for armed bandits. There have also been reports that terrorists are being trained by the United Arab Republic.²¹

ABORTIVE COUP D'ETAT OF 1960

During the absence of Emperor Haile Selassie on a state visit to Brazil in December 1960, an attempt was made by elements of the Imperial Guard to seize the government. The objective of the rebels was not merely to displace the Emperor, but to reform and remold the whole social system and the motivation of the government. It was an attempt to liberalize the regime and hasten the modernization of Ethiopia. The rebels were protesting such injustices as the disparity between the rich and poor, antiquated tax system, corruption among officials, and excessive poverty and ignorance.²² There was no evidence that the uprising was Communist inspired nor was there any evidence of foreign intervention.²³

The ringleaders of the abortive coup were Girmane Neway, an American trained graduate, and governor of Ji-Jigga Province, and his brother, Brigadier General Mengistu Neway, the commander of the Emperor's elite Imperial Guard. They led a small group of officers and men from the Imperial Guard and civilians consisting of young government officials and students. At the onstart of

²¹Greenfield, op. cit., p. 457.

²²Castagno, op. cit., p. 5.

²³Conti, op. cit., p. 32.

the revolt, many of the high government officials in the capital were placed in custody and strategic points throughout the city were occupied. Within a day after the coup began, rebel leaders announced the formation of a new government under the Crown Prince, Asfa Wossen.

A recorded message of the Crown Prince was broadcasted over the local radio network. The message stated that there has been very little progress in the 3000 years of Ethiopian history. There was a high level of ignorance and a low standard of living because of the selfishness and nepotism on the part of a few self-centered persons. Compared with Ethiopia, great progress has been made by newly independent nations. The deplorable conditions caused an atmosphere of discontent among the various groups of people. All of the people were asked to unite behind the new government.²⁴

Brigadier General Mengistu Neway testified at his trial that the Crown Prince was forced to make the proclamation.²⁵ A story is told that after the coup when the Crown Prince apologized to his father for the fact that he was forced to act on behalf of the rebels, the Emperor replied, "I am happy to see you alive but I would have been much prouder to have gone to your funeral."²⁶

²⁴Greenfield, op. cit., pp. 398-399.

²⁵Greenfield, op. cit., p. 445.

²⁶Peter R. Webb, "Ethiopia: At the Edge of Today," Newsweek, Vol. 6, 27 Jul. 1964, p. 43.

The Crown Prince is an amiable, intelligent man who has been kept in the background by his domineering father. It is unlikely that the Crown Prince or anyone else is likely to succeed Haile Selassie will be capable of exerting his leadership and authority.²⁷

The leaders were unsuccessful in rallying popular support for their cause because of their failure to use radio and other propaganda means effectively. Their statements were directed only to social injustice and their language was that used by African nationalism rather than Ethiopian feudalism. It appealed to the small number of modernists rather than the traditional masses.²⁸

Also very little attention was given by the conspirators to the power of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Albune was not interned nor was his support sought. Furthermore, the rebel broadcasts did not even mention God. Leaflets were published by the Church denouncing the revolutionaries as committing "crimes of treachery against their country."²⁹ An appeal was made by the Albune to the people to be faithful to the Emperor and their country.

The abortive coup shattered the image of a static Ethiopia. It dramatized the grievances that were held under a cloak of secrecy and for the first time the Ethiopians felt so strongly

²⁷Lipsky, op. cit., p. 213.

²⁸Ibid., p. 132.

²⁹Ibid., p. 411.

about their plight that they questioned the authority of the Emperor.³⁰

MILITARY POWER

Traditionally, the armed forces have been the principal supporters of the throne. They have played an important role in determining and enforcing the policies of the country and have been influential in settling questions relating to succession.

Following the liberation of Ethiopia from Italian occupation in 1941, the British undertook the task of reorganizing and training the armed forces. Since 1953, the United States has been assisting in their training and equipping. Military missions from Sweden and Norway have also been assisting in the training of the air force and navy, respectively. Through mid 1963, Ethiopia received \$74 million in United States military assistance representing about half of the total United States assistance to Africa.³¹

The army is a well organized and effective force of about 25,000 men organized into twenty-three infantry battalions, four artillery battalions, an airborne rifle company, and an armored squadron.³² In addition to the regular army, the land forces

³⁰Castagno, op. cit., p. 6.

³¹Greenfield, op. cit., p. 359.

³²Ibid.

include 30,000 territorial reserves and police which are vital to the integrity of the country.³³

The air force is a relatively small force organized around a nucleus of a squadron of 12 F-86 jet fighters. It also includes two squadrons of light bombers and a transport squadron. A recently created navy is still a negligible force.³⁴

As a group, the army officers are believed to be loyal to the Emperor.³⁵ However, they are divided between the progressive younger officers and the tradition-oriented older ones. Recent mass promotions of warrant officers and non-commissioned officers to junior commissioned ranks have been interpreted as an attempt by the Emperor to weaken the solidarity of the young progressive officers.³⁶

Although there is no known statement by the Emperor as to the mission of the armed forces, it can be presumed to include defense against invasion and as necessary to supplement police in suppressing rebellion and maintaining internal order. The size, training and effectiveness of the armed forces fully qualifies them to maintain internal security and to defend the nation against an attack from its immediate neighbors. However, the Ethiopian armed forces without assistance from the outside would be unable to withstand an attack from a modern power.³⁷

³³"The Atlantic Report: Ethiopia," op. cit., p. 42.

³⁴Castagno, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁵Lipsky, op. cit., p. 200.

³⁶Greenfield, op. cit., p. 456.

³⁷American University, op. cit., p. 615.

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Basically, Ethiopia is not poor but underdeveloped. Its potential in natural resources has not been fully determined, however, it has the agricultural potential to grow enough food to feed its own population and half of Europe.¹ What Ethiopia lacks is social development, agricultural technology, and a network of land lines of communication to open up the vast fertile highland areas.

Ethiopia's economy is predominately agricultural. Over 90% of the population earns its living from agriculture and about 70% of the nation's income is derived from it. Coffee, its main product, alone accounts for over 50% of the total value of exports.²

The gross national product was estimated in 1959 to be slightly over \$800 million or about \$47 on a per capita basis.³ This compares unfavorably with the \$120 average per capita income for the African continent.⁴ It is also far below the \$300 per capita income which the United States uses as the dividing line between developed and underdeveloped countries.⁵

¹Christopher Miniclier, "Military Aid and Ethiopian Revolt," New Republic, Vol. 145, 21 Aug. 1961, p. 15.

²Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, Ethiopia, p. 3.

³American University, op. cit., p. 459.

⁴J. W. Fredericks, "American Policy in Africa," Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 51, 10 Aug. 1964, p. 197.

⁵American University, op. cit., p. 459.

The government, especially the Emperor, is well aware of Ethiopia's need for economic development. However, because of inefficient government administration, overcentralization, and general resistance toward change by the Church hierarchy and nobility, it has been extremely difficult to implement a progressive economic program. Prior to 1957 (start of the first five-year plan), formal long range planning was unknown or at least untried. A second five-year plan which covers the period 1962-1967, calls for the investment of \$1062 million of which about \$250 million is to be obtained from foreign sources. Emphasis is directed primarily to strengthening agriculture, economic, and social infrastructure, and production facilities. A key objective is to accelerate the growth of industry so that the national income attributable to agriculture will be reduced from 70% to 63%. Based on experience of the first five-year plan and that of other developing countries, the planned rate of investment in many areas will not be maintained as scheduled.⁶ Nevertheless, Ethiopia has made a good start toward economic progress. In the course of such change, there will of necessity be modification in the social and political systems.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture at present and in the foreseeable future is the mainstay of Ethiopia's economy. About nine out of ten people

⁶Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, op. cit., p. 3.

earn their livelihood from agriculture and about 90% of the exports are agricultural products and their derivatives.⁷

In contrast with most of Africa, Ethiopia has no shortage of land suitable for agriculture. At present, less than 10% of the land is under cultivation although 50% of the land is arable. This low usage of arable land may be due primarily to lack of motivation to increase production above the level needed for subsistence. Also, expansion has been hindered by the lack of highly developed foreign and domestic markets, lack of transportation, and the land tenure system.⁸

Land reform is necessary if Ethiopia is to be transformed to a modern agricultural nation. At present, land has been surveyed in only a few areas and land tenure is often obscure. Large tracts of land belong to the imperial family, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the aristocratic nobility. Individual land holdings are meager.⁹

In 1960, a commission was established to study land reform problems and to propose a systematic program. The effort has resulted in a number of bills which have passed both houses of parliament, but have not been promulgated into law. For example, one bill would have given the tenant farmer more security and a greater incentive by changing eviction procedure rules, reducing

⁷Lipsky, op. cit., p. 15.

⁸American University, op. cit., p.459.

⁹Ibid.

the produce claimed by the owner from 75% to 50%, and prohibiting landowners from requiring tenants to perform personal services. Observers believe that the influence of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and nobility on the Emperor are preventing the bills from becoming law. In the meantime, the educated elite in the country and outside influences are pressuring for land reforms. In the abortive coup of December 1960, land reform was the first promise of the rebels.¹⁰

Most of the farming population is made up of subsistence farmers, consuming most of their own produce and bartering or selling the surplus on the local markets. A typical crop sharing farmer cultivates about twelve to twenty acres using crude implements by today's standards. A member of a group of officers from the Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College, who were employed by Ethiopia to teach modern farming practices to primitive tribesmen, commented, "We found the people scratching at the soil with implements that were considered obsolete in fourteenth century Europe."¹¹

The ordinary peasant is reluctant to accept new improvements in farming implements, methods, and seeds except in those few areas where the advantages derived from their use have been fully demonstrated. Large landowners have not given their full support

¹⁰Donald Louchheim, "Ethiopia Is Stalled on Basic Land Reform," Washington Post, 5 Apr. 1965, p. A10.

¹¹Hempstone, op. cit., p. 104.

to improving conditions because of their fear that change will undermine the traditional social relationships. Despite the efforts by the government to improve conditions, progress has been exceedingly slow.¹²

INDUSTRY AND DEVELOPMENT

To date only the most rudimentary beginnings of industrialization have been made in Ethiopia. In 1962, output in manufacturing industries was less than 2% of the gross domestic product.¹³ This production was directed primarily toward the processing of light consumer goods. A number of large factories are under construction such as paper mills, woolen factories, sugar factories, oilseed processing, and fishing industries. Of particular interest is a large Soviet financed oil refinery under construction at the Red Sea port of Assav with a planned capacity of 500,000 tons per year which far exceeds Ethiopia's domestic needs. The Emperor is pressing for construction as a matter of national pride and prestige and not that of the national needs.¹⁴

Meager power resources in the past have limited Ethiopia's industrial expansion; however, significant improvement has been made with the completion of the Koka hydroelectric dam. Because of a shortage of commercial power, many industries have to

¹²Lipsky, op. cit., p. 240.

¹³Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴Zbigniew Brzezinski, ed., Africa and the Communist World, p. 71.

produce their own power. In the private sector, less than 1% of the population lives in houses lighted by electricity.¹⁵ A large potential hydroelectric power source is the Blue Nile River which originates in the Lake Tana region. Through the United States government assistance program a survey of the area was started in 1956 for the overall development of the basin.¹⁶

Considerable progress has been made in the transportation system of the country especially in the construction and rehabilitation of roads. The task of providing a satisfactory road net is difficult and expensive because of the rugged terrain. At present, there are about 3000 miles of all weather roads and about 6000 miles of secondary feeder roads. In addition there is a 500 mile long single track, meter gauge railroad between Addis Ababa and the port of Djibouti in French Somaliland, and a 191 mile single track, meter gauge line connecting the cities of Massawa, Asmara, and Agardat. Most urban areas are connected by all weather roads or by railroads and some isolated areas by air transportation. However, vast areas are served only by trails.

Air transportation in Ethiopia has become important because of the sparsity of land lines of communication. Ethiopian Air Lines, which are owned by the government and operated under contract with Trans World Airlines, have been in operation since 1946. They service more than twenty-five domestic airfields and

¹⁵Lipsky, op. cit., p. 260.

¹⁶Greenfield, op. cit., p. 330.

have international connections in Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Egypt, Sudan, and West Africa. Air transportation is responsible more so than any other median for bringing Ethiopia into the twentieth century, thus practically eliminating her isolation from the world.

About 1/10 of 1% of the gross national product is derived from mining gold, potash, platinum, and salt, the only minerals produced on an industrial scale.¹⁷ The extent of other mineral resources is not known since no comprehensive geological survey has been made of the country. Extensive oil drillings were made by the Sinclair Oil Company with no success.¹⁸ Under the current five-year plan, an expenditure of \$33.8 million is scheduled for mining operations with particular emphasis on prospecting for petroleum, gas, and iron ore.¹⁹

One of the major handicaps to industrial production has been the shortage of skilled labor. Ethiopia lacks the instructors and training facilities necessary to train the workers required by industry. Another handicap has been the negative attitude of the Ethiopians, especially the Amharas and Tigras ethnic groups, to crafts and trade which are viewed as being degrading work. A proverb heard among the Amharas quite amply expresses their

¹⁷Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁸Lipsky, op. cit., p. 260.

¹⁹Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, op. cit., p. 7.

attitude, "From cleverness of hand, (comes) serfdom; from cleverness of mouth, master."²⁰

The slow pace of industrialization and the largely feudal agricultural society has mitigated against the formation of labor organizations. Although the revised constitution of 1955 granted complete freedom of assembly and right to join associations, the government discouraged the formation of labor organizations. It was not until 1962 that the government legalized trade unions. There are forty-eight trade unions registered and a national labor organization, the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions with headquarters in Addis Ababa. Out of the 125,000 urban salaried non-government workers, approximately 25,000 are trade union members. Their orientation is toward social and economic goals.²¹

FOREIGN TRADE

Ethiopia has been placing greater emphasis on increasing its exports to obtain additional foreign exchange needed for the modernization of its economy. There has been some expansion of trade with the Soviet bloc and Yugoslavia; however, total trade with the latter is relatively small. Imports from the Soviet bloc in 1963 were about 7.5% of the total whereas exports to the Soviet bloc were about 2% of the total.²²

²⁰Lipsky, op. cit., p. 270.

²¹US Embassy, Ethiopia, Post Report Ethiopia 1965, p. 14.

²²Ibid.

The value of exports in 1962 was about \$84 million consisting primarily of coffee which accounted for about 50% of total value, hides and skins, cereals, and oilseed. Ethiopia's main customer was the United States who received 39% of total exports, primarily coffee; Italy, 9.9%; Aden, 6.2%; United Kingdom, 5.1%.²³

The value of imports was \$103 million consisting primarily of cotton goods, machinery, sugar, and salt. Of the total imports, the United States furnished 18%; Italy, 15.6%; Japan, 13.9%; Germany, 9.1%; United Kingdom, 7.1%; India, 4.5%.²⁴

²³Chemical Bank New York Trust Company, op. cit., p. 10.

²⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

EXTERNAL FORCES

In the previous three chapters an examination was made of the social, political, military, and economic elements of national power to identify the internal forces that may threaten the stability of Ethiopia. This chapter examines the major external threats that affect the security or stability of the country. Accordingly, an examination is made of the Ethiopian-Somalian conflict and externally directed subversive effort.

ETHIOPIAN-SOMALIAN CONFLICT

It is the threat of Islam that Ethiopia considers to be the greatest external challenge to its security today as it has been in the past. The fear posed by the expansion aspirations of Islam was the primary reason for Ethiopia's desire to obtain Eritrea and it is the underlying cause of hostility between Somali Republic and Ethiopia today.¹

The Somali Republic, which was formed by the union of the former British and Italian Somaliland, became an independent nation on 1 July 1960. About 70% of the nearly 2,000,000 predominantly Moslem population are nomadic. Extreme individualism

¹Hempstone, op. cit., p. 114.

and utter lack of discipline are characteristics attributed to the Somali nomads.²

One of the causes of the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia is over the uncertainty of the border between the two countries. The origin of the problem dates back to the Italo-Ethiopian peace treaty of 1896. In an agreement reached a year later, but never published, the dividing line between Ethiopia and the Italian territory was established as being 180 miles parallel to the coast of the Indian Ocean. The dividing line was disputed by Ethiopian Emperor, Menelik II, who contended that it averaged 100 to 130 miles from the coast. During the occupation of Somalia after World War II, the British established an administrative boundary lying between the Italian and Ethiopian interpretation of the boundary location. When the British withdrew from the area in 1950, the administrative boundary became the de facto border between Ethiopia and what is presently the Somali Republic.³ Many attempts have been made through the efforts of the United Nations to resolve the issue, but they have not succeeded.

Another issue which causes constant friction between the two countries arises from the fact that 300,000 to 500,000 Somali tribesmen with their herds cross the Ethiopian border into the

²Mesfin Wolde Mariam, "The Background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 2, Jul. 1964, p. 193.

³Lipsky, op.cit., p. 222.

Ogaden region following the seasonal changes to obtain grazing lands and watering places.⁴ Sporadic clashes occur between Ethiopian frontier guards and Somali tribesmen. In early 1964 a full scale engagement took place between the military forces of the two countries along their 500 mile border. Although a truce was reached shortly afterwards, periodic fighting continues to occur between the Ethiopian and Somalian forces.⁵ There is no prospect that the strife will be settled in the near future.⁶

A constant threat to Ethiopia's security is Somalia's nationalistic aspiration to form a "Greater Somalia" which would extend the territory of the Somali Republic to include the Ethiopian Ogaden region, French Somaliland, and the Somalis inhabited areas of Kenya. Somali Republic claim to Ogaden is based on the fact that a large number of Somalis inhabitants reside in the area and because the area is used customarily for grazing by tribes from the Somali Republic. The Somalia nationalism is distinctly Moslem and has the backing of Egypt.⁷

Ethiopia is willing to negotiate with the Somali Republic on the boundary dispute, but will not surrender any of its territory.⁸ The possible succession of the Somalis in Ogaden may give cause to the many ethnic and religious groups to seek autonomy.

⁴Charles M. Thomas, African National Developments, p. 131.

⁵Louchheim, "Ethiopia-Somali Clash Feared," op. cit., p. A22.

⁶Thomas, op. cit., p. 131.

⁷Lipsky, op. cit., p. 225.

⁸Mariam, op. cit., p. 216.

In view of the threat from the Somali Republic, Ethiopia tightened its security in Ogaden and has tried to placate the indigenous Somalis by granting them greater participation in the government and by paying more attention to their needs. A mutual defense treaty has also been concluded with Kenya.⁹

The Somali Republic has been receiving extensive military support from the Soviet Union. In 1962, Somalia accepted a Soviet offer of \$28,000,000 which will enable it to increase the size of its army to 20,000.¹⁰

EXTERNALLY DIRECTED SUBVERSIVE EFFORT

The Soviets have a larger diplomatic representation in Ethiopia than in any other African nation.¹¹ Their interest may be attributed to Ethiopia's strategic geographical position. Ethiopia is well situated geographically to serve as a focal point for possible penetrations into other parts of Africa, to obtain a foothold on the Red Sea, and to exert influence on Egypt and the Nile area. If there is any disturbance during the succession of the Emperor, the Soviets will be represented adequately to exert their influence toward gaining a more dominant position in the country. Whether they will be able to improve their position is highly problematic.¹²

⁹Greenfield, op. cit., p. 457.

¹⁰Saadia Touval, "The Somali Republic," Current History, Vol. 46, Mar. 1964, p. 160.

¹¹Thomas, op. cit., p.134.

¹²Ibid., p.135.

Until the middle of the 1950s, the Emperor gave his wholehearted support to the West. He provided a battalion of troops to Korea who fought gallantly along with other UN troops. Ethiopia's voting record in the United Nations had been similar to that of the free Western powers. Then a new series of developments began. Ethiopia became an ardent supporter of the Pan African movement following the Bandung Conference of 1955. This support was reaffirmed in the Conferences of Independent African States that followed in 1958 and 1960. On the occasion of the Emperor's visit to Russia he was awarded an honorary degree of doctor of law by Moscow University for his achievements in strengthening the peace and the peaceful coexistence of states with different social and economic systems.¹³

These events do not mean that the Emperor is anti-West, but are rather indicative only of a change in his political behavior. For Haile Selassie is strongly anti-Communist. The reasons for the change in the Emperor's behavior is probably attributed to a variety of factors. One factor is the seemingly prolongation of the cold war without any marked shift of power in favor of the West. Soviet technological progress was also impressive as evidenced by the launching of Sputnik in 1957. Other factors include the deterioration of British-Ethiopian relations over

¹³Sergius Yakobson, "The Soviet Union and Ethiopia: A Case of Traditional Behavior," Review of Politics, Vol. 25, Jul. 1963, p. 332.

British Somaliland, the need for additional finance for Ethiopia's first five-year plan, the fear of the creation of "Greater Somalia," and the threat of Moslem encirclement.¹⁴

During the Emperor's visit to Moscow in July 1959, a trade agreement was negotiated, credits totaling \$100,000,000 were provided, and a cultural exchange was signed.¹⁵ Next to the assistance given Egypt for the construction of the Aswan Dam, this was the largest credit given to any African nation. The goal of the Soviet action was to permit a large number of technicians into the country and to strengthen Ethiopia's state ownership of industry at the expense of private ownership.¹⁶

As long as Haile Selassie continues to hold a firm grip on his country, the Soviets have little chance of penetrating the country. At present there exists no Communist Party, nor any Communist controlled union movement or front organization.¹⁷

Presently, the Soviet effort is being directed primarily toward medical aid, education, and the Church. In the medical field, the Soviets operate a hospital in Addis Ababa and have furnished medical supplies through their Red Cross. The medical support is highly effective because of the shortage of medical personnel and supplies in Ethiopia.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 333-334.

¹⁵Brzezinski, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁶Yakobson, op. cit., p. 335.

¹⁷American University, op. cit., p. 430.

In the field of education, the Soviets have provided scholarships for students to attend universities in Russia. They have also built in Ethiopia a special technical school with a capacity for 1000 students.

The Soviets are very effective in the use of the audio-visual media for attracting wide attention and disseminating propaganda. This method of communication is very appropriate because of the very high illiteracy. Films have been used to portray such items as the Emperor's visit to Russia and the Soviet people's war effort.¹⁸

In recent years there have been close ties between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The hierarchy of both churches have exchanged visits and during the Emperor's visit to Russia, he made a personal call on Patriarch Alexis who decorated the Emperor with a high religious order.¹⁹

Czechoslovakia has given a \$10,000,000 credit grant to Ethiopia and has provided various missions in connection with the use of the grant.²⁰ Like the Soviets, there is no evidence of any overt subversive effort by the Czechoslovak personnel.

Relations between Yugoslavia and Ethiopia are extensive and most cordial; both Tito and Haile Selassie have exchanged visits. Yugoslavia has made loans to Ethiopia in the amount of \$20,000,000

¹⁸Yakobson, op. cit., p. 338.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 339.

²⁰American University, op. cit., p. 430.

and has provided a large number of technicians and advisors to Addis Ababa. There is no evidence of any subversive effort by the Yugoslav personnel; rather their activities are directed toward promoting economic and technical ties.²¹

The only other known attempts from outside the country to promote subversion or dissent are propaganda broadcasts from Egypt. These broadcasts are being directed at the Moslems in Eritrea and the Somalis of Ogaden asking them to rebel and succeed from Ethiopia.²²

²¹Brzezinski, op. cit., p. 125.

²²American University, op. cit., p. 431.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapters 3 through 6 the internal and external threats to the political stability of Ethiopia were identified and discussed. This chapter analyzes the prospects for stability during the reign of Haile Selassie I and upon his succession. It also provides an analysis of the United States policies that should be followed to help assure continued stability. Based on these analyses, some substantive conclusions are drawn.

ANALYSIS

Ethiopia has enjoyed an enviable degree of political stability during the reign of Haile Selassie. This is due primarily to the dominant leadership, prestige, capability and astuteness of the Emperor. Through his actions and controls he has been able to keep in check the internal and external forces that threaten the stability of Ethiopia. Internal threats are from the social and political cleavages and Eritrean separatism. External threats are from Somali Republic and possible Soviet political penetration especially during internal strife.

Within Ethiopia the major tension is between the traditionalist and reformist. In general, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the aristocratic nobility resist change whereas the educated elite press for reforms. Within the armed forces there is also

a division of views between the progressive younger officers and the traditional-oriented older officers.

To alleviate the tensions, the Emperor has instituted some reforms but is proceeding towards modernization at a relatively slow pace. Included in his major accomplishments are his emphasis on modern education, the promulgation of a revised constitution, and the establishment of bureaucratic machinery. Although the Emperor has made considerable progress in providing a modern education, he has been unwilling to force the Church to change its curriculum; thus the Church is permitted to continue its elementary school program that is far inferior to that provided by the government schools.

The Emperor has given Ethiopia a written constitution which provides for a parliament that has one of its two bodies duly elected by the popular vote, however, the legislatures are subordinate to the Emperor. It is the Emperor who enacts the laws, convenes the legislatures, and if he so desires disbands them. The constitution states that the Emperor is "sacred," his dignities are "inviolable" and his power "indisputable." In fact Haile Selassie's power in theory and practice is absolute.

A relatively large bureaucracy has been established, however, the Emperor is reluctant to delegate responsibility. He becomes personally involved in many minor administrative matters that are handled routinely in a more progressive nation. Furthermore, to prevent individuals or groups from attaining power the Emperor

is constantly reassigning and transferring government officials. This neutralization has prevented the development of an effective bureaucracy.

One of the changes that the Emperor has not made is land reforms considered by the educated elite as a must for the economic development of the country. Failure to institute land reforms is no doubt due to the vested interest of the Church and nobility who are large landholders. Both groups wield considerable social and economical control over the masses especially in the rural areas. The government is dependent upon the support of the nobility to assure that the Emperor's and governors' orders are carried out and taxes collected. Therefore, although the Emperor desires modernization he is restrained from making reforms that will antagonize the Church and nobility.

Most of the educated elite are employed by the government in positions generally at the middle administrative level. Since most of the upper administrative and ministerial positions are staffed by members of the Emperor's personal family or nobility, close control over the elite is thus maintained. Furthermore the Emperor's intelligence network restrains them from carrying on objective and critical discussions of the government and its policies.

To placate the Somalis in the Ogaden Area and the Moslems in Eritrea, the Emperor has permitted them greater participation in the government and has taken more interest in their affairs

such as providing government funds for building mosques. The military forces have also been reinforced in the Ogaden area to contain the expansion aspirations of the Somali Republic.

In view of Haile Selassie's tight grip on the nation, there is a high probability that he will be able to maintain a politically stable government during his natural lifetime. When the Emperor who is now 74 years old departs, an orderly succession is most unlikely. What will follow is difficult to ascertain. It may be a constitutional monarchy, a military dictatorship, or a civil war that would fragment the country into various power groups and provide an invitation for Communist intervention. A safe prediction is that major political changes lie ahead and that there may be a serious testing of the present stability.

There is disagreement among the various writers on Ethiopia as to whether the Emperor has officially designated his son, the 50 year old Crown Prince, Afsa Wossen, as his successor. Some writers contend that the Emperor has not designated openly a successor, others claim that the Emperor has made it plain that the Crown Prince should succeed him. Regardless of what member of the royal family is designated as the successor, a less experienced leader will have difficulty in restraining pressures that are bound to develop from within and from without because of Ethiopia's outdated political system and social order.

Four major political forces, the aristocratic nobility, the Orthodox Church, the educated elite, and the army are likely to

be involved in the ensuing struggle for power. Both the nobility and Church have a vested interest in retaining the traditional political and social systems whereas the elite desire both political and social reforms. Although the officers in the army are divided between the traditionalist and reformist, the army will most likely be the key power in any political struggle. It is well organized, disciplined and possesses the physical power to take control. Furthermore, experience in other underdeveloped countries indicates that the army normally takes control of the government during periods of political turmoil.

During periods of internal strife, Somali Republic is likely to make a major military effort to seize the Ogaden area. Likewise, there may be a more intensified effort by dissident Moslems in Eritrea to gain autonomy.

In light of the internal and external threats, the general United States policy towards Ethiopia should be to encourage the nation's political, social and economical development, and to provide military and economic aid to assist in maintaining a peaceful, stable and independent Ethiopia. The greatest need in the political area is the decentralization of power which will permit the legislature to discharge their normal responsibilities, and will delegate more authority to the various departments and ministries. Visits to the United States by the Crown Prince and other high government officials should be encouraged to help maintain the friendly relationships between the two countries.

An expansion of the elementary and secondary government schools and a requirement for compulsory education at least through the elementary level is Ethiopia's greatest need for social development. In addition to decreasing the abnormally high illiteracy rate, it would lessen the influence of the Orthodox Church in education and thus reduce the overall power of the Church in resisting modernization. Priority in allocating the United States economic aid to Ethiopia should be directed towards education.

Land reform is the basic need for Ethiopia's economic development and will probably be the most difficult task to accomplish because the key to the power of the nobility and the Church is in their large landholdings. The United States should encourage the government to institute a program which will gradually accomplish the needed land reforms. The long term political, social and economic benefits that are derived from an effective land reform program should be emphasized to the Ethiopian government.

The United States military aid for the training and equipping of the Ethiopian armed forces should continue. Considering the key power position that the armed forces command in maintaining the political stability of Ethiopia, the United States policy should be directed towards developing an effective military force and one that will remain friendly to the United States. One way of fostering the friendly relationships is to encourage more officers to attend military schools in this country.

CONCLUSIONS

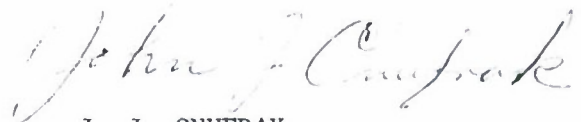
Based on the contents of Chapters 2 through 6 and the analysis just presented, the following conclusions are drawn.

Ethiopia has experienced an enviable degree of political stability during the reign of Haile Selassie. The prospects for the continuation of a stable government during the natural lifetime of the Emperor are excellent.

The internal threats are from the political and social cleavages and from dissident elements in Eritrea Province that are agitating for the separation of Eritrea from the Ethiopia Empire. The major external threat is from Somali Republic's nationalistic aspirations to seize that part of Ogaden area of Ethiopia which is inhabited primarily by Somalis.

Upon the succession of Haile Selassie, there is likely to be a serious testing of the political stability. The major political forces likely to be involved in the ensuing struggle for power are the aristocratic nobility, the Orthodox Christian Church, the army and the educated elite. The army will probably evolve as the key power.

The United States should encourage Ethiopia's political, social and economical development. Both military and economic aid should be continued to maintain a peaceful, stable and independent Ethiopia.



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