

HAILE SELASSIE I INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR OF THE VOICE OF ETHIOPIA

Question: Perceiving the great benefit the Ethiopian people have been able to derive from the Constitution which Your Majesty has been pleased to grant to them 27 years ago, and observing the great change and improvement in the way of life of the people since then, Your Majesty has been once again pleased to grant the new Revised Constitution on the Twenty-fifth Coronation Anniversary to suit the politically and intellectually advanced state of the present generation. This Revised Constitution has enabled the entire Ethiopian people to have the right to elect and be elected to Parliament. Consequently, we find today the representatives of the people performing their duties in Parliament after being elected by secret ballot in the spirit of the Constitution. Would it please Your Majesty to make known your views on the significant changes that have come about in the country within these 27 years?

Answer: Deeply conscious of the great responsibility conferred on us by God in guiding the destiny of Our people, and realizing that in order to build their future well-being on more solid ground and to give a new facade to their way of life no better alternative could be found than to allow them to participate in the various activities of the State, we have been pleased to proclaim a Constitution 27 years ago. It is well-known that the Constitution had opened a new chapter in the long history of the Ethiopian people and acted as a bridge over which they passed into an era of prosperity and better living standards. Even though what we planned for Our people in this new chapter of their history had been interrupted by a cruel invasion and war, Our strong determination has enabled us to get over the obstacles presented by the war and to patiently lead Our people to the comparatively high level at which they find themselves today.

On the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Our coronation We promulgated the new Revised Constitution which guarantees to Our people the right to elect and be elected to Parliament, thereby allowing them to increasingly share with us the difficult task of government. We felt this necessary in view of the spread of education and the satisfactory progress made by our people during the last 27 years which was largely the result of Our personal efforts in Our capacity as Minister of Education. Our future expectation, therefore, is for Our people to be wise enough to make full and judicious use of the rights We have granted them and to give us unstinted support and assistance in everything we do to make Ethiopia great.

Question: Economists of various countries have of late been expressing the view that Ethiopia has the potential capacity of providing food grains to a 100 million people of the Middle East, thus predicting that Ethiopia would one day become the virtual granary of this region. Would it please Your Majesty to express your opinion on this matter?

Answer: Undoubtedly Ethiopia is a large country whose future potentialities are satisfactory in every way. Her richness in resources is a fact well-known to us leaving aside the opinion of experts on the matter. It is in order to exploit this great wealth to the full that we have introduced modern agricultural techniques into Ethiopia hoping thereby to make Our country capable of providing food grains not only for her own increasing population but also for the outside world. The various agricultural schools and colleges found in the provinces have been established with the objective of giving useful training to Our people in modern methods of farming. When the high expectation we have of those institutions comes to be realized, therefore, we have not the slightest doubt that Ethiopia will be able to produce sufficient enough to provide many countries with food grains. This has been our strong belief all along.



Question: The future of the Somali peoples living in the territories bordering on Ethiopia under the rule of the three powers has been the object of speculation in some foreign newspapers lately. While some appear to have grasped the problems that have to be dealt with in the future, they often make it appear as if the only solution lies in the permanent division of these territories which is undoubtedly detrimental to all concerned in this region. What is the view of Your Majesty in this all-important matter?

Answer: In the years following the Second World War several attempts have been made by politically interested parties to create situations that would arouse our anxieties concerning the Somalis living in the territories bordering on Ethiopia. What we see from time to time appearing in some foreign newspapers is motivated by the same policy of preserving self-interest by creating dissension and disharmony in this area which cannot be said to be in the interest of the peoples of the region. Our attitude to the Somalis who belong to the same race as the Ethiopian people and share with them a common history, has always been crystal clear, namely, that of supporting everything conducive to their well-being and progress. It was in keeping with this policy that we recently invited the leaders of United Nations Trust Somalia and had talks with them here. Our strong appeal to our Somali brothers is to be aware of those who, in the furtherance of their self-interest, seek to plunge this area into chaos, thereby disturbing the peace that has reigned in this .

“ It is important that spiritual advancement must keep pace with material advancement. ”

part of the world for a long time. Much harm can be avoided by understanding in time the real intentions of these self-seekers.

Question: Even though some nations in Africa have recently acquired their independence there are yet many who have not had that fortune. Would Your Majesty be kind enough to explain if there is anything that Ethiopia is doing as an African country to improve the lot of these unfortunate African people?

Answer: Realizing that the bitter struggle which these African countries are carrying on for their freedom and independence is right and just, we have always been their strong supporters at all international conferences. It is our firm determination to consistently follow this policy under all circumstances. Ethiopia's decision to take part in the deliberations of the Conference Of Independent African States to be held at Accra this month springs from her desire to exchange views with the other sister African states and formulate ways and means of cooperating with each other on matters vitally affecting our continent. We strongly believe that each nation has an inherent right to shape its own destiny and to seek its own way to the high state of advancement which the free nations of the world have attained.

Question: During the Middle Ages the world had witnessed bitter wars arising among peoples on account of religious differences. The bloodshed and many other evils created by those wars could only be stopped after men came to the realization that peace and harmony could be found only through tolerance and a spirit of accommodation. There are many circles who advocate similar solutions to our present day world problems. Does Your Majesty believe that the spirit of co-existence or accommodation, without one country trying to impose its system and way of life on the other, would be an ideal solution to our present-day problems and to ensure peaceful existence possible?

THE NEW VOICE OF ETHIOPIA



Answer: Nations differing in ideologies could live side by side in peace unless they clash on matters involving self-interest. We live in an age of ideologies and world peace is too precious a thing to be disturbed merely because of the clash of these ideologies. It is an entirely different matter though, when one country attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of another. We believe that if all nations make the Charter of the United Nations the basis of their international relationships, all can live in peace and harmony in spite of their differences in ideologies.

Question: Many people have voiced the view that to carry on a peaceful construction and at the same time keep on building up military preparations is something that entails a great burden on the national economy. In fact it is the earnest desire of all nations to keep their military expenditures to the minimum while allotting most of their national budgets to peace pursuits. But in order to realize this desire it is necessary to devise a machinery that will guarantee their security and safety while pursuing their peaceful vocations. There are some quarters who hold that the United Nations is capable of providing the necessary safeguards against aggression. Does Your Majesty believe this organization, as at present constituted, to be strong enough to perform the great task of guaranteeing the safety and security of peaceful states?

Answer: For the United Nations Organization to guarantee peace and security in the world it must first of all enjoy an authority proportionate to its world-wide responsibility. As we have repeatedly emphasized on several occasions in the past, the United Nations Organization must be provided with a strong force of its own so as to enable it to enforce its own decisions and thereby become an effective safeguard against aggression. Even though it is admittedly a great burden on the national economy of nations to keep up both military and peaceful developments side by side, no nation can afford to neglect its basic defense requirements in order to guarantee its own security. On the other hand, the armaments race, apart from depriving nations of the wealth that could have been used for peaceful purposes, has created great fear and anxiety among the peoples of the world. It would indeed be in the interest of world peace if the nations of the world reach an agreement to stop the arms race. When a general agreement is finally reached on the question of disarmament all preparations of a military nature will gradually assume less significance than they do at present.

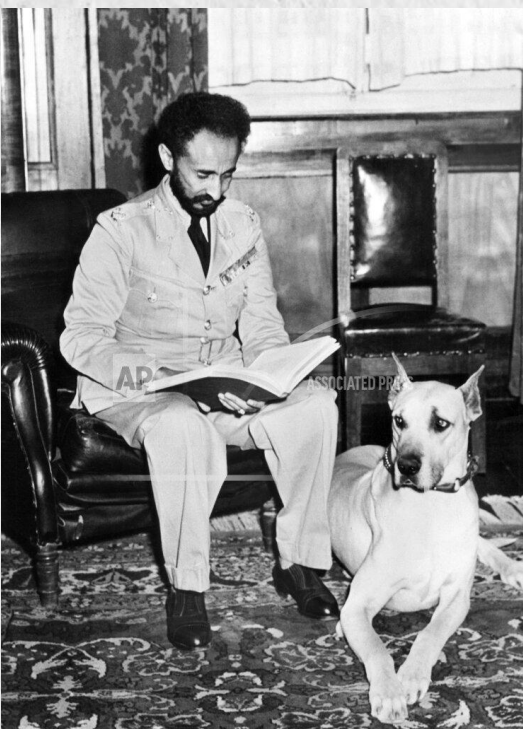
Question: There are people everywhere who hold that civilization has done more harm than good to humanity. These people argue that even though the so-called modern process

has brought some physical comfort, it has done incalculable harm to and greatly weakened the spiritual values regarded so highly in former times. What they call spiritual values are those things which are usually associated with religion. In other words the great progress made in the field of science has contributed to the weakening of the influence of religion and has deprived man of that inner calm that he so much needs for his spiritual well-being. What is Your Majesty's opinion on this matter?

Answer: One cannot deny that in former times man's life had been one of toil and hardship. It is correct to say, therefore, that modern civilization and the progress of science have greatly improved man's life and have brought comfort and ease in their trail. But civilization can serve man both for good as well as for evil purposes. Experience shows that it has invariably brought great dividends to those who use it for good purposes while it has always brought incalculable harm and damnation to those who use it for evil purposes. To make our wills obedient to good influences and to avoid evil, therefore, is to show the greatest wisdom. In order to follow this aim one must be guided by religion. Progress without religion is just like a life surrounded by unknown perils and can be compared to a body without a soul. All human inventions, from the most primitive tool to the modern atom, can help man greatly in his peaceful endeavours. But if they are put to evil purposes they have the capacity to wipe out the human race from the surface of the earth. It is only when the human mind is guided by religion and morality that man can acquire the necessary vision to put all his ingenious inventions and contrivances to really useful and beneficial purposes. The progress of science can be said to be harmful to religion only in so far as it is used for evil aims and not because it claims a priority over religion in its revelation to man. It is important that spiritual advancement must keep pace with material advancement. When this comes to be realized man's journey toward higher and more lasting values will show more marked progress while the evil in him recedes into the background. Knowing that material and spiritual progress are essential to man, we must ceaselessly work for the equal attainment of both. Only then shall we be able to acquire that absolute inner calm so necessary to our well-being.

Answer: For the United Nations Organization to guarantee peace and security in the world it must first of all enjoy an authority proportionate to its world-wide responsibility. As we have repeatedly emphasized on several occasions in the past, the United Nations Organization must be provided with a strong force of its own so as to enable it to enforce its own decisions and thereby become an effective safeguard against aggression. Even though it is admittedly a great burden on the national economy of nations to keep up both military and peaceful developments side by side, no nation can afford to neglect its basic defense requirements in order to guarantee its own security. On the other hand, the armaments race, apart from depriving nations of the wealth that could have been used for peaceful purposes, has created great fear and anxiety among the peoples of the world. It would indeed be in the interest of world peace if the nations of the world reach an agreement to stop the arms race. When a general agreement is finally reached on the question of disarmament all preparations of a military nature will gradually assume less significance than they do at present.

It is only when a people strike an even balance between scientific progress and spiritual and moral advancement that it can be said to possess a wholly perfect and complete personality and not a lopsided one. The type of progress we have chalked out for Ethiopia is based on these fundamental principles.



THE NEW VOICE OF ETHIOPIA

REMEMBERING CORONATION DAY NOVEMBER 2, 1930



HAILE SELASSIE I DEFENDER OF THE FAITH



THE NEWLY-CROWNED MONARCHS OF HISTORIC ETHIOPIA. THE EMPEROR, HAILE SELASSIE, THE FIRST, AND THE EMPRESS MANEN IN THEIR CORONATION ROBES. IN THE BACKGROUND STAND THE CROWN PRINCE ISFAO WASEN (RIGHT) AND A YOUNGER SON OF THEIR MAJESTIES, LIDJ MAKONNEN. THEIR MAJESTIES ALSO HAVE THREE DAUGHTERS. © NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY. PHOTO BY W. ROBERT MOORE

ADDISON E SOUTHARD, United States Minister to Ethiopia, was commissioned by *National Geographic* to cover the former Ras Tafari succeeding to the world's oldest continuously sovereign throne. His report appeared in the edition of June 1931 and was a major source of information for the emerging Rastafari movement in Jamaica.

2nd November 1930 (23rd Tekemt 1923)

I take my official seat in the great Cathedral hall between two gaunt and venerable feudal chieftains. I know these bearded 'greats' to be from the more remote parts of the Empire because they wear the ancient style of lion's mane regalia. Native leaders better accustomed to the capital have taken generally to the more prosaic uniform of Europe. These lion's-mane fellows are splendid to look at and most impressive in photographs, but rather difficult neighbours when one must sit for hours between two of them. The skin worn by one of this pair surely came from a particularly mature lion. Its bristles are so stiff that they not only tickle but prick my ear and cheek. The other pelt lacks olfactory appeal. But both add magnificently to the scenery. I look immediately over the head of Italy's Prince of Udine. Facing me across the open space before the twin thrones is a row of imposingly large and gilded chairs. The first seat holds a prince of England more than resplendent in his guardsman's uniform. Next to him sits a prince of the ancient and royal line of Solomon; then a marshal of France, using his knee as a rest for his gold baton; a king of Tigre, an ambassador of Belgium, and so on. Great and representative men from the Occident and from the Orient; bearded feudal chieftains from the north, the south, the east, and the west of this ancient Empire of Ethiopia – Christians and Moslems and many others are all gathered for the coronation of a new emperor, modern civilisation cheek by jowl with medievalism. The studded doors of the Holy of Holies open ponderously. Through them rolls in giant and stirring hum, the seemingly far-off chant of hundreds of priests, probably exactly as it would have sounded on an Ethiopian coronation day a thousand and more years ago.

THE NEW VOICE OF ETHIOPIA

THE LAST HOPE FOR PEACE



SEVEN SYMBOLS OF AWE AND MAJESTY ARE BESTOWED

For five hours then we witness the unfolding of the ancient and traditional Hebraic-Christian ceremony of the crowning of a ruler of the Empire of Ethiopia. Forty-nine bishops and priests of this ancient Christian country, in groups of seven, have held place for seven days and nights in the seven corners of this national cathedral to chant without ceasing nine Psalms of David. They are now joined by hundreds more. The established Coptic Church is revered and all-powerful in Ethiopia. This is a day when it may, and does, show its impressive might and splendour.

The Emperor, whose name may be Anglicised as 'Power of the Trinity', is vested first with his sword of gold studded with precious stones. Chanting and prayers to the God of Gods rise from a multitude of priestly throats and reverberate from the lofty ceiling of the Cathedral.

Bestowals of the imperial sceptre of ivory and gold and a golden globe of the earth follow.

The diamond-incrusted ring, the two traditional lances filigreed in gold and the imperial vestments are in turn with appropriate and lengthy ceremony. Seventh and last comes the magnificent crown.

FOUNDER FATHER OF THE ETHIOPIAN WORLD FEDERATION

Seven differently scented ointments of ancient prescription are received on the imperial head, brow and shoulders – one with each of these seven ornaments of the coronation.

After the completion of the coronation ceremonies for the Emperor, the Empress enters and takes her throne. She is crowned with less elaborate but always impressive rites, conducted also by the archbishop, his bishops and priests. The final ceremony is a grand tour of the Cathedral by Their Imperial Majesties. They are escorted by the bishops and priests, the princes and high dignitaries, assistants and others, carrying palm branches and chanting in mighty volume, "Blessed be the King of Israel."

Shortly after noon the cannons boom. There is a fanfare of a thousand trumpets. The triumphant ululation of tens of thousands of waiting women is released in waves over the city of the 'New Flower'.

We go forth in proud procession, which escorts to his 'Hill of the Palace' across the city, the three hundred and thirty-fourth of all the kings of Ethiopia and the one hundred and thirty-fourth of the *Christian kings* of the Empire.

“ By the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah,
His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, King of
Kings, Lord of Lords, Elect of God ”

This publication is brought to you by
The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated
International Executive Council
Intergovernmental Organization - EST. 1937
105 west 125th st. #1095 New York, NY
10027-4444
+1-929-483-3778

www.theethiopianworldfederation.org

www.globaldiaspora.org

www.panafricanrenaissance.com