



Lonely Emperor

The King of Kings, Elect of God, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah and 255th reigning monarch of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I, is a lonely man. At 74, he has outlived his wife, who died in 1962, and four of his six children. His son, Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, disappointed his father by cooperating in a 1960 coup attempt and, though since forgiven, enjoys little rapport with the Emperor. Indeed, there are few even in the palace circle who can remember when the Emperor was Tafari Makonnen, the young regent to his empress aunt, who took the throne in 1916 when Nicholas II still reigned as Czar of Russia and Lyndon Johnson Was in the fourth grade. He went on to win the world's admiration with his grave defiance of Mussolini's legions in the '30s (he was TIME's Man of the Year in 1936), and has remained a durable symbol of courage ever since.

Haile Selassie combats his mounting loneliness with travel and personal diplomacy, and his slight (5 ft. 4 in., 100 lbs.) figure, topped by a face like a Byzantine icon, has become familiar to millions around the world. Last week he came to the U.S. to tell Lyndon Johnson about the problems of Ethiopia, a Christian country flanked by Moslems. The Somali Republic, a new (1960) Moslem nation on his eastern border, has laid claim to much of his land, and has backed up the claim with Russian arms and terrorist raids. One of Haile Selassie's principal aims in Washington was to ask President Johnson for more U.S. military aid to protect his borders. The Emperor, however, has not survived for 50 years by leaving his bets unhedged. From the U.S., he flew to Majorca for a day's rest, and thence to Moscow, where this week he hopes to talk the Kremlin into restraining further military aid to the aggressive Somalians.

Close to Absolute. Haile Selassie's beard may be flecked with grey, but his back is still straight and his command over Ethiopia as firm as ever. He has put down three coup attempts in the past six years (for one of which four army officers are now on trial in Addis Ababa). He is, in fact, as close to an absolute ruler as the century will allow. Although he has permitted a Parliament to function for the past twelve years, he alone has the power to choose his Prime Minister. He regularly plays shumshir-the Ethiopian equivalent of musical chairs-to prevent his top ministers from gaining too much power, and he still serves as his nation's highest court: any subject in the land can appeal his grievances to the Emperor and get a personal hearing. To maintain his authority, he employs a 35,000-man army, a 29,000 strong police force, an elite palace guard and three separate intelligence services.

Ethiopia is still a backward nation, but Haile Selassie has tried hard to change it with the times. In 1926, only 291 students were enrolled in all of Ethiopia's schools; today there are more than 300,000. When he came to power, Ethiopia produced little more than subsistence crops and jaded kaffa (coffee); today it has an industrial base that turns out more than 300 products ranging from acids to textiles. Haile Selassie has successfully courted more than a billion dollars worth of foreign investment, receives

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foreign aid totaling \$150 million a year from such diverse countries as the U.S., Russia, Yugoslavia and India. He has also converted Addis Ababa into a center of black African nationalism by establishing there the Organization of African Unity.

Nothing Unworthy. Even when he is in Addis, Ethiopia's radio and newspapers give top attention to the Emperor's schedule of the previous day before they get around to other news; when he is away, the whole nation follows his progress. The only trouble with the Emperor's trips is that in his absence the entire machinery of government perceptibly slows down. Nothing is unworthy of the Emperor's attention, and he likes to make decisions about almost everything. Officers of the Imperial Golf Club, which is situated on land owned by Selassie, recently had to have the Emperor personally set a date for mowing the grass after the rains.

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