



Ethiopia: Man of the Year

The alert U. S. citizen last week could pick from among his fellow citizens as Man of the Year at the close of 1935 whom?

When accountants had added up box-office receipts, Miss Shirley Temple emerged as the Cinemactress of the Year.

Crime's grisly Man of the Year was the German carpenter who in his death cell in Trenton, N. J. last week heard that Charles, Anne and Jon Lindbergh were in the act of becoming the Exiles of the Year.

The Schechters, with their Supreme Court suit which sent NRA crashing, proved themselves Brothers of the Year. In 1935 an unsmiling Negro named Joe Louis fisticuffed his way up from \$50 fights into a \$215,375 sensation as Heavyweight of the Year.

In all the world no transport achievement in `935 equaled that of President Juan Terry Trippe of Pan American Airways with his inauguration of Clippers winging the Pacific to Manila.

On Broadway appeared four successful plays all by Playwright of the Year Clifford Odets.

On the thin edge between Science with its august curiosity and Mankind with its idle curiosity, Dr. Alexis Carrel awakened in 1935 with his best seller, "Man, The Unknown," fresh and healthy faith in medicine's sounder marvels.

Yet from Hauptmann to Carrel, from Temple to Trippe, from Louis to Odets and from the Schechters to the Lindberghs the U. S. obviously produced no Man of 1935 with the world weight of Franklin Delano Roosevelt when he was Man of 1932 or Man of 1934. In 1936 voters may make him President again and perhaps for the third time Man of the Year.

In 1935 Europe's perennial Men of the Years, Stanley Baldwin, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Kamal Ataturk and Dr. Eduard Benes held undiminished sway. The outstanding exhibition of the century in French political tight-rope walking was given in 1935 but as the year entered its last hours the fate of Premier Pierre Laval, 1931's Man of the Year, continued to tiptoe. In Asia practical control of North China was obtained by Japan in 1935 so adroitly and inconspicuously that it was a major Japanese triumph to have avoided producing a Man of the Year. China's perpetually harassed Man of the Year, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, entered his most excruciating morass of dilemmas.

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!

Both as human beings and as crowned symbols George & Mary in the glory of their Silver Jubilee were the King Emperor & Queen-Empress of the Year, inseparable in the public mind. The year restored George II as King of Greece but his Throne trembled last week as he sought to master Greece's ousted Dictator.

King of Kings. In 1935 there was just one man who rose out of murky obscurity and carried his country with him up & up into brilliant focus before a pop-eyed world. But for the hidden astuteness of this man, there would not now be the possibility of another world war arising out of idealism generated around the League of Nations in behalf of Ethiopia. But for His Majesty Haile Selassie the year 1935 would have been a distinctly different year. If by some unhappy chance the Italo-Ethiopian war should now spread into a world conflagration, Power of Trinity I, the King of Kings, the Conquering Lion of Judah, will have a place in history as secure as Woodrow Wilson's. If it ends in the fall of Mussolini and the collapse of Fascism, His Majesty can plume himself on one of the greatest feats ever credited to blackamoors.

Above all, Haile Selassie has created a general, warm and blind sympathy for uncivilized Ethiopia throughout civilized Christendom. In the wake of the world's grandiose Depression, with millions of white men uncertain as to the benefits of civilization, 1935 produced a peculiar Spirit of the Year in which it was felt to be a crying shame that the Machine Age seemed about to intrude upon Africa's last free, unscathed and simple people. They were ipso facto Noble Savages, and the noblest Ethiopian of them all naturally emerged as Man of the Year.

Outside Italy, the Emperor was clapped and cheered during 1935 in almost every cinema house in the world. His name entered the U. S. vocabulary in such homely exclamations as, "Well! If that's so, then I'm Haile Selassie!" In the last week of 1935, Haile Selassie reached Broadway as a character in the new George White's "Scandals". Cries he: "Boys, our country am menaced! What is we gwine do?" From then until the curtain falls amid applause which almost stops the show, His Majesty and guardsmen execute a hilarious tap dance.

Goodness & Wisdom. Without quibble or qualification the best and wisest ruler ancient Ethiopia has ever had is the present Man of the Year.

Ethiopia, contrary to popular misconception, is not a Christian country. It is not even Coptic Christian. Unroll an authoritative religious map of the Empire, such as that in the current January issue of "Foreign Affairs," and the facts are evident. In trifling quantity a few Christians are to be found near Addis Ababa, and the Coptic Christians, to which faith the Imperial Family appertains, form an island in the Mohammedan and pagan sea of peoples which is Ethiopia.

Until 1935 the country was known mainly to foreign savants as a "museum of peoples" who remarkably preserve the habits and customs of their various antiquities. It was known, incorrectly, to hasty readers of a popular book, as the "Hell-Hole of Creation." Actually the high plateau on which Addis Ababa stands and which comprises about half the Empire is suited in climate to the taste of an ordinary U. S. citizen although the altitude is trying. Rushing rivers criss-cross the plateau with deep gorges. Transportation of fantastic difficulty is enhanced by unimaginable mud in the rainy season, hut the obstacles of Nature on the plateau are in every sense susceptible of being overcome.

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!

In the desert regions, blazing and scorching some 8,000 ft. below the plateau toward the sea, are the Hell-Holes of Creation, inhabited by tribes of extraordinary hardihood and savagery. Explorers report that "some of these peoples have never heard of Haile Selassie." It is they who today with complete impartiality harry, snipe at and loot any small detachment of soldiers, be they Ethiopian or Italian. The peoples of Ethiopia are very old but the Empire is very young. When Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes was a youth of 18 there was properly speaking no Ethiopian Empire and the future Emperor Menelik ruled, as King of Shoa, the vicinity of Lake Tana, Aduwa, Aksum and Dessye. Three-quarters of the present Empire, including Harar and Ualual, he did not rule. Haile Selassie was born 44 years ago at Harar and in 1930 succeeded his cousin Menelik's daughter, Empress Zaudito, on the Throne.

The legend that Ethiopia's Imperial Family is descended from the seduction by King Solomon of Sheba's Virgin Queen is pure myth. Last month Oxford's University Press exploded it anew with "A History of Abyssinia" (\$2.25) in which the adoption of this legend by Coptic priests to give Ethiopia's present dynasty a savor of ancient lineage and of Biblical if not Divine authority is traced with British scholarship.

Intimate Glimpse. Although good and wise, Haile Selassie, as recently pointed out by Dr. Sassard, his French physician of many years, has never been popular among his turbulent subjects. Every conversation the physician has had with his Imperial patient, writes Dr. Sassard, "gave me further reason to admire and respect this Sovereign, who is so different from those who surround him and from his own people, and who is so superior to them. In his motionless face only his eyes seem alive — brilliant, elongated, extremely expressive eyes. They bespeak boredom as well as polite indifference, cold irony, or even anger. The courtiers know these different expressions well and retire suddenly when the monarch's glance becomes indifferent, then hard. On the other band, especially when he is dealing with Europeans, his eyes know how to be soft, caressing, affable — and even sincere."

Referring to his royal patient's frequent and serious illnesses, Dr. Sassard observes: "I have always been surprised by the reserves of energy and courage that exist in so frail a body.... The attention of the public and of Europe is directed at the two sons of the Sovereign. The first, the Heir Apparent, is now 19 years old. He generally lives far removed from the capital, surrounded by spies, restricted in any independent action he may take, frequently and harshly rebuked by his father... Prince Makonnen, who is 12 years old, is his father's great favorite.... Whereas a teacher was not accorded the Heir Apparent, a whole retinue of French educators has been designated to take care of the last-born son.... He has good sense, but he is perhaps a little too aware of his exalted birth and the destiny that he believes to be awaiting him. In any case it is unquestionably in Prince Makonnen that all his father's hopes are centred.

"We must give the Emperor credit for having lent prestige to moral values in his country and for having made courage, work and persistence respected in a land where only physical force had any value. The numerous Ministers are generally more or less related to the Emperor and the Emperor considers the granting of a Cabinet post a simple method of calming a noisy cousin or a belligerent vassal. Disorder and misadministration make each Ethiopian Ministry a bottomless barrel into which money flows.... Emperor Haile Selassie inherited a savage country. He will never be a leader of men, the chief of the wild hordes that his predecessors were. The Emperor knows this and the knowledge saddens him."

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!

Gold Chains; Ice Water. After so intimate a glimpse through the eyes of Man of the Year's longtime physician, His Majesty's achievements in 1935 are all the more staggering. They are the ripened fruit of a physically frail Semite's lifetime of goodness and wisdom. It was good to cast into golden chains the Ethiopian who would otherwise have been Emperor instead of Haile Selassie, for this individual had strayed into the Mohammedan faith. Had the late Lij Yasu been on the Throne today the League of Nations might not have displayed such anxiety for the country of an infidel.

His greatest wisdom is the result of meditating on the fact that in 1914 his beloved Ethiopia was saved from being dismembered by the Great Powers by the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. After the establishment of the League of Nations, the Emperor, or Prince Tafari as he then was, figured out wisely that if Ethiopia could possibly win membership in the League, she might never need another World War to distract the Great Powers from dismembering her. To get into the League, though, was most difficult. Egypt was then and is still barred, for the reason that Britain suspected then and now knows for certain that Egypt, once inside the League, would scream bloody murder for the British to evacuate Egypt. Ethiopia was at first barred. Then Ethiopian statesmen, largely inspired by Prince Tafari, began yielding deceptively to French and Italian efforts to obtain more important concessions in the empire than had ever been granted before.

In 1923 the French and Italians congratulated themselves that a most profitable and pleasant era of Latin-Ethiopian co-operation and economic exploitation was about to open with mutual goodwill. To top off the deal with pink icing. Ethiopia at Latin insistence was admitted to full membership in the League. Only three years afterward Tafari, who had become Regent, complained of Britain and Italy to the League, having caught them exchanging notes with a view to recognizing the possession of "spheres of influence" by each other in Ethiopia. With the same technique that the Man of the Year used in 1935, but without causing an explosion of world interest, Regent Tafari in 1926 shamed and reproved white men thus: "We should never have suspected that the British Government would come to an agreement with another government regarding our Lake Tana!" Ethiopia quietly won the first League round then & there, causing Italy and Britain to drop the matter, much as the Hoare-Laval Deal was to be dropped nearly a decade later with a crash heard around the world.

Suckers. Many white men personally familiar with events in Ethiopia since then say that the Emperor for years played Italian and other foreign concessionaires for suckers until Benito Mussolini gradually evolved his theory that the White Race is being aggressively menaced and must recover the dynamic attitude of Victorian England or ultimately suffer eclipse. Japan, during Depression, secured virtually the whole of Ethiopia's import business in cotton piece goods, while Italians were supplying Haile Selassie with a powerful radio station at cut rates. As soon as it was in working order, His Majesty turned around and fired the whole Italian staff of technicians, made a sucker out of the great Italian electrical firm of Ansaldo Lorenz.

Fatefully in December 1934 the issue between Italy and Ethiopia was joined. Each shrieked to heaven that a collection of mud huts called Ualual, located variously on various maps, had been subjected to aggression by the other. Months afterward a League of Nations commission decided that for the Ualual Incident neither Italians nor Ethiopians nor anyone else was to blame. By that time, though, the Man of the Year was fully in the making. He flashed off cables, smoking hot with pathos, righteousness, defiance and more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger which made front pages throughout

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!

Christendom. It was sheer genius for Haile Selassie to deny that Italians used dum-dum bullets instead of charging them with that military offense. It was again genius for him to cable out that in Ethiopia the local press had been ordered by the Emperor never to apply discourteous epithets to Benito Mussolini. Finally only genius could enable the Emperor to put himself — a frail, exquisite Semite who speaks French — in terms of friendly respect with robust Anglo-Saxon correspondents when they arrived in Addis Ababa and promptly nicknamed him "Little Charlie."

If the Covenant of the League of Nations be law, then in law Ethiopia and Haile Selassie are right and Italy and Benito Mussolini are wrong. The only trouble is that that portion of the white race represented by 44,000,000 Italians has opened hostilities and in the sphere of law Italy contends — much too late for popular acceptance — that under the League Covenant, membership in the League of Nations is barred to states in which slavery still flourishes, as it unquestionably does in Ethiopia. Therefore, argues Italy, the original mistake of admitting Ethiopia to the League should be corrected by ousting Ethiopia, after which Italy would have exactly as good a right there as Britain has in Egypt.

In successfully brushing aside these contentions of a Great Power; in dextrously pitching the issue of war on such grounds that the white race in general feels the future of the League of Nations to be at stake in the future of a Museum of Peoples in Africa; and in impressing even his own French doctor with his courage, his elevated moral stature and his peculiar genius for brow-beating Ethiopians while he charms foreigners, Emperor Haile Selassie emerged in 1935 not only as Man of the Year but as the world's own inimitable "Little Charlie" for as many years to come as health sustains him.

So What? In the actual zones of Ethiopian war, the number of square miles over-run by Italian forces as the year ended was about 30,000 a mapmaker's fact of doubtful significance. Neutral military experts in Washington, Berlin, Paris and London consider that Premier Mussolini's deepest purposes have not yet been revealed, but that unquestionably he has hamstrung his soldier's war in East Africa by political and diplomatic back-seat driving from Rome. Darting raids by Italian bombers, unaccompanied by troop operations on the ground, have resulted in little more than the enemy's terror and disorganization. After major advances there have been sudden, desultory lulls. Because concurrent maneuvers on the Diplomatic Front have been secret and clandestine, Il Duce is perhaps as good a judge as any of whether bombs and calms judiciously sprinkled in the world press have much affected the game on Europe's green tables. In soldiers' eyes the Italians have made a wretched showing in Ethiopia, and to soldiers Italy's diplomatic showing looks even worse, with Anthony Eden up.

The first and drier half of Ethiopia's "dry" season, in which alone military operations are possible, is now over. Bombs sprinkled around the Man of the Year have failed to get him. If Calvin Coolidge and the U.S. Marines, unhampered by Sanctions, never did succeed in bringing General Sandino to reason in Nicaragua, all the more reason for Haile Selassie to feel that his goose hangs high. On the other hand, should Mussolini decide that the diplomatic game is up, Italy's forces should be able to give a better account of themselves than they have thus far.

New Deal. Few months ago Dr. Sassard wrote of his patient: "The Emperor will undoubtedly fight at the head of his troops." In ringing proclamations His Majesty has more than once promised to do so. Simple Ethiopians expect any ruler worth his salt to

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!

remain for the duration of the war physically in the thick of the fight. Instead, both before hostilities began and since, Haile Selassie has kept Europe's diplomats well supplied with offers to make peace by selling or bartering parts of the empire, emitting at the same time declarations to the world press that he will part with "not an inch" of Ethiopian soil. If these Imperial activities resemble a Semitic tradesman's strident, righteous protestations and simultaneous readiness to compromise, they are not the Man of the Year's fault but aspects of his God-given character.

In Addis Ababa warrior chiefs of the Noble Savage type bitterly and contemptuously complain, "Our Emperor is a businessman " They should thank Ethiopia's stars. The astounding marvel is that Africa's unique Museum of Peoples has produced a businessman — with high-pressure publicity, compelling sales talk, the morals of a patent medicine advertisement, a grasp of both savage and diplomatic mentality, and finally with plenty of what Hollywood calls IT. The Emperor was "too smart" only once in 1935, when he tried by granting the Rickett Concession to Standard Oil to embroil the U.S. directly in Ethiopia's defense. In His Majesty's favorite phrase the entire situation is still "subject to negotiation."

Fortnight ago the Imperial Businessman had instructed Al Smith's publicity director, Josef Israels II, to tell the world that His Majesty was willing to settle on terms only slightly more generous to Ethiopia than those offered by The Deal of Hoare & Laval. He was willing to yield a great chunk of his empire in exchange for peace and a corridor to the Red Sea. The resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare and the tribulations of Premier Laval last week caused the Imperial Businessman to propose a completely New Deal. Ethiopia's new "basis for discussion," with which the Man of the Year masterfully closed 1935, are that: a) Mussolini's forces are to withdraw; a) Italy is to pay an indemnity to Ethiopia, and 3) the Great Powers excluding Italy are to be invited to a new game of giving economic, administrative and financial "assistance and advice" to Ethiopia, with Haile Selassie holding all the trumps and calling it Civilization.

RAS TAFARI LIVES AND REIGNS!