

Full Length Research Paper

Haile Selassie's selected global visits: Personal, national and regional implications of his diplomacy, 1916-1974

Tsegaye Kebede Kassa

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia.

Received 3 July, 2024; Accepted 8 August, 2024.

Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian Emperor who ruled the country for more than 50 years, has been both a celebrity and a controversial figure. He undertook more official missions abroad than any other leader in Ethiopia, making both the country and the person very well-known throughout the world. This paper argues that while the statesmanship and royalty of the Emperor have been extensively studied, there is limited coverage of his official missions during his reign. It aims to fill that gap by reporting the various travels Emperor Haile Selassie made from 1916 to 1974. The paper uses secondary sources, both published and unpublished, largely from the internet to document most of his travels. It posits that these missions provided him with significant opportunities for soft power or public/personal diplomacy. The study examines the national, regional (symbolic/psychological), and personal gains of his travel diplomacy at the end of each period's discussion. However, it should be noted that the study is far from exhaustive as not all records of his missions are available on the Internet. Therefore, the paper is based only on the available literature on the World Wide Web. Despite this limitation, the available sources will pave the way for deeper and more comprehensive research.

Key words: Haile Selassie, Ethiopia, official missions, soft power diplomacy, statesmanship.

INTRODUCTION

Haile Selassie was an important statesman of the world during a major part of the 20th century. Having assumed the throne of Ethiopia first as a Regent and king, and then as an absolute monarch, he consolidated his grip on the throne, amassing personal power in one of the most troubled and enigmatic parts of Africa during his long reign. He came from Harar, eastern Ethiopia, and assumed the throne both by design and by accident. By design, because he secretly aspired to rule Ethiopia, and by accident, because the man who was to ascend to the

throne of his grandfather, Emperor Menelik II, Lij Iyasu, was oblivious to his duties and opportunities. While Lij Iyasu was in power, he was supposed to strengthen it by staying in the capital, Addis Ababa, becoming the king of kings, and winning the support of the royal dignitaries and the court. Instead, he moved to various parts of the country, especially to Harar, Jimma, Afar, and other peripheral areas. This allowed Haile Selassie, then named Ras Tafari Mekonnen, to plot, along with higher officials of the time, spreading rumors that Iyasu was

E-mail: kebede.tsegaye@igad.int.

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flirting with Islam (Retta, 2006; Tesfu, 2008; The Crown Council, 1963).

The objective of this paper is to provide information about Haile Selassie's official missions, which are scattered in a coherent manner in one place. Moreover, the paper aims to contribute to the discussion of official missions as public diplomacy from an African perspective. It is public diplomacy because most of the missions discussed were conducted with a large entourage of officials from various sectors. While much has been written about his statesmanship and lofty ideals of transforming the country through education, technology transfer, modernization, and the abolition of the slave trade (Spencer, 1978; Vestal cited in Girma, 2003), most of the Emperor's official global visits (Findlay, 2011) have not been adequately covered. This paper argues that state visits are essential aspects of public diplomacy and that understanding the context and settings of these tours is an important part of International Relations.

These missions are carried out with purpose and are often expensive, involving a royal entourage and extending over long periods. Clapham, cited in Abota (2002), observed that Haile Selassie's diplomacy was conducted through face-to-face contacts sustained by numerous state visits. Despite this, Abota and other authors have mentioned only a few of his visits, avoiding a comprehensive documentation of nearly five decades of diplomatic activities and their direct and indirect national, personal, and regional gains. This paper reviews most of his publicly available official visits during his reign and narratively describes his achievements using a public or soft power diplomacy approach (Nye Jr., 2008; Melissen, 2005).

The paper is divided into four main periods. The first covers the fifteen years between 1916 and 1929, when he was a Regent and king, revealing limited but impactful visits. The second period spans from 1930 to 1941, during which he was coronated as king of kings and the Italian occupation of Ethiopia began and ended. This period, marked by personal and national ups and downs, is documented to show how patience and foresight contributes to diplomatic success. The third period addresses his travels from 1942 to 1960, covering nearly two decades after Italy's defeat, his return to power in Addis Ababa from almost five years of exile in England (Carlson, 2016), and the first coup during his official visit to Brazil in 1960. The final period, from 1961 to 1974, is similar in length to the first and includes his travels up until the last coup in 1974, which ended his reign and the monarchy after nearly 300 years. The conclusion emphasizes the significance of official missions in fostering positive interstate relations and their unique role in international affairs, characterizing his public or soft power diplomacy into four major types: assertive, survival, triumphal, and summative diplomacy. The paper deliberately excludes the Emperor's visits within Africa

and return visits by global counterparts, intending to address these in future work.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this paper is obtained through a desk review of the literature consisting of published and unpublished sources. It is primarily historical, qualitative, and descriptive in nature. The World Wide Web was used extensively to collect information. A chronological approach is employed in the analysis and write-up of the paper. The implications of each phase of the Emperor's visits are described and interpreted at three levels: personal, national, and regional. The official visits Haile Selassie made during his long reign are numerous and diverse, and not all could be exhaustively accounted for. Instead, a selection of these visits was made randomly, based on the availability of information or documentation from local and international media, mainly in the form of books, journals, newspapers, or related travel accounts. Consequently, the study is a documentation of qualitative information.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As indicated in the methodology, the discussion proceeds in chronological order. This approach is used because the issue under consideration is a diplomatic history with significance for the International Relations of Africa during colonialism and the liberation struggles. The four periods are discussed here.

Ras Tafari's visits from 1916 to 1929: The formative years

Ras Tafari, later Emperor Haile Selassie, made his first official tour in 1922. He traveled by train and ship to reach Yemen, upon the invitation of the British Colonial Office for East Africa and the Middle East. Yet, this paper begins in 1916, since it was at this time that he became Regent. He also began to receive honorary titles and awards from abroad as of 1917, recognizing his leadership and diplomatic skills. However, his major extended European tour took place in 1924 to several countries. During this time, he was accompanied by high-level dignitaries including Ras Hailu Teklehaimanot (Governor of *Gojam* and son of the former king of the region of *Gojam*, King Teklehaimanot), Ras Seyoum Mengesha (Governor of Tigre), *Dejazmach* Nadew Aba-Wollo (later called Ras), Ethiopia's first Ambassador in Geneva, *Dejazmach* Mulugeta Yigezu (later Ras), a minister from the time of Menelik II, *Dejazmach* Gebre Selassie Baragaber (Governor of Adwa), *Dejazmach* Haile Selassie Abayineh (father of Ras Emiru), *Dejazmach* Gessesse Wolde Hana (brother of Etege (Lady) Taitu), Ligaba Wodaje (who captured King Michael at the battle of Segelle), Liji Mekonnen Endalchew (who later became Bitwoded—most loved or respected and a minister), Ato Hiruy Wolde Selassie (later Bilaten Geta and minister of foreign affairs), Ato Sahle Tsedalu (later

Bilaten Geta and Minister of Education), other retainers and protocol officers, interpreters, and servants. As he was a Regent to Empress Zewditu, Haile Selassie deputized the then minister of war, Fitawrai Habte Giorgis, to act on his behalf and run the day-to-day activities of the government. He also appointed Ras Kassa Hailu, one of his closest confidants, as advisor to the Empress (Retta, 2006; Smidt, 2013; Kaliban, 2018). The latter put the number of the Ethiopian delegation led by Tafari between 50 and 60, while Monin (2013) puts the number at 39 members. In any case, this was a very high figure for a poor nation to sustain costs for four months and twenty days (Retta, 2006).

In the beginning, as invitation letters were received from the European powers, notably from France, the UK, and Italy, Ras Tafari was preparing for the missions. It was said that Empress Zewditu objected to his visit to these countries. Her position was supported by the Abuna and the Echegie on the grounds that the delegation's exposure to Western countries, which follows Catholic and Protestant religions, might corrupt the Ethiopian religion. The latter was predominantly composed of followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Christianity, which was considered a state religion at that time. However, as time went on, rejecting the visits of the officials was believed to create diplomatic blunders between Ethiopia and the great powers. Eventually, the Empress softened her stance and allowed the missions to take place. This decision was made in a consultative meeting of the royal court with the presence of the Abune, the Echegie, and other dignitaries. Once the missions were approved, the Echegie admonished the delegation and Tafari to take care of their religion. Most importantly, the religious authorities advised starting the visit with the Holy Land, Jerusalem. As this was part of the plan, Ras Tafari was pleased that it was mentioned. The Empress kissed him, blessed the missions, and prayed for the success of the long diplomatic trip (Retta, 2006).

The delegations went first to Djibouti by train and made the remaining journey by sea. Their first arrival was in Egypt, then to Jerusalem. They stayed in Jerusalem for about three weeks, where Ras Tafari and his entourage visited holy places, shrines, and historical sites in Palestine. They then proceeded by ship to Europe. Their first destination was Paris, where the Regent was received by the President of France, Alexandre Millerand (Retta, 2006). After the warm reception by the government, he traveled to various regions of France. He visited several historical and heritage sites. The Regent was taken to these places by high-ranking officials who believed his exposure to them would pave the way for the civilization of his 'backward' country. Tafari was highly impressed by what he saw in France, notably in Paris. This positive disposition towards the developments in France and Europe, as well as the absence of the same in his country, guided, to a certain extent, his

development endeavors during the decades of his rule.

From France, Ras Tafari proceeded to Italy, a country undergoing a series of political changes with Mussolini assuming political leadership in 1922. Italy was experiencing a turbulent socio-economic process at this time. After being received by Prime Minister Mussolini and other high-ranking officials, Ras Tafari met King Victor Emmanuel III. He also visited the Vatican, where he met Pope Pius XI (Monin, 2013). Obtaining access to the sea through Assab Port was a top priority for his visit to Italy, but discussions with the government were unsuccessful, leaving him almost empty-handed.

During this leg, Ras Tafari traveled to Palestine, Egypt, France, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Italy, England, Switzerland, and Greece (Pankhurst, 1968 cited in Abota, 2002). Regarding the outcome of the Swedish mission, Norberg wrote, "This visit initiated a period of expanded Ethio-Swedish contacts" (Norberg, 1977). The missions had different objectives in meetings with the principal colonial powers of Europe: France, Italy, and Britain. With all three powers surrounding Ethiopia, the Regent raised the possibility of Ethiopia's unfettered access to the outside world. However, the dream of having a sea outlet had to wait until Italy was defeated and relinquished its colonial ambitions in the eastern and horn of Africa. Eritrea's independence and return to Ethiopia were critical for this to happen. He saw this in his own lifetime when he returned to power in Addis Ababa in 1941. This period witnessed the end of World War II in Africa but the beginning of the same in Europe. We will discuss this when we reach the relevant section.

The period under consideration had national, regional (largely symbolic or psychological), and personal gains. At the national level, the Regent, later king, was able to project a positive image for Ethiopia. He successfully placed the country on the diplomatic map of Europe, which was struggling to reconstruct the economy and society destroyed by the First World War. He even managed to maintain a friendly relationship with Germany, a country defeated and isolated from the world due to its role in that war (Smidt, 2013).

On the regional or symbolic/psychological level, it can be highlighted that the visits motivated the struggle against colonialism and the forceful occupation of Africa. A Black king visiting European countries undoubtedly sowed the seeds of freedom among the African diaspora and anti-oppression elements in European capitals. From this perspective, the missions were beneficial to Ethiopia and Africa. Ethiopia was the only African country that joined the League of Nations and assumed a seat at this fateful organization, which later collapsed. In preparation for League membership, Ethiopia 'abolished' slavery, an institution that had existed for centuries despite previous regimes' attempts to curtail it. Additionally, Tafari managed to modernize his country by limiting the powers of regional lords, centralizing the army, and somewhat funding the civil service. He also intensified, though

selectively (Tsegaye, 2000), the transformations started by Emperor Menelik (Zewde, 2002).

On a personal level, his host governments and the general populace, impressed by his dignity, affability, and simplicity, was favorably disposed. This can be considered soft power or public diplomacy (Abota, 2002). The media played a crucial role in building a positive image of the Ras. European powers also showered him with symbols and tokens of recognition, valuing the friendship between his country and the foreign nation he had visited. These were personal gains from his global tours, often accompanied by gifts, awards, and presents, usually reciprocated by Tafari to high-level dignitaries of the respective countries. This practice continued in other official missions and became a pattern of his public diplomacy for the remainder of his reign.

Haile Selassie's visits, 1930 to 1941: The start of his reign as Emperor, exile and return

As noted in the introduction, during this period, the Emperor made limited travels due to Italian aggression and the brief occupation of Ethiopia. However, the few trips he made, particularly to Geneva in 1936, rendered him a world-renowned figure. During this time, he largely traveled to Jerusalem and then to England, where he was exiled. He left the Empress in Palestine until he could find a place to shelter and protect himself, his family, and his royal entourage. After settling in Bath, England, he traveled to Geneva to deliver his historic statement protesting the Italian occupation of his country in 1935. He delivered a passionate, backbreaking, and marrow-melting speech against the Fascists, emphasizing the broken promises of collective security and the protection of weaker nations by the League if attacked by great powers. Despite attempts to interrupt him by Italians and their white-supremacist counterparts in the League of Nations hall, he persevered. He concluded his speech with the prophetic words, "It is us today, it will be you tomorrow" (EOTC, ND). No meaningful action against the invader was taken for fear of offending the powerful aggressor, Italy. Thus, in 1936, with smaller events leading to a larger war, Ethiopia took its case to the League of Nations. On June 30, 1936, Emperor Haile Selassie made his appeal in person in Geneva on behalf of his own country and the rights of other small nations.

He knew he was speaking as the Head of State of a Black, 'backward' African country, and that his words might seem empty to many participants, inside and outside the hall. Yet, he was confident that his people's cries would be answered one day and that Europe would soon be engulfed by World War II, which it feared to avert. Instead, Europe decided to sacrifice Ethiopia to avoid disappointing Mussolini and triggering his alliance with Nazi Hitler. On this occasion, the Emperor demonstrated communicative, persuasive, and

informative diplomacy. He told the reluctant audience that Italy's actions were not only against the principle of collective security but also violated international laws by using globally prohibited poisonous gas to kill innocent civilians in large numbers. According to one observer, the Emperor's speech "set [s] the predicate for one of the most prescient, eloquent, and oft-forgotten rhetorical speeches of the 20th century" (Lutis, 2022). This public or soft power diplomacy was heightened when Time Magazine named Haile Selassie Man of the Year on July 6, 1936 (Time, 1936). A statement from the Ethiopian Argument website, reproduced from Time Magazine in 2014, reads:

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 (Ethiopian Argument, 2014).

Therefore, his return to England was marked by his recognition as Man of the Year for his fortitude and resoluteness against the Italian invasion, even as it was also the beginning of the period of his exile. He stayed in the UK for four years, residing in a property he purchased in Bath. The Italian illegal occupation of Ethiopia and the Emperor's exile drew sharp opposition from the international community, especially among Black communities. Blacks everywhere, particularly in North and South America, vehemently rejected the invasion and offered concrete support to the Ethiopian Patriots' liberation struggle both at home and in the diaspora. For instance, Black pilot John C. Robinson from Chicago traveled to Ethiopia to fight the invaders, stating, "I am glad to know that they realize that Ethiopia is fighting not only for herself but also for Black men in every part of the world, and that Americans, especially Black Americans, are willing to do anything to help us carry on and to win" (Borja, 2021). Ben-Ghiat noted that "On August 3, 1935, a day so humid you could taste the air, 25,000 Black and White New Yorkers marched down Harlem's Lenox Avenue to protest fascist Italy's plans to invade Ethiopia. Ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was a League of Nations member and one of two African nations that had never been colonized" (Ben-Ghiat, 2020).

By the time Haile Selassie was in his fifth year as Emperor, he enjoyed global fame and inspired Rastafarianism, a cultural and religious movement that viewed him as a messianic figure. It is argued that while the international community's protests against the

invasion of smaller or weaker nations by great powers and fascists were rooted in genuine concern for justice, these actions were amplified by Haile Selassie's popularity, which was often highlighted by sensational media coverages during his 1920s European visits. Though the trips during this period were limited, they were remarkably impactful on both the Emperor and his country. During his exile, he continued to display statesmanship and public diplomacy. In Bath, he created a lasting good impression, received favorable press, and was noted for his genuine affection for children and fondness for dogs (Haber, 1992). The continuing popularity of the Emperor and the Ethiopian cause in England, especially in Bath, was appreciated, particularly toward the end of his exile in 1940. As fascist Italy joined Nazi Germany in dismantling Europe, Haile Selassie found a crucial but threatened ally in the UK. His host decided to wage war against fascist Italy in Africa and arranged for Haile Selassie to return to Ethiopia through Sudan to bolster the Patriotic resistance movement. This decision, however, should be seen not as a purely altruistic act by the UK but as a strategic move to leverage the ongoing struggle for its own benefit. Sbacchi (1979) noted, "Haile Selassie and the Patriot troops played an important role in the defeat of the Italians." The diplomatic significance of Haile Selassie's mission to Sudan and subsequently to Ethiopia was substantial.

Haile Selassie's arrival in Khartoum was initially met with resistance for various reasons. Officially, the Emperor was advised that Khartoum was unsafe for his stay and should move to Wadi Halfa, a small rural town with minimal amenities for an Emperor. Additionally, he was informed that the colonial administration in Sudan had not received instructions from London regarding his return and that Sudan lacked the military readiness to confront the Italians across the border in Ethiopia. While this was accurate regarding Sudan's readiness for conflict, the true motive of the colonial office in Khartoum was to belittle the Ethiopian cause. Nonetheless, the Emperor viewed this as a temporary inconvenience and continued his diplomatic efforts, engaging with authorities in Khartoum, Cairo, and London, and reaching out to the media in London and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

His patience, dignified statesmanship, and persistent diplomacy led to a final decision by the UK government to enhance military preparations and permit the Emperor to enter Ethiopia to support the Patriots' fight. People advising and assisting the Emperor were allowed to join him in Khartoum from Palestine (Jerusalem), Egypt, Kenya, and Somaliland, enabling him to better manage the situation and enhance combat effectiveness. Additionally, the UK ordered forces from South Africa and Kenya to bolster the campaign against the Italian occupying forces. The goal of removing Italian forces from Ethiopia and Eastern Africa was to weaken the fascists' power in the Second World War. Ultimately, Ethiopia triumphed, and the Emperor returned to his

throne despite significant challenges from British colonial officials who viewed Ethiopia as a potential 'liberated' colony. The Emperor again demonstrated exceptional diplomatic skills using his well-developed soft power.

The national, regional (symbolic or psychological), and personal achievements of the victory over Italy can be summarized as follows. At the national level, Ethiopia proved invincible against Italian colonial ambitions for the second time, a remarkable feat considering Italy's advanced weaponry and trained army compared to Ethiopia's static conditions post-1896. The moral superiority of Ethiopians remains tied to this victory, mirroring the 1896 battle of Adwa. Symbolically, the defeat of Italy reinforced the notion that the days of White colonizers in Africa were numbered. The participation of Black soldiers in World War II alongside their colonial rulers highlighted the spirit of resistance learned from their Ethiopian counterparts, contributing to Africa's independence movement in the decade following the war. On a personal level, Haile Selassie emerged as a distinguished statesman. Despite the constraints imposed by the British in the early years of his return, his global standing, charismatic presence, and strong diplomatic ties with the United States and many African and Western countries facilitated his success.

Haile Selassie's diplomatic missions between 1941 and 1960: His matured statesmanship

This was the most suspenseful decade for the Emperor. The early years were marked by uncertainty, anxiety, and anguish, tempered by perseverance, patience, and reflective diplomacy towards the British partners. After aiding in the defeat of the Italian invaders, the British colonialists sought to colonize Ethiopia and assume a controlling role. This was unacceptable to both Haile Selassie and the Patriots, who had resisted the Italian invasion for five years. Nevertheless, the Emperor was compelled to sign a controversial treaty for two years, allowing the British to act almost as a protectorate power over Ethiopia from 1942 to 1944. The end of this period saw an attempted coup while the Emperor was on an official mission to Brazil in December 1960. He had to cut his trip short to address the plot against him, primarily orchestrated by his palace guards.

Ethiopia was seeking alliances with the great powers of the time, particularly with the United States. This goal was realized in February 1945 when the Emperor held a secret meeting with President Roosevelt at the Suez Canal in Egypt, during Roosevelt's return from the Yalta Conference. During this brief meeting, the Emperor addressed several bilateral issues, including the Eritrean question and access to the sea, the return of the Ethio-Djibouti railway to Ethiopia, weapons support, Ethiopia's involvement in drafting the new UN Charter, the role of Ethiopia in the post-war peace conference, and the return

of the Ogaden and other reserved areas under British control. The two leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in these and other political, economic, cultural, and social areas. Symbolically, this visit was significant as the Emperor felt a sense of accomplishment and true independence, contrasting with the British administrators who acted more like colonizers and protectors rather than allies (O'Brien, 1956).

The mission and secret meeting caused a shockwave in the British government. While the Emperor was in Egypt, the head of the UK diplomatic mission in Addis Ababa received an invitation for the Emperor to meet Churchill in Cairo. The diplomat sought to deliver the letter to the Emperor, though he was aware that the Emperor had already left for the Suez Canal to meet Roosevelt. Disappointed, the official decided to travel to Cairo that same day to arrange a meeting between the Emperor and Churchill. During this unscheduled meeting, they discussed various diplomatic issues, presumably including the conduct of some British administrators in Ethiopia, with whom the Emperor was dissatisfied. Thus, 1945 began positively for the Emperor, as he started to leverage one great power against another (USA Office of the Historian, 1954).

In May 1954, the Emperor visited the United States for the first time, invited by President Eisenhower. During this visit, he addressed various bilateral relations, regional, and global issues, occurring a few years after World War II and during the early Cold War. As a result, Ethiopia and the United States enhanced aid, technical, economic, and military cooperation. Of particular interest to the Americans was the strengthening of Kagnew Station in Asmara, which began in the early 1940s, though the formal agreement was signed in 1953, a year before the Emperor's visit (Girma, 2003). He also toured several states across the country.

Simultaneously, Haile Selassie undertook diplomatic missions to neighboring Canada and Mexico in June and July, respectively (Girma, 2003). In Canada, he received an honorary degree from Montreal University. These visits were highly successful and exceptional for an African nation from a continent still under colonial rule. The visit to the United States was especially notable. According to Girma (2023), in a review of Theodore M. Vestal's book, "His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I (HIM) is the first head of state to be honored with a tickertape parade in New York City, and the first African head of state to spend a night at the White House. He made six state visits to Washington starting in 1954, the most of any reigning head of state. In present-day Ethiopia, few know just how popular their monarch was in the New World." Girma also noted that the Emperor often spent his travel time conversing with officials and presenting awards, honors, and gifts (Girma, 2023). Vestal highlighted that "The year 1954 was in many ways the watermark of Haile Selassie's success and prestige" (Vestal, 2003). These visits aimed to broaden and

deepen diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and various foreign governments. Grima noted that in Canada, the Emperor appreciated the widespread use of French, and in Mexico, a plaza was named in Ethiopia's honor, with a reciprocal gesture by the Emperor in Addis Ababa (The Guardian, 2010).

In October 1954, the Emperor traveled to the UK on an official mission. This time, he was received as a statesman rather than an exile from the mid-1930s. Accompanied by one of his sons and his retinue, he traveled by sea. His grand arrival was notably covered in the media (Royal Collection Trust, 1954). The Queen welcomed him at Victoria Station, and he stayed at Buckingham Palace during his visit (BBC, 2019). The BBC reported in 2019 that, "Two blue plaques have been unveiled in Somerset to honor Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie's life in Bath and visits to Weston-super-Mare" (France 24, 2022). He was one of the 112 high-level state guests hosted by Queen Elizabeth, as reported by France24.

In November 1954, Haile Selassie visited Paris, a city he admired for its development and cultural significance. This visit was significant not only for its personal importance to the Emperor but also for its diplomatic implications. Following Paris, he traveled to Switzerland, where his visit was met with tremendous enthusiasm. Over 100,000 people gathered in Bern to celebrate his arrival, reflecting the high regard in which he was held. On November 25, he visited the Swiss Parliament, becoming only the second Emperor to do so in nearly 50 years (Swissinfo.ch, 2014; The Federal Assembly-The Swiss, ND).

During the same trip, Haile Selassie also visited the Federal Republic of Germany. For the newly established Germany, emerging from the shadows of World War II, the visit of an Emperor who had once defeated Italy was both an honor and a symbolic gesture of reconciliation and respect. The excitement surrounding the visit was considerable, though it was handled with care to avoid excessive publicity due to the country's socio-economic challenges. Schadomsky (2014) noted that the young Federal Republic of Germany was greatly honored by the visit, which attracted significant attention, especially given the Emperor's ornate uniform and helmet adorned with the emblematic black lion of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia and Germany had a longstanding diplomatic relationship that predates the two World Wars, despite the tumultuous period during Hitler's encouragement of Italy's occupation of Ethiopia. In 1956, Haile Selassie embarked on a significant diplomatic tour of India and Japan. In India, he met with President Rajendra Prasad and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, aiming to strengthen cultural and educational ties. Indian educators had been instrumental in Ethiopian education, and the visit underscored the ongoing collaboration between the two nations (Kamalakaran, 2021).

The visit to Japan was equally impactful. The Emperor

was so impressed by the traditional Japanese gardens that he requested Japanese experts to help develop similar landscapes in Ethiopia. This visit led to the establishment of a Japanese garden at his palace and further deepened bilateral ties. The Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia later highlighted that this interest in Japanese garden aesthetics was part of a broader request for expertise in various fields, including legal affairs, public administration, agriculture, and economic development (Boavida et al., 2010). Haile Selassie's tours during this period were not only diplomatic triumphs but also significant for fostering international relationships and enhancing Ethiopia's global stature.

A year before that, he traveled to Indonesia to attend the meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bandung. In 1958, the Emperor made his first official visit to the then Czechoslovak Republic, though trade relations between Ethiopia and that country date back decades. The visit resulted in formal economic and diplomatic relations. The Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation and the Agreement on Cultural, Scientific, and Technical were signed on December 5, 1959. This was followed by several scholarships and investment opportunities flowing into Ethiopia. Boavida et al. (2010) reported that the Emperor made diplomatic visits to six countries: Egypt, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, and Portugal, in that order (Ibid). An interesting aspect of the visit to Portugal was that 'Haile Selassie returned to Ethiopia as an honorary General of the Portuguese' (Abota, 2002). The visit to Moscow was his first official mission (Embassy of the Russia, 2019). This travel to the USSR was driven by the desire to play the two great powers of the Cold War against one another and minimize the pressure from either side. Regarding the outcomes of that mission, a post on the Russian Federation Embassy (in Addis Ababa) website stated that:

The visit of Haile Selassie gave a powerful impetus to the development of cooperation between the two countries. Radio Moscow began broadcasting in the Amharic language, and the translation of Russian literature into Amharic was initiated. With the support of the USSR, a polytechnic school was built in Bahir Dar that later became known as Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute (Boavida et al., 2010).

The personal diplomacy of Haile Selassie in the 1950s can be seen from the way he engaged with the leaders of the countries he visited. In return for gifts and tokens of recognition, he generously distributed gold jubilee medals and small gold coins and awarded the Star of the Order of Sheba and the Order of Solomon to the highest-ranking personalities he met: President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the United Arab Republic, General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Chairman Kliment Voroshilov of the Presidium of the

Supreme Soviet, President Antonin Novotny of Czechoslovakia, King Baudouin of Belgium, President Charles de Gaulle, Prime Minister Michel Debré, President Américo Thomaz, and Chairman António de Oliveira Salazar of the Council of Ministers (Embassy of the Russia, 2019). When he traveled to the USSR in 1959, as he did in other countries, particularly in North America and Western Europe, he toured Leningrad, Yalta, Sochi, and Stalingrad (Ibid). The visit allowed Ethiopia and the USSR to strengthen bilateral cooperation in social, cultural, and economic fields. They also exchanged awards and decorations of their countries' highest orders at both secular and religious levels (The Crown Council, 1963). A year later, in December 1960, the Emperor visited Brazil, Sao Paulo, and met Brazil's President Joscélino Kubitschek and several people, including Governor Pinto of the region. As noted above, he then interrupted his visit and returned to Ethiopia, which had undergone an aborted coup. The coup was the first large-scale political disorder in the country, though not the first instance of disobedience to the monarchy. The Emperor was flown to Asmara and then to Addis Ababa around the time the coup ended.

Like his visits in the 1940s and 1950s, his travels had a significant impact on Ethiopia, Africa, and himself. The national, regional, and personal implications of these global official missions were tremendous. Ethiopia increasingly emerged as a country of diplomatic importance, while Africa felt represented on the world stage by Haile Selassie, both through his personal diplomacy and the liberation movements following World War II. Individually, the Emperor reached the zenith of his personal diplomacy, monarchic statesmanship, and experience as an elderly leader of Ethiopia, Africa, and the world. During this period, he was regarded abroad as a living god and, at home, as a divinely chosen ruler, if not a god.

Haile Selassie's missions abroad, 1961-1974: His final years

This period began with a negative experience associated with the palace coup, foreshadowing what was to come over a decade later in 1973/74. Yet, the Emperor showed courage and resilience as he continued to consolidate power through personal diplomacy both at home and abroad. In 1963, he traveled to the United States to attend the United Nations meeting. Haile Selassie delivered a statement at the UN, reflecting on his experiences from the lessons of the 1930s and making them relevant to the new Organization, both at present and in the future. He observed that:

The record of the United Nations during the few short years of its life affords mankind a solid basis for encouragement and hope for the future. The United Nations has dared to act when the League dared not—in

Palestine, in Korea, in Suez, in the Congo. There is not one among us today who does not conjecture upon the reaction of this body when motives and actions are called into question. The opinion of this Organization today acts as a powerful influence upon the decisions of its members. The spotlight of world opinion, focused by the United Nations upon the transgressions of the renegades of human society, has thus far proved an effective safeguard against unchecked aggression and unrestricted violation of human rights (MacLeod, 2016).

This was a remarkable emphasis on the merits of the United Nations based on first-hand observation from someone who knew the defunct global organization that failed to live up to its own principles. In 1964, Emperor Haile Selassie paid an official visit to Iran and met his counterpart, the Shah. Both were friends of the United States and shared some common features. They exchanged views on bilateral and regional issues of concern and agreed to promote cooperation in several areas. The most dramatic and memorable visit, which attracted a large crowd when his plane landed in Kingston, was to Jamaica in 1966. More than 100,000 Rastafarians, along with other people of Jamaica, turned out for his reception. As usual, he awarded their leaders with various memorabilia. He also addressed the parliament in Amharic, which was interpreted into English by his entourage. The memorability of this visit is due to its association with myths and varying narratives. This is often related to the Rastafarians, who, as discussed in the preceding section, considered Haile Selassie to be a living god. It is also connected to the Ethiopian belief that Jamaica was suffering from drought, but it rained when the plane carrying the Emperor landed. However, there are accounts suggesting that it was raining before the Emperor arrived but stopped when the plane landed, as predicted by some Rastafarians (Woliso Eco Lodge and Campsite, 2021).

Haile Selassie visited Switzerland again in February 1967 and was also reported to be there in May 1967. This time, he was said to be accompanied by his three children and his ambassador to neighboring Germany (Vestal, 2008). In May 1967, the Emperor made another official visit to the United States at the invitation of President Lyndon Johnson. As is customary with other leaders, the Emperor and the President discussed both bilateral and global issues, particularly the Middle East situation (CIA, 1967). This assertion is supported by a CIA document, which reported that "... Haile Selassie arrives ... to discuss ... growing concerns over Somali, Arab, and Communist pressures [Sic] in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea basin" (LeMoore, 2021).

From the United States, Haile Selassie proceeded to Canada, where his third official visit to that country took place in 1967. It was a remarkable North American experience, an extension of his multistate tours in the United States. He was received by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in Vancouver (Ibid). During this mission, he

inaugurated Ethiopia Day at Expo '67, as reported by The Ethiopian Herald, a national English newspaper (The Ethiopian Herald, 1967). This state visit also coincided with the centenary celebration of Canada (LeMoore, 2021), making it an opportune time for a diplomatic mission. It also provided him with a fantastic opportunity to expand his diplomatic presence at the Expo by making guided tours of the pavilions of France, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, and Italy (Ibid). There, he met several high-level dignitaries, including the President of the host country (UN, 1967). From a diplomatic perspective, therefore, this leg of Haile Selassie's journey to Canada was extremely productive.

In August 1967, the Emperor visited Yugoslavia, where he was warmly received by President Tito at Brioni. The two discussed bilateral issues such as their friendly relationship and economic cooperation, as well as international affairs including the crisis in the Middle East and in Vietnam as members of the Non-Aligned Movement (Australia War Memorial, 1968).

In 1968, Haile Selassie visited Australia, where he also paid a courtesy call to the war memorial, laid a wreath of flowers, and dropped an Ethiopian gold coin into the water (Australia, 1968). His official visit to Australia was part of an eight-country tour (Mellor and Kirk, ND). Referring to the success of this diplomatic mission, it was reported that:

Haile Selassie was warmly received wherever he went in Australia, and the visit made front-page news around the world. He reveled in the attention, being at heart an internationalist, friendly (as far as monarchs can be), and multicultural in his approach. That helped to ensure his popularity and made for appealing images, such as those posing with a young kangaroo. Always a horse lover, he was much taken with the quality of Australian horses, which were soon to be seen on parade in Addis Ababa (Mellor and Kirk, ND).

In July 1969, the Emperor visited the United States during President Richard Nixon's tenure. Coincidentally, both leaders ended their service to their respective countries in 1974. At the end of his state visit to the US, the Emperor warmly thanked his host. Speaking in Amharic, which was translated into English by the Ethiopian Ambassador to the US, he said:

In our discussions, Mr. President, as you have indicated, we have considered the possibility of expanding the relations between Ethiopia and the United States on a bilateral basis. We have also considered problems affecting our region as well as problems affecting international peace and security (ODS, ND).

It is worth noting that, since New York is the seat of the UN, the Emperor's visit to the US had a dual mission: to attend the UN General Assembly and to be an official guest of the US Government. In 1970, he addressed the

UN General Assembly. Speaking in Amharic, he said:

As we are assembled here today for the purpose of observing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I believe it is proper that we should focus our thoughts on the constants of human nature and on the historical circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of this Organization. And I say this for a variety of reasons (USA Office of the Historian, 1954).

As usual, he criticized the former League of Nations for its failure to uphold the promise of collective security and protect weaker nations. He used the occasion to warn the UN not to repeat the same mistakes of its predecessor. He then "attended a White House dinner on the 25th anniversary of the UN and met privately with President Nixon on October 25" (Jima, 2021). The next time he met Nixon was in 1973, a year before their respective downfalls.

He visited Turkey in 1971 to strengthen bilateral and regional ties. The aging monarch used his tour to seek diplomatic support from developing countries like Turkey, despite that country's recognition of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in the 1930s (New York Times, 1938). In October 1971, the Emperor traveled to China and met Mao Tse-Tung, representing two ideologically different nations and leaders. Mao had been absent from public view for months, and his appearance to receive the Ethiopian "king of kings" was seen as evidence of improving health. The Emperor was quoted as saying:

It has been my long-cherished desire to visit this great land, which has given birth to man's most enduring civilization. I am very happy that this desire has been fulfilled today and I am now able to exchange views with the dedicated leaders of the new China (Adem, 2012).

In May 1971, Haile Selassie visited Spain during the reign of Dictator Francisco Franco. The Emperor added China to the list of countries that helped develop a positive image of him and his country, despite their divergent political alignments. Haile Selassie made his final official visit to Germany in 1973, just months before the revolution that unseated him and ended his one-man rule as well as the feudal system based on the monarchy.

The national, regional, and personal significance of the official tours during this final phase can be summarized as follows. At the national level, Ethiopia continued to benefit from heightened diplomacy, especially during the first few years after the failed coup attempt that occurred during his official mission to Brazil. Sympathy and gratitude, coupled with cautious optimism, characterized his presence on the world stage. The regional or symbolic significance of the missions was mixed. On one hand, many African states and Western countries viewed Haile Selassie as an elderly statesman who served as a role model for newly liberated African states and a power broker for colonial nations. On the other hand, he was no

longer the sole representative of the black race, unlike in the pre-independence years. Increasingly powerful young leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah, spoke not only for the liberation of their own countries but for the total independence of Africa, putting him in a relatively awkward position, at least mentally.

Characterization of Haile Selassie's mission diplomacy

The first period from 1916 to 1929 was crucial for the Regent, who later became king, and for Ethiopia in many ways. On a personal level, Ras Tafari projected himself as a leader in the making with significant potential and affability. His leadership qualities became evident over time, continuing a tradition of placing Ethiopia prominently on the diplomatic map of the world. In other words, Ethiopia joined the League of Nations, becoming one of only two African members, the other being apartheid South Africa. Under Ras Tafari during the early years of his leadership, Ethiopia engaged in assertive diplomacy. Assertive diplomacy occurs when a country and its leadership actively seek international recognition and attention from the global community through either strong military capacity (material strength) or networking, gift exchanges, and planned or purposeful missions, often on an official basis. This represents soft power or cultural diplomacy in action.

The second period encompasses positive and negative, disturbing and relieving experiences for Haile Selassie. At the beginning of this period, he ascended to the throne as Emperor Haile Selassie, king of kings of Ethiopia. He was working to build an image as a unifier and modernizer of a "backward" nation. However, just five years later, Ethiopia was invaded and briefly occupied by Italy. During this time, the Emperor made several international trips, which were critical for the survival of his country, himself, and international peace and stability. This period is characterized by survival diplomacy, where his missions aimed at preserving his throne, maintaining his country's independence, and upholding global stability, even as the world order was heading toward an inevitable breakdown and collapse, until it was reconstituted in the post-war era.

The third period, spanning from 1942 to 1960, is marked by several key features: initial disappointment and frustration following the defeat of Italy, the outbreak of the Second World War first in Africa and then globally, and the subsequent rise of the UN. For many years after the War and the establishment of the UN, Haile Selassie was seen as a senior diplomat who predicted the coming global tragedy due to the failure of collective security. As the leader of the only independent African nation, he offered a mature perspective on global affairs. He was victorious, reflective, cautious, both realist and idealist, and keen to advance modernization in selected areas like education, while remaining reserved on decentralized

governance. This period can be termed as triumphant diplomacy. His personal charisma and soft power enabled him to play a significant role in Africa, including the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, headquartered in Addis Ababa. He was a respected voice, advocating for his country and Africa, often using Amharic, which was a golden period for this uniquely written African indigenous language.

At the end of this prolonged period, an unexpected event occurred while the Emperor was on an official mission, as noted in the relevant section: the palace coup, which forced him to cut his visit short. Although the coup lasted less than a few weeks, its impact on the Emperor, the institution of the monarchy, and society was substantial. Until then, the monarchy was considered sacrosanct, supernatural, and unquestionable, to be obeyed and passed down from father to son without interruption. However, the aborted coup revealed the monarchy's vulnerabilities. It became ordinary, subject to challenge and scrutiny.

Despite continuing to travel and maintain his usual diplomatic relations, the Emperor harbored deep fears from various sources: the rise of communism on the global stage, the relatively vocal but small number of his own educated citizens, competition from newly independent African leaders, his advancing age, and the growing socio-economic inequalities at home. Thus, even as he undertook official visits to both capitalist and communist states, this period was marked by increasing insecurity. This phase can be termed as Summative Diplomacy. He was navigating through a natural course of decline and winding down. The early 1970s, therefore, witnessed not only his personal demise but also the end of the institution he had embodied and cherished for so long, which had been a cornerstone of the country for millennia.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the literature and available documents and found that Haile Selassie undertook several official missions during his long reign from 1916 to 1974. The study reveals that the Emperor made considerable efforts to build a positive image for himself as a leader, for Ethiopia as an independent country, and for Africa as the sole representative of a vast continent. Despite these efforts, his public diplomacy, based on official missions to destinations across North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Latin America, has not been sufficiently documented. Therefore, this paper aims to bridge this gap and seeks to reignite interest among researchers to expand our understanding of official missions as important elements of international relations conducted by an African country.

The study also outlines the possible outcomes of Haile Selassie's numerous official trips, characterizing them as

assertive, survival, triumphant, and summative diplomacy. These are key features of his reign and offer valuable lessons for public diplomacy both in Africa and beyond.

MEANINGS OF SOME AHARIC NAMES

"Liji," which literally means "child," is a traditional title used for someone from the dignitaries; "Ras," meaning "head," is a traditional title referring to the leader or head of an army or government; "Fitawrari" is synonymous with the vanguard commander of the army; "Echegie" refers to the administrative head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, equivalent to the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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