

Ras Tafari in Lusoland

On the 50th anniversary of Haile Selassie's I
state visit to Portugal, 1959-2009

Exhibition Catalogue



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Centro de Estudos Africanos

2009

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AHM - Arquivo Histórico Militar

AML/AF - Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa/ Arquivo Fotográfico

ANTT - Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo

On the 50th anniversary of Haile Selassie's 1st state visit to Portugal, 1959-2009



1.
July 24th-26th
Sailed in Portuguese navy frigate from Bayonne, France, to Lisbon. The Portuguese government couldn't find a suitable navy vessel to sail all the way from Massawah to Portugal.



2.
July 26th
Welcomed by the Portuguese President, Admiral Américo Thomaz, at Cais das Colunas, Lisbon. The weather is very hot at this time of the year.

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3.

July 26th

Saluted the navy, army and police forces in parade at Terreiro do Paço. The square was decorated with Ethiopian and Portuguese flags. Two years ago, Queen Elizabeth II was received here in the same manner.



4.

July 26th

Hailed by the people. Kept saluting them in the presidential Rolls Royce through downtown Lisbon on the way to Palácio de Queluz. There, awarded the Order of the Queen of Sheba to the President, gave him a golden case with Ethiopian insignia in ivory, and a jewellery case to his wife. Lunched and rested. Went to Palácio de Belém to be awarded the Bend of the Three Orders; also awarded the Council Chairman Oliveira Salazar with the Cross of Salomon and offered him another case. Returned to Queluz.

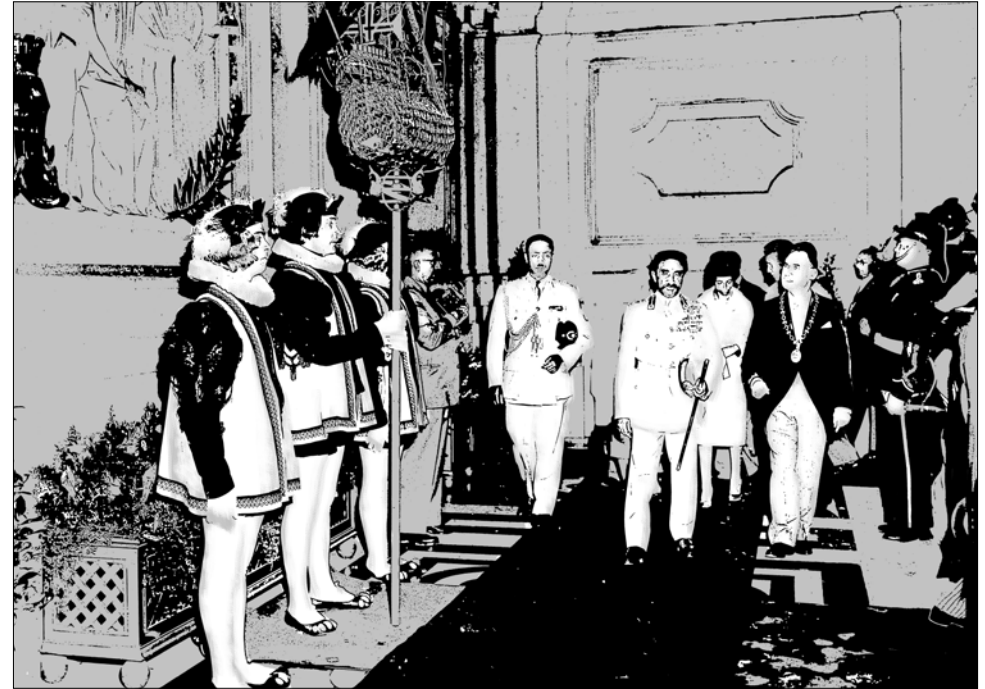
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5.

July 27th

Mosteiro dos Jerónimos' church: deposited a bronze palm with a plaque depicting the castle of Gondar on the tomb of Vasco da Gama, the father of the martyr of Ethiopia. Visited the Museum of Carriages and received a collection of postcards. Went to the stadium of the Football Club Os Belenenses. Earlier, reception in Queluz attended by the diplomatic body credited in Lisbon.



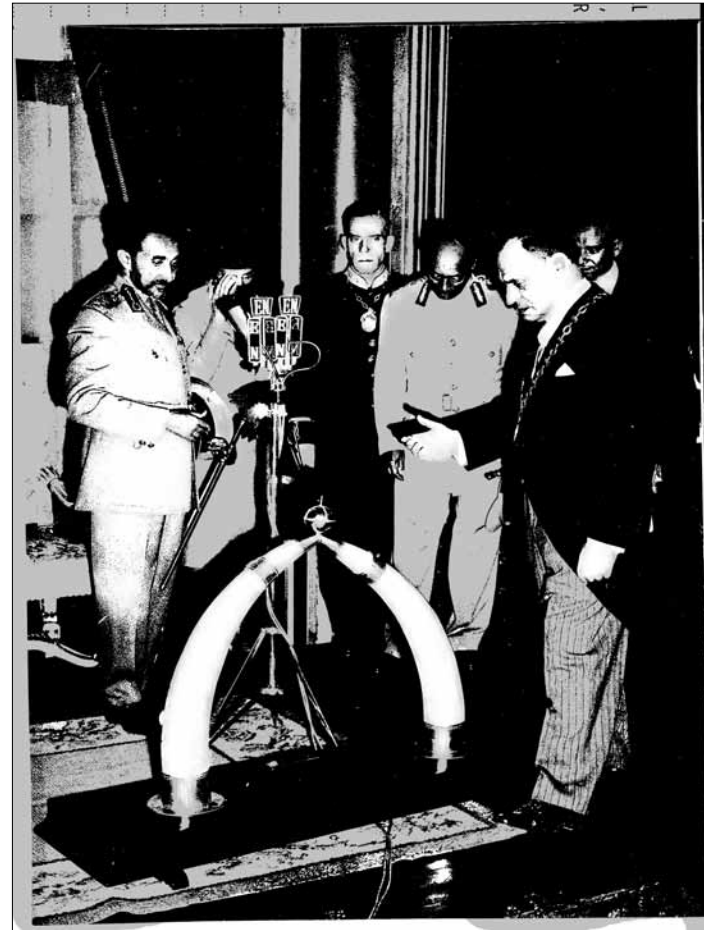
6.

July 27th

Saluted the navy, army and police forces in parade at Terreiro do Paço. The square was decorated with Ethiopian and Portuguese flags. Two years ago, Queen Elizabeth II was received here in the same manner.



7.
July 27th
Greeted by Lisbon's Mayor and various individualities invited to a reception at the Town Hall.



8.
July 27th
Presented the Mayor, Brigadier França Borges, with an Ethiopian handcrafted box. Signed the Book of Honour and so did Princess Aida Desta. Received silver basin and jar, also a silver flowerpot. Leisure visit to Cascais and Sintra, tea at the romantic Palácio da Pena.

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9.
July 27th
Discussed African politics with the Council Chairman Oliveira Salazar at Palácio da Ajuda. The Portuguese government's position seems untenable.



10.
July 27th
Toasted to both countries in the banquet at Ajuda. Evoked common history and Portuguese generous assistance to Ethiopia in the sixteenth century.



11.

July 28th

Trip to Leiria. After lunch at the castle, offered a folkloric dance show, performed by two different groups. Here two young men dance the fandango. In the morning, visit to the monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha. Deposited flowers on the tomb of the unknown Soldier, defender of the Ethiopian freedom. Distributed Ethiopian coins to the local children.

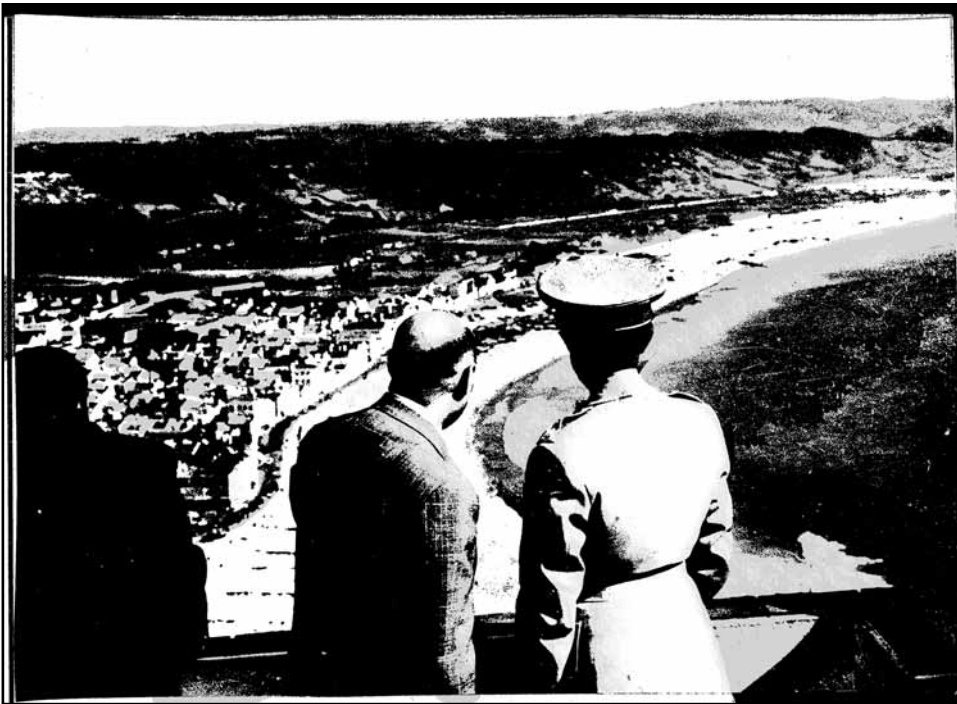


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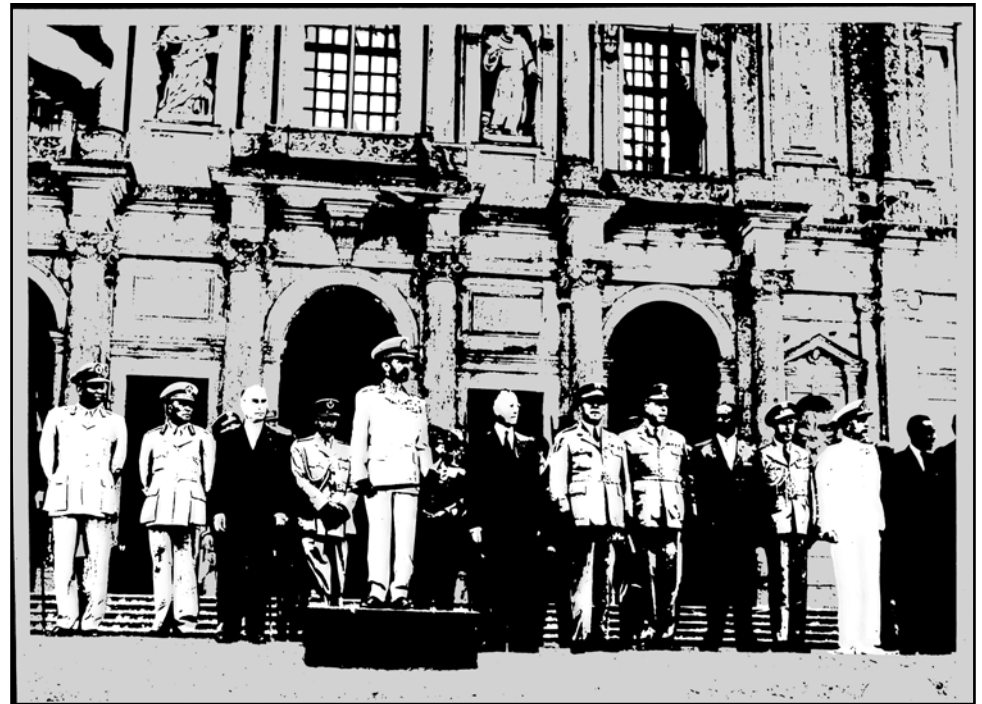
July 28th

Greeted by the folkloric dancers in the Castelo de Leiria, after the show.

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13.
July 28th
Gazing at the Atlantic Ocean and Nazaré fishing village, from Sítio (a promontory dedicated to Our Lady of Nazareth).



14.
July 29th
Honorary review of army cadets parading in front of the monumental Convento de Mafra.

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15.
July 29th
Watched live fire exercises in the Tapada de Mafra, accompanied by Mr. Marcelo Mathias, the Portuguese minister of Foreign Affairs, and the army commanders.



16.
July 29th
Tapada de Mafra: gave praise to army officer involved in the live fire exercise. Portuguese weaponry outdated (American WWII artillery).

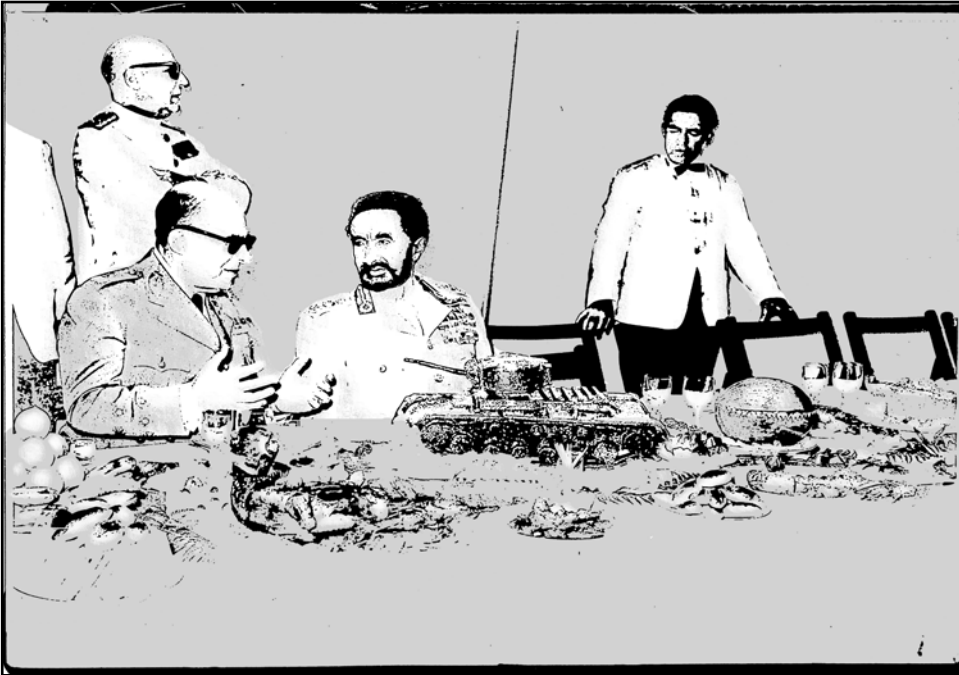


17.
July 29th
Visited Mafra's sports stadium to watch horse riding show. Joined by Princess Aída Desta. After lunch, visited the palace and convent of Mafra. Impressed by its library. Offered a book about the monument.



18.
July 29th
Offered the keys to the city of Covilhã, in a ceremony at the Queluz Palace, in the outskirts of Lisbon. Next, received the folkloric groups of Nazaré and Benavente that danced yesterday in Leiria Castle, who had been invited to a small reception at the palace. Presented everyone with small medals, and was given a doll wearing the traditional dress of the Nazaré women. In the evening, watched traditional bullfight at the Campo Pequeno Arena, in Lisbon.

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19.
July 30th
Lunch in a tent at the Santa Margarida military camp (next to Tancos), with army and air force high commanders. For dessert, a huge tank-shaped cake.



20.
July 30th
Received the insignias of honorary general of the Portuguese land army, on a tribune at the Santa Margarida military camp. Offered a traditional Ethiopian shield and two spears to the Portuguese Defence Minister, General Botelho Moniz.

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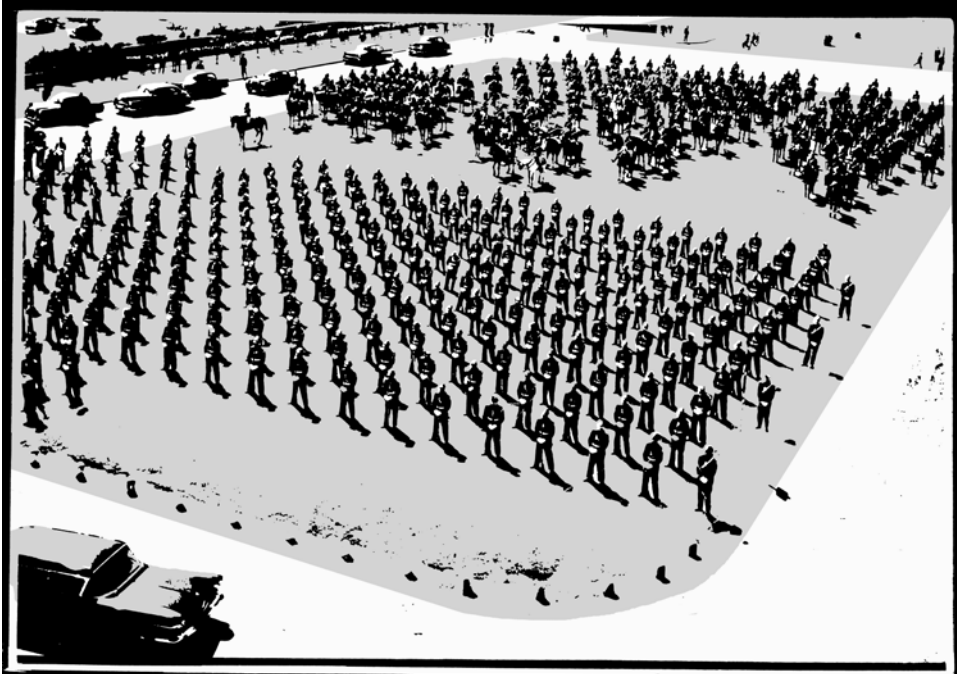


21.
July 30th
Reviewing the troops at the Santa Margarida military camp.



22.
July 30th
Conducting the first lady, Mrs. Gertrudes Thomaz, to the table of the banquet in Queluz. Behind, the Portuguese president, Admiral Américo Thomaz, with Princess Aida. After the dinner, formal speeches and ball. Some trouble dancing with the first lady.

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23.
July 31th
One last military parade offered to the emperor of Ethiopia at Lisbon airport's square.



24.
July 31th
Farewell, Portugal! Next stop: Baden Baden.

Diplomatic relationship between Portugal and Ethiopia, 1954-1963

Pierre-Etienne Page and Isabel Boavida

Relations between Portugal and Ethiopia began in the early 16th century when, after a long quest for this African Christian land thought to be the mythical kingdom of Prester John, a Portuguese legation was sent by King Manuel I in response to a letter from the Ethiopian regency in the name of the child king Lebna Dengel asking for friendship and cooperation in technical and military fields, maybe inspired by a former Portuguese envoy, Pêro da Covilhã. Less than ten years after the departure of the legation, King Lebna Dengel requested military help from Portugal when the seasonal attacks from the sultanate of Adal gave way to an invasion followed by territorial occupation under the leadership of the imam Ahmad al-Ghazi. An expedition led by Cristóvão da Gama was sent and the combined forces of the Portuguese artillery and Ethiopian army led Ethiopia to victory. The death of da Gama at the hands of the imam, reported in Ethiopian and Portuguese chronicles and traditions, has been depicted as martyrdom, reinforcing the image of heroism and sacrifice. Many of his surviving companions stayed in Ethiopia and raised families, founding a small community that was to be the first pretext for establishing a Catholic mission in the 1550s. Later, in the 17th century, the proselytizing efforts of the Jesuits resulted in King Susneyos converting to Catholicism and plunged the kingdom into civil war.

The religious episode was conveniently erased from the shared past that would be used by both parties as the main argument for resuming diplomatic relations in the 20th century. The main topic of the converging rhetoric of the old friendship between the two countries was, needless to say, the episode of da Gama and his 400 warriors.

The first event in the 20th century in which Portugal seized the opportunity to assist Ethiopia was during the Italian invasion in 1935. Salazar's government accepted the call for sanctions against Italy and forbade the export or transit of weapons, munitions and other war material to Italy or its colonies. We can see in this gesture Portugal's solidarity with Ethiopia, also a member of the League of Nations. This event alone could not explain why the two countries resumed their diplomatic relationship but Portugal stance in those hard times later facilitated negotiations.

In a letter written in 1948 the Portuguese consul in Kenya, José Leopoldo Lopes de Neiva, wrote, 'A number of Indo-Portuguese residents in Abyssinia go to the consulate registrations, passports and other consular acts'. He underlined the need to open a new Consulate in Addis Ababa to support the local Goan community and prevent the possibility of a shift in their loyalties, given the goal of unifying all India proclaimed by the leaders of the new independent nation. Moreover, Ethiopia would be an 'excellent political observation point', as it was 'the centre of communist propaganda and expansion in Africa', due to the activities of the Russian Embassy. This letter can be considered the first step towards the establishment of new diplomatic relations.



In 1949, the consul of Nairobi travelled to Ethiopia to meet the Emperor and the Indo-Portuguese who lived there and try to find a solution for their awkward situation. At the same time, the author and journalist Armando de Aguiar was there to collect some information for his book *The world that the Portuguese created*. Neiva and Aguiar produced two reports that would have some impact on the final decision to found a Portuguese Legation in Addis Ababa.

Neiva's Information on the visit to Ethiopia is a detailed survey of Ethiopian political life as observed, and imagined, by a foreigner in just a few days. Having been received by the emperor, Neiva was impressed by Haile Selassie's complimentary declaration on the 'non-imperialist' nature of Portuguese policy. They also reached an agreement about the future of the Indo-Portuguese population to facilitate immigration and open a consulate for them. Indeed, the director of the Bank of Ethiopia at that time, Senhor Menezes, was an Indo-Portuguese and therefore in a good position to encourage the government of Portugal to build future economic and trade links.

Aguiar's report was much more general. He was also favourable to resuming diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, an issue of 'national interest'. His trip lasted 25 months and his aim was to visit each place where Portugal had been in the past few centuries. The journalist had brought a carpet from Covilhã, a town in the slopes of the central highlands of Portugal, ordered by Haile Selassie because the Emperor remembered the ancient link between his ancestor Eskender

and Pêro da Covilhã in the 15th century. Aguiar thought about Ethiopia's strategic and military position of and concluded that it might be helpful in the eventuality of an attack against Mozambique or India.

Those two reports provided some important keys to the formalization of the diplomatic relationship. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the situation of the Goans in Ethiopia. However, other issues were also raised, such as 1) the possibilities for exporting Portuguese products to Ethiopia, 2) possible support by the Ethiopian government for Portuguese colonial policies and 3) the establishment of an anti-communist alliance.

Pondering all these in light of the possibility of more Goan families moving to Ethiopia, the Portuguese Foreign Office decided to open a legation in Addis Ababa. It finally happened in 1954, when António de Séves presented his credentials, later replaced by Armando de Castro e Abreu. The embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, Alfredo Lencastre da Veiga, whose main task was promoting and preparing to host the Goan immigrants, produced a rather pessimistic report on the Indo-Portuguese community in 1956, considering that Aguiar had inflated the whole matter. In 1957 a mission was sent look into Ethiopia's tourist potential. The following year, the first steps were taken in cultural exchanges with the award of a scholarship to an Ethiopian student, Girma Beshah, who came to Portugal to study the history of Portuguese-Ethiopian relations.



During Haile Selassie's first trip to Europe of in 1954, the Portuguese Ambassador to Germany communicated back to Portugal that the Emperor was disappointed at not being invited to visit Portugal. It was only in 1956 that the Salazar government sent its first invitation to Addis-Ababa. It was not answered. The new consul in Ethiopia, Castro e Abreu, heard at the beginning of 1959 that the Emperor would be making a new trip the following summer, so a new invitation was issued and the Emperor accepted. The Lion of Judah planned to visit many countries - Egypt, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Belgium, France and Portugal. Lisbon kept a close eye on this itinerary and there was deep scrutiny of each meeting between Haile Selassie and the heads of state of all these countries. For instance, Abreu related his meeting with Nasser where both reiterated the principles of the Bandung and Accra summits regarding the liberation of all African colonies. Nevertheless, according to Ethiopian newspapers, Haile Selassie, being a wise and cautious statesman, never made any allusion in his speeches to the independence of the African colonies in his following visits, even when Khrushchev or Novotny insisted on his eminent role in this battle for emancipation.

The official purpose of this visit to Portugal was to reinforce the old friendly link between the two countries and sign a cultural agreement. Any political significance had to be read between the lines. The following year, to develop the partnership, the Portuguese Ministry of Information sent to Addis Ababa tourist brochures, books about history and the Portuguese architectural heritage, pictures and a show to be performed at the National Theatre.

In 1961, the fierce reaction of the Angolan colonizers and the Portuguese government after the violent action by the Angolan Peoples Union (a liberation movement) in northern Angola had a great impact on the international community. At the end of the year, Haile Selassie made clear in a meeting with the new ambassador, Martim de Faria e Maya, that he was worried about this international situation and that he was leaning closer to the Afro-Asian block at the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was strictly anti-imperialist. Because of Ethiopia's mighty history and his personal charisma, Haile Selassie was naturally one of the leaders of the Third World movement. Then, with the growth of the Afro-Asian block's role in the international community and the foundation of the OAU (with its headquarters in Addis Ababa), the Emperor was forced to take a more assertive stance and demand the liberation of Portugal's colonies.

In a letter of 17th June 1963, the Emperor urged Salazar to present an agenda for the progressive liberation of the colonies and to plan a date for independence, arguing, 'We cannot acquiesce to the fact that other fellow Africans remain oppressed in exchange for the freedom we enjoy' (1963: 3). He also declared, 'If the Portuguese Government does not respond favourably to this request all independent African countries should break off their diplomatic relations' (1963: 3). Salazar answered this demand in a long letter in which he described his vision for the colonies and also backed up his position with different projects that were already implemented or planned for the future, 'the new Overseas Basic Laws, which have just been published' (1963: 10), the natives' growing direct



participation in government and the opening of universities in Angola and Mozambique. He ended, 'We will continue in this manner to fight for justice and the welfare of the population' (1963: 13).

Because of Salazar's refusal to free the Portuguese colonies, Ethiopia and other African countries decided to break off relations with Portugal. It meant that trade would cease and also that each time they had to vote at the General Assembly of the United Nation, they would vote against Portugal. With specific regard to Ethiopia, the Portuguese Embassy closed the next year, ending a decade of diplomatic relations.



A state visit in times of change

Isabel Boavida

On June 23rd 1959, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I departed from Addis Ababa on a state tour to six countries. Egypt (June 23rd – 29th), the USSR (June 30th – July 13th), Czechoslovakia (July 13th – 17th), Belgium (July 17th – 20th), France (July 20th – 24th) and Portugal (26th – 31st). He also made a private visit to Yugoslavia in early September, after a month's holiday in Germany where he spent at least one week in Baden Baden to rest and cleanse his body after the highly demanding diet of the previous five weeks and went to to Bad Nauheim to meet King Ibn-Saud of Arabia. These were the countries whose people would have the 'opportunity to meet this statesman' and whose leaders 'would have the stimulating effect of personal knowledge' of the Ethiopian emperor, according to the Ethiopian Herald editorial the day he left.

According to his biographer Angelo Del Boca, the invitations addressed to him by heads of state all over the world proved that 'Ethiopia was taking an increasing position in the concert of nations' (Del Boca, 2007: 229). They also responded to a personal 'pursuit of pomp and grandeur' as 'he sought glamour and splendour abroad in his record-breaking foreign tours' (Bahru Zewde, 1994: 41). In fact, Haile Selassie invested his personal charisma (and charm) in reinforcing the international role of Ethiopia. It mirrored his own leadership style, centralizing all aspects of Ethiopia's political life. Furthermore, the well-oiled control and internal information

machine assured him the possibility of absenting himself from the palace in Addis Ababa for longer periods, around two or three months each time. Its strength would be put to the test in December 1960 when a coup took place days after the emperor left for yet another trip abroad. In 1959 he returned for the Ethiopian New Year festivities, having stayed abroad for more than three months.

His travel agenda was in line with general Ethiopian foreign policy goals combining the emperor's state and personal desiderata. In times of change like those of the late fifties, characterized by the challenges posed by the bipolarization of world politics and the emergence of the former colonised or peripheral countries as alternative voices and forces, which had formed a new group at the Conference of Bandung (1955), his agenda was drawn along the line of neutrality and his skilful manipulation of rhetoric was displayed differently to different audiences. The Bandung and Accra principles of coexistence and cooperation were stressed in Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Egypt and Yugoslavia, plus the idea of non-alignment for the last two. He played the gratitude card for old historical links, or the more recent favourable disposition towards Ethiopia in the League of the Nations in Portugal, and added the argument of mutual suffering under the fascist (or Nazi) invasion in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. Without compromising himself with foreign agendas, and seizing the advantage of being on good terms with both blocs, Haile Selassie managed to obtain a long-term loan of 400 million roubles at low interest from the Soviet government. This news was received with some incredulity by the USA, which associated sources of funding for emergent countries



with the ideological orientations at their disposal. During the emperor's stay in Paris, cabinet members and a few members of the diplomatic corps whispered about on the huge loan. Was it possible that Haile Selassie harboured communist sympathies? As he told de Gaulle, the Soviets lent the money with no special conditions, but recognized that the Somali question was the main issue underlying the proposed loan and its acceptance, given the positions of the USA and the UK in favour of the independence and unification of former Italian Somalia with British Somaliland. The balance of power in the Horn of Africa and the hegemonic role of Ethiopia were old guidelines in Ethiopian foreign policy. In times of change, the emperor maintained his claim for territorial jurisdiction and annexation under the Ethiopian flag and defended peoples' right to self-determination. He portrayed himself as an African leader among younger leaders like Kwame Nkrumah or, better, as the African leaders' patron. The growing African trend in Ethiopian policy can also be regarded in the context of the growing pan-Arab movement led by Nasser.

Gontran de Juniac recorded a good-humoured comment by Haile Selassie on the lessons a statesman should learn from travelling abroad: avoiding above all the national dish and the folklore soirée (Juniac, 1994: 240). The programmes organized by host countries, even the less spectacular ones, involved considerable human resources (organization, security, transportation, media, services) and huge amounts of money. Greeting ceremonies including volleys of gunfire and big parades to the sound of military marches and national anthems were a common pattern adopted by international protocol for state visits. Receptions at town halls, universities and technical

schools, state residences, national palaces, military and industrial facilities, including gifts and exchanges of honorific awards and flowers for the ladies, followed by special lunches or dinners with pompous speeches and happy toasts, and by classic or folklore musical performances, or some other cultural or sports events, were another common facet of protocol. So Haile Selassie returned to Ethiopia as a honorary General of the Portuguese army. He was also awarded the Order of the White Lion - 1st class for 'his merits in the struggle for peaceful existence between nations, his activities for the progress of the African people, his intrepid resistance against fascism and his efforts towards the reinforcement of cooperation between Czechoslovakia and Ethiopia' in spite of the differences in their political systems by Antonin Novotny. He received the 1940-45 Military Medal from King Baudouin for his role in the resistance against the violent Italian occupation of Ethiopia, and many other different national orders, medals, keys of the city and insignia.

In return, he liberally 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, the President of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikita Khrushchev, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Kliment Voroshilov, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, President Antonin Novotny, King Baudouin of Belgium, President Charles de Gaulle, Prime Minister Michel Debré, President Américo Thomaz, Chairman of the Council of Ministers António de



Oliveira Salazar. He also presented the Golden Cross of the Order of the Holy Trinity to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Alexei I. From the collection of gifts his staff provided him with, he could choose to present his hosts with a set of two spears and a shield, gold and silver crosses or two elephant tusks tipped with gold and mounted on a wooden base. Gold and ivory cases were special gifts to heads of state and government and their wives.

On previous similar trips, Haile Selassie always took some of his sons or grandsons with him as part of their training. This time the choice fell upon his granddaughter Aida Desta, who was around thirty years old and a discreet and educated young woman, daughter of Tenagne Worq (1912-2003) and Ras Desta Demtew (d. 1937). Members of the Ethiopian cabinet, such as Vice-Prime Minister Tsehafe Te'ezaz Aklilu Hapte Wold, the Minister of the Imperial Court, Tsehafe Te'ezaz Tafarra Worq Kidane Wold, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ato Yilma Deressa, also went on the state visit.

By the rivers of the Nile, the issue of water and management of shared natural resources was naturally raised. Both sides agreed in general on its adequacy to the needs of the riparian states, provided that there would be consultation between them, a decision that would postpone the regulation of the use of water resources. This assertion proved to be fallacious. Apparently 'adequacy to the needs' meant 'as far as other countries but Egypt didn't develop any hydroelectric or irrigation project in short or long terms'. So, Haile Selassie informed Nasser about Ethiopian plans for the use of the Blue

Nile waters and the development of the upper Nile basin, especially in the area of Lake Tana. It was Ethiopia's response to the expensive Egyptian project for building a dam at Aswan. In fact, since his first visit to Yugoslavia in 1954 the cooperation project had provided technical assistance and funding for the development of at the port of Assab and a detailed survey of Ethiopian water resources. Later on, in response to the proposal to build a dam on the Blue Nile, Nasser's successor would threaten Ethiopia with war. Then, in 1959, the only topic arising from the meetings as far as economic relations were concerned was the possibility of a trade agreement.

Another delicate issue on the table was the support that Egypt was suspected of giving to the Eritrean Islamic separatists who opposed the federal status of Eritrea and Ethiopian imperialism. Haile Selassie had not fully accepted the federal status decided on by the UN in 1950 and in the late 1950s began taking steps towards the unilateral annexation of Eritrea that would take place in 1962. A month before the state visit, activists fleeing Eritrea were taken in as refugees by Egypt (Juniac, 1994: 229). We must remember the influence of the modern Islamic movement in Eritrea and Somalia, through education centres like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood whose leaders would stress 'the importance of organization, activism and the socio-political dimension of change and the creation of a modern Islamic state' (Medhane Tadesse, 2002: 13). It was therefore necessary to be on good terms with Egypt to avoid possible radicalization of the situation at home on the eve of Somalia's independence.



This regional question would also be raised in France. Common interests, given the neighbouring position of Ethiopia and the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (Djibouti), and the need to work out bilateral solutions for shared resources like the Djibouti–Addis Ababa railway were at the root of the new treaty between the parties on the status of the railway and the reinforcement of an informal entente for mutual support if all Somali people and territories were united under the same flag. Haile Selassie presented his cause in Egypt and France, framed by ideological narratives on the major hegemonic forces in the Horn of Africa and on the obviously conflictive constitution of a greater Somalia and greater Ethiopia. On July 22nd the Somali Prime Minister Abdullah Issa, referring to the emperor's European tour, declared that its main goal was backstage manipulations for international support for a federation of Somalia with Ethiopia, soon disavowed by the Ethiopian government. The tension between the countries increased after the independence of Somalia (July 1st 1960). At the 3rd Pan-African Peoples Conference in Cairo, the Somali delegates openly defended the self-determination by referendum of the Somali territories in neighbouring Ethiopia and northern Kenya. A rather theatrical reaction was then enacted, when the entire Somali delegation left in protest against the indignation expressed by the Ethiopian delegation. The peace agreement signed in 1967 had a short effect on the pacification of the frontier dispute. The situation would grow worse until war was declared in Ogaden in 1976-77. The collapse of the successive

conciliation efforts was easy to see. Both countries had expansive hegemonic projects for the region, each excluding the other, supported by strong propaganda machines, with ramifications even inside academia.

During his state visit, Haile Selassie signed cultural, economic or cooperation agreements with Egypt, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France and Portugal. The agreement with Portugal bore little fruit: the Amharic translation of Francisco Álvares' book by Girma Beshah (1966), the publication of Girma Beshah and Merid Wolde Aregay's *The Question of the Union of the Churches in Luso-Ethiopian Relations* (1964), and the honour of having contributed to the intellectual formation of the late. In spite of the assumption that the visit to Portugal was 'the most important from a moral standpoint, for it was an act of gratitude' (Ato Mechecha Haile, in a press conference, July 22nd 1959), 'an almost religious peregrination to sound the genius of the Portuguese people' (Haile Selassie speech, July 27th 1959), the links between Ethiopia and Portugal were too weak to play a significant role in 1963.



The organization and the unfolding of the visit of the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie in Portugal, 26th-31st July 1959

Pierre-Etienne Page

The purpose of Emperor Haile Selassie's state visit was to strengthen the ties between Ethiopia and Portugal. The diplomatic call in Portugal by the Lion of Judah took place in the context of a much larger European trip. After Egypt, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and France, he spent a week in Portugal and had the great honour of the nation bestowed upon him. The Portuguese government's National Secretariat for Information (NSI) organized this state visit, engaging civil and military authorities with extraordinary energy and resources to honour the guest.

Preparations for the visit

The invitation from the President of Portugal, Américo Thomaz, was sent on 25th March 1959. In the letter, written in French, the visit was presented as a way to 'further strengthen the old bonds of understanding and mutual friendship between our two countries'. It was the second invitation to the Emperor. The first one, which was sent in 1956, received no answer. This time, Haile Selassie responded on 21st April to confirm 'that such a visit will render yet closer the friendly ties which have long linked Ethiopia with Your Excellency's great nation'. This act of courtesy was formal but necessary to show how friendly this visit would be. They did not fix a date

at that time, because of the different countries Haile Selassie was planning to visit on his way to Portugal. This also meant that the visit was not the Emperor's main goal, unlike Egypt and the USSR, where he had more important issues to discuss.

From the end of May until his arrival, the Portuguese government actively prepared for the visit from its imperial guest. From the Portuguese representative in Addis Ababa, Castro e Abreu, there was an intensification of correspondence with the Foreign Ministry in the months preceding the visit. The consul relayed information about the Emperor's interests and personal preferences and what he would like to do in Portugal. For example, we know that he asked to be received by a carriage on his arrival. In the end, this did not happen, though a visit to the National Coach Museum was arranged. Haile Selassie also expressed a wish to travel on a Portuguese naval ship, first from the Eritrean port of Massawa. However, as there was not one suitable or comfortable enough, he finally decided to sail to Lisbon from the French port of Bayonne. An audit of all available boats had been ordered in an effort to choose the one most likely to impress the Emperor. The chosen vessel was the frigate Nuno Tristão for the Emperor, Princess Aida and some other members of his retinue. Two destroyers, Lima and Vouga, were used for the rest of the delegation. An article in the French newspaper *Le Figaro* mentioned that on board Haile Selassie would find a luxury edition of the Portuguese epic poem *Lusíadas* by Camões and a golden caravel, said to be an replica of the boat that Cristóvão da Gama sailed to the Red Sea in 1541.



Some instructions were sent to the newspapers in order to avoid misunderstandings, such as calling the country Abyssinia or mentioning hot issues like the Somalia question, especially because the Portuguese legation in Addis Ababa was asked by the Ethiopian Ministry of Information to file all articles published by the Portuguese press on the visit. The coverage of the visit by the different media was very similar, from *Diário da Manhã*, which was closest to the regime, to less connected papers except with regard to the size of the articles (more concise in the regional press). They reported who, what and when in eulogistic terms, always underlining 'the spirit of the old relations and the feelings of friendship that unite the two countries and their peoples'.

The preparations in Lisbon for hosting Haile Selassie involved many different measures. Queluz Palace had to be renovated to receive the Emperor and his retinue. Collections of rich furniture and tapestry from different museums and palaces were borrowed for the banquets that would take place in Mafra Palace and Leiria Castle. Lists of Portuguese personalities and guest from the diplomatic legations to invite for the different receptions were prepared. Ethiopian flags and a variety of gifts were ordered. Messages were published urging the population to participate in mass in welcoming the guest.

The programme

The NSI produced a ceremonial protocol for the visit which was highly detailed, with a precise description of what would be happening day by day. Abundant information was produced for the first day, 26th July. The Emperor would arrive at Cais das Colunas and the procedure of the ceremony was laid out minute by minute - who should disembark first from the Nuno Tristão, which boat would receive the dignitary, what colour the crew should be wearing...

After landing, Haile Selassie and his granddaughter were greeted by President Thomaz and his wife, who introduced them to the members of the government and distinguished personalities. Then they watched a military parade from a special platform built for the occasion in Terreiro do Paço. After this ceremony, the emperor was driven in the Presidential Rolls Royce with a police escort to Queluz Palace. Later in the afternoon, Haile Selassie and Princess Aida Desta were invited to visit the Presidential Palace in Belém. The first night was quiet and a simple family dinner was organised in Queluz.

Each day brought an opportunity to see Portugal's heritage and the beauties of its natural landscape. His Imperial Majesty, the Princess and the Ethiopian ministers were taken to the Jerónimos Monastery, the burial place of King Manuel's line, where he laid a bronze palm on the tomb of Vasco da Gama, father of Cristóvão da Gama, to the Town Palace and Pena Palace in Sintra, the monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha where the Emperor laid a floral wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Leiria Castle, Mafra Palace, Nazaré beach and the coast between Sintra and Cascais. Most of these places were



connected with important events in the history of Portugal, such as its foundation or maritime expansion (the discoveries). Besides visits to some important places in Portuguese history, Haile Selassie's agenda included visits to different institutions. He was received by the Mayor at Lisbon Town Hall on July 27th and military honours were presented to him by the National Republican Guard. He visited the Institute of Tropical Medicine, a social quarter and the stadium of Os Belenenses football club, where he was made an honorary member. The Geographic Society of Lisbon was included in the programme with a bibliographic and cartographic exhibition at its facilities during the week of the state visit.

The social and cultural programme would include a show of traditional dance, performed by two groups (Tá Mar of Nazaré and Sete Saias of Benavente) in the Castle of Leiria, a bull fight in Campo Pequeno, Lisbon, on July 29th evening, and the banquets, with a special reference to those offered at the Ajuda Palace, hosted by Américo Thomaz on the 27th, and at the Queluz Palace, hosted by Haile Selassie on the eve of his departure. To the first dinner were invited, besides the guest of honour and his grand-daughter, the members of the Ethiopian party, the Portuguese ministers and their wives, and civil, military and ecclesiastic personalities. For the one offered by Selassie the same personalities were invited plus all diplomatic body represented in Lisbon. A big map of the table was drawn before the dinner because of the number of people (around 300). These were occasions for both head of state to make a circumstantial speech before toasting. In Ajuda, the President of Portugal referred the episode of D. Cristóvão da Gama and expressed the wish that his guest's wisdom might

always be considered in the concert of nations. The Emperor's speech was even more innocuous and concluded blessing the Portuguese for the military assistance their forefathers bestowed during the invasion of the imam Ahmad al-Ghazi in the 16th-century.

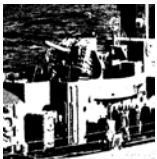
A major part of the programme was occupied by military manoeuvres. After the role of the navy in transporting the guest from France, the parade of battalions representing all bodies of the army at his arrival, the emperor would be seized the opportunity to watch the air force, the infantry and the artillery in simulated action. Haile Selassie was a General of the Ethiopian army and had endured the invasion of his country, thus the two days of the visit devoted to military matters were planned to honour him. Moreover he has been invested by the Minister of Defence, General Botelho Moniz, as General of the Portuguese Army, receiving the sword, the stars and patent letter, symbols of the rank (later he would be exonerated from this dignity). In the 29th he attended a simulated battle performed by the infantry in Mafra. The following day he visited the Air Bases of Ota and Tancos, and the Instruction Military Camp of Santa Margarida, having watched an acrobatic air force show that he appreciated, and artillery exercises with real fire that he should have followed with some complacency as the Portuguese military technology was far from being a cutting-edge one. The Minister of National Defence, Botelho Moniz, would express the wish that one day, in the future, the armies of both nations could fight side by side 'for the sacred cause of peace and the true freedom.'



This visit was also an occasion to exchange gifts and honours. The Emperor honoured President Thomaz with the Order of the Queen of Sheba and received the Portuguese Sash of the Three Orders, in addition to being made an Honorary General of the Portuguese Army. More personally, Haile Selassie gave a gold and ivory case to the President, a gold jewellery box to the President's wife and an ivory carved case to Oliveira Salazar. Two large lances and a shield, symbolising the weapons that 'granted Ethiopian independence through the ages' were given to the Minister of Defence, and 'two large silver-mounted elephant's tusks topped with the Ethiopian insignia' to the Mayor of Lisbon. In return the Mayor gave a silver bowl to Haile Selassie and an engraved silver jar to Princess Aida. The Emperor also generously distributed golden jubilee medals to everyone who assisted him during the visit, and also to the folklore dancers who were invited to Queluz Palace where there was 'one of the most significant and enjoyable receptions, in which the Emperor 'had the opportunity for contact with the people' (Diário da Manhã, 29th July). He also distributed gold coins to the children he met in the streets during the visit.

More than a simple friendship or an economic and cultural partnership, the Portuguese government was angling for Ethiopia's support of the Portuguese colonial presence in Africa. Indeed, even if the subject was never mentioned directly, it underlay the speeches and the charming strategy displayed during the state visit. Before the Emperor's arrival, Salazar was aware of Haile Selassie's tendency to lean towards African solidarity and wished to assure the imperial guest that

Portugal's presence of in Africa could be defended, as this defence had been legitimised historically, ideologically and legally, presenting Portugal as a multi-continental and multi-racial country.



Spilt coffee: The tipping point in Portuguese and Ethiopian relations

Manuel João Ramos

In the Portuguese Diplomatic Archives files that refer to the short period of bilateral relations with the Ethiopian state (1954-1963) one can find many precious memories, ranging from grandiose plans for mass migration of Goan Indians to Ethiopia to British researchers' letters advocating the return to Ethiopia of imagined riches from Portuguese museums. Among the numerous documents, reports and telegrams, there is a curiously plaintive letter written by Armando de Aguiar, a Portuguese journalist working for *Diário de Notícias* newspaper, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Mathias, on August 8th, 1959.

The letter narrates the author's unhappy dealings with Mechecha Haile, the councillor of the Ethiopian diplomatic mission in Portugal. By its content, the discomfort it denotes, and the time of its writing, it stands symbolically at the turning point of an unlikely process of rapprochement between two countries and two regimes that had little to say to each other beyond fantasised evocations of shared historical reminiscences.

Aguiar was no stranger to Ethiopia or to Portuguese mythical visions of the country. Since the late 1940s, when he was touring the world on the tracks of the sixteenth-century Portuguese discoverers, he played an important role in sensitizing both Portuguese public opinion and his government towards Ethiopia. Present in Addis Ababa for Haile

Selassie's jubilee in 1955, he let himself be influenced by the views of some members of the small Goan community, who viewed Ethiopia as a promising haven for migration of their fellow Christian countrymen, anticipating Nehru's intention to invade the Portuguese territory in India – reinforced by ideas projected since his former meeting with this community six years earlier.

Aguiar had been asked by Mr. Mechecha, supposedly at Haile Selassie's request to 1) write a short report on the fall of the Portuguese monarchy in 1910 and 2) assist him in procuring a special gift of 1,000 kilos of coffee that his sovereign wished to give the 500 sailors from the three Portuguese ships in the convoy that brought him from the French port of Bayonne for his state visit to Portugal. The visit began on July 26th of that year when he ceremoniously landed at the Cais das Colunas in Lisbon's waterfront square.

In his letter, Aguiar said that that he had visited Casa Ambriz, a local shop in Avenida Duque de Ávila in uptown Lisbon selling coffee beans from the Portuguese colonies, to check the prices of the different coffee blends. He wrote that he had then reported back to Mechecha, who told him that the king had chosen a mid-range blend and handed him a note with a formal order and a request to get a discount. A few hours later, Aguiar went back to the shop to order the coffee, escorted by Lieutenant Galo from the frigate *Nuno Tristão* in which the king had sailed to Lisbon, and negotiated a 1% discount on the total price.



What happened in the following days can only be guessed from Mr. Aguiars' emotional letter. All protagonists and witnesses of the events are now deceased and have left no other known written record apart from the letter.

Aguiar reported that he urged his Ethiopian interlocutor every day to go to Casa Ambriz and pay for the package and that Mechecha out off the purchase until August 3rd, three days after Haile Selassie ended his visit to Portugal and flew to Germany. On July 31st, hours after the king's departure, a smiling Mechecha announced to Aguiar that the king had left a gift for him and that he had been ordered to buy an additional 1,000 kilos of coffee, this time for the Portuguese army, of which his sovereign had days before been made an honorary general officer. The Ethiopian added that he would prefer to buy a lower quality coffee this time.

While on their way to the Casa Ambriz, Mechecha hinted that he would like to exchange his dollars on the black market rather than at a bank. Aguiar reported telling him that there was no such thing in Portugal. Finally, Aguiar took Mechecha to an exchange bureau, where he cashed a series of traveller's cheques and managed to bargain 1 point off the exchange rate offered.

Having put off the visit to the Casa Ambriz warehouse until the next day, Mechecha suddenly announced that he was no longer interested in the middle-range coffee for the Portuguese sailors but wanted to buy a low-quality unroasted coffee. Upon insistence by Aguiar and the shop owners as to the difficulty the sailors and soldiers would have roasting the coffee, Mechecha allegedly repeated over and over that it

was not his concern and that the coffee should be delivered unroasted. Aguiar seems to have been shocked by what he believed was the Ethiopian's arrogance and insensitivity. Mechecha is reported as saying that the Portuguese armed forces simply had to do as they did in Ethiopia and roast their own coffee. In the end, seems to have been sidestepped when the Ethiopian councillor turned to the Portuguese Ministry of Defence to explain the reasons for his choice, which were not given in the letter.

On the next day, August 5th, Mechecha contacted Aguiar again to ask him to change the order one more time, since now he wished to buy the lowest quality coffee. Aguiar refused to accompany him to the shop and said that his attitude risked being misinterpreted. In fact, it seems that it was, since the army officer with whom he was in contact noted that it looked as if the money intended to buy 1,000 kilos of coffee for the sailors was now being stretched to pay for the soldiers' gift too. What Aguiar took to be a total lack of sensitivity on the part of Mechecha, together with a suspicion of malicious appropriation of funds and abuse of his sovereign's good will, seemed serious enough to lead him to vent his anger to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Anyone minimally familiar with Ethiopian traditions, when reading this letter, will notice that Aguiar was profoundly ignorant of at least two facts, firstly that Ethiopia is an old, probably the oldest coffee producer in the world and secondly that the practice of roasting one's own coffee (or rather having a female member of one's household roast it) isn't demeaning but praised. In fact, the coffee ritual in Ethiopia is as much a



communal drinking experience as an olfactory one, the roasting process being supplemented with the burning of incense. Ethiopians will only buy and drink ready roasted coffee as a last resort. If today, drinking espressos and macchiatos in cafés is a common enough routine in Ethiopian urban areas, in the late fifties it was very much a disdained practice, introduced during the Italian occupation of the country in the 1930s and restricted only to the Western expatriate community. One suspects that the Ethiopian dignitary was also largely ignorant of Portuguese social attitudes towards coffee and its place in nationalistic representations. Portuguese people like Aguiar would surely take pride in the quality of their colonial produce and tended to boast the superiority of their expertise in blending African and Brazilian grains. As in Italy, drinking coffee was, and is part of their social life.

The Ethiopian councillor's bartering was most possibly derived from his initial shock at what he took to be a rip-off, considering what to him was the absurdly high price of low quality coffee (that is, of roasted and not Ethiopian beans). The mutual incomprehension that quickly set in could only spark suspicion and misguided interpretations of each other's expectations, attitudes and utterances.

The matter of the letter is assumedly minor but in a way quite telling of the general framework of misunderstandings and misassumptions that surrounded not only that state visit but the whole context of the diplomatic relationship between Portugal and Ethiopia from 1954 to 1963. Neither one can be extricated from the historical context affecting the relationship between Europe, its waning colonial territories and the world

at large, just as a large array of such territories was vying for self-determination and independence. Portuguese interest in Ethiopia was sparked by the possibility that this country could take a large Goan diaspora. Already on the move from India to the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa, the Goans in Ethiopia could expect shelter from racial and religious marginalization.

But it was the lure of finding in Haile Selassie an influential African ally in support of the Portuguese aim of maintaining their African colonies that clearly motivated the Portuguese government to accept a half-hearted Ethiopian suggestion in the late forties to establish bilateral diplomatic relations made some years earlier. To Haile Selassie, Portugal was but a pawn in the complex diplomatic chess game he had started to play with Western countries, the Soviet block and the emergent non-aligned group, as African independences were becoming visibly inevitable, to achieve a series of interconnected goals. He wanted to keep Ethiopia's external partnerships and its standing as the beacon of African resistance against the appearance of charismatic new African leaders and to control Nasser's popularity whom he apparently loathed and feared, to ensure a greater diversity of outside financial aid to the country, to ensure that the OAU's permanent seat would be Addis Ababa, and to achieve his intentions of absorbing Eritrea as an integral part of the Ethiopian territory, and so to reverse what he saw as an illegitimate British-influenced UN decision (that of establishing Eritrea as an independent country federated with Ethiopia, a solution that held certain similarities with that found for the two Somalias).



In this context, Haile Selassie's visit to Portugal served the two countries' largely unrelated purposes, and, though today they may sound somewhat risible, the signs that it was supposed to give were carefully planned. The Portuguese government paraded the 'Prester John' king around Lisbon and the surrounding Western region as a reminder of Portugal's ancient presence in Africa, so as to stress its argument that its African territories weren't colonies but 'provinces' with the same administrative and legal status as the metropolitan ones. By sailing in Portuguese naval vessels, on being given the honorary title of general of the Portuguese army and on witnessing a series of supposedly spectacular (but frankly shabby) army manoeuvres and air force shows, he was given the signs that Portugal had both the will and the power to defend its colonial possessions in the face of the general independence process. Haile Selassie's insistence that he should sail to Lisbon in a Portuguese naval vessel from the Eritrean port of Massawa (later grudgingly dropped because the Portuguese couldn't find a suitable ship) was a telling sign of Ethiopia's pretension to guarantee permanent access to the Red Sea. By agreeing to play the Portuguese government's game, he was securing a trump card that he would use in 1963, when he condemned Portugal's anti-liberation war in Angola and Mozambique in a dramatic, emotional speech at the UN. By expressing his opposition to Portugal's view that its colonies had the status of 'provinces', he managed not to be condemned either in the world (UN) or in African (OAU) forums, one year after his army had moved into Eritrea claim it as one of Ethiopia's old provinces.

The downhill slope of negative rhetoric on Ethiopia that we find in the Portuguese Diplomatic Archives from 1959 onwards, the Prester John motif being superseded by those of untrustworthy 'Oriental' posturing and African backwardness, can in some way be traced back to the letter from Aguiar, the publicist who went out of his way to reinvent the ancient mythical bonds of friendship between the two countries.



The Foundation of the Organization of African Unity

Aurora Almada e Santos

In May 1963, at the invitation of the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, around thirty representatives of independent African states met in Addis Ababa. The meeting resulted in the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the adoption of its Charter. Therefore, Ethiopia was the stage for the creation of a regional organization that gave substance to the idea of African unity.

The foundation of this organization was a reflection of the emergence of new African states resulting from decolonization at the beginning of the sixties. Many states were deeply imbued with Pan-African ideals, forged in the early twentieth century, and aspired to a united Africa. There was also a desire, fed by some leaders, for African participation in the global balance of power and the search for better economic relations with the world, which would only be possible through concerted action.

Similarly, we cannot overlook the particular role of Ethiopia, which formed the background to events in the implementation of the organization. In the 1950s the country embarked on an approach to Africa, redefining its regional affiliation to the continent over the Middle East and nurturing the desire to contribute to the process of decolonization. The creation of the organization was considered a political and legal means of maintaining the country's territorial integrity, against the wishes of the creation of a Great Somalia bringing together the Somali people also living in Ethiopia and Northern Kenya.

The diplomatic initiatives of Haile Selassie, who enjoyed great prestige among the African leaders, led to the holding in Addis Ababa of a meeting organized in two stages. The first was a preparatory meeting of foreign ministers on 21 and 22 May, while the second was a summit of Heads of State and Government from 23 to 25 May.

The meeting was attended by all African states except South Africa, which was not invited, Morocco, which decided not to participate because of its dispute with Mauritania on the Western Sahara, and Togo, which was not admitted due to its internal problems. It also allowed the participation of representatives of the liberation movements, as observers. They included Oginga Odinga, Holden Roberto, Jonas Savimbi, Kenneth Kaunda, Eduardo Mondlane, Joshua Nkomo, Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe, Amilcar Cabral, Sam Nujoma and Oliver Tambo.

The main purpose of the meeting was to create an organization to replace the existing alliances, including the Casablanca Group, which argued that political union should precede any form of economic integration, the Monrovia bloc, which postulated the gradual construction of a unit based on technical and economic integration, and the Brazzaville bloc, which was characterized by its pro-French political position. Despite this intention, the meeting initially highlighted the divisions that affected the various African states, particularly regarding the procedures for achieving African unity.



Accordingly, Ethiopia would play a decisive role in reaching a consensus. At both meetings, Emperor Haile Selassie gave speeches in which he urged the participants to speed up the independence of people still living under colonial regimes, improve living standards, adopt an African Charter and create a permanent secretariat. Based on the Organization of American States and the Monrovia Group charters, whose formulas were sufficiently vague and ambiguous to generate the membership of participants, Ethiopia contributed to the reconciliation of different groups. As a reflection of his action in favour of unity, which also succeeded at the first session of the organization in July 1964, Addis Ababa was chosen for the seat of the OAU.

The Charter was adopted unanimously on 25 May. Its Article II stated that the purpose of the OAU was to promote unity and solidarity among African states, coordinate and intensify efforts to achieve a better life for the people, defend sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, eradicate all forms of colonialism and promote international cooperation. Consequently, the signatories pledged to harmonize their activities and cooperate in the fields of politics and diplomacy, the economy, including transport and communications, education and culture, health, sanitation and nutrition, scientific and technical development and defence and security.

Underlying these purposes were a set of principles, which were defined in Article III of the Charter. Thus, the OAU member states pledged to ensure the equal sovereignty of all, not to interfere in neighbours' internal affairs, respect

the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inalienable right to independent existence of each state, to settle disputes peacefully through negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration, unreservedly condemn political killings and subversive activities, show absolute and total dedication to the emancipation of still dependent African territories and affirm a policy of non alignment.

The organization thus created, whose objectives were essentially political in nature, was endowed with a set of bodies that would be responsible for achieving its purposes. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government was defined as the supreme body, which was responsible for coordinating and harmonizing the general policy of the OAU. The Council of Ministers was responsible for implementing the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and coordinating inter-African cooperation. The General Secretariat, which would be appointed by the Assembly, was responsible for administrative matters. The Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration Commission would settle disputes between member states in a peaceful manner.

In addition to these bodies, it was decided that the Assembly of Heads of State and Government should create a number of specialized technical committees, depending on needs. Initially the Charter created the Economic and Social Commission, the Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Health Commission, the Commission of Fifteen on Refugees, and the Defence Commission.



Following the various principles and ideas underlying the founding of the OAU, the African states chose the struggle against apartheid and colonialism as the main target, because they considered that without the removal of the last vestiges of foreign domination it would be difficult to achieve the objective that governed the creation of the organization, which was to strengthen the position of Africa in international relations. In its struggle against apartheid and colonialism, the OAU sought to impose sanctions and internationally isolate the white minority regimes and help the liberation movements that fought for independence.

Thus, one of the resolutions adopted in Addis Ababa at the foundation of the organization was to cut diplomatic ties with Portugal and South Africa, banning all imports from these countries, close ports and airports to their ships and aircraft and inhibit over-flying the airspace of African states. Later, in 1964, the Secretariat established a Bureau of Penalties, later known as the Sanctions Bureau, which coordinated sanctions against these countries to ensure implementation of all resolutions adopted in order to harmonize the cooperation with other African states, the idea being to achieve a real boycott and collect and disseminate information on issues and campaigns for the adoption of economic sanctions at international level.

However, its action was not effective, because the decisions against South Africa, Portugal and Southern Rhodesia, where, to the disgust of the OAU, the white minority unilaterally declared its independence in 1965, were regularly violated

by member states. These violations occurred in part due to economic dependence on South Africa, the existence of internal differences in the OAU as to the way forward and the fact that there was no penalty for breaches.

The support of liberation movements was relatively more successful. The OAU adopted a measure that was decisive in establishing the Liberation Committee. Officially known as the Coordination Committee for the Liberation of Africa, it was established under a resolution on colonialism adopted by the Summit of the Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa. Its main objective was to harmonize the assistance of liberation movements, having been decided that it would be based in Dares Salaam.

Due to its location far from OAU headquarters, this body achieved a certain autonomy in relation to the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government and the Council of Ministers. One of its main means of support for liberation movements was recognizing them as legitimate representatives of the peoples of territories under the domination of colonial powers or white minority rule. Thus, it recognized this status, among others, for the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress (PAC), the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), the Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Movement of National Liberation of the Comoros (MOLINACO).



The criteria for this recognition were not always clear, which was aggravated in cases where there were several movements that claimed to control the fight for independence in the same territory. But according to the information that its representatives submitted to the United Nations in 1971 during the visit of an ad hoc committee on the decolonization of Africa, for this recognition the OAU had in mind the effectiveness and commitment of movements in the struggle for liberation, without ever relying on tribal or ideological considerations. The recognition of more than one liberation movement for each colony would still be possible, if they cooperated in the struggle against colonialism. Yet this recognition was not permanent, as it could be revoked at any time.

The OAU would also work for as a liaison between the UN and liberation movements. For example, from 1966 the committee on decolonization decided that support for liberation movements of African territories should be channelled through the OAU. Moreover, when the Committee decided in 1972 to assign observer status to the liberation movements, only those on the list submitted by the OAU were granted this status.

The OAU, through the Liberation Committee and the special fund that it managed, also provided financial support for liberation movements. Although contributions from member states were not always made on time and the amounts allocated to the movements were not very high, the monetary and diplomatic support from the OAU contributed to the international legitimacy of the liberation movements.

However, the OAU's activity showed some limitations, particularly as regards its inability to get different liberation movements from the same territory, such as Angola, to work together.

However, this does not invalidate the fact that the foundation of this organization created a new standard in inter-African politics.



Revisiting Eritrea's isolation in the regional and global political arenas in the light of the contradictions at the time of African independences

Alexandra Dias

Since 1962, when the UN failed to condemn Ethiopia's dissolution of the Eritrean federation, the history of the struggle for Eritrean independence is a singular story of hardship and discipline in the face of international indifference.

(Human Rights Watch, 2009: 84).

Only people whose basic rights are recognized (that is, only people who are constituted as civilians) may come together to establish themselves as citizens within democratic states, and those states will then have rights to non-intervention in their domestic affairs.

(Frost, 2001: 51)

Between the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the end of the Cold War, Eritrea had to endure the longest road to self-determination and statehood in Africa (Pool, 1979). The political trajectories of state and nation-building were forged during the three-decade war for independence (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002; Pool, 2001; lyob, 1995). Eritrea's liberation insurgent movements opposed the imperial regime of Emperor Haile Selassie and the Marxist military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Failure to recognize the righteousness of Eritrea's claim to self-determination

resulted in a long war for independence which led to 65,000 military (Pool, 1998: 19) and between 150,000 and 250,000 civilian (Jacquin-Berdal & Aida Mengistu, 2006: 97) deaths on Eritrea's side.

Eritrea attained de facto independence in 1991 after the military victory of the separatist and reform insurgencies of Eritrea and Ethiopia- the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF)/ Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) against the Derg. Independence was proclaimed in 1993 after a referendum. However, despite the transformation of the separatist movement into a political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), in 1994, the few steps taken towards democratization never took effect. Eritrea's National Assembly ratified the Constitution in 1997 but its promulgation and implementation were to remain hostage of the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia and its aftermath. The post-conflict situation has been marred by political mistrust between the two leaderships. In the face of the absence of normalization of relations between the two neighbouring states the PFDJ has declared a permanent state of emergency in Eritrea and has used this justification to hamper democratization and human rights from taking root in Eritrea. The no-peace-no-war situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia has had regional ramifications further contributing to instability in the Horn of Africa.



This paper analyses Eritrea's admission to the regional society of sovereign states. It will first revisit the contrasting positions of Ethiopia and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) vis-à-vis Eritrea and other former colonies. It will analyse Ethiopia's position with regard to Eritrea and the former Portuguese colonies and the OUA's silence towards the inherent contradiction in foreign policy of one of its founding members. The article claims that the OUA's failure to take a coherent stance towards all colonial entities has compromised its leverage towards Eritrea. Eritrea's suspicion of the now African Union (AU) plays against its interests and still continues to undermine the AU mediation efforts at critical moments which represented a threat to international order and peace in Africa, namely the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the 2006 Somalia crisis and the 2008 border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti.

Ethiopia and the OAU vis-à-vis Eritrea and African independences

Ethiopia's dissolution of the federation (1952-1962) and its incorporation of Eritrea as the 14th Province of the empire sparked dissent and armed opposition in Eritrea
(Pool, 1979 & 2001; Iyob, 1995).

The founding principles of the OAU right from the start placed Ethiopia and African leaderships at odds with Eritrea's legitimate right to self-determination and independent statehood. The Eritrean case was treated as an exception to the principle of *uti possidetis* (stick to what you had at the time of independence). In contradiction to Ethiopia's position regarding Eritrea, the founding charter of the OAU

recognized the legitimacy of inherited colonial borders as the basis of independent nation-states. Eritrea, like the remainder of the independent African sovereign states, was a creation of colonialism. Eritrea as a former Italian colony fulfilled the criteria for recognition of its right to self-determination and independent statehood.

Emperor Haile Selassie visited Portugal on July 1959. During the official dinner at Ajuda Palace in Lisbon, the Emperor lauded the Portuguese ancestors' efforts in the search for the Christian kingdom of Prester John. This enterprise, the Emperor claimed, was pivotal to the opening of the maritime routes to India and the Far East. He praised the Portuguese government for its contribution to the progress of Western civilization and for the extension of its civilizing message to the New World (Raposo, 2003: 135). On this occasion Portugal's illegitimate sovereignty over overseas territories in Africa was not mentioned.

On June 1963, in a letter addressed directly to the Chairman of the Council, Oliveira Salazar, the Emperor urged Portugal to grant independence to the Portuguese colonies in Africa. In a personal note the Emperor added that the Ethiopian people's love of independence could not allow Ethiopia to accept that other African peoples remained the object of oppression (ibid: 135). The Emperor further stated that Ethiopia firmly believed that other Africans had the right to enjoy full freedom (1963: 3). The contrasting claims on the Lisbon visit (1959) and in the later letter (1963) should be regarded in light of two major events.



After the solution to the Eritrean question by dissolution of the federation, the Emperor was in a position to increase his standing in the regional political arena. In the aftermath of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935-43) and World War II Emperor Haile Selassie skilfully played out Ethiopia's claims to Eritrea in the global political arena. From an Ethiopian standpoint, Italian colonialism in Eritrea had been an epiphenomenon which had temporarily challenged Ethiopia's territorial integrity. The dissolution of the Federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1962 had secured Ethiopia's claims over Eritrea's future as an integral part of Ethiopia.

In the aftermath of the historic meeting in Addis Ababa between heads of state and government in Africa (May 1963), Emperor Haile Selassie aligned himself with the OAU position and voiced African leaderships' commitment to the principle of territorial integrity of states established by colonial rule. Ethiopia's capital was made the OAU headquarters. Both the OAU and the United Nations remained silent in the face of the dissolution of the federation, which resulted in the incorporation of Eritrea as a region of Ethiopia. It is perhaps no coincidence that Ethiopia's foreign policy on African independences was only made public once it could no longer compromise Ethiopia's national interests, namely its policy on 'reunification with Eritrea'.

The liberation insurgent movements in the former Portuguese colonies were not isolated in the African political landscape and counted upon African leaderships' support and condemnation of Portugal's colonial policy of illegitimate possession of overseas territories: Angola, Mozambique,

Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé & Príncipe. After the overthrow of the Estado Novo, Oliveira Salazar's authoritarian regime in Portugal, the former Portuguese colonies finally entered the road to independence.

In contradistinction, Ethiopia's policy of forcible 'reunification of Eritrea with Ethiopia' obstructed the OAU pattern of recognizing independence following colonial rule (Pool, 1979: 45). This inherent contradiction in the continental organization's approach to African independences would resonate and would condition Eritrea's foreign policy orientation towards the OAU in the aftermath of independence.

The Eritrean President in his inaugural speech in 1993 during the OAU Summit in Cairo alluded to the OAU's silence on Eritrea during the 30-year war for independence (Berouk, 2008: 4). As Lecoutre notes, President Issaias Afewerki criticized the OAU's decision to ignore systematically the Eritrean people's petitions during its war of independence (Lecoutre, 2005: 42). Eritrea's admission into the regional sovereign society of states and the regional organization was cherished by its President with declarations of resentment. This resentment, as the next section will show, fuelled suspicion towards the regional organization at critical moments of Eritrea's political trajectory in the regional political arena.



The AU and Eritrea's isolation in the regional and global political arenas

Eritreans have systematically reproduced the myth that the cornerstone of the success of the Eritrean separatist movement was the self-reliance principle. Sentences like 'We did it on our own' are not uncommon. But the discourse and decision-making based on the self-reliance principle has changed. Indeed, this section will show how this central pillar has been used to legitimise and justify a foreign policy that has resulted in increasing isolation of Eritrea in the regional and global political arenas (Healy, 2008: 17).

The 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia posed a challenge to the OAU conflict mediation mechanisms (Lecoutre, 2005). From the onset the Eritreans favoured UN-led mediation over the OAU. Eritrea criticised the latter's bias and accused the continental organization of being held hostage by its headquarters host country's foreign policy (Lecoutre, 2005: 48). During the war, in February 1999, Ethiopia declared the Eritrean Ambassador in Addis Ababa as *persona non grata* (Lecoutre, 2005: 67). The fact that the OAU headquarters was based in one of the belligerent parties' capitals conditioned its leverage as an independent mediator. However, as Eritrea's subsequent moves towards other regional and international organizations well show, its approach to the OUA (and AU afterwards) fits well into its overall foreign policy of isolation in the regional and global political arenas, where Ethiopia is also a member. Eritrea's border dispute with Ethiopia was not unprecedented.

Eritrea's regional and global political isolation increased steadily after the signing of the Algiers Peace Agreement in December 2000 and the subsequent standoff with Ethiopia after the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's (EEBC) 2002 Decision. Ethiopia's protests over the EEBC award of the sparking point of the conflict – Badme – to Eritrea and the EEBC's 2003 rejection of Ethiopia's claims further heightened political mistrust between the parties. The two neighbouring states have taken irreconcilable stances on the border delimitation and demarcation. Eritrea insisted (and still does at the time of writing) that it would not normalize relations with Ethiopia unless the latter abided by the EEBC's final, binding decision on the disputed areas along the common border. Furthermore, since the EEBC declared (upon its extinction in 2007) that the border was virtually demarcated, Eritrea considers that the border dispute has been resolved (Aljazeera, May 22, 2008). Ethiopia accepted the EEBC decision first in principle and then unconditionally, but would not comply with demarcation of the border without prior negotiations with Eritrea. The Ethiopian leadership's understanding of virtual demarcation stands in stark contrast to the Eritrean leadership's perspective. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, bluntly declared that Ethiopia accepted the EEBC Decision unconditionally, but equated demarcation to the process of placing physical pillars along the border. The Ethiopian Prime Minister compared 'virtual demarcation to legal non-sense, and it should be treated as such' (Aljazeera, November 22, 2007).

Eritrea justifies the domestic state of emergency in the face of Ethiopia's failure to comply with the EEBC decision.



Eritrea's illegitimate resort to force to settle territorial disputes with neighbouring states and other foreign policy orientations towards international organizations, states and non-state actors in the region reflects its poor socialization and defiance of accepted principles in the regional and global political arenas. Indeed, Eritrea's foreign policy has gradually led to increasing isolation.

Eritrea has continually placed pressure on international actors to force Ethiopia into compliance with the EEBC decision over the border delimitation and demarcation.

Eritrea recalled its Ambassador to the African Union in November 2003 (Berouk, 2008: 12). In addition, Eritrea increasingly placed obstacles in the way of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE). Eritrea's obstruction of UNMEE's monitoring activities grew exponentially in November 2005 culminating with the United Nations Security Council's July 2008 Resolution, which brought UNMEE to an end.

The forceful intervention of Ethiopia in the Somalia crisis in December 2006 led to the military victory of the Somali Transitional Federal Government over the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). The US air campaign in Somalia in the area of Ras Kamboni to track the masterminds behind the bombing of the US Embassies in East Africa had important political ramifications and inexorably tied Ethiopia's forcible intervention to the US (Kenneth Menkaus, January 2007). As a consequence, Eritrea's defiance of the TFG's legitimacy and support for former

members of the ICU and alleged support for al-Shabaab (the militant Islamist movement al-Shabaab figures on the US list of terrorists) came close to its inclusion in the US list of states sponsoring terrorism in 2008 (The Telegraph, April 2009).

In strong disagreement with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Eritrea suspended membership of the regional organization (IGAD) in April 2007 because of its members' support for the Ethiopia-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG). This decision was another setback furthering Eritrea's isolation in the regional political arena.

In a not unprecedented fashion, Eritrea resorted to force to settle a territorial dispute with Djibouti. The military build-up along the common border resulted in skirmishes that opposed the armed forces of the two states in June 2008. To date, Eritrea has failed to comply with UNSC Resolution 1862 (2009) which ordered the parties to withdraw to the positions held before 10 June 2008. Eritrea justifies its position by stating that it is not occupying Djibouti foreign territory and claims that Ethiopia's failure to comply with the EEBC decision means that Ethiopia is still occupying Eritrea's sovereign territory (Eritrea Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 15, 2009).

In clear contrast, Ethiopia, as more than a mere tool of extra-continental actors, has been skilful over the years in manipulating external support while at the same time remaining immune to any external pressure against itself (Clapham, 2006: 33). Indeed, during its intervention in Somalia despite several reports from international non-governmental organizations (Amnesty International, 2007; Human Rights



Watch, 2007) denouncing indiscriminate targeting against non-combatants, Ethiopia maintained its presence on the basis of its support for the TFG and for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until January 2009. Furthermore, Ethiopia's presence in Somalia and delayed withdrawal was supported and lauded by international actors engaged in reconciliation in Somalia. In sharp contrast, Eritrea's role in Somalia and its alleged support for militant Islamists, such as al-Shabaab, continues to be criticized by the US (US Department of State, May 14, 2009).

Ethiopia's domestic political trajectory has been increasingly at odds with the initial promising steps towards democratization since the EPRDF came to power. However, especially since the 2005 elections, human rights abuses against citizens supporting or representing opposition parties and citizens accused of providing support for Ethiopian insurgent movements, such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), have been widely reported and criticized by international NGOs (Amnesty International 2008: 127-30; Human Rights Watch, 2008). Despite this far from immaculate record, Ethiopia's leadership standing in both the regional and global political arenas remains unchallenged. Indeed, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, as the chair of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), represented Africa at the G-20 Summit in London on April 2, 2009.

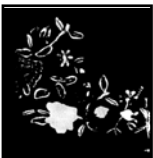
Conclusion: International law and the lack of enforcement mechanisms

Eritrea's increasing isolation in the regional and global political arena is likely to further undermine international actors' ability to mediate between the two leaderships. The definition of its foreign policy in opposition to Ethiopia undermines its standing and hampers international actors' efforts at mediation, the AU included.

Eritrean citizens continue to bear the brunt of Eritrea's regional and global isolation in. In contrast with the war for independence, the 1998-2000 border war and its aftermath have shown the limited return of war in the Eritrean political trajectories of state and nation building. The Eritrean state deprives Eritreans of basic human rights and its permanent war footing has led Eritrean citizens to flee the country in growing numbers (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Eritrean citizens are kept in a right-less position.

The Eritrean leadership's rationale seems to remain hostage of the legacy of the war for independence. The transformation of the guerrilla fighters into state-builders has been further compromised by the lack of normalization of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The PFDJ leadership has forcefully used the border closure to justify derailing democratization.

In the regional and global political arenas Eritrea seems to align itself and oppose states and international organizations on the sole basis of their policies towards Ethiopia. However, the reproduction of the victimization myth has played against Eritrea's best interests. Eritrea wants Ethiopia to comply with



the EEBC decision. However, without the support of regional and global actors the general lack of enforcement mechanisms of international law will continue to prevent Eritrea's claims over the disputed areas along the common border from coming into effect.



Brief notes on the diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Portugal, 1959-2009

Luís de Barros

This exhibition bears witness to a time of great importance for the relationship between Portugal and Ethiopia in the 20th century. Long before, in the 16th and 17th centuries, our relationship with Ethiopia, once thought to be the mythical kingdom of Prester John, had gone through periods of vitality, such as the joint military efforts in 1541-43, or the conversion to Catholicism of Emperor Susneyos with much of his family and courtiers in 1622, crowning the proselytizing work of the Jesuits and sparking civil war so that his successor Fasiladas would turn them out of Ethiopia and return immediately to the Orthodox Christian faith.

The relative lethargy of Portuguese-Ethiopian relations during the modern era was only interrupted, however with pomp and circumstance, by the state visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to our country in late July 1959. However, four years later, Ethiopia severed diplomatic relations with Portugal. This diplomatic break was closely linked to a brief letter sent to Oliveira Salazar by special envoy in June 1963. In this 'final call' Sellassie requested independence for the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique (only these were mentioned). The letter began by praising the decisive support given by the Portuguese people centuries before when they helped the Ethiopians to repulse the invaders in order 'to preserve their independence and lead their Christian way of life'. It continued by emphasizing several recommendations of the

UN General Assembly for the independence of these colonies and the unanimous decision in the same sense by the Summit Conference of African Heads of State held in Addis Ababa in May 1963. Finally it closed with a threat to break off relations by all independent African countries, South Africa excepted, if the Portuguese government did not meet the request.

In a long letter, Salazar replied as would be expected, defending, although in other words, the theory of a single Portugal from Minho to Timor, enforced by the legal unity of all territories regarded as provinces that, from his point of view, disallowed the claim for self-determination: 'Since the ineluctability of independence cannot be based on geographical separation nor be justified by racial differences, it is impossible to admit the allegation of oppression by strangers on populations such as the Portuguese ones which, having been integrated in the Nation since centuries, have been taking part in the political, economic and administrative life of the national whole.'

This correspondence between two men of different education but both so averse to the values of democracy, was published in three languages (French, English and Portuguese) by the National Secretariat for Information, for propaganda purposes in Portugal and abroad.

Thus ended another round of Portuguese-Ethiopian history. Our embassy in Addis Ababa was closed and, years later, the building was sold to Israel, which still has its embassy there today.



Some dozen years later, decisive events occurred in both countries. In Portugal, democracy was restored in 1974, followed by a troubled decolonization. In Ethiopia, a military coup ended the monarchy and established a one-party regime under the leadership of Colonel Mengistu, who was overthrown in 1991. Following this, Ethiopia recognized the independence of Eritrea in 1993 and a new constitution open to the democratic principles of separation of powers and establishing a federal state was adopted in 1994.

Against this background a decisive step in current Portuguese-Ethiopian relations was taken with the appointment of a Resident Ambassador in Addis Ababa, combining the office of Permanent Representative to the African Union Commission, the successor to the Organization of African Unity, headquartered there since its foundation in 1963. Before that, Portuguese interests had been managed from the embassy in Nairobi. From 2002 to 2006, my staff and I had the honour of opening the embassy and the challenge of rebuilding the old political, economic and cultural connections started in the time of Lebna Dengel.

Today, our excellent relationship with Ethiopia has considerable value not only politically, as the country is an essential factor of stability in a very problematic region, given the serious political and humanitarian turmoil in neighbouring countries, but also culturally. I must stress the programme, undertaken with Instituto Camões, of teaching and disseminating the Portuguese language, not only at university but also as a business language, as there is a significant interest on the part of Ethiopian entrepreneurs in

Angola and Portugal, regarded as a facilitator to Ethiopian businesses in EU and especially in Portuguese-speaking Africa. An agreement was signed between the two countries, which opens vast possibilities, and clearly promotes exchanges in the cultural sector and the areas of youth, sport and journalism.

Our diplomatic presence in Ethiopia increases the visibility of Portugal in the African Union and therefore the 53 member countries. Since it has observer status, Portugal has shown solidarity to and directly supported initiatives agreed upon between the international community (including the UN and EU) and the African Union, aimed at overcoming the serious conflicts and tensions that unfortunately continue in Africa. A significant part of the preparation of the diplomacy that led to the holding of the 2nd EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in 2006 was undertaken by the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa.

Just a parenthesis to say that about 120 countries are now directly represented in the Ethiopian capital, in addition to the entire UN system (agencies, dependent organizations, etc) and the main international financial institutions. This highlights the position of Ethiopia on the international scene.

Finally, I would like to express the hope that this exhibition stimulates the public's curiosity about Ethiopia and its rich, ancient civilization, in which admirable monumental testimonies and diffuse genetic marks of the former Portuguese presence in the country still persist, in spite of some alienation on the part of some Portuguese cultural entities of reference.



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