

3,000-Year-Old Monarchy Hurrying To Catch Up With Rest of World

By DON DILLON
United Press International
 Addis Ababa - (UPI) - Ethiopia is a 3,000-year-old monarchy hurrying to catch up with the rest of the world. It is a land of jet transport planes and donkey caravans, parking meters and horse-drawn taxi-buggies, shiny new schools and illiteracy.

It is a place where the pre-dawn howl of hyenas awakens newcomers to its modern capital, where half the clocks are six hours ahead of the others, and where the tablecloth is made of bread and eaten with the rest of the meal.

A little bit of it, along the Red Sea on the eastern bulge of Africa, is one of the world's hottest areas. But most of it is a plateau a mile and a half above sea level with a climate in which you can swim every day and sleep under a blanket every night.

The plateau is pocked with mountains two or three miles above the sea and with gorges larger than the Grand Canyon of the Colorado river. The whole country is about the size of the United States from Maine to Lake Michigan and from Canada to Tennessee.

Constitutional Monarchy
 The form of government is constitutional monarchy and the degree of democracy perhaps corresponds to the nation's educational and economic development. There are no political parties and the senate is appointed by the emperor. The chamber of deputies is elected and appears to be moderately independent of - but never hostile to - the emperor.

Foreign diplomats were astonished by the two-day revolution in December, 1960, by the imperial household guard - and they still differ about its purpose. Some describe it as a demand for faster reforms and economic progress; others call it a naked power-grab by totalitarian-minded officers.

All agree that the 2,000 victims on both sides included some of the best brains in a country which urgently needs all the educated and trained men it can develop.

Leaders of the rebellion were hanged and put on public display. Haile Selassie was on a state visit to Brazil when the revolt broke out. When he got home one of his first acts was to abolish his son, Crown Prince Asfaw Wossen.

Prince In Broadcast
 The prince had said in a

broadcast during the revolt that "the laws and regulations of the country have been abused to deprive the common people of their rights and privileges in order to boost up the riches of the favored few." He explained later that he had been forced to make the broadcast.

The middle-aged crown prince attends public affairs with his father now and appears to have preserved his standing as heir apparent.

Addis Ababa is surrounded by peaks but it is still 8,200 feet up. A visitor can find himself puffing as he walks up the soft slopes of Haile Selassie avenue, the main downtown street.

Other major streets bear names such as Churchill, Eden, Wavell, Wingate, George VI and Smuts. The names used to be such as Badoglio, Graziani and Mussolini. They were renamed when the British army in 1941 ended the five-year Italian occupation - the only break in Ethiopia's 30-century history of independence.

Have No Names
 Many of the side streets have no names and the houses are unnumbered. This makes no problem for the postmen; everybody goes to one of the city's two post-offices to pick up his mail. The dial telephone system is efficient, but looking up an address in the directory can be disconcerting. Most simply list postoffice box numbers but many are such as these: "Near police station number five," "Behind ammunition store."

Everywhere you look in Ethiopia you see animals. Underdressed Brahmin cattle graze in the centerlanes of downtown Addis Ababa boulevards; hippopotami are common along the rivers; families of baboons caper beside the dusty roads, countryside game includes elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, zebra, wart-hog, oryx and cheetah.

The hyenas are seldom seen but they perform a useful function: a dead animal in the streets need not be removed; the carcass will be consumed between midnight and dawn.

Tamed Chained Lion
 And in the courtyard of the emperor's office palace is a tame chained lion named Tojo who enjoys being petted by emerging visitors.

The ruler's name is Haile Selassie I, emperor of Ethiopia, king of kings, elect of God and conquering lion of

the tribe of Judah. He has reigned since 1930 and is supposed to be the 325th monarch in a dynasty started by the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon.

The 70-year-old widower emperor lives in Jubilee Palace, a two-story tan stone structure.

He likes to receive visitors and does so as often as possible in his 20-by-30-foot office. He sits at a low carved wood desk at one end of the office, usually wearing a brown khaki uniform with almost a square foot of ribbons on his chest.

For American Newsmen
 The audience this correspondent attended recently was for a dozen American newsmen, some of them travel writers. The frail-looking, bearded, five-foot-six emperor answered their questions through an interpreter, then asked abruptly: "How do Americans feel about Africa?" The answers were scarcely enlightening. The lion of Judah then emphasized the "importance of what tourists say."

A palace official suggested later he was referring to offensive remarks attributed to an American senator about the ability of Africans to govern themselves.

When the formal audience was finished, the king of kings stepped around his desk and chatted briefly in English. He remarked that the United Nations seemed to be doing "much better" than the League of Nations. He did not refer directly to his celebrated - and unsuccessful - personal appeal to the league in 1936 to head off the Italian invasion of his country. But he noted that "the members of the league were not strong enough morally to make collective security work."

State-Owned Airlines
 Much of the country's passenger and freight moves via the state-owned Ethiopian airlines. It is an efficient, profitable line set up in 1945 with technical assistance from Trans World Airlines.

The company recently bought two Boeing 720B jets for its routes to Greece, Spain, Germany, Kenya and West Africa. The line uses propeller planes including the old reliable DC3s to serve 33 Ethiopian cities.

Some of the provincial airports are just grass strips. An Ethiopian pilot told this correspondent that a Goba airport the crew sometimes has to shoot the circling vultures

for safety reasons before take-off.

Only about 7,000 tourists came here last year but a revitalized Ethiopian tourist organization thinks the figure may reach 20,000 in 1963. It advertises such countryside attractions as churches lew from solid rock at Lalibela, huge ancient obelisks at Axum, and Lake Tana, the headwaters of the blue Nile. Near Bahar Dar, on the south shore of Lake Tana, the Nile plunges over Tissisat Falls, perhaps the most spectacular in the world with exception of Victoria Falls.

Addis Ababa pretty well shuts down from 1 to 3 p.m. daily. The men return to their homes - plastered cement block structures with tile or galvanized steel roofs - for the heavy meal of the day. The food is called wat - an assortment of hotly spiced meats and vegetables with side portions of yogurt and rice.

No dishes are on the table. Instead, the whole table is covered with a thin, soft grey millet bread called injera. The wat is served in little piles atop the bread. Each diner tears off a four-square-inch piece of the "tablecloth" and folds it into a sort of open envelope which he uses, one-handed, to pick up the food.

The time system is confusing. Public clocks now operate midnight-to-midnight as elsewhere. But many people still follow the old method in which the clock-day starts at dawn. Thus a public clock will say 6 a.m. at dawn but other timepieces will say 12. When you have a 10 a.m. appointment it pays to find out if you should be there in mid-forenoon or six hours later.

Twist parties have become popular in Addis Ababa homes and the Ras hotel sponsors a twist session every Friday night. The city has two night clubs, a good theater featuring American and European films, and a prostitution district in which red-curtained doorways have replaced red lights for identification purposes.

There are perhaps fewer than 40 neon signs in the city. The radio station broadcasts minge Ethiopian music with such exotic tunes as "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

Business establishments range from the "atomic laundry" in Addis Ababa to a big Dutch-run sugar plantation on the Wonji plain to the south. The major export is coffee

and Ethiopians tell you the beverage originated here and took its name from the province of Kaffa.

In Neutral Camp
 Ethiopia seems determined to stay in the cold war's neutral camp. Officials privately express concern over Communist Chinese cultural and economic penetration of Africa but they think Peking should be in the United Nations. They say they have held off recognizing Peking only out of deference to "our American friends."

American foreign aid has concentrated on education and the peace corps is both active and popular. Yugoslavia is building a hydroelectric project on the upper blue Nile. Nearby is a handsome technical school built by the Russians. Ethiopia hopes to be a prime force toward unity of the continent.

A heads-of-state meeting is scheduled for May in Africa hall. Addis Ababa's most imposing building. This seven-story edifice is headquarters of the United Nations commission for Africa. Its stained glass windows depict ancient

ignorance, a black man slaying a dragon symbolic of colonialism, and a free people marching forward.

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EMPEROR'S RESIDENCE—Jubilee Palace, shown above in a picture taken last December, is the residence of Haile Selassie I, emperor of Ethiopia who has reigned since 1930, and is supposed to be the 325th monarch in a



NATIVE HOUSES—These native houses beside the Blue Nile in the village of Bahar Dar are pretty much the same as they were 3,000 years ago, but much of Ethiopia is changing in order to catch up with the rest

dynasty started by King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Although the Emperor lives here, he rides across town to work in the older Menelek Palace. (UPI)

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