

RASTAFARIONLINE



March, 2005

SistrenItes!

Rastafari Newsletter



Vol.2, Issue #003

Hailing His Majesty Haile Sellassie I Honoring Empress Menen



Not For Resale

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Contents

Editorial Page	1
Empress Menen Biography.....	2-3
Empress Menen Timeline.....	4-5
Empress Menen Speaks.....	5-6
HIM Haile Sellassie I Speaks.....	7
The Empress & The Crown: Zawditu.....	8
Word from Rastafari Nation:	
Wayzero Desta Meghoo Peddie (EOZ Conf)	9-10

A Word From the Editor

Greetings in the name of Qedamawi Haile Sellassie the First. Worthy to be praised, Endowed with the Wisest of Wiseminds, the Lion-hearted Prince of Peace!

Beloved readers, it is with the sincerest of thanksgiving that I approach this March edition of SistrenItes!. Having successfully completed a full year of monthly publications in 2004 and now forwarding into its second year, it is with great reverence that I pause to Iditate on the goodness of His Majesty as well as the overwhelming goodwill of the faithful SistrenItes! community of readers. The month of March is particularly special to the Dawtas of H.I.M., because His chosen wife Empress Menen was born on March 25th. Last year, in honor of InI Queen Mother, I felt moved to set aside additional time to create a special edition of SistrenItes!, which was specifically livicated to Her. It was especially timely as it also coincided with the Empress of Zion's (EOZ) Annual Rastafari Woman's Conference; which was held in Brooklyn, NY in March, 2004. The goal was to research/compile some of the available information which can be found in English, into one report and offer it to the nation, as well as to the EOZ Conference, in thanksgiving and love. InI were well pleased to bring joy to the sistren by forwarding that free-will offering, as InI do treasure any information which InI come across that is related to Her Majesty. This year, for those who did not have an opportunity to obtain the original March, 2004 Empress Menen Special Edition of SistrenItes!, I am again offering the same material as it was presented in last year's publication; minus some of the photos. Along with Her Majesty's crucial material, this year's edition also contains other information relevant to the nation in this Iwa.

*May the Almighty bless the Is thoroughly.
Sis PoeticLeah*



PoeticLeah



March 2004

SistrenItes!



Vol. 1, Issue #003

Empress Menen Special Edition



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Please Note: Only the current edition of SistrenItes! will be available for download from Rastafarionline.com. Please check the upcoming April, 2005 edition of SistrenItes! for more information on how to obtain the back issues.

Not available

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EMPRESS MENEN



Her Imperial Majesty Empress Menen was born in Wollo in 1889. She was the daughter of Jantirar Asfaw of Ambassel, and his wife, Woizero Sehin Michael. Woizero Sehin was the daughter of King Michael of Wollo and half sister of Lij Eyasu. Through King Michael, Empress Menen could trace her ancestry back to Emperor Fasiledes and also to the Prophet Mohammed.

Empress Menen had been married three times prior to her marriage to Emperor Haile Selassie. Her husband immediately before the Emperor had been Ras Leulseged Atnafseged. From her first husband Empress Menen had two children, Woizero Belainesh Ali, and Jantirar Asfaw Ali. From her second marriage, she had two more children, Jantirar Gebre Igziabiher Amede and Woizero Desta Amede. She had no children from her brief marriage to Ras Leulseged. The Empress thus had ten children altogether and the Emperor therefore had 4 step-children.

Empress Menen married Emperor Haile Selassie on July 30th 1910, while he was still Dejazmatch Tafari Makonnen of Harrar. Unlike her previous marriages, this one was a church wedding with a communion service, thus the only one of her marriages recognized by the Orthodox Church. The marriage is said to have been promoted by the Lord Regent, Ras Tessema Nadew and Fitawrari Habte Giorgis Denagde in order to tie Dejazmatch Tafari more closely to Lij Eyasu and ensure his loyalty. Some say Lij Eyasu ordered his paternal niece to marry his maternal cousin, while others say he actively promoted the match after the couple first met at his home in Addis Ababa and were smitten, and he realized the political advantages to him. Whatever one believes, what is certain is that their marriage proved very successful and long lasting.

The Emperor and Empress celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1960. Her Imperial Majesty withdrew herself from public view in 1961 after 51 years of marriage, at the age of 71. She had been Empress of Ethiopia for 32 years at the time of her passing. She was buried at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa.

-Adapted from Crown Biography Text

WAR-TIME EFFORTS

During the war, in which Italy sought to colonize Ethiopia, Empress Menen mobilized the women of Addis Ababa in making bandages and provisions for the soldiers. She presided over the Ethiopian Red Cross and became its patron.

In August 1935, the Association of Ethiopian Women's Welfare Work was founded by Princess Tsehai, daughter of the emperor, under the patronage of Her Majesty Empress Menen.

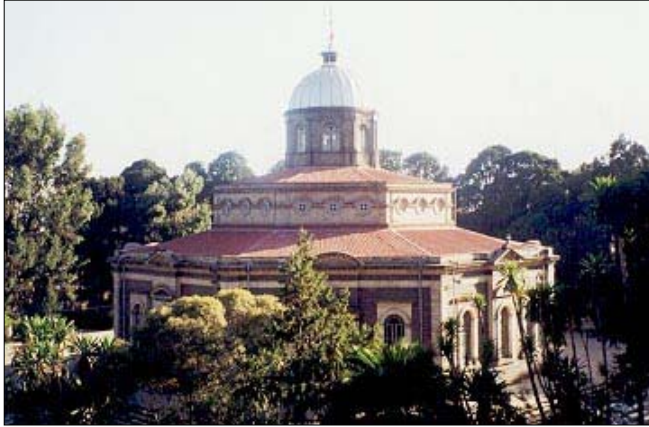
She was very busy organizing funds for the various activities of the welfare association and warning people to protect themselves from bombs. She prepared statistical military reports, advised and encouraged the Ethiopian people to persevere, and contributed funds to the families of Ethiopian patriots of war. On 13 September 1935, she made a radio appeal to women and men of the world in which she stated:

“...There is still time for those who desire justice to take action to end the most unjust of wars... I, therefore, appeal to France the emblem of equality, fraternity and liberty; to Great Britain, defender of justice; for all races and to the whole world to abandon all further delay in saving my country”.

Empress Menen

Empress Menen is the ONLY Empress to have been crowned on the same day, during the same ceremony, with the Emperor.

An all-night service was held in the *St. George cathedral* (below) on the eve of the coronation. Negus Ras Tafari and his wife Woizero Menen prayed in unison with richly costumed priests and deacons, who danced, chanted and beat drums and prayer sticks in time with the music of harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and the one-stringed masanko.



St. George's Cathedral

*She is referred to as a
"God-fearing Empress"
who spent most of her time
in prayer*



Not For Resale

"Speaking for the Universe and the womanhood of man, Queen Omega the Ethiopian woman is the crown woman of this world. She hands us Her Rulebook from the poles of supreme authority she is the Cannon Mistress of creation."

"Queen Omega being the balming mistress of many worlds she charges the powerhouse right now."



"King Alpha and his wife Queen Omega were here on earth before, if you please. Old Alpha the Lion of Creation said to Queen Omega please hand me the Pay Roll and the Militant Balance Sheet. And Your Majesty will mount His Excellency's Great Circle Throne and throw old Theocracy above the Wheel of Holy Time, right into Holy Eternity to the Lion of Alpha and Omega the King of Kings forevermore."

"His Majesty Ras Tafari alone with his bona-fide lion-hearted wife Queen Omega King of Kings, most Living and Eternal and Ever Living Sovereign owner of Life, the Biblical Sovereign of this world."

"King Alpha and Queen Omega are the Keeper of the Tree of Life."

From *The Promised Key*
Leonard P. Howell

Timeline
(Ethiopian Calendar)

March 25, 1883

Born in Wollo province to Jantirar Asfaw and Woizero Sehin Michael.

Baptized in St. Delba George church as Wolete Giorgis.

1892

First marriage.

July 30, 1903

Married Dejaz. Tafari Makonnen.

Jan 22, 1905

Fikirte Miriam born (daughter).

July 8, 1908

Asfa Wossen born (son).

July 18, 1909

Hirute Sellassie "Zenebework" born (daughter).

1910

Empress Taitu turned over completion of the Kidane Mihret church in Addis to Menen. A portion of her estate was given for this project which became a monastery and haven for many Christians.

Oct 2, 1912

Wolete Birhan "Tsehai" born (daughter).

March, 1915

Traveled to Jerusalem and Egypt, visited many holy places and donated to various churches and monasteries.

Oct 5, 1916

Orice Makonnen born (son).

Nov 7, 1917

Daughter Tenangne Work given in marriage to Ras Desta Damtew.

June, 1920

Visited Tafari Makonnen School and made donation.

Sept 27, 1921

Ras Tafari became Negus and Woizero Menen presided over an 8-day feast.

Nov 18, 1921

Traveled to Djibouti due to health problems and returned Dec 9th.

Sept 24, 1923

Founded a girl's school near Genete Loul Palace.

Nov 2, 1923

Emperor and Empress Coronation



Feb 20, 1923

Sahile Aba Dina born (son).

April 30, 1924

Asfa Wossen married Wolete Israel.

Nov 11, 1925

Oversaw construction of St. Hana Church on her estate land at Furi. Gave the priests and deacons acres of land for residence quarters.

Sept 6, 1926

Visited Jerusalem and returned to construct the St. Trinity Church.

1928

Gathered women and prepared wartime logistical support, and first aid materials and sent them to the battlefield.

Sept 13, 1928

Spoke at Women's World Conference against war.

Nov, 1928

Drove around Addis Ababa encouraging the residents during bombing.

Waged spiritual warfare through fervent prayer.

1928 - 1933

Exiled in England.

Aug 23, 1933

Returned to Addis Ababa.

1934

Gave speech in Wollo province. Constructed Menen Girl's School.

1935

Gave portion of her estate to war orphans.

Opened the Siwaswe Birhan school for the blind.

Nov 11, 1935

Visited Ethiopian Women's Association and advised on its strengthening.

Oct 5, 1936

Visited Empress Menen School and advised the girls on the importance of studying.

1939

Commenced construction of Gete Semani St. Mary Church with private funds and gave a portion of her estate land as residence for the priests and deacons.

July 10, 1939

Sent her crown to Bethlehem church.

1941

Donated portion of her estate on Empress Zauditu street for the construction of the school which was to be named after her beloved daughter Zenebework.

Jan 24, 1941

Visited Gondar and donated clothing and money to the various churches.

Sept 1, 1941

HIM Haile Selassie instructed Ethiopia that cultural apparel should be worn as an example to the future generations. Empress Menen took the initiative to begin dressing in like manner.

1942

Printed 3800 copies of the 14 sacred books, and gave proceeds from sale as donation to the Sewaswe Berhan St. Paul School. Also gave a portion of her mother's estate for the school's usage.

Renovated the Gishen Church in the Wollo region and constructed a road which made the church more accessible.

Timeline (Cont'd)

1943

Reconstructed the Boru Trinity Church; which had been devastated during the Italian invasion.

June 7, 1943

Visited Empress Menen Girls School and encouraged the students.

1944

Visited various schools in Nazareth.

1945

Traveled to Eritrea and visited with the people as well as the Ladies Association.

1947

Along with HIM, awarded certificates to female graduating nurses and students.

1948

Bought German Missionary's land and constructed school for blind orphans and hired teachers and caretakers to care for the youths.

1949

Visited Eritrea.

April 18, 1945

Celebrated 25th anniversary of the Empress Menen Girls School.

1954

Withdrew from public view.

The Children

Princess Tenagnework,

Crown Prince Asfaw Wossen

(later Amha Selassie I, Emperor-in-Exile),

Princess Zenebework,

Princess Tsehai,

Prince Makonnen Duke (Mesfin) of Harrar,

Prince Sahle Selassie.

Rastafari Lives!!

Empress Menen Speaks

To the World Womens Association

"I am pleased to present my speech to all world women. When Italy conquered our people and country the World Women Association supported us to settle peace and freedom. We are very happy to express our deep feeling for the association. While I am speaking now, in order to be understood by all countries my daughter, Princess Tsehai, will translate my speech into English.

Princess Tsehai made the following speech on behalf of Empress Menen:

"Recently, Italy conquered us unjustly and the world's women should hear the voice of the Ethiopian people. Even though women of the world are living in different countries with different climates, all women are interrelated with the same will and objectives. War is a distress and trouble to mankind. For all women of different countries, different races, and religions, the acts of violence and war have victimized their husbands, brothers and children. War is a destruction of the family and creates homelessness. So women are against war.

We know that even Italian mothers and barren women may worry about the war, since war is good for nothing. Therefore, all women should prevent war before it brings trouble and distress. They should collaborate their voices and request the avoidance of war before there is bloodshed on both sides.

Ethiopia does not think of violence as a means to resolve conflict and wishes to maintain peace. Ethiopia tried to settle the conflict peacefully in the early months. In every aspect Ethiopia has done her best. So we have a clear conscience. Ethiopian people welcomed all foreigners; the guests who came to work peacefully and innocently. The Ethiopian people's good hospitality towards foreigners has been well-narrated in the history of the world. However, one state which is the neighbor to Ethiopia, is trying to control and govern. Ethiopia is always on the line of peace, while the rival state is looking only after its own interest.

The enemy deployed its army and set up bases around our country to kill our women's husbands, children, and brothers. Our people live and work peacefully, by being God-fearing, but the enemy is trying to devastate the wealth of the country and destroy our family in the name of modernization.

We pray to God not to face this kind of distress and destruction if the so-called modernization brings such big trouble. Hence, the association which is established for the purpose of peace by the world's women may exert influence to bring peace and stability. We don't hesitate to believe that the World Women Association may contribute a great deal to settling this conflict peacefully. We pray to God that the Association accomplishes its mission. We hope the activities of the Association may bring fruitful results in the preservation of peace and security in our country.

Nonetheless, if the war is started, we women should treat wounded soldiers and minimize the damage from the war.

Women who are living all over the world, who stand for peace, may help us during the time of war. We know that these women assist the sacrificed patriot's family. All women of the world should struggle to bring about peace and justice. Government officials must be guided along the lines of God and we pray for this as well as your collaboration with us in this effort."

Empress Menen Speaks

To the people of Wollo

"My country's ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would like to thank the Almighty Lord for our flag having been returned to its rightful place. Our patriots were victorious after staying in the bush for 5 years. Secondly, any human being would feel the great pleasure, I feel at this moment, when he or she is rejoined with his/her birth place. By the grace of God, I was eager to see my native home, Wollo. I am very happy as it has been 31 years since I last visited this region. Finally, I am very grateful for the people who received me with great pleasure.

All of you know that this naturally gifted country which is green and different from any other African country has never been colonized and has been ruled only by its own kings. After many attempts at colonization, Italy perpetrated propaganda warfare. Through this campaign, Italy tried to dismiss our unity and divide our people. Is there anybody who did not loose a relative during the war? Some of our citizens were killed by hoes, spades and machine guns.

God made it possible that Ethiopia was quickly victorious over its enemy. We, the citizen's children feel proud when we see our country freed from any aggression and we are very thankful to Almighty God.

Ethiopian people have had good lessons from past experience which enables us to cooperate; much like one mother's children who love each other. This made every Ethiopian struggle for the country's independence and freedom. You have seen that a people without freedom are victims; as was seen during the 5 years aggression. Indeed our people did not hate native rulers as long as they kept the language, custom and tradition of the people. But Italians tried to rule in a subtle way. During the aggression, even though the enemy killed our people, patriots went to the bush and some went abroad in exile. This situation surprised the world.

My native ladies and gentlemen of Wollo, our country has been free for 3000 years. However through the help of England and the fierce struggle of its children, we freed our country, the flag and King of our common motherland Ethiopia. We have to be one and united The crown prince is selected by and came up from you, our beloved son, prince Meried Azmach Asfa Wosen is now with you. Even though I was separated from Wollo 31 years (physically, as it is impossible to say that I was living alienated from you), I was with you spiritually.

Our beloved son is your governor. I believe you will be very happy when I tell you this information. You will treat him loyally and kindly and he will share your problems and help you. He will govern you through good justice. Please, give him good advice and assist him whenever he needs it.

May God keep our country fertile. May God give long life to our flag."

Empress Menen Speaks

To the 25th Anniversary of the Empress Menen School for Girls

"His Imperial Majesty King of Kings believed that there is nothing better for the development of a country's progress and advancement than education. In this regard on his willingness he built many schools for boys. But if girls are left behind without having regular education, they will be at a disadvantage. Therefore, I have opened this school for the teaching of girls 25 years old and younger, since I believe girls should learn as boys.

This school was discontinued by the invasion of the enemy against Ethiopia. By the grace of God the school resumed its function after the victory. Many girls have received a chance to be promoted at the higher level of education after graduating from this school. Many of them are working in the government offices and in private organizations.

If my country's girls get the opportunity to receive the standard education I hope they can contribute a lot which is expected from them as their brothers.

Twenty-five years ago, there were not more than 50 students, when the school was opened. Today there are about 1300 students. This number is increasing because girls are aware of the advantage of education. I am very happy to see to this progress. I thank the Almighty God for which I celebrate the 25th year of the Empress Menen School. I thank the director of this school and the lady teachers who have shared the problems of the school, as well as its progress."

His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I Speaks

February 15, 1962

“We are pleased with the speech Our Prime Minister delivered yesterday on behalf of Our Ministers and Our people concerning the demise of Her Imperial Majesty Itegue Menen in which he adequately described her kindness and virtues.

All of you knew her well but she was more intimately known by I. She was devoutly religious and did not lose her faith even in times of hardship. During the memorable days of our companionship, we never had differences that needed the intervention of others. As Sarah was to Abraham, so was she obedient to I. Our wishes were mutual until we were separated by the Almighty. Her assistance for the good of the young, the old and the needy requires no testimony for they are greater than thoughts and words.

We have been extremely pleased to live long enough in the perfect union that enabled us to see our offspring, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. We are thankful to the Almighty for having vouchsafed to us that long uninterrupted union which is not very common in the world today: There could be no more profound prayer for I to utter.



In spite of Our utmost efforts to save her life in her time of illness, she was overtaken by the fate of Adam and passed away.

We cannot fly in the face of the Almighty, nor can we afford to be idle. Now that the time of mourning has come to an end, the public and our officials must attend to their duties. As idleness is injurious to the welfare of the country, as from Monday everyone should return to his work.

A large number of people have come from the Provinces to take part in Our mourning. Since We do not wish them to continue because this will disrupt normal life, it would be better for them to send two or three representatives with letters.

We are deeply touched by the expressions of grief both on the part of Our people and the foreign communities.

This is not the first time that Our people have joined Us in Our mourning. When Our beloved son, Prince Makonnen, passed away they expressed their grief in no less measure than We ourselves. They have even contributed, of their own free will to erect a monument in his honor.

We pray the Almighty shall recompense you for your deeds.

When Itegue was sick, the general public, following the events through the radio, shared Our anxiety. To the doctors and her personal attendants We owe a debt for their untiring assistance. May these tears We shed be accepted by God as price for peace in Ethiopia and in the world.”

The Empress and the Crown The Return of Tewodros' Crown



Empress Zawditu

The British Government agreed to return this Maqdala crown to Ethiopia during a state visit by Ras Tafari Makonnen (the future Emperor Haile Sellassie, who was then Regent and Heir to the Throne) in 1923.

Ras Tafari Makonnen left Addis Ababa in April, starting an historic visit to Palestine, Egypt, and Europe to mark Ethiopia's entry into the League of Nations.

The Regent's eventual arrival in Britain, quite unexpectedly, and by a strange quirk of official British thinking, opened up the question of the loot which the Napier expedition had taken from Maqdala, Emperor Tewodros's capital, over half a century earlier.

The British Government was unaccustomed to dealing with women who were rulers in their own right. The Foreign Office was therefore at a loss how to honour Ethiopia's reigning woman ruler - Empress Zawditu.

Britain, having, as they believed, no suitable decoration for the Empress, someone in the Foreign Office had the bright idea that she should instead be given "Emperor Tewodros's crown". The brainwave was duly conveyed to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary of Britain's first Labour Government. He gave it idea his full support.

On 7 July, the very day of Regent Tafari's arrival, one of the Prime Minister's aides, Mr F.F. P. Adams, of the Foreign Office, wrote a "Very Urgent" letter on the matter to the Secretary of the Board of Education. This was because the latter was responsible for the Victoria and Albert Museum, in South Kensington. This institution, together with the British Museum, was one of the two principal repositories of the loot from Maqdala.

He wrote: "In view of the ineligibility of women for the highest British Orders, such as those which have been or about to be conferred upon the Ras

Taffari, the bestowal of an inferior decoration on the Empress might be misinterpreted; it is, therefore, considered necessary in the circumstances to give her a present. It is thought that the only gift which would give her any real satisfaction, and which would also appeal to all classes of opinion in Abyssinia, would be the restoration of the Crown of Emperor Theodore, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Whatever artistic interest may attach to this exhibit can be but small in comparison with its historic and sentimental value for the Abyssinians, and it is considered that the restoration would give that country more solid satisfaction and gratification than any gift which could be made to them by any other country".

On 11 July officials of the Foreign Office rushed off to speak with Sir Amherst Selby Bigge, of the Board of Education, from whom they learnt, to their surprise, that there was, not one crown, but two, both of which had been taken from Maqdala.

A Foreign Office official reported: "It appears that there are two crowns, the first a highly ornate and rather barbaric headgear is listed in the Museum as the imperial crown and if it is decided to return it to the Empress, it would probably be possible to do so by arrangement with the Secretary of State for India who, it appears, lent it to the Museum.

"The second crown, though less showy, is from an artistic point of view the superior article. It is listed in the Museum as the crown of the Abouna, but it appears open to doubt whether it is not really King Theodore's crown. This second crown it will be impossible to restore, as nothing short of an Act of Parliament could get it out of the possession of the Museum; besides to restore it would create a very difficult precedent. We would be beebattled with demands to restore the Elgin marbles to Greece, not to mention other objects of interest which have been acquired from time to time as a result of military operations".

He continued: "'If you think, after inspection, that the first crown... would serve the purpose in view and would not actually whet Abyssinian appetites for more and lead to demands for the second crown and a valuable chalice which we acquired at the same time, we will take the matter up with the Secretary of State for India. If, however,

you are satisfied that nothing but the second crown... would produce the desired effect in Abyssinia then I am afraid we must let the whole matter drop".

What Mr. Murray, most remarkably, did not say, but what we now know, is that the two crowns were of entirely different composition. The first crown, which he proposed sending as a gift to Empress Zawditu, was silver-gilt, with coloured glass decorations, whereas the second, which he wanted to retain in Britain, was made of gold, and therefore presumably infinitely more valuable.

This latter crown, according to Sophia Shirley of today's Victoria and Albert Museum, is made "mainly of high carat gold (more than 18 carat) alloyed with silver sand copper", and, according to Louise Hofman, also of the V. & A., weighs no less than 2,488.8 grammes.

On 14 July, 1924, which was a full week after Tafari's arrival, the Foreign Office accordingly rushed off a letter to the India Office. Emphasising once again the need for urgency, it stated that King George V would be granting their distinguished Ethiopian visitor a farewell audience the following Friday, and that they were: "anxious, if possible, that on that occasion His Majesty should be able to inform the Ras that it is the intention to present the Empress with this crown, which has great sentimental value for the Abyssinians".

The Secretary of State, as expected, duly gave his consent, on the following day, 15 July. The "rather barbaric" crown was then packed at the museum that same day - and was therefore not in fact seen by the Regent, or any of his compatriots, in the course of their visit.

The proposed repatriation was accordingly announced by King George, in a brief farewell speech to Ras Tafari, on 18 July 1924. The King is quoted in Emperor Haile Sellassie's later "Autobiography" as saying, "We are returning to you the crown of Emperor Theodore which the commander of the British army at the time of the Magdala campaign had brought back".

The Foreign Office decided that, to attain maximum publicity, the crown's presentation should be carried out by the British Minister in Addis Ababa.

Final restitution was in fact delayed, for almost a year.

This article from Afromet.org

**Third Annual Empress of Zion Conference
Creating the Rastafari Curriculum
March 26, 2005, Miami, Florida USA
By Wayzero Desta Meghoo Peddie**

Greetings in the precious name of His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I Jah Ras Tafari and His chosen wife and life mate, Empress Mennen. Greetings and one perfect love Sisters, Brothers, youth, special guests. First of all, I give thanks to the Sisters of Empress of Zion for inviting me to participate this afternoon. I pray the Most High will bless my words and that they may be an inspiration and of strength to you all today.

In Luke chapter 1 verse 28 where the angel Gabriel said to Saint Mary upon the time that Yeshua the Christ was to be conceived, "Rejoice highly favored one, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women". Saint Mary replied "Behold the maid servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word, but why is this granted to me, that the Mother of my Lord shall come unto me?". The angel Gabriel replied, "Blessed is she who believed for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord". Saint Mary sealed the moment by saying, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in Jah my Savior, for he has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold henceforth as generations will be called blessed. His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers to Abraham and to his seed forever."

Powerful words, what is its relevance to the Rastafari curriculum, to Africa Unite, to repatriation? Everything, it is the beginning stages of responsibility and the quote we often hear "To whom much is given much is required". Hence, our desire and duty to give our youth a firm education that prepares them to compete in the market place of life, without for one moment compromising the integrity of that same one or the principles and philosophies taught to us through the Divine One of Iration, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I Jah Ras Tafari, and through the examples of Her Majesty Empress Mennen's works. Finally, it means that women have this special duty, this duty as maidservants of the Most High to let the will of Jah be done. The questions to us today are: what is the will of Jah, how do we know it, and are all women, Rasta women, chosen?

In the context of why I was invited to speak today, Africa Unite Ethiopia, and as a Rastafari woman, mother and wife,

my response is as follows:

I cannot emphatically say what the will of Jah is, in no uncertain terms. I can however go by the teachings I have received from my Elders, by my readings of His Majesty's speeches and by what has been revealed to me through life and longsuffering. I can say it is my honest opinion, that Jah wants us to be liberated, repatriated and receive redemption. He wants our children to be educated in order to serve themselves, their African family, their communities and our beloved Mother Africa, subsequently serving I-manity. How do we know this? Because the Most High has given us tools, gifts, talents to realize these goals. He sent priests, prophets and even propagandist (we use this in the truest sense of the word as on who spreads information) to teach us, to prepare us, and to sound the trumpet of what is to come. Some of us responded. This attempt by the Sisters of the Empress of Zion is one result of the response-the attempt to create a Rastafari centered curriculum.

Our other question is how will we know it? We know it when we see it because it feels right, we know it when we see it because it is met with nuff fight and nuff rejection, and nuff interjection by Satan. We know it when we see it because it is good, and the people rejoice in it, and Jah is pleased and rewards us accordingly.

The most challenging question today is, Are all women, Rasta women chosen? I agree with the Matthew 20 vs 16 that says For many are called and few are chosen. I don't know the answer to this question in a broad spiritual sense, but I know that many of us are chosen to do various works at various times. This again is based on the talent and tools the Most High provides for us. Some are mothers/nurturers. They care for not only their children but others. They will give the youth comfort, strength and love. This chosen one will prepare the youths in a way no book can, by giving them self-confidence, self-determination and most of all the important experience of being loved. Their talents - unconditional love, patience, humility - balanced by great silent strength. Their tools - the minds to create meals when there is nothing in the cupboard, their hands to create a home and surroundings from virtually nothing, and their heart to withstand the feeling of despair and isolation felt in those rare quiet lonely moments careful to never show that face to the children.

Some are chosen to educate the children building on the work of the mother figure. These educators, some of whom are here today, have been given the talent of teaching. They know how to connect with the child, they know how to reach the mind of the child, developing their natural curiosity. They know what to teach the youth, and how to teach the youth, and when to teach the youth.

Cont'd on next page

Word from Rasta Nation (cont'd)

Their tools do and or should include both formal and informal Higher education, books, classrooms with images of themselves to instill pride, and hopefully one day soon, a Rastafari-centered curriculum.

Another type of woman is one who builds on the works of the mother and the educator. She is prepared and called to work on an administrative level and international level to secure the opportunities and help fulfill the promises and prophecies made by our Father. I think I am one of these sisters. I was given a vision that appeared near impossible and filled with tribulations. There were times I wanted to run away, to give up, to become someone else. Especially as encouraging words and support are far and few between. (I give thanks to my sister Nana Rita Marley who kept me focused on the triumph instead of the trials.) I was also strengthened by my first visit to Ethiopia where we made a promise to the brothers and sisters on the land that we would return with a program that would have several goals which we could build upon.

- 1) Increase awareness of and enhance the perception Africa in the minds of the world
- 2) Raise awareness about some of the challenges facing Ethiopia/Africa
- 3) Raise funds to try to implement development initiatives

This was Africa Unite. An event which included a symposium at the Africa Hall and the United Nations Conference Center, Art and Photo Exhibits, tours to Shashamane and a concert that over 300,000 people attended. Many were called to this event in order to achieve the abovementioned goals, as a true collective giving balance and strength. A few did answer the call. Those who answered were able to utilize the message of and the love for the most well known Rasta man in the Universe Brother Bob Marley to help change the present image shoved down our throat by the media that make some of us very ones in this room and Rastafari Movement reluctant to go home to Africa. We were

able to secure and create, for Rastafari people, in this context, and all Africans generally, a stable environment and a new re-newed interest in Africa for investment and residential purposes. Many Rasses who were there seized the moment to visit the investment office to begin the process of building factories, hotels, libraries, schools, and more. This gives us leverage with regard to repatriation, as we are now seen as contributors of more than the equally important spiritual upliftment. The ball is in our court. Who among us feels chosen, who among us, like Saint Mary, is ready to receive the gift of life, the personal touch of the Most High to ready us for true salvation and redemption on a spiritual, physical and governmental sense?

My sisters, let us get ourselves ready. Check ourselves, stop blaming the brothers, the fathers, the sons, the moon - looking everywhere but at ourselves. Like the thief on the cross who was crucified next to Yeshua the Christ, even at the eleventh hour was given entrance into the Zion Gates. It is not too late to start forgiving ourselves, forgiving each other, starting out new with each other and within ourselves so we can truly be the chosen few. The chosen few who will educate our children, who will Unite Africa and who will help realize repatriation, liberation and redemption. We must be free of contamination and of self serving notions that become cancerous growths in our minds and bodies. Paraphrasing His Imperial Majesty, we must be something that we have never been before. Africa does await its creators and with two years and 5 months, there will be a new millennium, in which the government of Jah will reign. We will all soon find out who are the true revolutionaries and indeed the chosen few. In closing, His Majesty's words in answer to the question as to the will of Jah were, "We have abiding faith that the Almighty, Who has vouchsafed Us the privilege to reach this present stage, will grant to Ethiopia a bright future and an enduring destiny."

Submitted in One Perfect Love, Aim and Destiny



EOZ Conference, FL, 2005, Sis Moy, Sis Winnie, Sis Claudine

H.I.M. MESSAGE TO WOMEN'S SEMINAR—1960

Africa has accepted the challenge of the modern world and with it comes grave responsibilities. Many discouraging hours will arise before the rainbow of accomplished goals will appear on the horizon. African civilization in its potential magnitude must be able to command fortitude, patience, tolerance and diligence. To sustain us in all our tasks we count on the women of Africa. Without their relentless vigilance no aspect of our responsibilities can be attained. Woman's role has never been so demanding, and you can be proud to answer this call for the betterment and future of mankind.

Ethiopia welcomes you and wishes you God-speed in your deliberations.