



The Crown in an Age of Uncertainty

*An Address to Australians for Constitutional Monarchy
and the International Monarchist League*

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The Right Reverend and Honourable Peter Hollingworth, former Governor-General of Australia;

My Lord and Ladies;

Distinguished members of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy and the International Monarchist League in Victoria; my beloved countrymen from Ethiopia; and esteemed colleagues all:

... Many thanks for the incredibly gracious hospitality you have extended to me tonight, and since my arrival in this beautiful land. The efforts of key members of the two sponsoring bodies tonight have not only made this evening's gathering possible, but, indeed, made many aspects of this Commemorative Visit to Australia possible. Thank you, and thank you again.

I have entitled my remarks tonight as "The Crown in an Age of Uncertainty".

It certainly is an age of uncertainty into which we have plunged.

But what I wish to emphasize tonight is that although the age may be uncertain, the Crown acts as *a beacon of certainty* because it represents both the past which made us and the future which we will make. It is, in most societies, a light of constancy.

My remarks tonight dwell mostly on the Crown of Ethiopia, of course, although we can see that the experiences of societies which find stability and wellbeing — or seek to *return* to stability and wellbeing — are those which have fixed icons and sagas which define their identity and structures. And, of course, I have no need to remind Australians of the reality

that the Crown of Australia has served as a fixed symbol and sign of continuity for this nation since (and before) Federation.

Crowns change, as societies change. But, as J. R. Tanner, the constitutional historian of Oxford said, many years ago: "The existence of the Crown serves to disguise change and therefore deprive it of the evil consequences of revolution." In other words, the constancy of the Crown helps societies adjust. But crowns also adjust incrementally to ensure that they both adapt to emerging realities as well as reflect the underlying foundations of the past.

But let me address why I am in Australia.

It is a distinct honour and privilege to be with you, not least because my Grandfather, His late Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie, would have been overjoyed that we were finally building on the ties he tried to cement between Australia and Ethiopia.

He recognised that our two nations were linked by the Indian Ocean; that our peoples had consistently fought on the same side of history;

that our cultures were inevitably the product of the same Abrahamic ethos.

And that the unbroken Solomonic line which, for Ethiopia, began with the union of King Solomon and Queen Makeda of Saba — the Queen of Sheba — produced an historical line which represents the timeline and bloodline of Western civilisation.

My Grandfather's particular fondness for Australia partly originated in his love of horses, and particularly for the Walers which found their way into the Imperial Guard Regiment as a result of the Australian Light Horsemen having to leave these gallant mounts in the Middle East before they sailed for Gallipoli.

At least in that light, we see the ANZAC Spirit still at the gallop in Ethiopia's beautiful terrain.

Earlier, of course, we had the scent of Australia because of the eucalyptus groves which Emperor Menelik II planted around Addis Ababa to reforest the city as he built it in the late 19th Century. So for me, my first scent of Australia was a scent of home.

It was a point of great comfort and pride that yesterday I was able to lay a wreath at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in remembrance of Australian-Ethiopian ties and mutual sacrifice.

My Grandfather laid a similar wreath in 1968. And I am sure that he was as moved as I was at the solemnity of that sacred place which carries the soul of Australia.

Today, at the beautiful Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, I planted a tree near the tree planted there a half-century ago by the Emperor. I shoveled the first earth onto the new tree using the spade my Grandfather had used. And then the rest of the earth with another spade, which was inscribed with my name. We see the constancy of our ties.

In Canberra, too, I enjoyed three separate Parliamentary receptions to celebrate the visit. They were at the highest ministerial levels. I was privileged to meet and talk with the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull. I was hosted at dinner by former Governor-General Michael Jeffery and Mrs Jeffery, old friends. The Ethiopian Ambassador in Canberra also opened the doors and heart of the Embassy to me. And, as in Sydney, I met in Canberra with Ethiopians whose loyalty to the Emperor has not dimmed, and has been passed on to the next generation.

In Sydney, we were received wonderfully at the New South Wales Parliament. At that august establishment, as in Canberra, my visit was acknowledged from the parliamentary floor, a wonderful tribute. But there have been many other meetings here which have shown how much people cherish the memories of the Emperor and the ties with Ethiopia. Those meetings, too, with members of the Ethiopian community in Australia have been profoundly moving and rewarding.

There were many factors which caused my Grandfather to come here on a formal State Visit in 1968. He saw in Australians a population he admired, taking the best from its British origins but fighting — as he saw in World War I, World War II, and Korea — with an easygoing, good-humoured spirit to defend a tradition of civilisational values.

He saw an Australia committed to the principles of collective security; of participation in the defence of the rights of many peoples. This, for my Grandfather, resonated profoundly. He had seen the failures of talk among the international community when the League of Nations could not prevent the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. He, and Ethiopia, were left

alone, cast adrift, and seemingly bereft of hope by the failure of the global community to stop the invasion.

His words as he left the podium at the League of Nations were: "Today it is us; tomorrow it is you." And finally, as the world collapsed into World War II, he saw Britain throw him the first lifeline of hope with a small force — which included Australians — to support the Ethiopian resistance. When they re-took Ethiopia they gave the Allies the first great victory of World War II. It was in a broader Middle East in which Australians were already heavily committed, understanding then that Australia's lifelines passed through Ethiopia's sphere of influence to Europe.

But from that point forward, the Emperor championed the causes of collective security, as Australia itself did. He threw himself into the development of international bodies to work for the common good, from the United Nations to the Organisation for African Unity. He committed himself and the blood of the Ethiopian People to these concepts, as did Australia. Ethiopian and Australian troops were to fight together on the same side again — the side of the united nations; the Allies — in Korea.

So my Grandfather saw in Australians an egalitarian people who spoke directly to each other; *with* each other. There is no question that some of the World War II links with Ethiopia continued. Certainly, Australian Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies was familiar with the role of Ethiopia and the Emperor in World War II, and Australia's Governor-General, Lord Casey, had been heavily engaged in the Middle East during the war. Casey was familiar with the Emperor and Ethiopia. And so began Australia's overtures to Ethiopia, starting with a typically Australian gesture: cricket diplomacy.

I am conscious of the fact that I should not take too much of our time together with my remarks, but it is fitting to note Sir Robert Menzies' gesture of sending a youth cricket team to Ethiopia in 1965. It was a team of New South Wales schoolboys under the tutelage of the great Australian test cricketer, Bert Oldfield. They went to play the Wingate School team in Addis Ababa. Of course, Wingate School was named after Ord Wingate, the British soldier sent by Churchill to assist Ethiopia recapture the country, and who later fought in Burma alongside the Australians. Anyway, Bert Oldfield took a cricket bat to give to the Emperor from Sir Robert, and it was a gesture which touched my Grandfather greatly.

It led to the State Visit of 1968, by which time Sir Robert was no longer Prime Minister. Even so, when the State Visit took place with Australia

under the Premiership of John Gorton, the nation was still seen as an ideal by the Emperor.

Today, the nephew of Sir Robert's envoy, Bert Oldfield, Dr Paul Scully-Power, AM, Australia's first astronaut, and one of the world's great polymaths is a scientific advisor to the Ethiopian Crown Council. He looked down upon Ethiopia from the Space Shuttle, remembering his uncle's stories, not realising then that he and I would one day meet, and that he would become a great friend himself to Ethiopia.

There were many personal touches in the links between Australians and the Emperor; and between our two strikingly compatible but vastly different cultures. The Emperor saw in Australia's political structure something which embodied what he sought to create in Ethiopia.

He *wanted* governance devolved upon the People.

He also saw the vital necessity, of course, to perpetuate the great continuity which an ancient Crown and bloodline gave to the identity of Ethiopians — the sixty or so nations of people which comprise the Ethiopian entity — but he wanted that Crown to be iconic and above politics. And he knew that what ultimately drives national confidence and successful governance of any people is their sense of identity security.

The Solomonic identity, and the great saga of the *Kebre Negast* — the Glory of Kings — were part of what defined the Ethiopian People in the same way that ANZAC defines the Australian and New Zealand Peoples.

Emperor Haile Selassie saw that Australia, and other British dominions in similar though different ways in New Zealand and Canada, had created something unique and special from the British parent from whom they sprang.

There is no question that my Grandfather profoundly admired the iconic, stabilising role which the British Crown gave to the United Kingdom, but he saw that Australia — as well as New Zealand and Canada — took that iconic and historical Crown and blended it with the egalitarianism of new societies. ... New societies which he saw as self-reliant, egalitarian; intrinsically rather than legalistically democratic; and in which the Crown and the People were a fused entity.

My Grandfather loved democracy, and fought diligently to bring it to Ethiopia, first by introducing education on a broad scale.

My Australian strategic advisor for many decades, Gregory Copley, in a talk at the US Library of Congress a month ago, said that the Emperor introduced education at a helter-skelter pace in order to create an informed and proud electorate. He introduced assemblies which were modeled on those created in the British Commonwealth. Gregory, who is also here with us today, indicated that he felt that the Emperor's approach to giving an international education to as many young Ethiopians as possible worked against the Crown in the short-term.

There is no question that, by educating so many passionate young people so quickly, and bringing them back into a country struggling desperately to escape the poverty of an agrarian economy, he saw expectations rise more rapidly than his fledgling democracy could deliver. In that, he may have sown the seeds of the 1974 coup which gave Ethiopia decades of poverty, dictatorship, and regression, only now beginning to fade.

But the Emperor was not wrong in his historical vision of what Ethiopia needed.

It needed education; it needed democracy; it needed to retain its many millennia of identity. I do not believe that his vision was destroyed by that dreadful coup and his cruel regicide in 1974, at the hands of a few individuals who wanted personal gain and ended up having to sell our country to an alliance with totalitarianism. I believe that the Emperor's vision *will* come to pass. Ethiopia's return to its three millennia of Solomonic identity and the duty of Ethiopians to share that with the world; Ethiopia's commitment to modern governance and education: *all* will yield the perpetuation of our ancient civilisation, but now in a modern context.

My Grandfather saw, when he came to Australia, a constitutional monarchical democracy which sat easily on the shoulders and in the hearts of Australians.

He saw the unimpeachable valour and dignity of a society which embodied self-reliance, compassion and duty to others — an easy and loving commitment to the true meaning of mateship — and a familial relationship between their own Crown and all of society.

He saw a society in which both Crown and the People — gathered from so many places and from Australia's own ancient societies — were equal, sovereign, indivisible.

I hope you see what you have here in your great society.

Do not let it slip away.

You have demonstrated the value of the Crown in an age of uncertainty.

Some have asked why I chose to commemorate the Emperor's State Visit to Australia, when he visited so many lands.

But where else should I be? I know why this sunburnt country; this land of sweeping plains, felt like a home to my Grandfather. And why Australia and Ethiopia are family.

Family who should meet more often.

I realize that there was so much to say that we did not — and possibly could not — cover as much as I would have liked regarding the question of the Crown in a Time of Uncertainty. But let me say that we *know* that we are in an age when the world's strategic architecture is changing. Borders are changing; power is changing; populations are on the move. All of this profoundly challenges the way civilizations and cultures preserve themselves, and whether or not they disappear.

What we know from Ethiopia's and Australia's experience is that the Crown is a safe haven.

It represents stability.

It represents identity.

And in this world of change, identity security is the only portable and enduring form of self-confidence, hope, duty, and caring. So what is critical to us all is the reality of the crown which we hold in our hearts; that is the enduring crown.

Let me conclude now. Let me thank you, on behalf of myself, my Grandfather, and on behalf of all Ethiopians.

We thank you for what Australia represents, and what it can and must represent in the future to my Ethiopian Peoples — in their ancient homeland and now scattered around the world — and to all those of all societies who value what a Crown and a People can do together.

God bless you. God bless Her Majesty the Queen of Australia. And God bless the work you are doing to preserve the cultural and civilizational values which have made Australia the hope of the future.