

monastery of the Côte Pavée; in a letter dated 21 August 1938 he exhorted Hayla-Sellase:

to make an appearance somewhere around Khartoum, on the borders with Ethiopia, and do so before the end of the Spanish Civil War. I hope that England would grasp the importance of such a move, which might oblige the Italians to leave Spain.³⁸

Hayla-Sellase would not go to Khartoum, but he would do much more: he would send a personal representative into the heart of occupied Ethiopia. In fact, in the fall of 1938, in the name of anti-Fascism some very improbable alliances were created. The forces behind this secret pact were the Minister of Overseas France and her Colonies Georges Mandel, the Italian Communist Party in the person of Giuseppe Di Vittorio, and the Emperor Hayla-Sellase. They shared a common intention, that of preparing and carrying out in Ethiopia two exploratory missions. Lorenzo Taezaz also took part in the second of those two missions.³⁹ Taezaz, among his various responsibilities, was in charge of reviving the campaign of guerrilla warfare, announcing that the political situation would soon shift radically and that the emperor would finally be able to return to his country. When in the summer of 1939 Taezaz concluded his adventuresome and successful mission, returning to Bath, he brought with him an extremely positive report for the emperor: the Ethiopian population—despite some attraction for a republican solution⁴⁰ and the interference undertaken by two sons of Lej Iyyasu⁴¹—was still faithful to its sovereign and was now ready for a general revolt.

Lorenzo Taezaz's report not only restored the Negus' optimism, but had a considerable influence on the conduct of Great Britain. On 10 June 1940, as soon as Italy declared war on England, the attitude of the British government toward the emperor in fact changed suddenly. Hayla-Sellase, who had been relegated to Bath for so many years and deliberately ignored, on occasion even abused and humiliated, was suddenly transformed again into a martyr, a hero, and a precious ally. Winston Churchill, who had taken over from the ambiguous and waffling Neville