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The Dying Lion: Feudalism & Modernization In Ethiopia

Partick Gilkes

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In September 1974, after forty-four years as ruler of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie, The Lion of Judah, was deposed. This book examines in depth the causes of the unrest which finally led to the army taking power. During the early 1970s there were extensive changes in the complex of relationships between the government, the army and the peoples of Ethiopia. To explain these developments Patrick Gilkes, who lived in Ethiopia for many years, uses detailed and often confidential sources in his examination of government corruption, local government administration, land tenure and the tragic famine, the revolutionary student movement which played a major part in the build-up of criticism of the Emperor, and other forms of opposition, both violent and non-violent. The book is valuable analysis of political and economic power in a developing country. It puts into perspective the causes and symptoms of the failure of modernization, looking in particular at the feudal system used to control power, which finally led to the tension and conflict of 1974. * * * "The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia was a remarkably perceptive book when it was originally published. The author traveled widely in Haile Sellassie's Ethiopia and his well-based, thoughtful account of the condition of the country on the eve of the 1974 revolution is of enduring value." Prof. Donald Crummey, Author of Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia "The book is one of the seminal works produced at that unique moment in history when the ancient regime in Ethiopia was dying and the new revolutionary order was being born. As such it sits astride two eras, dissecting clinically the order that was in its twilight hours and anticipating the new one that was in its birth throes." Prof. Bahru Zewde, Author of Modern History of Ethiopia "The original edition of The Dying Lion, published in 1975, quickly became a classic. The dramatic story of the decline and eventual collapse of Haile Selassie's monarchy remains a seminal event in Ethiopia's modern history. Tsehai Publishers is to be congratulated for reprinting this important study for a new generation of readers." Dr. Thomas Ofcansky, Co-Author of Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia

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