

U.S. MISSION TO THE AFRICAN UNION
(Includes information on Organization of African Unity)

READER
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HERMAN KLEINE
Mission Director, USAID
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1957-1959)

Herman Kleine was born on March 6, 1920 in New York, New York. He attended the State University of New York at Albany and then entered the military. Mr. Kleine began his career in Foreign Service in 1949 when he joined the Marshall Plan Mission to the Netherlands. He also served in Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, and Brazil. Mr. Kleine was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1996.

Q: Did you have any contact with the British in Addis Ababa?

KLEINE: Yes. There was a British Embassy. I don't think they had an aid program. There were British and French cultural programs and the Israelis were beginning a small technical assistance program, but we were the only significant bilateral program. There was a UN program. Interestingly, the Ethiopians at that time did not consider themselves as being African. They would say that they were red. The Emperor's political, economic and cultural outlook was oriented toward Europe. And it was only later when he began to aspire to a position of leadership in the newly developing and independent Africa that he made state visits to African countries and sought to attain a leadership role in Africa. He succeeded in getting the Organization of

African States (OAS) [precursor to the AU which formed in 2002] to establish its headquarters in Addis Ababa. And it was an interesting change. Another thing we started to observe was the growing pressure from the Soviet Union to get a foothold in Ethiopia. The U.S. maintained for a long time an important military communications center, Kagnev Station, in Eritrea, Asmara. Toward the end of my stay there, at a meeting we had with the Emperor, he informed us that he had been offered military assistance in the form of supplies and equipment and training from the Soviet Union, and he was exploring whether we would do the same. We were rather courageous in deciding not to seek to outbid the Soviets in military assistance and, after consulting Washington, the Emperor was so informed. Later there was a Soviet presence.

JOHN A. BUCHE
Political Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1963-1966)

John Allen Buche was born in Indiana in 1935. He served in the U.S. Army overseas from 1957 to 1959 and received degrees from Purdue University and Tuebington University in Germany. After entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings abroad have included Toronto, Addis Ababa, Malawi, Niger, Bonn, Geneva, Zambia, and Vienna. Mr. Buche was interviewed in 1999 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: What was the political situation in Ethiopia when you arrived? Really, we're talking about early 1963.

BUCHE: While there was intense interest within the Palace and in several Government ministries about the momentous changes in Africa, the man in the street looked down on the dark-skinned Africans and did not want anything to do with them. The Emperor [Haile Selassie] had the foresight to use the burgeoning African independence movements for the benefit of Ethiopia. He had decided that if there was going to be a large number of newly-independent African states, he was the only logical choice for the role of the Continent's "father figure." So he laid the groundwork for an organization (to be sited in Addis Ababa) to serve the new Africa. His vision created the Organization of African Unity. How did he bring it off? For years he had supported independence movements, not with large sums of money or arms shipments, but by personal contacts with the various leaders. Many, while still engaged in the struggle for independence, had been invited by the Emperor to visit him in Addis Ababa. The Emperor feted them lavishly and bestowed generous gifts on them. They would leave Ethiopia, pleased with the Emperor's recognition and generosity. The Emperor sent the draft OAU charter to the leaders of independent African states and invited them to meet in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to sign the document. They came, and after several days of oratory and festivities, signed the Charter.

We were curious how ordinary Ethiopians would react to the increasing numbers of African diplomats and officials coming to Addis Ababa in connection with the OAU and ECA. The ingrained Ethiopian politeness and hospitality toward guests overcame their cultural antipathy against dark-skinned people. They swallowed their cultural prejudices and treated the Africans

with respect. What their thoughts may have been when the Africans badly misbehaved in public is another question. Many of the Africans in the numerous delegations or new embassies in 1963-66 had suddenly gone from being students or clerks to being ambassadors, junior ministers, and the like. When they came to Addis Ababa, there were Ethiopian officials to open doors, limos with chauffeur at their disposal, easy access to booze and women, and attention from journalists and diplomats. It was a heady time for the newly-independent Africans, and more than a few disgraced themselves and their country with their public antics.

Q: Yes, and also that this was not a Bureau at the top that wanted to hear about antics; it wanted to hear about very serious things, and probably much more was expected from the Africans than actually the Africans were being able to deliver at that time.

BUCHÉ: Yes, the antics never found their way into the Embassy reporting. We had enough sense not to report the disgusting public behavior of some of the Africans. Our reports were timely, accurate, substantive, really high quality. I did not write them because I did not report on the OAU or the ECA. Don Junior was responsible for OAU issues; Art Stillman covered the ECA. When there was an important OAU or ECA conference, and there were many of the former in the first several years, the entire Embassy got involved. Ambassador Korry did much of the spot reporting, folding our bits and pieces into what he had picked up from the principals involved. He was an experienced, resourceful, competitive, and effective reporter by profession. He brought these traits with him to Addis Ababa. Korry wanted to be the first into Washington and our embassies with reports on important developments from the OAU and ECA conferences. (Developments in the former were much more important and time-sensitive than the latter.) He wanted Soapy Williams and Wayne Fredericks, plus our embassies, to hear from him first before they saw the results on the news tickers or had read-outs from interested governments. Korry regarded the BBC, Reuters, AP, and Agence France Presse as colleagues and competitors. He knew the top reporters and had excellent rapport with them. They had useful contacts among the African delegations from the capitals and were willing to trade information with Korry. Being the American Ambassador, but more than that, being Edward Korry, meant that he quickly established effective relations with the key Ethiopians. The OAU sessions were closed to the public, including diplomats and journalists, but Korry and his Embassy team learned from various sources what was happening inside. I met a French interpreter through Anike, who proved to be an excellent source. As soon as a session was over, Korry and team would confer with our contacts and then rush back to the Embassy. Korry would sit down at a typewriter and type the report on the green telegram form. He would hand the finished product to Sheldon, Bob Wenzel, or Don Junior to read in case he had forgotten something, and then give it to the Communications Officer to transmit. This was often at midnight or later. When the Department of State and our embassies opened the next day, Ed Korry's cable was in the take. While I enjoyed assisting with the OAU conferences, my primary task was internal Ethiopian reporting.

Q: It sounds like on anything government to government that there was not much need for going to ministries.

BUCHE: The Emperor seemed to be near the height of his mental powers during my time in Ethiopia. When I came back from Ethiopia, I was on the Ethiopian Desk for three years. As I recall, he still was still pretty sharp mentally. He was juggling new considerations, however. One was the rise of the independent African states and the OAU. He decided that Ethiopia was not going to be swept up in the flood of popular democracy, anti-colonialism, and "African" socialism. He saw the dangers to his power from the ideologies of Sekou Toure, Nasser, Jomo Kenyatta, et al. Haile Selassie had impeccable credentials as an anti-colonialist, but he also had excellent relations with the colonial powers. He had invited many young nationalist leaders to Addis Ababa when they were sorely in need of a little bit of money and some stroking, and he treated them magnificently. He was able to use the African independence movement to his and Ethiopia's advantage. We were amazed at how cleverly he handled this whole thing. He brought the African leaders together and persuaded them to sign the charter of the Organization of African Unity. He had set up the diplomatic work several years in advance and brought in a Chilean expert to write the charter (based to a large extent on the OAS). The Emperor was able to bring regional enemies and rivals together from the rest of Africa - the Moroccans, Tunisians, and the Algerians, Nasser and Sekou Toure. It worked, and they sat down and signed the Charter of the OAU in 1963. The Charter was not something that they saw for the first time in Addis; it was circulated much earlier. It was very cleverly written, so there was a very strong emphasis on "pre-colonial borders." There were some countries that did not want that concept included, in particular, Somalia. The Emperor cleverly isolated the Somalis before the conference, and they had to go along. Most African countries wanted pre-colonial borders. There was no alternative to the concept, but war.

Q: It's been an article of faith with us, anyway, that once you uncork this - whoosh - I mean, the whole Continent would fall apart into a thousand little tribal enclaves, and so like it or lump it, there it is.

BUCHE -The Charter did allow an escape clause, something along the line that these unjust colonial borders shall remain, unless mutually agreed to by all parties concerned. That could mean the barrel of a gun, but it was enough to allow everyone to sign. Also there was a dispute-solving mechanism. The Emperor figured that his prestige could be enhanced if the OAU became the venue for intra-African dispute negotiations. The OAU had a crisis on its hands within months after the Charter was signed. It was the Moroccan-Algerian War. That crisis was followed by others throughout the Continent with numerous assassinations and *coups d'état* in dozens of African countries. Many of the disputes did end up at the OAU in Addis Ababa. The Emperor almost always was involved in some way in seeking a resolution of the disputes.

LEWIS D. JUNIOR
Organization of African Unity
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1963-1967)

Lewis D. Junior was born in Kansas in 1925. He graduated from Georgetown University and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Mr. Junior joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in Nigeria, Italy, Germany, Ethiopia,

Zaire, the Netherlands, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: What were you doing there?

JUNIOR: I had a unique job in Ethiopia. I went to fill a job newly created, because Haile Selassie, it appeared at the time, and appeared correctly at the time, had managed to steal the "capital of Africa" from everybody else. That is, the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity. That was later confirmed. It was still tentative at the time the department had decided that we needed another officer in Addis to follow that exclusively. So I was, at least technically, and in many ways functionally, not involved in Ethiopian problems at all; I was trying to work out a relationship with the secretariat of the OAU, which was not easy.

Q: What was the American attitude towards this new organization?

JUNIOR: It was nebulous but friendly, because one didn't know what the new organization was, what it would do, what attitudes it would take on, whether it was beast or beauty, and whether it was friend or foe. So that the initial job was to establish good lines of communication. And for those who tried, that far back, to establish friendly relationships with the haughty Ethiopians, that was a tough job. Because at that point every member of the secretariat, including the secretary general pro tem, were Ethiopians. A number of those people are now in the United States, in refugee status; but, then, they were not at all pleased to see this imperialist power showing some interest in what the OAU was up to.

Q: How did you deal with them?

JUNIOR: Gingerly. It took a while for the staffing to change, and eventually a number of other nationalities arrived to take over some new jobs. The first secretary general was from Guinea, and that was the famous (or the infamous) Diallo Teli, who was no friend to the United States. Then we had Nigerians and Moroccans and Tunisians and so forth, and when they began to arrive, it became easier to communicate with them. But it was always tricky, because a number of those folks were no less suspicious of American motive. So when you went around and tried to present a position on an upcoming agenda item for a meeting of the OAU, they were loath to take careful note as to what you had to say.

Q: Did you find that the Soviets had more of an entrée? Because this was certainly at the height of their sort of opening to Africa and all of that, as fellow anti-colonialists or something like that, despite what they did at home.

JUNIOR: Were you to ask the then U.S. ambassador, Ed Korry, you might get a different answer than I would give. I don't really think that they had much influence on the organization, as an organization; I think they had considerable influence in the constituent countries. But the emperor, who had pulled off this coup of getting the "capital of Africa," was determined that nobody else was going to find any reason whatsoever to steal it away from him, so I'm sure he fended off the Soviets as effectively as he did us. I don't think that they had any particular influence at the time.

Q: What about your relation with the ambassador? Edward Korry was a fairly strong character, wasn't he?

JUNIOR: He was indeed.

Q: And how did he treat you and the OAU?

JUNIOR: He was a man of great passion and vigor and intelligence and ego. He had worked very hard. I think that a number of his efforts directed at the Ethiopians might have been self-defeating, in that they didn't necessarily cotton up to that open, aggressive approach that he had. But he was influential, and he managed to shake the tree of American assistance vigorously enough to produce some aircraft and other things that the emperor wanted. I think maybe the country was too small for him, but he made the most of it, and he was always making something happen.

He was not averse to picking up good ideas, no matter what the source. And any number of his staff commented, then and later, that they would come up with an idea which he would immediately pooh-pooh, but within a discernible period of time, that idea would emerge in something that he would write himself. Rarely would he say thanks, or that's a good idea, but he was listening.

On one occasion he called me into his office to rip me apart for something I had done or had not done, so I went over to the door to the office and closed it, and we had at it for about ten minutes. After that, he treated me with considerable respect. I think that if he saw someone who was unable or unwilling to fight back and to stand their own ground, then he would crawl all over them. So it was okay after that.

Q: Were there any major sort of internal developments that impacted on the work you doing, either in Ethiopia or outside Ethiopia, that caused you concern?

JUNIOR: Well, we had the crisis in the Congo, which was in part played out in Addis wherein they had special meetings of the OAU there. And that illustrates a point I was making earlier: we had things we wanted to say to the OAU, and to selected member states, about what was going to happen and why we airdropped over Kisangani and so forth.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia at the time, and the neutral nations were making a big thing about our interference in Africa. What sort of reaction were you getting from within the OAU?

JUNIOR: Very negative. Almost universally negative. I think there were some people who did understand what was going on, but there was no particular reason for them to take up our cause.

GILBERT D. KULICK
Political Officer
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1969-1972)

Gilbert D. Kulick was born in Connecticut in 1942. He attended the University of Texas and graduated from there in 1963. He earned his M.A. from UCLA in 1965. In 1966 he joined the Foreign Service. His posting included Mogadishu, Addis Ababa, Tel Aviv, and Washington D.C. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 29, 1993.

Q: The OAU is the Organization of African Unity.

KULICK: I suspect that it may not really be so united. I was quite pleased with the assignment. It was considered a "plum" for an Africanist. It meant coming back to Washington for a fairly short time, which my wife wasn't terribly happy about. That's a motif that was repeated throughout my Foreign Service career, because I had told her that as a reward for sweating it out in Somalia for a couple of years I would get us an assignment in Rome or Europe or someplace like that. Why I thought I could make such a promise, I don't know. I guess that what I meant was that I would try. She heard the commitment and held me to it. As it turned out, she loved Ethiopia and had a wonderful time there. There were no long-term recriminations about it, except for the fact that I hadn't consulted her properly. That, in itself, was a black mark on my record. I was in Washington for about nine months. The course was for 10 months. I left after about eight and one-half months because I was anxious to get out to the post. There is only so much language that you can learn in a classroom.

ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, JR.
Ambassador
Ethiopia (1975-1976)

Ambassador Arthur W. Hummel, Jr. was born to American parents in China in 1920. He received his master's degree from the University of Chicago. His career with USIS included assignments in Hong Kong, Japan, Burma, and Taiwan. He served as the ambassador to Burma, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. Ambassador Hummel was interviewed by Dorothy Robins-Mowry on July 13, 1989.

Q: One last question before we leave Ethiopia. How did you find working with the OAU, the Organization of African Unity? How did it operate as you saw it in those days?

HUMMEL: They had some very bright people associated with it. One of the brightest was an Egyptian with an Italian name, and there were others like him, too. They were some very savvy people but they couldn't get the OAU to intervene actively in problems as they arose. For instance, a problem with Mauritania.

Q: This concerned the "Polisario" question.

HUMMEL: Western Sahara. They couldn't get together to do anything. They couldn't handle that. Of course, as it turned out in later years the OAU has not been a factor in the solution of any of the major problems of Africa--such as Southwest Africa or Namibia. The whole business of intervention in Liberia was handled by a consortium of neighboring, West African countries. There was the Mauritania problem--all of these things. It is a great tragedy that the OAU could not get itself together to act effectively and collectively on any issue that I can think of. Yet the people in the OAU were very good as sources of information. I enjoyed good personal relations with them. We would go to dinner or talk about these issues, during a call. Of course, the OAU was founded when Emperor Haile Selassie, in his post World War II prime, brokered an agreement between North and South Sudan, with the help of this fledgling organization, which later became the OAU. So the OAU was founded on the basis of a successful solution to an African problem, organized by Haile Selassie. However, as far as I can remember, the OAU never pulled off anything substantial like that again.

Q: Was this an endemic problem?

HUMMEL: It was an inability to go act because of the different factions involved--the Islamic faction, the West African faction, and so forth.

OWEN W. ROBERTS
Deputy Chief of Mission
Addis Ababa (1979-1982)

Ambassador Owen W. Roberts was born in Oklahoma in 1924. He received his A.B. from Princeton University and his M.I.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army. Ambassador Roberts entered the Foreign Service in 1955, serving in Egypt, the Congo, Nigeria, Upper Volta, Ethiopia, Gambia, Seychelles, Chad, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

ROBERTS: There was another action development that shows what can be done on just the diplomatic level, even if you are only a small embassy. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) usually met in Ethiopia. We did not really try to affect its sessions and resolutions. Too big a job and mostly of too little importance to us. We would assign one or more of our young officers to cover the meetings -- a hard job as access to most meetings was closely controlled. But we had a particularly capable officer in Frank Day, who covered many of the sessions. He was a particularly ingenious, if not crafty young man who could get in almost anywhere, and he did some marvelous reporting. So we were satisfied with just getting good coverage of what the OAU was doing.

A frequent issue on the agenda was whether or not the rebel movement in Mauritania, the Polisario, was to be seated. This was of vital concern to Morocco, where we had real interests. A minority OAU group, mainly French-speaking states, did not want the Polisario to be seated. There were security and political reasons; also the Polisario was a movement, not a state. These countries constituted, if organized, a clearly blocking vote. The issue had come up previously but had always failed to get the necessary two thirds majority. I went to the formal opening meeting. Just before all the delegates trooped in, a lot of turbaned, blue-robed Polisario representatives came in and sat down at a table with a Polisario flag. It became evident that somebody had administratively made a decision to seat them -- to present a fait accompli. Well, all the delegations came in and settled down, most not aware of the situation. The president of the OAU came up to the podium and looked down, and there were the Polisario. Drama. He made some polite remarks and then said, "I think that we have a question here which has not been resolved, and I suspend the meeting until it is settled." I talked to a few delegates and reported the impasse and strong pressure from the pro-seating faction.

It turned out later that the secretary-general of the OAU, the head of the OAU staff, had made the decision, probably under some pressure--or possibly payment--to set up the seating. He may also have thought that this time arrangements had been made for a two-thirds vote and he wanted to be on the winning side. Well, the outcome wasn't all that clear, and the OAU suspended meetings for about a day and a half while the delegations negotiated among themselves. This provided a diplomatic opportunity.

I got a very strong message from the Department to do what I could to help block the Polisario from getting into the OAU. A blocking third was needed. The Department got involved partly because Morocco felt very strongly about Mauritania and weighed-in with Washington, and partly because Senegal and Abidjan also did. These were important countries for our African policy. Remember now, we're under the Reagan Administration, and they were good conservative regimes, and Morocco was very much on our side when it came to the Mediterranean issues and relations with Algeria. So I got strong instructions to do what we could.

DAVID HAMILTON SHINN

Ambassador

Ethiopia (1996-1999)

Ambassador David Hamilton Shinn was born in Washington in 1940. He received three degrees from George Washington University. During his career he had positions in Kenya, Washington DC, Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, and ambassadorships to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. Ambassador Shinn was interviewed in July 2002 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: How was the diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa?

SHINN: It was a congenial group. We saw our diplomatic colleagues frequently. There was a very large African diplomatic corps because the Organization of African Unity is headquartered

in Addis. Nearly every African country had an embassy. There was a fairly large European diplomatic presence. The representatives of the major donor countries held regular meetings. It was a nice diplomatic corps; I enjoyed their company.

End of reader