

help in the actual fighting – first in the Ogaden and now in Eritrea and the northern provinces – it could rely only on the growing commitment of the Cubans.

It is difficult to analyse Israel's role in this conflict because of its desire to remain in the background. Nevertheless, it supplied the Dergue's military regime with arms. It is impossible to say whether personnel – that is, military advisers – were, or are, working in the training-camps on the outskirts of the capital, where Ethiopian armed forces recruits and the people's militias are trained. It should be remembered, however, in the effort to understand Israel's position in this conflict, that it has suffered many setbacks in its African policy and that the Imperial Ethiopian Government was the only one not to sever diplomatic ties with Jerusalem. Its presence in Ethiopia may thus be no more than an expression of gratitude, but it might also be for the purpose of maintaining a base in Africa from which to renew old friendships on the continent at some time in the future.

Outlook

Although the swift resolution of the Ogaden drama quickly dashed President Barre's hopes of reuniting Somalia, the situation in Ethiopia is still far from normal.

Eritrea is still largely controlled by the various liberation movements. With the help of the Cuban troops, which number more than 17,000, and the support of Russian technicians, the situation of the Ethiopian armed forces – which have been besieged for years in the major cities – may improve. But it would be wrong to think that the conflict in Eritrea will end as quickly as that in the Ogaden, because too many factors – geographical, social and military – differentiate the two areas. Moreover, since the end of the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia and the change in the theatre of operations, there has been a parallel change in the alliances and attitudes of certain countries. Libya, though it gave strong backing to the military junta against the Somali invasion, has always been an active supporter of the Eritrean cause, and the regional powers, especially Iran and Saudi Arabia, clearly do not want so important a part of the oil-route threatened by the Russians. It is mainly for these reasons that the Soviet-Cuban adventure in Eritrea will not be as easy as the Ogaden operation. If the Cuban mercenaries are victorious, they will certainly pay the price in men, weapons and prestige.

Ethiopia will obviously have to continue in a state of instability, repression and dependence on foreign countries for as many more years as it takes for all the



Wide World Photo

For decades Emperor Haile Selassie, "The Lion of Judah", ruled over the 40 tribal groups in Ethiopia. His overthrow was a prelude to the recent fighting.

internal opposition groups in Eritrea and the northern provinces to be completely eliminated. This could take a long time, for the northern region is particularly well suited to guerilla warfare. Events will undoubtedly unfold as they have done in Angola, where Cubans and soldiers of the MPLA are constantly harassed in the north and are caught up in a war against the elusive FLNA guerillas. The Cubans are now experiencing what the Americans went through in Vietnam.

Somalia is now trying to adjust to the aftermath of the war in the Ogaden, with all