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**Az etióp diplomácia a gyarmatosítás után és az afrikai antikolonialista
időszakban**

**Ethiopian Diplomacy in its Post-Occupation, and African Anti-Colonial
Period.**

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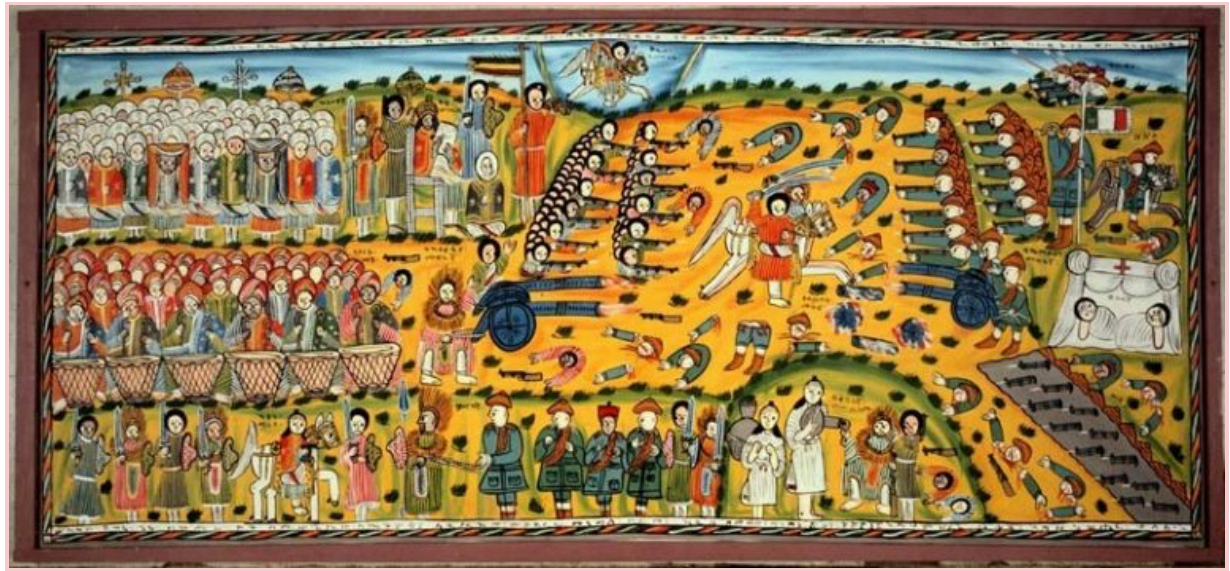
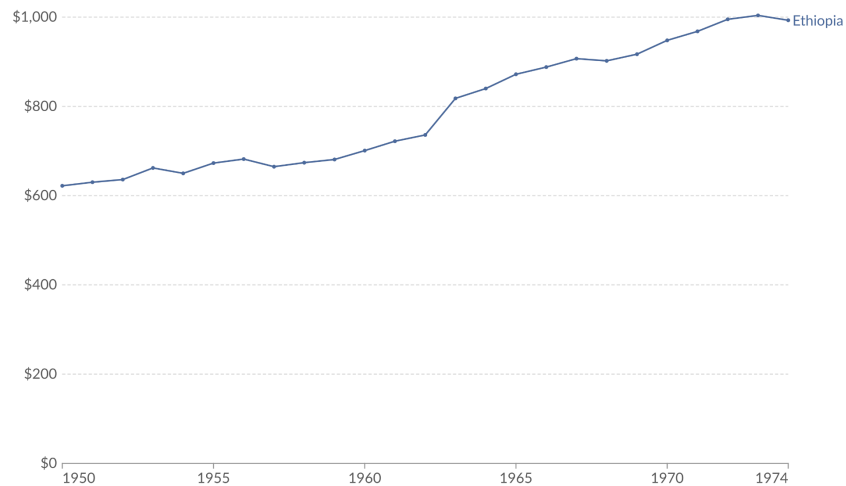


Figure 2: GDP per Capita, 1950 to 74

GDP per capita, 1950 to 1974

This data is adjusted for inflation and for differences in the cost of living between countries.



Data source: Bolt and van Zanden - Maddison Project Database 2023
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OurWorldinData.org/economic-growth | CC BY

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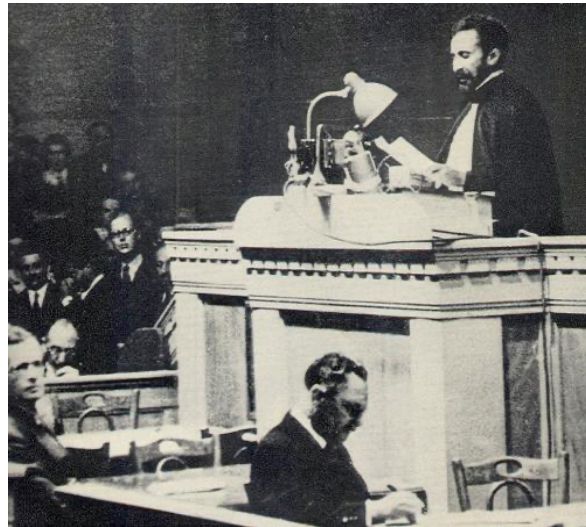


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INTRODUCTION

The diplomatic history of Ethiopia during its post-occupation period is crucial for understanding both the country's national resilience and its contributions to Africa's anti-colonial struggle. Being one of the few African nations to resist European colonization, it played a pivotal role in shaping post-colonial Africa's diplomatic landscape. Its successful resistance to Italian occupation (1936–1941) positioned it as a symbol of African independence and unity. This research explores Ethiopia's post-liberation diplomacy, highlighting its influence in Pan-Africanism and its leadership in African unity. As an Ethiopian, this topic holds deep personal significance. My motivation comes from a desire to examine how Ethiopia's diplomatic strategies impacted both its own development and the broader African struggle for decolonization. Its unique history allowed it to play a leading role in the Pan-African movement, and through this research, I hope to uncover how its experiences shaped the continent's anti-colonial agenda.

Ethiopia's historical trajectory has been analyzed by several scholars who provide critical insights into its political and diplomatic evolution. Saheed A. Adejumobi discusses the internal challenges Ethiopia faced after its resistance to Italian occupation, emphasizing how these issues influenced governance (Adejumobi 2007). Fasil Solomon critiques the nation's dependence on British support following liberation, arguing that this reliance compromised Ethiopia's autonomy (Solomon 2020). Bahru Zewde further emphasizes the limitations of Haile Selassie's postwar policies, noting that they prioritized foreign capitalist interests (Zewde 1993). Another author is Paul B. Henze, who explored the agricultural decline and resulting famines during the Derg regime (Henze 1990). Finally, Erin Lee critiques the Organization of African Unity (OAU), characterizing it as a conservative institution reluctant to address human rights abuses on the continent (Lee 2021). Together, these authors illuminate the complex interplay between foreign influence and domestic governance in shaping Ethiopia's historical narrative.

In terms of methodology, this paper will use a combination of historical analysis, cultural analysis, and document analysis. In the first chapter I will explore key historical backgrounds, and Ethiopia's foreign policy during and after its occupation. In the second chapter, I will look into relations with Hungary, and cultural diplomacy will be analyzed as a strategic tool the country used to further its influence in its post-occupation. Moreover, treaties and speeches from this period will shed light on Ethiopia's diplomatic strategies. The third chapter will be a case

study of Ethiopia's role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its leadership in the Pan-African movement. Lastly, I will provide my findings and give recommendations.

This study seeks to address several key research questions that explore the multifaceted nature of Ethiopia's post-occupation diplomacy and its role in the broader context of African anti-colonialism. First, how did Ethiopia's resistance to Italian occupation shape its post-occupation diplomatic strategies and influence in Pan-Africanism? Second, how, in the years after its liberation, did Ethiopia employ cultural diplomacy to further pan-Africanism? Third, how did Ethiopia's socialist policies under the Derg regime impact its post-occupation recovery and foreign relations? Finally, in the aftermath of the occupation, what impact did Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts have on the establishment and operation of important pan-African institutions like the Organization of African Unity (OAU)? This research aims to explore Ethiopia's diplomatic evolution in the post-occupation period, highlighting its significant role in African diplomacy. It will demonstrate how its unique history positioned it as a leader in the Pan-African movement and influenced the continent's diplomatic landscape during the decolonization era. My hypothesis is that Ethiopia became a leader in Pan-Africanism through its post-occupation diplomacy and anti-colonial resistance, which shaped African anti-colonial movements and strengthened Ethiopia's own growth and sovereignty.

CHAPTER 1: UNIQUE POSITION OF ETHIOPIA AND ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMACY IN COLONIAL AFRICA

1.1. Tewodros II: Defiance and Modernization

Through the efforts of visionary leaders like Emperor Tewodros II, Emperor Yohannes IV, and Menelik II, Ethiopia worked toward national unity, modernization, and military strength. These leaders defended the nation against foreign aggression, culminating in the famous victory at the Battle of Adwa. The country faced external threats and it fought to maintain its own independence. Nevertheless, it also inspired other African nations seeking self-determination. Emperor Tewodros II (1855-1868) undertook the ambitious task of reuniting and developing Ethiopia, restoring centralized rule over its historic heartlands. He formed a close alliance with the Christian Church in a bid to strengthen his control over the monarchy, civil society, and the country's wealth. However, Tewodros' reign saw growing tensions over land tribute distribution, which evolved into a broader conflict over royal authority (Adejumobi 2007). His rule is

remembered for efforts to modernize Ethiopia, primarily through military action and the establishment of a unified state (Hailu 2020). Tewodros implemented two significant policies to consolidate his power. First, he dismantled traditional administrative structures, reducing the influence of local princes and kings, and appointed trusted military officers or family members as administrators of the newly formed regions. Additionally, he developed a professional, disciplined state army equipped with modern firearms and artillery, providing soldiers with regular salaries, clothing, and equipment for the first time (Adejumobi 2007). These measures helped him consolidate some degree of centralized power and collect tributes from the northern regions of Ethiopia (Hailu 2020).

The Emperor's reign is notable for key reforms in administration and his skillful handling of feuding nobles. He initiated infrastructure projects such as road construction and distinguished himself in foreign policy. Determined to modernize his country, he sought diplomatic relations with Europe, especially Queen Victoria of England (Appleyard and Pankhurst 1987). Among his achievements was halting Egyptian dominance over the vital port of Massawa. However, when his appeals for European assistance failed, his growing frustration led to the detention of European missionaries and British diplomats as hostages (Hailu 2020).

As his political situation worsened, Emperor Tewodros II resorted to extreme actions in a bid to assert his authority, one of which was the capture of British missionaries and diplomats in Magdala. This bold move, however, provoked a decisive response from the British government, which launched a full-scale military expedition against him in 1868. General Napier at the head of a well-equipped British force, led the campaign to free the captives and confront Tewodros. The Emperor's army, consisting of about three thousand soldiers armed with outdated weapons and guns, made a valiant stand at the steep, heavily fortified stronghold of Amba Magdala (Appleyard and Pankhurst 1987). However, despite their courage and determination, Tewodros' forces were no match for the superior British technology, including rockets and breech-loading rifles, which devastated the Ethiopian defenses.

After their victory, the British forces looted valuable treasures from Magdala before setting the fortress ablaze. Tewodros, realizing that capture was inevitable, chose to take his own life rather than surrender to his enemies (Adejumobi 2007). His suicide marked the end of his reign, but not the end of his legacy. Although he was defeated, the dream of a unified and modernized Ethiopia that he championed endured. His efforts laid the groundwork for future leaders to build

upon, and his vision of national unity and modernization would influence the course of Ethiopian history in the years to come.

1.2. Menelik II: Fight for Sovereignty

Ras Kassa was crowned as Emperor Yohannes IV after Tewodros' fall in 1872. Under Yohannes (1871-1889), Ethiopia faced the growing pressures of colonial politics (Caulk 1971). His reign became unstable, and he was eventually killed in a battle with the Mahdist forces (Hailu 2020). His chief general, Ras Alula, played a crucial role in defending Ethiopia from the Mahdist threat and contributed to Ethiopia's resistance against European imperialism (Adejumobi 2007).

Following Yohannes' death, Menelik II ascended the throne as King of Kings of Ethiopia. During his earlier confinement under Emperor Tewodros, Menelik gained valuable insights into the importance of foreign technology and the risks posed by internal divisions within the empire. His time in captivity shaped his future vision for Ethiopia. This led him to prioritizing national unity and the modernization of the military as essential strategies to safeguard the country's sovereignty.

Fully aware of the growing colonial threat from Western powers, Menelik understood that the country's survival depended on keeping pace with modern warfare. He made the procurement of modern weapons, including advanced firearms and artillery, a top priority in his efforts to strengthen the military. He also pursued a policy of territorial expansion to secure Ethiopia's borders and further consolidate the empire. His campaigns, particularly in the southern and eastern regions, were aimed at both extending the country's influence and creating a more cohesive, centralized state. These expansionist policies were controversial, especially for their effects on the local populations. But they still played a key role in creating a larger and more unified Ethiopian state. This approach helped strengthen the country's sovereignty and made it a rare example of successful resistance to colonialism in Africa (Hailu 2020).



Figure 1. The Battle of Adwa painted by Shibru Nuru, 1975 (Library of Congress African and Middle Eastern Division, Ethiopian Collection)

The Italians had been a threat to Yohannes and remained a concern during Menelik's reign. However, Menelik successfully united Ethiopians across ethnic, class, and gender lines to defend the nation from colonial aggression. His leadership showed out in the historic Battle of Adwa in 1896, where Ethiopian forces decisively defeated the Italians. *Figure 1* above shows a painting of this battle. Menelik's diplomacy, in contrast to Tewodros', was highly skilled and demonstrated a sharp awareness of the colonial rivalries at play during the scramble for Africa (Clapham 2006). This victory not only secured Ethiopia's independence but also inspired colonized Africans and the African diaspora. After Adwa, the period of peace fostered increased foreign contacts and the arrival of foreign artisans, fueling economic and technological development. Menelik was also the first Ethiopian ruler to implement the practice of collecting taxes for the imperial treasury from all levels of administration. In 1886, Addis Ababa was founded and it became Ethiopia's capital city five years after that (Adejumobi 2007).

1.3. Haile Selassie: Resilience Against Colonialism

In 1930, Ras Tafari Makonnen became Emperor Haile Selassie and oversaw the consolidation of a modern, centralized Ethiopian state. In 1935, Italy once again attempted to assert colonial control in East Africa, invading and occupying Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941. Despite a five-year occupation, Ethiopia's patriots launched a successful resistance campaign, ultimately expelling

the Italians. Yerasework Kebede Hailu raises the critical question of whether Ethiopia truly escaped the global forces of coloniality. He suggests that, despite evading direct colonization, Ethiopia, like other African nations, continues to grapple with developmental challenges. Thus, Ethiopia's non-colonization does not imply that the country was free from European colonial influences or metaphysical colonialism. (Hailu 2020:20).

After World War II, Ethiopia sought to regain access to the Red Sea, aiming to incorporate Eritrea, which had been under Italian control. Although Eritrea was administered by Britain after Italy's defeat, the United Nations eventually federated it with Ethiopia in 1950 (Negash 1997). By the 1960s, Ethiopia had strengthened its political and territorial control through military modernization and diplomatic efforts. However, the 1974 Socialist Revolution brought about significant political shifts. Initially filled with promise, the revolution ultimately led to an authoritarian regime that failed to deliver meaningful reforms (Adejumobi 2007). Since 1991, Ethiopia has pursued a political system rooted in Ethnic Federalism, influenced by revised Marxist principles (Clapham 2006).

The diplomatic history of Ethiopia from 1936 to the 1960s underscores its resilience in defending sovereignty amid shifting global alliances and colonial pressures. Following Italy's 1936 invasion, Emperor Haile Selassie fled into exile but continued to mobilize internal resistance and international diplomacy, notably at the League of Nations, to advocate for Ethiopia's liberation, ultimately regaining independence in 1941. Upon his return to power, he faced new challenges as British imperial interests restricted Ethiopia's autonomy, exerting control over its trade, industry, and transportation. The Emperor's persistence led him to redefine Ethiopia's foreign policy with an emphasis on national defense, modernization, and strategic partnerships, aligning at times with the United States and diversifying alliances within the Non-Aligned Movement. Ethiopia's diplomatic strategies in the post-war era reinforced its position as a symbol of African independence, committed to supporting anti-colonial movements across the continent.

1.4 Ethiopia's Foreign Policy (1936-1960s)

In his analysis of Ethiopia's foreign policy principles, Fasil Solomon, a lecturer in the Department of Civics and Ethical Studies at the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, categorizes the Emperor's foreign policy principles into five main areas. Solomon first highlights Haile Selassie's emphasis on collective security, a stance initially expressed at the League of

Nations and later upheld within the United Nations. Despite Ethiopia's abandonment by the League during the Italian invasion, the country remained committed to this principle. It actively participated in UN security missions. Another guiding principle, Solomon explains, was peaceful co-existence and conflict resolution, aimed at maintaining harmonious relations with neighboring countries and advocating for peaceful means of resolving international disputes. A strong defense capacity was also a priority, with Haile Selassie dedicating about 20% of the national budget to building a modern military force, making Ethiopia's armed forces among the most capable in Africa and allowing it to independently maintain much of its military equipment. Additionally, Ethiopia adopted a policy of non-alignment, which aimed to diversify international partnerships and reduce dependency on the West, particularly the United States. Thereby expanding its diplomatic and economic relations. Finally, the author notes the country's embrace of Pan-Africanism, using its unique position as a symbol of African independence and its historical victories over colonial powers to inspire other nations. This stance aligned it with African liberation movements and demonstrated its commitment to African unity and independence. (Solomon 2020:36-37)

Haile Selassie's political survival throughout the events leading up to World War II was overly dependent on the League of Nations and European soldiers. The Emperor had sided with the Western Powers, but he also supported the Non-Aligned Movement in the subsequent Cold War era in an effort to gain some degree of autonomy. Haile Selassie's political survival throughout the events leading up to World War II was overly dependent on the League of Nations and European soldiers. The Emperor had sided with the Western Powers, but he also supported the Non-Aligned Movement in the subsequent Cold War era in an effort to gain some degree of autonomy. Haile Selassie's diplomatic priority shifted to removing British influence, increasingly positioning the U.S. as Ethiopia's most favored power in international relations. This Ethio-American alliance strengthened in the 1940s and '50s, driven by the Emperor's efforts to modernize his military for internal stability and strategic defense, alongside a broader need for fiscal and technical support to sustain modernization and the imperial bureaucracy. In order to offset the colonial past and legacies left by British and French powers who persisted in defending their interests and influence in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia also courted the United States. In 1941 and 1943, for example, Haile Selassie negotiated lend-lease agreements with the United States, which resulted in the arrival of the first transport aircraft in Addis Ababa in 1944.

Ethiopian Air Lines (EAL) was established the following year as a result of another deal between Ethiopia and Transcontinental and Western Airlines (TWA) (Adejumobi 2007).

Nearly 40% of its exports were imported by the United States, which also became its largest external trading partner at the end of World War II. There was a bias in favor of import generation rather than export tariffs, despite Ethiopia packaging various incentives to further promote mining activities. Civet musk, hides, skins, and wax were among the Ethiopian exports; nevertheless, coffee was the most important product, with 70% of it going to the United States (Adejumobi 2007). Furthermore, Ethiopia's proximity to the Middle East and critical waterways made it a valuable partner in the U.S. policy of containing communism. This alliance allowed Ethiopia to receive economic and military aid, including the establishment of Kagnaw Station, a strategic American base in Eritrea (Solomon 2020).

Through the 1950s, Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives included securing access to the sea via Eritrea, and Haile Selassie skillfully leveraged U.S. influence to promote Ethiopia's interests in the UN and other diplomatic settings (Negash 1997). More than \$200 million in U.S. military aid over 20 years was pledged by a mutual defense deal signed in 1953. India, Sweden, Israel, and the Soviet Union also provided aid to Ethiopia (Adejumobi 2007). The Emperor met with President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954 on the first of his seven trips to Washington, D.C. He privately voiced his dissatisfaction with the meager amount of material aid—primarily military aid—that the nation was getting from the United States during this visit. Ethiopia contacted the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia after the United States broke a previous pledge to assist in building Egypt's Nile-fed Aswan Dam. In doing so, Ethiopia indicated its tentative support for a state socialist policy (Kassa 2024).

In 1958, Emperor Haile Selassie made his first official visit to the former Czechoslovak Republic. This helped formalize economic and diplomatic relations that had been evolving for decades. It led to the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, along with an Agreement on Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation on December 5, 1959. This treaty established a framework for enhancing bilateral relations. It solidified formal diplomatic ties, facilitating cultural exchanges that promoted mutual understanding of each nation's heritage and traditions. They also opened avenues for scholarships and educational exchanges ;10–15 scholarships for Ethiopian students to study at Czechoslovak universities, and 25–30 internships for Ethiopians to receive industrial training in Czechoslovakia. This was significant for

modernizing its educational system. Additionally, the agreements included provisions for technical assistance, allowing Czechoslovakia to provide expertise in agriculture, industry, and infrastructure development. They encouraged Czechoslovak businesses to invest in Ethiopia and emphasized collaboration in scientific research and technological development (Muehlenbeck 2016). Overall, these agreements were pivotal in fostering closer ties between Ethiopia and Czechoslovakia during a period marked by the Cold War and the struggle for decolonization in Africa.

Haile Selassie's diplomatic maneuvers during his first official visit to Moscow exemplified a strategic approach to navigating the complexities of Cold War politics. His mission to Moscow, noted as his first official diplomatic journey there, was strategically intended to leverage the Cold War rivalry to alleviate pressure from either side. Reflecting on the impact of this visit, the Russian Federation Embassy in Addis Ababa reported that the visit catalyzed cooperation between Ethiopia and the USSR. Among its results were the launch of Radio Moscow's Amharic broadcasts, and the translation of Russian literature into Amharic (Rupprecht 2018). By the 1960s, its strategic value to the U.S. declined due to advancements in satellite technology. Additional strains on the relationship included U.S. neutrality in the regional conflicts with Somalia, Ethiopia's outreach to the Soviet Union for assistance, and internal political instability. These factors marked the beginning of a cooling period in Ethio-U.S. relations, reflecting Ethiopia's shift towards a more balanced diplomatic stance amidst Cold War pressures (Kassa 2024).

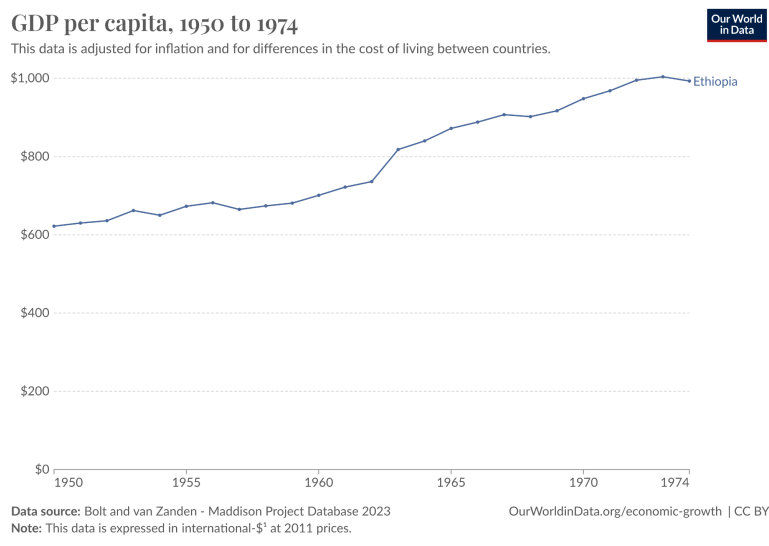


Figure 2. GDP per Capita, 1950 to 74

Figure 2 shows Ethiopia's GDP per capita from 1950 to 1974 in "international dollars,". It was adjusted to 2011 prices to account for inflation and differences in living costs across countries. By using 2011 international dollars, it is possible to compare income and living standards globally, as \$1 represents the same purchasing power everywhere. Although the growth was relatively slow, GDP per capita rose from about \$600 to nearly \$1,000 during this period. (Our World in Data, 2023)

CHAPTER 2: DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND POST-OCCUPATION CHALLENGES

2.1 Relations With Hungary

Relations between Hungary and Ethiopia were marked by limited diplomatic engagement within a complex geopolitical context during the occupation. Hungary, aligned with the Axis Powers during World War II, had a supportive stance towards Italy's expansionist policies, which influenced its approach to the conflict in Ethiopia. While Hungary did not directly participate in the invasion, its government prioritized relations with European powers. But eventually, Hungary's foreign policy would shift as it navigated the changing post-war landscape, impacting Ethiopia's future relations. Although formal diplomatic relations were limited during the occupation, historical and cultural ties between Hungary and Ethiopia persisted. This led to sporadic cultural exchanges, though these interactions were not significant in the context of the occupation.

After World War II, Ethiopia and Hungary established official diplomatic relations in 1959, though embassies were not opened until 1964 in Budapest and Addis Ababa. While Ethiopia's imperial foreign policy is often characterized as Western-oriented, it also maintained cordial relations with the Eastern Bloc. Following the treaties on commerce and aviation in 1965, Emperor Haile Selassie visited Hungary in February 1964. During this visit, Ethiopia and Hungary signed a two-year agreement on scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation, and Hungary extended a \$2 million loan for agricultural development. As a result of these agreements, Ethiopian students began their studies at Hungarian universities and colleges. (Szélinger 2012).

Viktor Marsai, who is an expert in migration processes in Africa and the security policy implications of migration, argues that Hungary's determination to establish diplomatic relations

with Ethiopia should not be underestimated. He emphasizes that Hungary's efforts, set against a broader socialist diplomatic offensive, were crucial in overcoming its post-1956 diplomatic isolation, and its ability to reestablish official ties with a predominantly pro-Western Ethiopia just four years after those events marked a significant achievement. This success can largely be attributed to the tireless work of Hungarian diplomats and Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff based in Budapest, Cairo, and Khartoum, who made substantial efforts to forge these connections. Marsai argues that this mission would not have been possible without the shifts in Ethiopian foreign policy during the 1950s. Haile Selassie's decision to diversify his country's foreign relations and provide greater openness to socialist nations created a unique opportunity for Hungary. Although primarily symbolic, this shift allowed Moscow and its allies to gain a foothold in Addis Ababa. Nonetheless, it is clear from the records that the influence of the Eastern Bloc remained limited and marginal until the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 (Marsai 2022).

2.2 Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural expressions played a vital role in Ethiopian diplomacy, framing resistance as a call for justice and independence. Literature, music, art, and religious symbolism were mobilized to inspire national unity and garner international support for Ethiopian sovereignty. One example is Haile Selassie's Speech addressed to the League of Nations on June 30, 1936. The speech, as shown in *Figure 3* below, highlighted the brutality of the occupation, including the use of chemical weapons against Ethiopian civilians, and condemned the League's inaction. His words, "It is us today. It will be you tomorrow," warned of the rising threat of fascism, a prescient statement that resonated with an international audience facing the looming shadow of World War II (Kassa 2024).



Figure 3. Emperor Haile Selassie (top right), League of Nations, 1936

This speech galvanized support from anti-fascists worldwide, leading to demonstrations in Europe and the Americas. His eloquent plea became emblematic of the fight against colonialism, and it remains one of the most powerful examples of cultural diplomacy in rallying international support for a nation's struggle for sovereignty.

British activist Sylvia Pankhurst emerged as a prominent advocate for Ethiopia during the Italian occupation, leveraging cultural diplomacy to mobilize international support. She was committed to social justice and she fiercely campaigned against the Italian invasion. She documented the atrocities committed by Italian forces in her writings, including articles and her book, *Ethiopia: A Cultural History*. Through her newspaper, "New Times and Ethiopia News", she reached a broad audience across Europe, effectively raising awareness of Ethiopia's plight. Pankhurst's efforts extended into British politics, where she pressured officials to condemn the invasion and advocate for economic sanctions against Italy. By connecting Ethiopia's resistance to broader anti-fascist and anti-colonial movements, she fostered international solidarity. Her work not only kept the country's struggle visible but also humanized its people, cultivating empathy and support among readers in Europe and the United States (Srivastava 2021).

The collaboration between Ethiopian intellectuals and their counterparts in the African diaspora significantly advanced the concept of African unity. In examining W. E. B. Du Bois's contributions to the Pan-African movement, H.G. Pardy offers a critical perspective on his impact. Pardy highlights Du Bois as a prominent African American sociologist and activist who fervently championed Pan-Africanism and built connections with Ethiopian leaders. His essay "The African Roots of War" emphasized the historical and cultural ties among Africans worldwide while advocating for a collective struggle against oppression. Although Pardy ultimately concludes that Du Bois's Pan-Africanism was a failure, it is essential to recognize his significant role in the movement (Pardy 1967).

Another key figure was George Padmore, a Trinidadian journalist and political activist, who collaborated closely with Ethiopian intellectuals. He emphasized the necessity of a unified approach to anti-colonial struggles. In his book, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, he critiqued

colonialism and explored the role of Pan-Africanism in achieving liberation for African nations (Pardy 1967). His ideas resonated with Ethiopian leaders, reinforcing the notion that cultural diplomacy and cooperation among African states were vital.

As explored by S. Chojnacki in his article “The Iconography of St George in Ethiopia”, visual art became a powerful medium of cultural diplomacy during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Artists created works that depicted significant figures and themes relevant to their struggle, notably the image of Saint George, Ethiopia’s patron saint, defeating a dragon. This imagery symbolized courage and righteousness resonated with both Ethiopians and international audiences. It represented the fight for justice and sovereignty. Saint George, who is revered in Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, embodied the triumph of good over evil. These artistic expressions extended beyond religious contexts, featuring in exhibitions and publications (Chojnacki 1974). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church played a pivotal role in cultural diplomacy in the post-colonial context.

In their article, “The Representations of Histories”, Emir Karakaya and Maria Eliades examine the symbolic role of the Ethiopian flag in African liberation movements and Pan-African identity. Ethiopia’s flag—displaying the colors red, yellow, and green—became an emblem of hope and resistance for many African nations. These colors, deeply rooted in Ethiopian history, took on symbolic meanings: red for the blood shed in the fight for freedom, yellow for Africa’s rich mineral resources, and green for its fertile land and natural wealth. This tricolor arrangement spread across the continent, inspiring countries such as Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Ghana, and Cameroon, who incorporated the colors into their own flags as expressions of solidarity, pride, and unity. The flag’s colors symbolized the broader ideals of Pan-Africanism, uniting African countries under shared symbols that represented resilience and independence. Through its rich symbolism, the flag became a tool of cultural diplomacy, fostering diplomatic ties and collective identity across the continent. This influence extended beyond national borders, encouraging mutual respect and a shared vision of African unity across the continent. As the authors highlight, Ethiopia’s heritage has left a lasting impact on the Pan-African movement, making it a central figure in promoting cultural pride throughout Africa (Karakaya and Eliades 2015).

2.3 Internal and External Challenges

After the Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941, Ethiopia faced significant internal challenges in its efforts to rebuild. Its political structure was in a weakened state, though there was a strong opportunity for consolidating imperial authority. During the Emperor's exile, regional leaders gained considerable autonomy as Italian rule weakened centralized governance. Some of these leaders collaborated with the occupying forces, with one becoming resentful over a promised kingship that was never granted. Dissatisfied with Haile Selassie's policies—which often favored rival groups—these leaders resisted the emperor's efforts upon his return to restore a unified national administration. Additionally, local rebel groups had exploited the occupation's instability to conduct raids and pursue their own ambitions, further disrupting the balance of power and complicating efforts to establish lasting political stability (Adejumobi 2007). Moreover, Eritrea, which had been under Italian rule since the late 19th century, began pushing for independence.

Ethiopia also faced a range of economic, administrative, and social challenges internally. Saheed A. Adejumobi examines the Ethiopian resistance to Italian occupation, delving into these challenges faced by the nation. Socially, the occupation caused widespread displacement and trauma, leaving many Ethiopians disconnected from their communities and requiring efforts to rebuild cohesion. Administratively, Haile Selassie needed to modernize and expand the bureaucracy from the ground up, while also rebuilding a weakened military to secure national sovereignty, prompting him to seek international support. The expansion of commercial agriculture and the enhancement of public services related to building roads, bridges, hospitals, and schools were examples of capital development undertaken by the Italians. Despite these advancements, the author contends that the main goal of Italy's presence in Ethiopia cannot be altered by the projects they started or the assistance they provided to settler groups in supporting development initiatives. According to him, Italy sought to secure its "place in the sun" as a key position for future territorial development and resource exploitation. Italy had also taken control of Ethiopia's gold production and reserves, imposing state control over the country's economy (Adejumobi 2007).

Solomon and Adejumobi further provide critical insights into the geopolitical challenges Ethiopia faced, particularly regarding the complex dynamics of foreign interference. Their analysis highlights the significant influences of both British and American power in the region. After World War II, it remained under British protection, limiting its ability to pursue an

independent foreign policy. The British government, which had allied with Ethiopia in the fight against Italy, dominated the political landscape following the country's liberation, exerting control over its financial, and industrial resources. This control extended to the regulation of imports and exports, management of the railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, and oversight of Ethiopian access to shipping. Consequently, Emperor Haile Selassie's primary foreign policy objective became ensuring Ethiopia's independence and expelling British forces from the country (Solomon 2020).

As mentioned in the second chapter, the Emperor sought to attract American interest in Ethiopia's development, a strategy that gradually bore fruit as the U.S.'s strategic interest in the region grew. Meanwhile, Britain faced its own internal economic challenges and social discontent, leading its labor government to prioritize social security at home over imperial security abroad, ultimately struggling to sustain its military presence in Ethiopia. In conclusion, the transition of Ethiopia from Italian occupation to a British protectorate highlights the precarious nature of its sovereignty in the post-war period. Discontent with British administrative and fiscal control during the war, the Emperor increasingly turned to the United States as a counterbalance to British influence, recognizing the shift in global power dynamics as America emerged as the dominant political and economic force. The Ethiopian leadership faced the dual challenge of navigating foreign dominance while striving for genuine independence (Adejumobi 2007).

2.4 Critiques of Ethiopia's Post-Occupation Diplomacy

Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts after the Italian occupation were marked by both accomplishments and significant critiques, particularly as the country sought to redefine its foreign relations and secure its independence. One major point of contention was Ethiopia's reliance on British support immediately after liberation. This dependency, while essential for stability, raised concerns among Ethiopian leaders and citizens who feared it compromised Ethiopia's autonomy in foreign policy (Adejumobi 2007). The British presence was viewed with skepticism, as many Ethiopians were wary of repeating colonial patterns that had previously subjected them to foreign control. This duality created a complex landscape where the Ethiopian government had to navigate the delicate balance between benefiting from British support and asserting its sovereignty. Additionally, the dynamics of Cold War politics influenced Ethiopia's foreign policy choices. As

global superpowers vied for influence in Africa, Ethiopia found itself at a crossroads, needing to forge strategic alliances while safeguarding its national interests.

Historian Bahru Zewde noted that Haile Selassie's postwar reliance on capitalist nations, with their flexible governance systems and capacity for reform, contrasted sharply with Ethiopia's own approach. Although the Ethiopian public yearned for genuine modernization, the Emperor promoted selective reforms that consolidated his authority, sidelining substantial national development in favor of maintaining autocratic control. Zewde argued that this dependency on foreign capitalist aid weakened Ethiopia's traditional self-sufficiency, bypassing opportunities for progressive reform and embedding underdevelopment (Zewde 1993). Overall, Ethiopia's post-occupation diplomacy is characterized by strategic alliances, compromises, and missed opportunities for greater unity in Africa. While its leadership aimed to position the country as a leader in the African independence movement, reliance on Western nations for economic aid and military support complicated this goal. Ultimately, its diplomatic efforts highlight the ongoing struggle for self-determination in the face of external pressures .

2.5 The Role of Socialism

After the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie and the monarchy, Ethiopia underwent a dramatic transformation with the rise of the Derg regime under President Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974-1991). This regime was a military junta that implemented socialist policies aimed at restructuring the nation's political, economic, and social framework. It aimed to establish a Marxist state that emphasized the principles of socialism. Under this regime, the government sought to nationalize industries, redistribute land, and implement social welfare programs, fundamentally altering Ethiopia's economic structure. One of the notable benefits of these socialist policies was the initial focus on improving access to education and healthcare, which helped to increase literacy rates and reduce infant mortality. The regime's emphasis on state control over resources was intended to promote equitable distribution, alleviating some of the widespread poverty that had persisted under previous administrations (Markakis 1981).

Derg's international diplomacy, particularly its alignment with the Soviet Union, drew criticism for its reliance on external support, which compromised Ethiopia's sovereignty. The diplomatic parallels between Russia and Ethiopia during their respective revolutionary periods suggests that both nations sought to address deep-seated social and national issues through radical policy changes. This shared context points to the potential for diplomatic engagement. In his

article called “Ethiopian Development”, Christopher Clapham draws an interesting comparison between Russia and Ethiopia. The author argues that Russia and Ethiopia faced two fundamental challenges that the Russian Revolution aimed to address and that a revolutionary Ethiopia could likewise be expected to overcome. The first challenge involved harnessing the productive potential of an exploited peasantry to stimulate economic development within a predominantly agrarian society. “Land to the tiller” united urban intellectuals with rural communities, driving the Ethiopian revolutionary regime to nationalize land and create state farms and cooperatives. The second issue entailed disassociating governments from any specific nationality to promote a form of nationalism that transcended ethnic divisions. Clapham highlights that this mirrored pre-revolutionary Russia, where the dominance of Amharic-speaking Christian highlanders was comparable to the position of “Great Russians.” (Clapham 2006).

Despite the initial gains, criticisms of the Derg's socialist model highlighted severe limitations to Ethiopia's progress. Political repression resulted from the regime's oppressive methods, which restricted liberties and suppressed criticism. Many projects were hindered by centralized authority and a contempt for local government. And since farmers resisted leaving behind traditional practices, collectivization often proved ineffective. This resistance then led to agricultural decline which worsened food shortages and famines in the 1980s (Henze 1990). The government during this time also prioritized military spending over social investments and this led to economic stagnation and social unrest.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)

3.1 Ethiopia’s Leadership and Vision

Ethiopia’s pivotal role in establishing the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 marked a defining moment in its diplomatic history. As the only African nation to successfully resist colonization, Ethiopia, under Emperor Haile Selassie, possessed a unique moral authority that shaped its leadership vision. The Emperor recognized the urgent need for African nations to unite against colonialism and advocated for self-determination and independence as central tenets of the OAU’s mission. In this post-occupation African context, Ethiopia emerged as a symbol of resistance and an ardent supporter of Pan-Africanism, emphasizing that unity was essential for

political stability and economic development. Hosting the founding conference of the OAU further solidified Ethiopia's commitment to fostering collaboration among African states.



Figure 4. Emperor Haile Selassie and other founding fathers of OAU, 1963.

Figure 4 shows a picture of Emperor Haile Selassie and other founding fathers of the OAU (See Appendix I). Thirty two sovereign African nations convened at the first summit in Addis Ababa to talk about shared goals and issues (Omitalo and Jiboku 2009). In his vision, the emperor urged African nations to stand together. This vision was not just theoretical; it was based on the realities of post-colonial Africa, where newly independent countries struggled with colonial legacies, political instability, and economic underdevelopment. The founding principles of the OAU were greatly influenced by Ethiopia's leadership. It placed a strong emphasis on respect for one another's territorial integrity, and non-interference in domestic matters. The nation's strategic decision to host the conference gave it a forum to discuss member state cooperation.

Beyond serving as a forum for leaders to discuss urgent topics , the headquarters came to represent African unity. In keeping with Haile Selassie's dedication to pan-Africanism, the OAU also aimed to support liberation movements in nations that were still governed by colonialism or apartheid. Ethiopia's leadership role was further demonstrated by its support of various movements, including those in South Africa, Mozambique, and Angola. Manuel Ramos, in his article on the birth of the OAU, said that “The adoption of Ethiopia’s draft of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter in May 1963 and the location of the headquarters of the

Organization in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in February 1964 were not chance historical events but a diplomatic victory for the strategy that the Ethiopian Government and its diplomats had been developing since 1958.” This observation reflects the underlying motivations that shaped the organization’s formation. (Ramos 2010:35).

3.2. Diplomatic Engagements

Diplomatic engagements and initiatives within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have been instrumental in promoting continental cooperation. Mohammed Faal in his research called “*The OAU and Conflict Management in Africa*”, explored the organization’s engagements post cold war. He claimed, “With the end of the Cold War, the African states were 'orphaned' and therefore they found in the OAU a moral comfort.” (Faal 2001:112) One example he talked about was the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. He argues that it skillfully managed this. Working closely with the UN, it mediated a peace agreement between the two nations, and on the basis of these discussions, a peace agreement was ultimately signed in Algeria on December 12, 2000.

All in all, the OAU moved quickly and enacted its preventive diplomacy plan on time. According to Faal however, the issue is that this was an ad hoc peace arrangement, which is a temporary fix for a long-term issue; regional stability. Because of its emphasis on action-backed preventive diplomacy, the OAU's new mechanism was greeted as a milestone in its conflict management effort when it formed. By urging both heads of state to refrain from using force in the crisis between the two countries, the OAU did employ preventive diplomacy. But, every action made in this regard was at the level of the government. The peace process did not involve the local people in both countries, which have historical ties but also old scores to settle (Faal 2001).

3.3. Challenges and Critiques

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) received criticism for its ineffectiveness in building African unity and development, despite its ambitious goals. It was set up to promote interaction among African countries and deal with the continent's immediate issues, but as time went on, its shortcomings became apparent, casting doubt on its ability to accomplish its goals. The OAU's

non-interference stance in member states' domestic affairs was one of the main points of concern. It was additionally criticized for its development and economic objectives. Despite its support of economic integration and cooperation, several member states persisted in significantly depending on foreign investment and aid, which impeded efforts to achieve sustainable development and self-sufficiency (Ramos 2010).

In her article "A Critique of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)," Erin Lee argues that the OAU was fundamentally designed to be ineffective. She contends that the organization operated as a conservative, anti-secessionist, and anti-interventionist institution. It selectively affirms state decisions while using the principle of state sovereignty as a shield to avoid taking an active role in defending human rights across the continent. She claims that the OAU's structure and principles hindered its ability to address African challenges, leading to hesitancy to oppose repressive governments and support human rights efforts in member nations, despite its crucial role in promoting African unity (Lee 20210).

Faal said, "The existence of the OAU, the only Pan-African organization in Africa demonstrates the willingness of African leaders to work together. That in itself is a great achievement (Faal 2001:212). It is imperative to say that Ethiopia's role in establishing the OAU marks a landmark achievement in African unity and cooperation. By spearheading the OAU, Ethiopia provided a platform for African leaders to bring about collective action in addressing the continent's challenges. This contribution reflects Ethiopia's historical dedication to Pan-African ideals and highlights its vital role in strengthening African agency on the global stage. Despite its foundational role in fostering unity, the OAU's legacy is mixed. Successes like mediating the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict contrast with challenges in promoting sustainable development and deeper regional integration, underscoring the need for more effective Pan-African strategies. The OAU's emphasis on preventive diplomacy, which urges heads of state to refrain from employing force, has not received enough local participation, underscoring the need for more comprehensive conflict management.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

4.1 Summary and Findings

Ethiopia's historical resilience to foreign domination, most notably through its victory in the Battle of Adwa in 1896, profoundly influenced its post-occupation diplomatic strategies and its

Pan-Africanist stance. As a symbol of African sovereignty, its diplomatic leadership, especially under Emperor Haile Selassie, promoted unity, independence, and self-determination across the continent. During and after the Italian occupation, Ethiopia's leaders effectively utilized cultural diplomacy to garner international support for its anti-colonial stance. Figures like Haile Selassie and activists such as Sylvia Pankhurst leveraged art, literature, and Ethiopia's tricolor flag to advocate for solidarity among African nations and to bolster Ethiopian sovereignty.

In the years following World War II, Ethiopia expanded its diplomatic reach, aligning with broader aspirations of newly independent African states while also building alliances, notably with the United States, to advance regional security and mutual interests. Ethiopia's unique position allowed it to spearhead the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, crafting a foundation for African cooperation centered on territorial integrity and non-interference, though this approach sometimes limited the organization's effectiveness in addressing human rights and sustainable development.

The later Derg regime's socialist policies, aimed initially at educational and healthcare development, ultimately shifted towards authoritarian control and political repression, hindering Ethiopia's internal progress. Cold War tensions further complicated Ethiopia's foreign relations as it oscillated between Soviet and Western support, leading to military prioritization over social investment and creating internal contradictions in its sovereignty and developmental goals. Through its diplomatic history Ethiopia emerged as a leader in the Pan-African movement. In addition, it influenced Africa's collective journey toward sovereignty, unity, and resilience against external pressures. This legacy underscores both the achievements and challenges that define Ethiopia's role in African diplomacy, from cultural advocacy to institution-building within the African context

My hypothesis was that Ethiopia's post-occupation diplomacy and anti-colonial stance positioned it as a leader in Pan-Africanism. And that this in turn influenced the continent's anti-colonial efforts and contributed to the formation of institutions like the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I believe my research has partially proved this to be true. On one hand, its diplomatic advocacy for African unity played a significant role in shaping the Pan-African movement. Its symbolic status as a nation that had resisted colonization, and its foundational work in the OAU, also helped create a framework for African solidarity and territorial sovereignty. However, I found that the hypothesis is only partly substantiated because Ethiopia's

internal challenges and external dependencies sometimes undermined its diplomatic goals. For instance, its post-liberation reliance on foreign support, particularly from Britain and later Cold War superpowers, often complicated its pursuit of full autonomy. Additionally, the later authoritarian policies under the Derg regime diverted resources to military and ideological aims. And this came at the expense of its initial Pan-African aspirations at times. Therefore, while Ethiopia's diplomacy undeniably influenced Africa's decolonization movement and helped shape continental institutions, its effectiveness was partially hindered by internal governance issues and the constraints of Cold War politics. This dual outcome highlights both the achievements and limitations of Ethiopia's post-occupation diplomacy in advancing a united and independent African continent.

4.2 Future Outlook

Ethiopia, the only country in Africa to successfully resist colonization, can take the lead in resolving disputes and promoting collaboration, particularly within the African Union (AU). As Africa faces many challenges, Ethiopia's experiences after colonization and its focus on sovereignty can help guide other countries. The lessons it learned from its economic reforms and socialist policies could also help shape development strategies in Africa, supporting modernization while maintaining independence.

Ethiopia's rich cultural history is important for building relationships and boosting its influence in the world. By using cultural diplomacy, Ethiopia can connect with other nations through shared interests. This not only improves its reputation globally but also shows its commitment to Pan-African values. The experiences from its diplomatic work during the Cold War can help guide its current efforts to tackle challenges. As global dynamics shift, especially with the changing relationship between the U.S. and China, Ethiopia can focus on its national interests while navigating these changes.

What is probable for the future is that Ethiopia's political reconciliation is essential. Tackling long-standing issues especially from the post-occupation period, will be key to building stability and unity across its diverse political landscape. Including voices from all regions in national discussions might also improve governance and create a fairer society. At the same time, diversifying the economy is crucial to lessen reliance on foreign support, helping Ethiopia to develop local industries and sustainable practices for greater self-sufficiency. Pan-African

institutions like the Organization of African Unity (OAU) may need to rethink some of their founding principles. Today's challenges show that the traditional focus on non-interference and state sovereignty can sometimes limit the effectiveness of organizations like the African Union (AU). A more active approach could better protect human rights and support democracy across member states. Additionally, involving local communities more in conflict resolution is crucial, as it respects historical connections and helps address deep-rooted issues necessary for lasting peace.

Pan-African collaboration has been made possible by the nation's diplomatic relations following its occupation. Strengthening such commitments will be essential as African nations strive to address issues of economic development, security, and climate change in a rapidly evolving world. By promoting regional cooperation and pursuing self-sufficiency, Ethiopia can solidify its position as a leader in African diplomacy and contribute to the development of a more resilient and united continent.

4.3 Recommendations

To keep Ethiopia as an important player in African unity and independence, it's essential to support Pan-African initiatives that focus on self-sufficiency and shared values. If I was in the position to advise the Ethiopian government, I would advise it to push for policies that lessen its reliance on foreign aid. This will help strengthen Africa's independence and build on Ethiopia's history of resisting colonialism. Improving conflict resolution methods within the African Union is also important. This will help maintain stability in the Horn of Africa and deal with regional conflicts. The country needs to invest in balanced economic and social policies that support development while protecting political freedoms. One thing I think the country can learn from the Derg regime times is the need for transparency and community involvement. This is an issue that is still at hand. By refining its Ethnic Federalist model, Ethiopia can honor regional diversity and enhance local governance. This can help reduce tensions and promote unity among its people. Cultural diplomacy is an important way for Ethiopia to use its rich heritage as a form of soft power. By expanding cultural and diplomatic initiatives, especially with countries that have historical ties to Ethiopia, the country can increase its influence.

Moreover, it is important to strengthen diplomatic institutions so they can work well with different partners. It seems to me that Ethiopia should also invest more in healthcare and education to reduce poverty and create a skilled workforce. According to recent data from the

Ethiopian Ministry of Education, out of the 684,405 students who took the national Grade 12 exam, only 5.4 percent scored above 50 percent (Addis Standard, 2024). I suppose these results are concerning. Building positive relationships with other countries will help it benefit itself and its allies while engaging in Pan-African initiatives. Finally, fighting poverty requires promoting economic justice through sustainable practices. The African Union, which evolved from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), should focus on human rights and democratic governance. By building on the OAU's legacy, the AU can improve its ability to work together and take action among its member states.

I believe that further research is required to completely comprehend Ethiopia's diplomatic tactics throughout the occupation, and how. This also applies to their influence on the nation's post-conflict healing relations with other African countries. Examining these elements may help to clarify the long-term consequences of diplomacy in resistance movements and provide information on its function in nation-building. Moreover, it seems to me that more literature and research done by Ethiopian researchers being translated into other languages would be useful.

In conclusion, its history of overcoming challenges is important for understanding its current position in African diplomacy. The country has a unique culture and experiences that can help it improve its influence through partnerships with other nations. The lessons from its past might guide it in tackling today's problems in Africa, especially when talking about issues after colonization. As Ethiopia works on political healing and economic growth, it has a chance to help build a stronger and more united Africa. To succeed, it needs to focus on including everyone in governance and respecting human rights. It should also actively participate in Pan-African efforts. How well it adapts to changes in the world will shape its future role in African diplomacy. This will help create a better future for the continent.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I

Emperor Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah



Kwame Nkrumah was the first President and then the Prime Minister of Ghana, from 1957 until 1966. Nkrumah was also a founding member of the Organization of African Unity(OAU) .

