MEKI CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Grade 12 History

"Success doesn't come from what you do occasionally, but from what you do consistently. Study hard today, so your future self will thank you tomorrow." 🚀📚

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Unit Five: Global and Regional Developments Since 1945

Introduction

Unit Five of the Grade 12 Ethiopian Student Textbook covers global and regional developments from 1945 onward, a period defined by the aftermath of World War II, the onset of the Cold War, and significant shifts in international relations and regional dynamics. Spanning pages 120 to 150, the unit includes seven lessons that trace the establishment of a new global order, economic recovery, ideological conflicts, and the eventual collapse of communist systems. For Ethiopia, this era marked its emergence as a key African player, bolstered by its wartime liberation and Emperor Haile Selassie's international stature. This note provides an in-depth exploration of each lesson, weaving in Ethiopia's context where applicable, such as its role in the United Nations and Cold War alignments.

1. The Aftermath and Consequences of WW II (Page 121)

Overview

World War II's end in 1945 left a devastated world, with profound political, economic, and social consequences that reshaped global power structures and set the stage for the Cold War.

Key Consequences

- **Human Toll**: Over 70 million deaths, including millions from the Holocaust and atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- **Territorial Changes**: Europe was redrawn (e.g., Germany divided into East and West), and Japan lost its empire.
- **Superpower Emergence**: The United States and Soviet Union emerged as rival superpowers, replacing weakened European powers.
- **Decolonization**: Weakened colonial empires (Britain, France) accelerated independence movements in Africa and Asia.

Ethiopian Context

- **Liberation Impact**: Ethiopia's liberation from Italian occupation in 1941, with British and Ethiopian Patriot support, restored its sovereignty, enhancing its status as a symbol of African resistance.
- **Haile Selassie's Role**: His return in 1941 and wartime exile elevated Ethiopia's international profile, positioning it as a leader in post-war African affairs.

Analysis

- The war's devastation necessitated global cooperation, leading to the UN's creation, while Ethiopia's experience underscored the broader push for self-determination.

2. The United Nations Organization (the UN) (Page 126)

Overview

Founded in 1945, the United Nations aimed to prevent future wars and promote international cooperation, replacing the ineffective League of Nations.

Establishment

- **Origins**: Born from wartime Allied discussions (e.g., Yalta Conference, 1945); charter signed June 26, 1945, in San Francisco by 50 nations.
- **Structure**: Key organs include the General Assembly, Security Council (with five permanent members: U.S., USSR, UK, France, China), and Secretariat.
- **Goals**: Maintain peace, promote human rights, and support economic development.

Ethiopia's Involvement

- **Founding Member**: Ethiopia joined as an original signatory in 1945, reflecting its independent status and Haile Selassie's advocacy against aggression (e.g., his 1936 League appeal).
- **Peacekeeping Role**: Later contributed troops to UN missions (e.g., Korea, 1950s), reinforcing its commitment to collective security.

Achievements and Challenges

- **Successes**: Mediated conflicts (e.g., Suez Crisis, 1956) and supported decolonization.
- **Limitations**: Cold War rivalries paralyzed the Security Council, with frequent U.S.-Soviet vetoes.

Analysis

- The UN provided Ethiopia a platform to assert its sovereignty and influence African decolonization, though its effectiveness was constrained by superpower tensions.

3. The Post-War Global Socio-Economic Recovery and Developments (Page 128)

Overview

Post-1945 recovery efforts rebuilt war-torn economies, spurred technological advances, and transformed global trade, with varying impacts on developed and developing nations.

Recovery in the West

- **Marshall Plan (1948–1952)**: U.S. provided $13 billion to rebuild Western Europe, fostering economic integration (e.g., precursor to the EU).
- **Economic Boom**: Industrial growth and consumer demand drove prosperity in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Developing World

- **Challenges**: Newly independent states, including in Africa, faced infrastructure deficits and reliance on former colonial powers.
- **Ethiopia's Experience**: Economic recovery focused on agriculture (e.g., coffee exports) and modest modernization under Haile Selassie, though progress was slow.

Global Developments

- **Technology**: Advances in aviation, medicine (e.g., penicillin), and nuclear energy emerged from wartime innovations.
- **Trade**: Bretton Woods system (1944) established the IMF and World Bank, stabilizing currencies and aiding development.

Analysis

- While the West thrived, Ethiopia and other developing nations struggled to bridge economic gaps, highlighting disparities that fueled Cold War competition.

4. The Cold War Realities (Page 131)

Overview

The Cold War (1947–1991) was an ideological struggle between the capitalist U.S. and communist USSR, marked by proxy wars, arms races, and global alliances.

Key Features

- **Iron Curtain**: Europe split into Western (NATO) and Eastern (Warsaw Pact) blocs after Churchill's 1946 speech.
- **Arms Race**: Nuclear proliferation (e.g., U.S. H-bomb, 1952; USSR, 1953) heightened tensions.
- **Proxy Wars**: Conflicts in Korea (1950–1953) and Vietnam (1965–1975) pitted U.S. and Soviet-backed forces.

Ethiopia's Position

- **U.S. Alignment**: Haile Selassie aligned with the U.S., securing military aid (e.g., Kagnew Battalion in Korea) and hosting a U.S. base in Asmara.
- **Soviet Interest**: Later, the 1974 revolution shifted Ethiopia toward the Soviet sphere under the Derg.

Analysis

- The Cold War's bipolarity forced nations like Ethiopia to navigate superpower rivalries, shaping its foreign policy and internal politics.

5. Situations in Asia during the Cold War (Page 135)

Overview

Asia became a Cold War battleground, with communist victories, independence struggles, and regional conflicts influencing global dynamics.

Key Developments

- **Chinese Revolution (1949)**: Mao Zedong's communists defeated Nationalists, aligning China with the USSR.
- **Korean War (1950–1953)**: North Korea (Soviet-backed) vs. South Korea (U.S.-backed) ended in stalemate; Ethiopia sent troops under UN command.
- **Vietnam War (1965–1975)**: U.S. intervention failed to stop communist victory, reflecting Cold War limits.
- **Indian Subcontinent**: India's non-alignment contrasted with Pakistan's U.S. alliance.

Ethiopian Perspective

- **Korean Contribution**: Ethiopia's participation signaled its commitment to Western-led UN efforts, enhancing its international standing.

Analysis

- Asia's Cold War conflicts demonstrated the spread of ideological battles, indirectly influencing Ethiopia's military and diplomatic engagements.

6. The Middle East (Page 145)

Overview

The Middle East saw post-war tensions over oil, Israel's creation, and Cold War alignments, impacting regional stability.

Key Events

- **Israel's Founding (1948)**: UN partition of Palestine led to Arab-Israeli wars (e.g., 1948, 1967).
- **Oil Politics**: Western control of oil (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia) clashed with nationalist movements.
- **Suez Crisis (1956)**: Egypt's nationalization of the canal prompted Anglo-French-Israeli intervention, opposed by the U.S. and

USSR.

Ethiopia's Role

- **Regional Ties**: Proximity to the Red Sea linked Ethiopia to Middle Eastern dynamics; Haile Selassie mediated in Arab-Israeli disputes (e.g., 1960s peace efforts).
- **UN Support**: Ethiopia backed UN resolutions on Palestine, balancing neutrality with African solidarity.

Analysis

- Middle Eastern instability underscored resource and ideological conflicts, with Ethiopia maintaining a cautious yet engaged stance.

7. The Dissolution of the Communist Bloc and the Aftermath (Page 150)

Overview

The collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies (1989–1991) ended the Cold War, ushering in a unipolar world dominated by the U.S.

Causes

- **Economic Strain**: Soviet inefficiency and military spending (e.g., Afghanistan, 1979–1989) weakened the economy.
- **Reforms**: Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika (1980s) unleashed dissent.
- **Eastern Europe**: Revolutions (e.g., Poland, 1989; Berlin Wall fall, 1989) dismantled the Warsaw Pact.

Dissolution

- **USSR Collapse (1991)**: Breakup into 15 republics after a failed coup against Gorbachev.
- **Global Shift**: End of bipolarity; U.S. emerged as sole superpower.

Ethiopian Context

- **Derg's Fall (1991)**: Soviet support waned, contributing to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) overthrowing the Derg, aligning Ethiopia with Western powers.

Analysis

- The Communist Bloc's dissolution transformed global politics, freeing Ethiopia from Soviet influence and reshaping its post-1991 trajectory (explored in Unit Eight).

Conclusion

Unit Five captures a world transitioning from war's wreckage to Cold War rivalry and eventual superpower realignment. Ethiopia navigated this era by leveraging its UN membership, aligning strategically with the U.S., and adapting to the communist collapse. These developments influenced its internal politics (e.g., 1974 revolution) and regional role, setting the stage for post-1991 changes.

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