UNIT SEVEN
INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, 1941–1995

7.1. Post-1941 Imperial Period

7.1.1. Restoration and Consolidation of Imperial Power and External Relations

A. Ethiopia and Britain

- In the post-1941 period, Britain recognized Ethiopia's status as a sovereign state with mutual diplomatic accreditation, but it continued to exercise the upper hand.
- The British considered Ethiopia Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA).
- Emperor Haile-Selassie I was forced to sign with the British the 1942 and 1944 agreements.

The 1942 agreement gave Britain a final authority over Ethiopia's foreign affairs, territorial integrity, administration, finances, the military, and the police.

- The British minster in Ethiopia enjoyed precedence over other foreign diplomats in Ethiopia
- British citizens held key posts in Ethiopian administration as advisors and judges
- they maintained total control over the country's police force, which was set

- British aircraft had exclusive aviation rights
- the emperor had to obtain approval from the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in East Africa, Sir Philip Mitchell, to implement sovereign matters.
- Britain also decided on disposal of Italian prisoners of war and civilians and the administration of Italian properties.
- the British assumed control over currency and foreign exchange as w ell

The Emperor resented such restrictions to his powers and made some diplomatic engagements. With this and the help of the USA and friends of Ethiopia such as Sylvia Pankhurst, Britain relaxed the restrictions.

- **The second Anglo-Ethiopian agreement, signed in 1944,** shows some of the concessions the emperor won from Britain.

According to this agreement,

- The priority accorded to the British minster over all other foreign diplomats in Ethiopia was lifted
- The Ethiopian government could now employ non-British foreign personnel
- It regained control over a section of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway
- The British also agreed to evacuate their army from the region once they equip Ethiopia's military force
- Britain did not, however, yield to Ethiopia's territorial demands during the 1944 agreement.

- The Ethiopian government requested Eritrea and Ogaden as part of the Ethiopian empire.
- Britain insisted that Ogaden should be merged with Somalia to form what they called “Greater Somalia”.
- Similarly, they wanted to integrate the Tigrigna speaking highlands of Eritrea with Tigray to form a separate state.
- Therefore, in September 1945 at the London conference of Allied powers Ethiopia’s claims to Eritrea and

The territorial issues were resolved only after a decade.

- In 1948, the British left parts of Ogaden, and in 1954, they withdrew from the region.
- In Eritrea, people were divided;
- those who wanted a union with Ethiopia rallied behind the Unionists.
- The Liberal Progressive Party and
- the Muslim League rallied people who sought for separation and independence.

In 1948, Britain, France, USA and USSR referred the question of Eritrea to the UNSC. The UN appointed a commission of five men from Burma, Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan and South Africa to find out the actual wishes of Eritreans.

1. Guatemala and Pakistan recommended granting independence to Eritrea.

2. While Norway recommended union with Ethiopia,

3. South Africa and Burma recommended Federation.

- On December 2, 1950, UN Resolution 390V granted the Federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, which came into effect in 1952.
- However, this arrangement did not satisfy both unionists and the independence bloc; each side seeking to unmake the federation to fit their respective interests.
- On November 14, 1962, the Eritrean Parliament, under pressure from the Ethiopian government, resolved to dissolve the Federation and placed Eritrea under the imperial umbrella.

B. Ethiopia and the USA

- The first official contacts between Ethiopia and the USA traced back to 1903 when Ethiopia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce.
- In his efforts to ensure his sovereign political authority from British domination, to modernize his country and consolidate his power, Haile-Selassie I turned towards the United States as a powerful ally than Britain in the 1950s.
- American interest in the region grow after they acquired a communication base in Asmara known as Radio Marina from the Italians.

- The radio station was later on renamed Qagnew after the Ethiopian force that fought on the side of the Americans in the Korean War (1950-3).
- In 1943, the Ethiopian vice Finance Minister, Yilma Deressa, visited the US to request expertise to assist the country's development.
- In response, USA extended the Lend-Lease Agreement with Ethiopia and sent a technical mission led by Perry Fellows in May 1944.
- Emperor Haile-Selassie I and the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, met in Egypt at the beginning of 1945

The two countries signed two agreements in the 1950s.

- **First**, the Point Four Agreement that enabled subsequent American assistance in education and public health was signed in 1952.
- **Second**, the Ethio-US Treaty that granted a continued American use of the Qagnew base in return for military assistance was signed in 1953.
- Following the 1953 treaty, the US launched a military aid program named the American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to equip Ethiopia’s armed forces.

- The MAAG was to train 60,000 Ethiopian soldiers in three separate divisions.
- By 1970, sixty percent of US military aid to Africa went to Ethiopia.
- In the period between 1946 and 1972, US military aid was over 180 million US Dollar.
- Civil aviation, road transport, and education were other spheres that the Americans took active part.
- an agreement was concluded with Transcontinental and Western World Airline (TWA) that established Ethiopian Air Lines (EAL) in 1946.

- The Imperial Board of Telecommunication was established with the help of International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) organization between 1950 and 1952.
- In January 1951, with financial loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Imperial High Way Authority (IHA) was set up.
- In the field of education, scholarship offered for many Ethiopians for second and third Degrees. Many American volunteers came to Ethiopia to teach in Ethiopian schools under the Peace Corps Program.

7.1.2. Socio-Economic Developments

In the twentieth century, agriculture remained the leading economic sector in

- providing employment for about ninety percent of the population,
- generating about seventy percent of the national GDP and
- supplying almost hundred percent of the country's income from export trade.

- Therefore, the landholding that was

- Generally, peasants in the northern and central highland parts of Ethiopia held land in the form of rist.
- In southern Ethiopia, government grants were made by the Government for large number of its supporters and tenancy was widespread.
- Tenants surrendered up to 60 percent of their produce to landlords who mostly lived in towns or the capital.

Since the 1950s, the government formulated strategic plans for economic development and this came in a series of five-year plans.

- The First Five Year Plan (1957-1961) targeted the development of infrastructure.
- The Second (1962-1967) turned towards mining, manufacturing and electricity.
- The Third (1968-1972) gave priority to large-scale agricultural development and ‘bringing higher living standard’.

Following these plans, the Ethiopian economy witnessed some progress particularly after 1950.

- Domestic output increased nearly three and a half times and even better progress was registered in manufacturing.
- The number of industrial enterprises grew to over four hundred and the industrial working force to nearly sixty thousand.
- The electricity supply and infrastructure expanded considerably. Road and air communication enabled linkage of parts of the country.
- The emergence of new towns and the development of city life hastened urbanization.
- Banking facilities expanded and the State Bank of Ethiopia was formed in 1942.
- In 1963, it was divided into the Commercial Bank and the National Bank of Ethiopia. Also a private bank, Addis Ababa Bank was established in 1963.

- Yet, much of Ethiopia remained traditional with a low living standard and Ethiopia was one of the least developed country in the world.
- While the manufacturing sector contributed less than five percent of the national income, industrialization was spatially limited in the capital and its vicinity in addition only to Asmara and Dire Dawa.
- The manufacturing sector only produced light consumer goods. Moreover industrial investment was

Consolidation of Autocracy

- The post-liberation period witnessed the climax of the emperor's power. After he was restored to the throne in May 1941, Emperor Haile-Selassie embarked on consolidating his power.
- This was made possible through the bureaucratization of government, the building of a national army and a centralized fiscal system.
- In order to fill-in the expanding bureaucracy, education was promoted at both school and college levels.

- The post-1941 political order was dominated by Haile-Selassie that both the state and the country came to be identified with the emperor. Significant urban landmarks such as schools, hospitals, theatre halls, stadiums, main avenues and squares in the country bore the name of the Emperor.
- The imperial regime was strengthened the military and security apparatus. The ministries of Defense and Interior, in charge of maintaining public security, consistently received the highest budgetary allocations

- The traditional aristocracy, although made to enjoy urban and rural property, had lost most of its political privileges. Based on the traditional shum shir, the emperor appointed and demoted his ministers, most of whom had humble origins.
- In 1943, the emperor appointed eleven ministers to draft laws and appoint junior officials. For example, it was only in 1966 that even the prime minster was allowed to select his cabinet members to be approved by the emperor.

- Ras Bitweded Mekonnen Endalkachew served as prime minister from 1942.
- Next to Mekonnen Habte-Wold (1949-58), whose brother, Aklilu, became the last prime minister of the imperial regime (1961-74), Yilma Deressa left the strongest mark on the Ministry of Finance.
- But the most powerful of the ministers in the post-1941 political order was Tsehafe-Tizaz Wolde-Giorgis Wolde-Yohannis who headed the strategic Ministry of Pen in the period 1941-55.

- In general, members of the royal family, leading nobility and the Abun still were members of the crown council.
- In 1955, Haile-Selassie promulgated a new constitution, revising the first constitution issued in 1931. American advisers like John Spencer as well as Tsehafe-Tizaz Wolde-Giorgis WoldeYohannis and Tsehafe-Tizaz Aklilu Habte-Wold were in the drafting committee of the 1955 revised constitution. More than its predecessor, the 1955 revised constitution provided

- The emperor was head of the three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. Human rights and civil liberties were restricted and violated. Regional identities, needs and feelings were ignored in the interest of centralization.
- As the years progressed, the emperor started to dedicate his attention to foreign affairs. He played a significant role in the Non-Aligned Movement and Organization of African Unity.
- But his preoccupation with international affairs detached the emperor from the domestic affairs.

7.1.3. Oppositions and the Downfall of the Monarchical Regime

A. Plots and Conspiracies

I. Dejazmach Belay Zeleke

- One notable patriot who resented the fact that he was not given a stature recognizing his contribution to the Resistance was Dejazmach Belay Zeleke.
- The emperor made Belay governor of a southern province of Gojjam because he wanted to remove him from his base in Bichena in eastern Gojjam.

- Belay rejected the offer and was even more dissatisfied at dignified positions of Ras Haylu Belaw (Governor General of Gojjam) and Bitweded Mengesha Jembere (Deputy Governor General of Gojjam).
- In February 1943, forces from Debra-Marqos and Addis Ababa invaded Belay's district.
- After fighting for three months, Belay surrendered, was detained in Fiche from where he tried to escape and return to Gojjam a few months later,

II. Bitweded Negash Bezabih

- He was a vice minister and Senate President in the emperor's administration after liberation. He plotted to assassinate the emperor and proclaim a republic in 1951.
- In the process, some military officers like Beqele Anasimos were attracted to the plot, but Dejach Geresu Duki, another patriot, whom the plotters had unsuccessfully approached to recruit to their cause, exposed them.
- Finally, the plotters were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment after being arrested during one of their clandestine meetings.

III. Blatta Takele Wolde Hawaryat

- The most fierce and sustained opposition to the emperor came from Blatta Takele WoldeHawaryat, who hatched a plot in constitutionalist terms using Yohannes Iyasu as front. But the plot was uncovered and he was detained.
- In 1945, Blatta Takele Wolde-Hawaryat was released and appointed as deputy Afe-nigus. Yet, he was involved in another plot in 1946 and was detained up to 1954.
- He tried to assassinate the emperor on November 17, 1969, but his final plot failed and he barricaded himself in his house and engaged in a shoot-out with the police in which he was killed.

IV. Abortive Coup d'etat of 1960

- The abortive coup d'etat of 1960 was led by the Neway brothers, Brigadier General Mengistu and Germame.
- Garmame attended Haile-Sellasie I Secondary School, and then the University of Wisconsin where he received his B.A and M.A. Degrees from Columbia.
- As governor of Wolayta, Germame's activities were alarming to the regime. He monitored police activities, introduced a settlement program in which he distributed government holdings to landless peasants and ordered written tenancy agreements. He was then summoned back to Addis Ababa for explanation.

- However, unable to criticize Germame's intentions Haile-Selassie sent him to Jijiga where he continued as radical reformer.
- Together with his brother General Mengistu Neway, the head of the Imperial Bodyguard, and others the two brothers started detaining ministers and other members of the nobility when the emperor was on state visit in Brazil.
- They also took over the radio station and spoke about the backwardness of

- The crown prince Asfawosen was declared to be a salaried constitutional monarch. The prince delivered a speech on Radio Addis explaining the rationale of the coup in which he promised the establishment of new factories, schools etc.
- On December 14, 1960, a new government was declared that was to be headed by Ras Emiru Haile-Selassie.
- Major General Mulugeta Buli was chosen as chief of staff of the armed forces while Brigadier-General Tsige Dibu was to lead the Imperial Bodyguard and the Police Force, and Colonel Workneh Gebeyehu was security chief.

- However, the army and the air force refused to side with the rebels and with the support of the Americans and the blessing of the patriarch, the loyalists led by General Merid Mengesha, Ras Asrate Kassa etc attacked the plotters.
- Finally, they had to run for their lives but only after killing the ministers and other dignitaries they had detained at Geneta L'uel palace.
- In the meantime, the emperor entered the capital. Finally, Garmame died fighting in the outskirts of the capital and Mengistu was captured and hanged after trial.

B. Peasant Rebellions

1. The Woyane Rebellion

- The first peasant resistance against imperial rule took place in Tigray, known in history as the Woyane rebellion. The term Woyane means 'revolt' in Tigrigna language.

Causes of the rebellion

- corruption and administrative inefficiency
- greed of the Territorial Army unit stationed in the region
- The peoples of Wejjerat and Raya-Azebo had wanted to maintain their local autonomy that the government violated. the 1942 land decree which forced peasants to pay tax arrears
- The nobility took advantage of the popular discontent against government officials and their militias and put strong resistance against government forces thanks to the able leadership of Blatta Haile-Mariam Reda.

- Finally, the major confrontation took place on January 11, 1942 where the imperial force was defeated and humiliated by Raya-Azebo peasants.
- On May 22, 1943, the rebels scored an astounding victory in Addi Awuna, Soon small towns around Mekelle like Qwiha and Enda-Iyyasus, and Meqelle itself on October 14, 1943 fell in rebel hands. They then expanded to Kilte-Awlalo, Wuqiro etc in eastern Tigray.
- Such initial advances of the rebel forces, however, did not last long. In October 1943, the imperial army under

- **2. The Yejju Rebellion**
- Overt dissidence of Yejju peasants in Wollo during Haile-Selassie's rule occurred three times. In 1948, peasants rose against the system after the government ignored their appeal against land alienation.
- With Qegnazmach Melaku Taye and Unda Mohammed in the forefront, peasants stormed and freed inmates held in Woldya prison. The nech lebash were called to quell the unrest and eventually the leaders were publicly flogged.

- Throughout the 1950s, localized skirmishes between government forces and peasants expanded to Qobo, Hormat, Tumuga, Karra Qore etc led by prominent figures like Ali Dullatti (Abba Jabbi).
- In 1970, peasants revolted against the introduction of mechanized agriculture that encroached on pastureland and killed Qegnazmach Abate Haylu who was a member of the local nobility and direct beneficiary of the new development. Finally, the rising was suppressed by the local militia.

3. The Gojjam Peasant Rebellion

In 1968, another violent peasant uprising set off in Gojjam caused by the government's attempt to implement new tax on agricultural produce, which the parliament adopted in November 1967.

- The then governor of Gojjam, Dejach Kebede Tesema, initiated land assessment and classification to determine taxation. He then raised tax rate.
- In 1950, a revolt broke out in Mota, Qolla-Daga Damot and Mecha districts led by people like Dejach Abere Yimam. As a result tax rate was reduced by 1/3, Kebede was removed and replaced by Haylu Belew, a hereditary ruler of Gojjam.

- Later, Haylu's Shewan successor named Dejjazmach Tsehayu Enqu-Selassie forced contributions to build the emperor's statue in Debra Marqos.
- It finally sparked the 1968 uprising led by veterans of the resistance period.
- The government was forced to transfer Dejazmach Tsehayu to Kafa, declare amnesty, abandon the new tax, and cancel all tax arrears of taxation going back to 1950.
- Despite these concessions, the rebellion spread throughout Gojjam except Agaw-Midir and Metekel, which alarmed the government.
- Finally the rebellion was subdued by the combined forces of the army, police and nech lebash by the end of 1968.

4. The Gumuz Rebellion

- The Gumuz staged major armed rebellion against the regime of Emperor Haile-Selassie in 1952/3.
- The movement is named after one of its famous leaders, Abba Tone.
- Abba Tone armed uprising had its roots in administrative injustice, land and taxation policies of the imperial regime.
- Finally, an open clash broke out between the policemen and the Gumuz when tax collectors with the backing of the police force attempted to force the people pay land taxes. Nevertheless, the government was able to put down the uprising. Abba Tone was captured and later released on pardon.

5. The Gedeo Peasant Rebellion

- The major source of peasant discontent in Gedeo was land alienation. In the 1960s, the Gedeo witnessed an unprecedented level of land expropriation such as emperor's daughter Princess Tenagneworq.
- Petitions and appeals to higher authorities to curb the land alienation proved futile. Then peasants refused to pay *erbo* armed themselves and clashed with the imperial army at Michille in 1960. Over a hundred

6. The Bale Peasant Rebellion

- The Bale peasant uprising, which lasted from 1963 to 1970, presented the most serious challenge to the Ethiopian government.
- The causes of the uprising were multifaceted. peasants largely became tenants after the introduction of the *qalad* in 1951.
- high taxation, religious and ethnic antagonism that reached to unprecedented level after the appointment of Warqu Enqu-Selassie as governor in 1963.
- Somalia's material and moral support to the rebels as part of its strategy of re-establishing a "Greater Somalia".

- The revolt broke out in El Kerre led by people like Kahin Abdi. Initially, rebel groups conducted hit-and-run raids.
- It quickly spread to Wabe, Dallo and Ganale under the able leadership of Waqo Gutu and others.
- The rebels killed *Girazmach* Beqele Haragu of Adaba and *Fitawrari* Wolde-Mika'el Bu'i of Dodola in 1965 and 1966 respectively.
- In December 1966, the government put Bale under the martial rule of Wolde-Selassie Baraka. In 1967, the army, police, Territorial Army (*beherawi tor*), settler militia (*nech lebash*) and volunteers (*wedo zemach*) launched massive operations against the

C . Movements of Nations and Nationalities

1. Mecha-Tulama movement

- In January 1963, the Mecha-Tulama Welfare Association (MTWA) was formed with the objective of improving the welfare of the Oromo through the expansion of educational, communication and health facilities in Oromo land.
- Founding members of the association included Colonels Alemu Qitessa and Colonel Qedida Guremessa, Lieutenant Mamo Mezemir, Beqele Nedhi, and Haile-Mariam Gemeda. In the next two years, the association attracted large number of Oromo elites, including such high-ranking military officers as Brigadier General Taddesse Birru.

- Although the Association had its root in the development of Oromo inhabited territories, it soon transformed into a pan-Oromo movement coordinating peaceful resistance against the regime.
- The regime was alarmed by the activities of the association and determined to curb the movement before it crystallized into an organized liberation front.
- Meanwhile, leaders of the association plotted to assassinate the emperor and change the regime on the anniversary of his coronation in November 1966, but security forces foiled the plot.

- Mecha-Tulama was dissolved in 1967 following the imprisonment and killing of its prominent leaders such as Mamo Mezemir and Haile-Mariam Gemeda by the regime's forces.
- Brigadier General Taddese Birru exiled to Gelemso where he stayed until the outbreak of the 1974 revolution. In 1975 the Derg executed Tadesse on allegation of instigating armed struggle.
- The brutal suppression of the Mecha-Tulama Association, however, did not

- In 1971, an underground movement called the Ethiopian National Liberation Front (ENLF) was formed by Oromo elites, perhaps by former members of the association.
- In 1973, some members of the ENLF and other Oromo nationalists formed the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) with the aim of establishing an independent State of Oromia. The following year, OLF launched an offensive against the imperial regime in Hararghe. Accordingly, the armed struggle, which set off in the eastern part of Ethiopia, extended to other Oromo inhabited areas such as Arsi and Wallagga.

2. Eritrean liberation movements

- In 1958, a number of Eritrean exiles founded the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) in Cairo. In 1961, the ELM evolved into the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) or Jabaha in Arabic. Hamid Idris Awate who fired the first bullet of the Eritrean armed struggle.
- By 1966 the ELF challenged imperial forces throughout Eritrea. In June 1970, two splinter group liberation movements emerged from the ELF. These were the Popular Liberation Forces (PLF) and the Salfi Natsenet Eritrea (Front for Eritrean Independence).

- The PLF was formed in the Red Sea area led by Osman Salah Sabbe while Salfi Natsenet Eritrea (Front for Eritrean Independence) emerged under the leadership of Isayas Afeworqi.
- In early 1972, a new coalition of forces composed of Eritrean Liberation Front-Popular Liberation Front (ELF-PLF) led to the founding of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) or Sha'abiya in Arabic. After a long and bloody civil war, the EPLF was able to establish its hegemony over the independence movement.
- Finally, the EPLF succeeded in achieving de

- **D. The Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM)**

  In fact, the Ethiopian student movement was a strong opposition against the regime. Although the movement started within the university, students had turned into a radical opposition and were already marching on the streets from 1965 onwards and was spreading to the high schools by 1968.
- The parliament's rejection of tenancy reform bill in 1964 triggered student protest in the following year demanding "Land to the Tiller."

Factors that contributed to sharpening the students' ideology include

- ✓ the 1960 coup, students' increased awareness of the country's socio-economic and political conditions
- ✓ influence from other African countries through scholarship students Ethiopian University Service (EUS) Launched in 1964.

- In 1964, the emergence of a radical group of students with Marxist-Leninist leanings known as “the Crocodiles” marked the increased militancy of the students.
- Side by side with the radicalization of the movement, students formed the University College Union (UCU) to coordinate their activities in 1962 and then the National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS) in 1963.
- The Main Campus Student Union (MCSU) and the University Student Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA) with its paper *Tagel* (Struggle) were established in 1965 and 1968 respectively.

- Outside the country, students were organized under the Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA) with its paper called Challenge and the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE) with its paper Tateq (Gird yourself) in the USA and Europe. ESUNA and ESUE gave ideological support to MCSU and USUAA.
- Throughout the 1960s, a rallying cry of student demonstrations was “land to the tiller”, but other local and global issues were also raised.

Students protested against

- the minority white regime in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1968,
- expressed their solidarity with the people of Vietnam
- Shola Destitute Concentration Relief Camp
- fashion show at the university campus and
- educational reform.

- With the students' demands for the respect of the rights of nations and nationalities, the government was started taking measures against leaders of the movement ranging from press campaigns to detentions and killings.
- Furthermore, the regime deported large number of students to the torrid Gibe river valley in 1972. Meanwhile, students' opposition was aggravated to armed hijacking of transport aircrafts.
- By early 1970s, the student movement coupled with other under-running issues such as rising inflation, growing discontent of urban residents, corruption and widespread and yet covered-up famine especially in Wollo all prepared a fertile ground for a revolution.

7.2. The Derg Regime (1974-1991)

The mass uprising that finally put an end to the old regime came in February 1974.

- From January 8 to 15, 1974, soldiers and non-commissioned officers stationed at a frontier post in Negele Borana mutinied protesting their bad living conditions.
- Finally, the mutiny of different divisions of the army in Asmara and Addis Ababa and the air force in Debre Zeit brought a serious challenge to the state. This time soldiers did not only demanded salary increases, but also asked for political and economic reforms.

- The various units then set up a coordinating committee, which became a precursor of the later Derg, in order to coordinate their actions.
- Teachers throughout the country protested against the implementation of an education reform program known as Sector Review.
- Taxi drivers went on strike demanding increase in transport fees (fifty percent) due to rise of petrol prices that followed the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war of 1973.
- Students, workers and the unemployed youth joined the protests, vehicles particularly buses, and luxury private automobiles were attacked.

The government responded by

- suspending the Sector Review, reducing petrol prices and raising the salaries of soldiers.

In spite of this, the uprisings continued and on February 28, the cabinet of Prime Minister Aklilu Habte-Wold resigned.

- He was replaced by Endalkachew Mekonnin who was an Oxford-educated member of the aristocracy.
- Although Endalkachew promised constitutional reform and included highly educated and progressive ministers into his cabinet, the protests continued.
- On March 8, the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) staged a successful general strike.

About 100,000 Muslim residents of the capital and their Christian sympathizers who came out demanding religious equality held a major popular demonstration on April 20.

The Muslim community demonstrated against the age old discrimination they suffered. They demanded that;

- Muslim courts be recognized by law;
- muslin holidays be nationally celebrated;
- separation of state and church; to form associations;
- allowed to broad cast over the radio and television;
- to be given equal opportunities of employment in the civil,
- military and diplomatic services

In the meantime, the soldiers, through their various committees, were also taking their own measures.

- The coordinating committee of soldiers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) set up in February were joined by officers, such as Colonel Alem Zewd Tessema of the Airborne Brigade, who then became its leader.
- In April, the Committee arrested Aklilu and hundreds of other high-ranking officials of the regime.
- The Minister of Defense, Lt. General Abiy Abebe set up the National Security Commission to restore order and respect for the authority of the government.

- The leading opposition against the Endalkachew cabinet were the students. Nevertheless, the students were less organized to achieve their goals and eventually, the soldiers hijacked the struggle.

- The Derg was formed on June 28, 1974. “Derg” a Ge’ez word for “Committee” was the name given to the Coordinating Committee of representatives from various military units.
- Major Mengistu Haile-Mariam of the Third Division of Hararghe, and the vice-chairman, Major Atnafu Abate of the Fourth Division, came to be key figures.

For some time the Derg exercised power parallel with the Endalkachew's cabinet. Gradually derg began to take several measures such as:

- on August 1, Endalkachew was imprisoned and replaced by Lej Mikael Emiru as prime minister.
- arrested other members of the regime whom it considered obstacles to the revolution.
- define its ideology and declared the motto, "Ethiopia Tikdem" ("Ethiopia First"), "Yaleminim Dem" ("Without any bloodshed").
- Two enterprises, Anbessa Bus Company and the St. George Brewery were nationalized.
- British documentary film disclosed the hidden horrors of the Wollo famine precisely served the awaited interest of the Derg.
- Finally, on September 12, Emperor Haile-Selassie I was deposed and detained at the Fourth Division headquarters.

- The Derg then proclaimed itself the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) and assumed full powers.
- All strikes and demonstrations were immediately banned. Very soon, civilian revolutionaries, who had started calling for the establishment of a provisional people's government, started gathering around the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU), the University teachers' group known as Forum, and the students. Sections of the military, the Army Engineers Corps, the First Division (the former Bodyguard), and the Army Aviation opposed what was to become a military government.

- However, the Derg imprisoned the leaders of CELU and a leader of the Forum group. On October 7, a militant group within the Army Engineering Corps was violently crushed in a tank assault, which took the lives of five soldiers. The motto of “Ethiopia First, without any bloodshed” thus failed as early as then.
- On November 23, an even more violent phase commenced.
- Lieutenant General Aman Mikael Andom, chairman of the PMAC was shot dead after a disagreement within the Derg over the Issue of Eritrea.
- The Derg announced execution of some 52 prominent members of the old regime.

7.2.2. Attempts at Socio-Economic Reform

- The Derg took a series of measures that aimed at fundamentally transforming the country.
- In December 1974, what was called the Edget Behibiret Zemecha was inaugurated.
- In 1975, banks and insurance companies were nationalized. Finally, in March 1975 the Derg made a radical land reform proclamation, It abolished all private land ownership
- The proclamation also provided the establishment of peasant associations.
- On 26 July1975 another proclamation nationalized all urban lands and extra houses.

The campaigns showed Derg's belief in mass mobilization to achieve a cause.

- There was the "Green Campaign" of 1978 aimed at bringing about rapid economic development,
- the literacy campaign aimed at eradicating illiteracy, and
- the "Red Star Campaign" of 1982 that aimed at solving the Eritrean problem.

Of these campaigns, only the literacy campaign registered some degree of success.

- The land reform proclamation did put an end to landlord exploitation but it failed to make the peasant master of his land.

- The Derg used peasant associations to control the countryside and the urban dwellers' associations (kebele) to control the towns.
- The kebele became battleground when the struggle between the Derg and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) (formed in Berlin in 1972) reached its bloodiest phase in 1976/7.
- The EPRP targeted kebele leaders and assassinated them while they in turn led the government's campaign of terror against the EPRP called the "Red Terror", as opposed to the "White Terror" of the EPRP.

- Initially, the leftist opposition to the Derg came from two rival Marxist-Leninist political organizations called the EPRP and the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (acronym in Amharic, Meison).
- In the meantime, the Derg pushed by the dominant leftist political culture systematically abandoned “Ethiopian socialism” and embraced Marxism-Leninism.
- With the setting up of the POMOA, Derg proclaimed the National Democratic Revolution Program, which was the Chinese model for socialist revolution and had identified feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucratic capitalism as the three main enemies of the people.

- In a few months, Derg's leftist political organization known as Abyotawi Seded (Revolutionary Flame) was launched.
- In 1977, an alliance called Emaledeh (the Union of Ethiopian Marxist–Leninist Organizations) was established as prelude to the formation of one vanguard party.
- The Emaledeh was composed of Marxist Leninist Revolutionary Organization (MLRO, Malerid), Meison, Abyotawi Seded (Revolutionary Flame), Wezlig (Workers League) Dr. Senay, Malerid (the Ethiopian Marxist–Leninist organization) and Ech'at (the Ethiopian Oppressed Masses Revolutionary Struggle) founded by Baro Tumsa.

In late 1976, the Derg itself was ideologically divided and beset with the internal struggles.

- Mengistu had eliminated two powerful members of the Derg and potential rivals of his power and influence, Major Sisay Habte and Major Kiros Alemayehu. .
- On February 1977 Brigadier General Teferi Benti chairperson of the Derg and other anti-Mengistu Derg members were executed.
- Mengistu HaileMariam assumed the chairmanship of the Derg and the post of commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He then filled the top positions in the Derg with his loyal supporters.
- Within just a year, Lt. Colonel Atnafu Abate,

- Then Mengistu and his civilian left allies unleashed what they called the “Red Terror” initially targeting the EPRP and later on EPLF , TPLF and Meison.
- In the summer of 1977, the government of Somalia led by Siad Barre waged a large-scale war against Ethiopia. The Somalia Army crossed the border taking control of Jigjiga and the cities of Harar and Dire Dawa were endangered.
- The government mobilized a force of about 100,000 peasant militia and other forces that were trained at Angetu, Didessa, Hurso, Tateq and Tolay in a short time with the help of USSR advisors and equipment.
- Finally, with 17,000 Cuban troops and the help from Southern Yemen Democratic Republic, the Somalia National Army was defeated at Kara-Mara near Jigjiga on March 4, 1978.

- The aggression of Somalia made it possible for the Derg to rally the population to its side.
- In early 1977, the Derg had severed relations with the USA. Mengistu concluded agreements with Moscow for economic, cultural and military co-operation.
- In the north, Eritrean insurgents had encircled Asmara while a pro-monarchy organization, the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), was marching inroads from the Sudan in the Satit-Humera region.
- Yet, by the end of 1978, the EPRP had been contained in the towns and the Eritrean insurgents were pushed back. EDU was crushed near the Ethio-Sudan borderland in places like Metema, Abder Raffi and Satit-Humera.
- The Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations fell apart once Meison defected the Derg and its leaders were consequently either killed or arrested.

- The other three member organizations Ech'at, Wezlig, and Malerid were successively expelled from Emaledeh and their leaders and members executed or detained.
- It was only Mengistu's Seded that remained as the authentic Marxist-Leninist organization in the country.
- In December 1979, the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) was established.
- In September 1984, the Workers' Party of

In order for the government to have a more direct societal control,

- on January 6 1977, the CELU was replaced by a government-controlled All Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU),
- formation of the All Ethiopia Peasants' Association (AEPA), which ensured the government's control over peasants.
- Established in 1980, the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) and Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (REYA), rallying women and the youth behind the state.

- The Shengo (PMAC National Assembly) proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) in 1987. With the birth of the PDRE, the Derg officially ceased to exist.
- A typically Communist constitution already on its way, Colonel Mengistu became President of PDRE, secretary general of WPE and Commander in chief of the national armed forces with Fisseha Desta as Vice President and Fiqre-Sellassie Wegderes head of the Council of Ministers as Prime Minister with five deputies.
- Finally, it turned out that Mengistu could not stay in power more than four years after he was proclaimed president of PDRE.

- The dictator fell under the attack of rural-based guerrilla movements fighting for national self-determination. These included the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), active mainly in the Wallagga region, the Islamic Front for Liberation of Oromia, based in Hararghe, the Afar Liberation Front, the Sidama Liberation Front, the Beni-Shangul Liberation Front and the Gambella Liberation Front.
- The two significant liberation fronts which could be considered to have jointly brought about the downfall of the Derg were the EPLF and the TPLF.
- In 1984/5, a more devastating famine than the one in 1973/4 indicated the failure of the Derg's economic policies especially in agricultural production and marketing.

- The state responded by resettling the affected people in less affected areas mostly of Tigray and Wollo provinces, of western Ethiopia.
- The villagization program that followed the resettlement further alienated the majority of peasants. It was in this context that the guerrilla forces scored remarkable victories.
- International politics too had turned against Mengistu’s interest as his ally, the Soviet Union ceased to be the source of his external support.
- In March 1990, the Derg proclaimed a mixed economy policy, which seemed to come too late.

- the Derg turned its forces to the north, with the rather too assured slogan that “the victory scored in the east will be repeated in the north.”
- Initially the derg pulled back the rebel’s to their major strongholds in 1976/7 at Naqfa in northern Eritrea.
- In March 1988, EPLF scored a major victory at Afabet, north of Asmara. In 1990, EPLF forces captured the port town of Massawa.
- The final decisive blow to Mengistu’s regime came to be administered by the TPLF that aimed to secure the self-determination of Tigray.
- The TPLF started in February 1975 as a

- In February 1989 TPLF scored its most decisive victory at Enda-Selassie, Western Tigray, after a series of other military successes. At the victory of Enda-Selassie, tens of thousands of government troops were captured. This resulted in the withdrawal of all government troops from Tigray.
- In May 1989, commanders of almost all military units, coordinated and led a coup against Mengistu when he left the country on a state visit to the East Germany.
- However, the coup was so poorly organized and failed. The coup leaders were imprisoned or executed.

- TPLF, after liberating Tigray, continued to move forward and made the necessary organizational adjustments forming a bigger front known as the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).
- The member organizations were TPLF, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM).
- In 1990 and 1991 in consecutive and stunning campaigns, EPRDF forces drove the Derg out of Gondar, Gojjam, and Wollo and parts of Wallagga and Shewa and

7.3. Transitional Government

On 1 July 1991, a handful of organizations of which many were organized along ethnic lines assembled to review the draft Charter prepared by the EPRDF and the OLF. The gathering was called the Peace and Democracy Transitional Conference of Ethiopia.

- The Conference debated and approved the Transitional Charter on the basis of which the Transitional Government of Ethiopia was created.
- Representatives of 27 organizations formed a Council of Representatives (COR) which acted as a legislative body ('Parliament').

- A Council of Ministers was formed as an executive branch, with Meles Zenawi as the President of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE).
- Meles Zenawi then appointed a Prime Minister (Tamirat Layne) and a seventeen-member Council of Ministers. Key posts were given to members of the EPRDF and OLF.
- In December 1994, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was ratified, taking effect following federal elections in mid-1995. After the election, Meles Zenawi assumed the premiership while Dr. Negasso Gidada became head of state.

- Meanwhile, EPLF set up a Provisional Government of Eritrea in 1991.
- This was followed by a referendum to decide the fate of Eritrea in which the majority of the population voted for independence from Ethiopia.
- In May 1993, the Government of Eritrea was formed with Isayas Afwerki becoming the first president of the country after independence.