UNIT SIX: MAKING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ETHIOPIA: 1855-1941 (MT6)

6.1. Territorial Unification and Expansion

- State building remained an agenda of several powerful individuals and groups that arose in the 19th c.
- The making of the modern Ethiopian state went through two distinct phases.

  -Unifying northern and north central parts of the Christian kingdom Ethiopia.

  -Territorial expansion into the southern parts adjoining the heartland of the Christian kingdom.

A. Unification of Old Provinces

- **It was began by Kasa Haylu** (shifta and later Emperor from 1855-1868).

- **Kasa beat war lords of his times turn by turn**. For exa. He beat:
  - *Dejjach* Goshu Zewde of Gojjam at Gur Amba on Nov. 27, 1852;
  - Birru Aligaz, Aben, Yazew and Belew, the four dejjazmachs sent by Ras Ali, at (Gorgora Bichign) on April 12, 1853;
  - Ras Ali at Ayshal on 29 June 1853 and
  - Dejjazmach Wube of Simen and Tigray at Deresge on 8 February, 1855.
- After victory, he was anointed by Abune Salama, the Coptic bishop at Deresge Mariam on 9 February 1855, with the throne name of **Tewodros II**.
- **The Coronation of Tewodros II marked the end of Zemene Mesafint**.

ii. *Dejjach* Kasa Hailu of Quara (Emp. Tewodros II)

- **Tewahdo was declared the only doctrine of the EOC.**
- Tewodros subdued different independent and semi-independent regions.
- He started military expedition to old provinces.
- In March 1855, he campaigned to **Wollo** where he met stiff resistance and took harsh measures on war captives.
- Then Tewodros marched to **Shewa** where the expedition lasted well until November.
- He returned to Gonder after wining Shewa and capturing child Menelik.
- Tewordos did the same thing to **Gojjam** and **Tigray**.
- He wanted to create a strong central government.

- He appointed both hereditary and non-hereditary rulers over the subdued regions.
  - Example, **Meridaztnach** Haile Michael over Shewa.
  - He appointed his own men from high ranking civil and military officials over Gojjam.

Reasons behind the downfall of Tewodros II:

- **Included both internal and external factors.**

1. The Deviation of Regional Lords

- Regional lords fought against emperor's centralization drive.
- Many of them did not want to lose their former political, military and economic privileges.
- The rebellious regions increased from time to time unseated the emperor.
- Tewodros on his part became harsher in dealing with rebels.

2. Opposition from the Churchmen

- Early in his reign, Tewodros II **cooperated** with the church.
- However, later he entered into **quarrels** with the clergy.
- He **distributed the church land** to the peasants.
- He also **reduced the priests and deacons** in church to two and three respectively.
- Furthermore, the **clergy were ordered to cultivate** their own lands and pay due tributes to the state.

- The clergy reacted strongly and instigated the masses against the emperor.

External challenges

1. diplomatic crises & conflict with British

- Tewodros requested Europeans send **personnel** who could train his compatriots how to manufacture & operate fire arms.

- But Europeans refused to send the personnel whom he expected.
- Thus, **Tewodros detained European** citizens living in his empire including the British consul named Cameroon.
- Britain repeatedly requested and **warned Tewodros to release** but the later refused.
- To set free European hostage, **General Robert Napier** led British military expedition to Ethiopia in 1868.
- On April 10, 1868 ***Fitawrari* Gebriye** met the British at Aroghe.
- Next day, Tewodros released European prisoners.
- And on April 13, he **committed suicide rather than surrender, at Mekdela.**
- Nevertheless, Tewodros's policies of unification and central authority were preserved by his successors.

ii. ***Wagshum* Gobeze of Lasta (Emp. T/Giorgis II (1868−71).**

- ✓ Tekle-Giyorgis carried out military expeditions to different regions.
- ✓ He controlled central Amhara **except Shewa**.
- ✓ *Ras* Kasa Mircha of Tigray challenged his power in the north.
- ✓ In July 1871, he beat the emperor at **Assem**.

iii. **Kasa Mircha of Tigray (Emp. Yohannes IV (1872-1889).**

- ❑ Yohannes attempted to introduce a **decentralized** system of administration. He resolved the difference with Menilek through **Liche Agreement (March 1878).**

What did say the articles of this agreement?

- ❑ Similarly, Yohannes designated *Ras* Adal Tesema of Gojjam as *Negus* Tekle-Haymanot of Gojjam and Kafa in 1881.

- Emperor Yohanis was not liberal towards religion.
- He wanted to bring religious unity as a precondition to state unity.
- He arranged ***the Council of Boru Meda*** (May 1878).
- Tewahdo was declared the only doctrine of the EOC.
- The emperor was also unhappy of the expansion of Islam.
- He ordered Muslims of Wollo to embrace Christianity.
- This caused Muslim opposition led by Sheikh Talha.

iv. ***Negus*** **Menilek of Shewa (Emp. Menelik II(r. 1889-1913)**

B. Territorial Expansions (1865- 1899)

- The most successful of territorial expansion was managed by Menilek of Shewa for the reason that:
  - **Menilek had access to modern firearms**.
  - **Menilek had controlled of resourceful areas**
  - **Menilek got determined war generals**

- Menilek's expansion involved both forceful subjugation and peaceful submissions.
- His expansion can be discussed in three phases:
  - ✓When he was king of Shewa (1865-89),
  - ✓From 1889-96 (Emperorship to Battle of Adwa) and
  - ✓Aftermath of Adwa (1896-1900).

First Phase

- Before the 1870s, Menilek had already incorporated the Tulema and eastern Mecha Oromo territories. He controlled local leaders notably:
  - ✓Ashe Rufo of Salale,
  - ✓Dula Ara'e of Gullale,
  - ✓Tufa Muna of Gimbichu,
  - ✓Ture Galate of Soddo and others.

- Meanwhile, other **Oromo elites** such as Ras Gobena Dache, Fitawrari Habte-Giorgis Dinagde, Dejjach Balcha Safo (Abba Nefso) and others cooperated towards the formation of the modern Empire state.
- In 1875-76, northern Gurage, the Kistane, peacefully submitted.
- Leqa-Naqamte, Leqa-Qellem, and Jimma others submitted to Menilek peacefully.
- Arsi in 1886 submitted to the army of Ras Darge Sahile-Selassie-after fierce confrontation.
- Harar submitted in 1887after Abdullahi and Bakar Ware were defeated by Dejjach Wolde-Gabra'el’s forces.
- Muslim Gurage (of Qebena) forcefully submitted in 1888

Second Phase (1889-1896)

The central Army took over areas like

- Dawuro-Konta in 1889
- Kambata in 1890.
- From the early 1890s to 1894 Bale, Sidama, Gamo, Gofa and Wolayta.

The 3rd Phase-(1896-1900)

Menilek's force incorporated

- Kafa in 1897
- Maji in 1898/99
- Beni-Shangul in 1897/98, and

-Tesema Nadew also controlled Baro (Sobat) and Nasir in Gambella.

6.2. Modernization

The period from 1800 to 1941 also witnessed efforts **to adopt western ideas and technology by Ethiopian monarchs**.

Emperor Tewodros:

- ✓ introduced **military titles**, like *Yasr Aleqa*, *Yamsa Aleqa*, *and Yeshi Aleqa*.
- ✓ tried to organize and replace the regional armies of the *Zemene-Mesafint* with **salaried national army**.
- ✓ attempted to **manufacture firearms** at his workshop, Gafat (near Debre Tabor) with the help of European missionaries and artisans.
- ✓ reduced the church land & the number of priests & deacons.
- ✓ also attempted to put **an end to the slave trade**.
- ✓ attempted to **ban polygamy**.
- ✓ the **use of Amharic** became more developed,

In the reign of Menilek >>>>

- ✓ the establishment of a postal service and telecommunications/ the telephone-telegraph system.
- ✓ construction of railway line from Djibouti to Addis Ababa,
- ✓ the opening of a bank (the Bank of Abyssinia) and
- ✓ the introduction of paper money.
- ✓ In terms of administration, the emperor introduced European style **ministerial system/ministers** in **1907**.

Table 11.1 Members of Menelik's Council of Ministers.

Name of the member	Position held
Afe-Nigus Nesibu Mesqelo	Minister of Justice
Fitawrari Habte-Giyorgis Dinegde	Minister of War
Tsehafe-Tizaz Gebre-Sillase Welde-Aregay	Minister of Pen
Bejerond Mulugeta Yiggezu	Minister of Finance
Neggadras Haile-Giyorgis Welde-Mikael	Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs
Azazh Metaferya Melke-Tsadiq	Minister of Imperial Court

Members of Menelik's Council of Ministers, Misikir T., Mirror History, 2020.

- Menelik's reign also witnessed the **opening of:**
  - **a hotel** in 1907 (Itege Hotel),
  - **modern school** (Menilek II School in 1908) and
  - the foundation of **Russian Red Cross** hospital in 1906 and
  - Russian-run **hospital** (Menilek II Hospital) in 1910.

✓ *Lij* Iyasu (1913-16) reformed traditional methods of tithe (***asrat)*** collection.

✓ He outlawed the tradition of ***Leba Shay***.

✓ He also did away with the ***Quragna*** system.

- *Lij* Iyasu established a modern municipal police force called ***Trunbulle***.

- ***Birhanina Selam***, a news paper that began to be published in 1925.
- In the early 1930, the Ethiopian government began to train the **Imperial Bodyguard**.
- The trainers were **Belgian** officers.
- The first written **constitution** of Ethiopia was introduced in 1931.
- In 1934, **Haile-Sillase I Military Academy** was opened at Holeta Genet.
- It was a military school instituted **to train officers** for the Ethiopian army.
- Instructors came from **Sweden**.

6.3. Defending Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

Reactions to Egyptian Aggressions

- In 1821, the Egyptian army invaded the **Funji** Sultanate of the Sudan.
- Egypt used the occupied Sudan as a **stepping-stone** to attack western Ethiopian regions.
- *Dejjazmach* Wube of Simen, *Dejjazmach* Kinfu of Kuara and the then rebel Kasa Hailu (half-brother of Kinfu) fought against the Egyptian penetration.
- The Ethio-Egyptian conflict continued during the reign of Tewodros II.
- And, it reached peak during that of Yohannes IV.
- Already in **1864, Egypt** had taken over the Port of **Massawa**.

- The Egyptian ruler ***Khedive* Ismail Pasha** (r. 1863-1879) revived the idea of Greater Egypt.
- He intended to establish mastery over **the Nile Valley**.
- As a **source of Blue Nile**, Ethiopia became a major target of Egyptian expansion.
- The architect of Egyptian aggression on Ethiopia was **Werner Munzinger**.
- In 1871, Ismail made Munzinger a governor of Massawa.
- In 1872, he occupied **Bogos**, in present-day Eritrea.
- In July 1872, **Yohannes wrote a letter** to Ismail and condemned the Egyptian conquest.
- However, Ismail continued to take over more territories.
- **Yohanes then informed the European powers** the unlawful Egyptian invasion.

- Unfortunately, Europeans gave deaf ear; remained silent to Yohannes.
- Yohannes's hope for diplomatic solution for the Bogos crisis failed.

In 1875, the Egyptian invasion came in three fronts:

- Muhammad Rauf Pasha moved from the direction of **Zeila** and occupied **Harar**.
- Munzinger led a small army of about 400 men from the Port of **Tajura** but was crushed by the Afar.
- Col. Arrendrup led about 2,500-3,000 well-equipped men from **Massawa** and reached Mereb River.
- Emperor Yohannes had no alternative but to fight and defend his empire.

•On 16 Nov. 1875, Ethn. army crushed Egyptians at **Gundet**.

•It captured modern arms and war prisoners.

•In 1876, another round of Egyptian invaders Ratib Pasha and General Loring entered into Ethiopia.

•But they were destroyed at **Gura**.

•Egypt, thus, experienced another serious blow.

- Yet the victory was not fully rewarding to Ethiopia.
- Egyptians were left in the occupied region of Bogos.
- And Emperor Yohanes resumed diplomatic solution.

•Nevertheless, Ismail remained unwilling to return Bogos.

•Therefore, a period of "**no peace**, **no war**" set in and lasted up until 1884.

Reactions to Mahdist Aggression

- In **1881**, Mahdist Sudanese began the struggle against the Egyptian rule.
- They **trapped Egyptian troops** on the Ethio-Sudanese border.
- Unfortunately, only the help of Ethiopia could save them.
- As a protector of Egypt since 1882, **Britain** sought to rescue the sandwiched troops through peace treaty with Ethiopia.
- The **Hewett Treaty** was signed on 3 June 1884 at **Adwa**.

Here are some terms of the treaty.

- Bogos and Massawa was restored to Ethiopia.
- Ethiopia agreed to help in the safe evacuation of the trapped Egyptian army through her territory.

- Egyptians escaped through Ethiopian territory.

- Hewett Treaty appeared a diplomatic victory for Ethiopia.
- In reality, it came to be **disastrous**.

  -While Yohannes was expecting the restoration of Massawa, the British secretly invited Italy to take over the port.

  -Ethiopia bought other enemy in the west-Mahdists.
- Mahdists saw Ethiopia as an ally of unlawful Egypt.
- They began offensive attack on the Ethiopian regions.
- Metemma-Gonder corrider became the main theatre of the Ethio-Sudanese war.
- Nigus T/Haimanot confronted Mahdists but he was defeated at **Saruha**.
- And Menilek was too late to save the city of Gonder.

- On 9 March 1889, the forces of Yohannes met Mahdists at the Battle of **Metemma**.
- Despite an initial victory, Ethiopia lost the day after Yohannes was wounded.
- One of the defender of the motherland, Yohannes IV, died the following day.
- However, there was no more war between Ethiopia and Mahdists afterwards.

Reactions to Italian Aggressions-Round One

- Since 1876, Italians were spying at **Let-Marefya**, in Shewa.
- Once took control of Massawa, Italians advanced into Mereb Mellash.
- *Ras* Alula Engida, repeatedly warned Italians to leave the Ethiopian territory.
- Italians ignored the ultimatum.
- On January **1887**, Alula attacked Italians at Sa'ati and then as Dogali.
- The Victory of Dogali was a great shock to Italians.
- It created urgent desire for revenge in Italy.
- In Oct. 1887, they signed **the Convention of Neutrality** with *Nigus* Menilek.
- The treaty was signed in a condition that the Italians would not take an inch of land in Ethiopia.

- Italians acted fast and reoccupied Sa’ati.
- Meanwhile, Emperor Yohannes declared war on Italians.
- In **March 1888**, Ethiopian army provoked the fortified Italians, but Italians refrained to come out.
- On hearing the news of Mahdist invasion, Emperor Yohannes returned to the south.
- Therefore, Italians were left never crushed by Yohannes.
- **Italians had to notify that Ethiopia is an their protectorate.**
- This could be achieved through **mischief treaty**.
- Their attempt was attested in the **Wuchale Treaty**.
- **Article III** of Wuchale Treaty guaranteed Italians considerable territories in Mereb Mellash.
- **Article XVII** (Italian version) of the Treaty bound Ethiopia to make **all** its contacts through the agency of Italy.

- In **October 1889**, Italy notified the major powers of Europe that **Ethiopia** had become her protectorate.
- Most of them recognized the Italian protectorate claim.
- Only Russia and France had reservations.
- Finally, on **1 January 1890** Italy declared Mereb Mellash to be her colony of Eritrea.
- After some times, Emperor Menelik realized that he was deceived.
- In **February 1893**, Emperor Menelik declared the **abrogation of the Wuchale Treaty**.
- Italians failed to secure diplomacy to convince the emperor.
- Major lords have renewed their allegiance to Menilek.
- Only military option remained for the Italians to realize their colonial ambition.
- The major military engagement was at **Adwa**.

- On their part, Emperor Menelik and Empress Taytu Bitul opted war rather than surrender.
- In Sep.1895, Menelik ordered a general mobilization order.
- All Ethiopian was united against white aggressors.
- Contingents were sent from almost all Ethiopian regions under their respective local rulers.
- But the major war was preceded by two immediate events:

-the Battle of Amba Alage (7 December 1895)

-the Siege of Meqele (lasted for about a month).

- **The decisive and historic Battle of Adwa** was fought on 1 March 1896 and Ethiopia scored a resounding victory.
- Aggressors under the Commander-in-Chief of Italian Army General Baratieri were surprisingly smashed on the black soil.

➢ ***What contributed to the Victory of Adwa?***

➢ ***Identify the consequences of the VA.***

Reactions to Italian Aggressions-Round Two

- **Benito Mussolini** refashioned the idea of an Italian colonial empire in Africa.
- Italy used its colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland as bases of military preparations.
- On **5 December 1934**, Italian troops opened fire on Anglo-Ethiopian boundary commission passing through **Walwal**.
- The Italians lost about 30 soldiers and Ethiopians three fold.
- Nonetheless, Italy demanded that Ethiopia should apologize and pay reparations.
- On its part, Ethiopia took the matter to the League of Nations.
- The League of Nations lacked both the will and power to give justice.

- Walwal incident was just a **pretext**.
- On **3 October 1935**, Italian troops started their long-prepared war of invasion.
- The invasion came from two directions: in the north from Eritrea and in the south from Italian Somaliland.
- Marshall Emilio **De Bono** commanded Italian occupation in the north.
- Italians occupied **Addigrat**, **Adwa**, **Meqele** and historic **Aksum** on October 5, 6, 8 and 15, 1935 respectively.
- 300 airplanes showered internationally outlawed poison gases on the Ethiopians.
- In this front, the Ethiopian army was put under overall command of ***Ras*** **Kasa Haylu**.

- It fought Italians in three flanks.
  - In the **west**, Ethiopian force-led by *Ras* **Emiru** Hayle-Sillase.
  - In the **center**, the forces of *Ras* Seyoum Mengesha and *Ras* Kasa Haylu.
  - In the **east**, the forces of *Ras* Mulugeta Yiggezu.
- The final battle in the northern front was fought at **Maichew** on 31 March 1936.
- The better trained army, the Imperial Bodyguard, led by Emperor Haile-Sillase.
- Nonetheless, this battle was lost as well. Ethiopian troops retreated in a disorderly manner.
- After Maichew, the road was clear for Fascist Italians.
- They reached Dessie on 4 April 1936.

- On **2 May 1936**, Emperor Haile-Sillase, left for **London**.
- Only three days later on 5 May Badoglio entered Addis Ababa.
- In the south, the Italian army was under the command of Gen. **Rudolfo Graziani**.
- Italians used about **100** aircrafts for air attack on this front.
- The Ethiopian forces in the same front were made up of two subdivisions: Southern and Southeastern flank.
    - The southern flank was led by *Ras* Desta Damtew, governor of Sidamo.
    - southeastern flank by *Dejjach* Nesibu Ze'amanuel, governor of Harar.

- *Grazmach* **Afeworq** Welde-Semayat who fortified at **Qorahe** temporarily checked the Italian advance from the direction of **Ogaden**.
- *Ras* Desta had already been disastrously beat in the early 1936.
- Graziani captured Jigjiga and Harar on 7and 8 May respectively.
- Ethiopian war leaders in the south including *Dejjazmach* Mekonnen Endalkachew, *Dejjazmach* Balcha Safo and others also fought the Italians with courage.
- However, the Italo-Ethiopian war ended in victory of the Fascist forces.

- ***What factors contributed to the defeat of Ethiopians?***

The Patriotic Resistance Movement

- It has two major phases.
- The fist lasted until February 19.

Black Lion Organization

- It was formed in the summer of 1936.
- It consisted of military officers and civilian intellectuals.
- It fought Italians around Neqemte.
- It planned to liberate Addis Ababa.
- It was destroyed by Italians near Gojjeb.
- *Ras* Emiru was captured and deported to Italy.
- *Dejjazmach* Abera and *Dejjazmach* Asfawosen made another plan to liberate Addis.
- The moving spirit was reportedly *Abune* Pietros.

- But the operation failed due to lack of coordination.
- *Ras* Desta Damtew was combating against fascists.
- He was captured and executed in Feb. 1937. >>>>>>>
- On **19 February 1937**, Abraha Deboch and Moges Asgedom threw bombs at Graziani.
- As revenge, Italians carried out a wholesale massacre on Ethiopians in the city.
- It marked the beginning of the second phase of resistance.
- The second phase of resistance was characterized by guerrilla warfare.
- It was centered at rural areas.
- Patriots made series of surprise attacks on the enemy forces, camps and fortresses.

- They broke lines of Italian communications and ambushed convoys.
- True, some Ethiopian patriots had **anti-craft guns**.
- Contribution to the patriotic resistance came from:
  - Ordinary people
  - Inner patriots.
- Ethiopian **women** played a prominent role in case of inner patriots.
- There were, however, women that led their own troops in the battles of resistance.

What challenges did patriots face in their mission?

How did inner patriots contributed to full time patriots?

Liberation of Ethiopia

- After carefully weighing the Nazi success, Italy entered WWII on the side of Germany in June 1940.
- This event led to British military intervention in the liberation campaign of Ethiopia.
- Britain decided to attack Italy in East Africa.
- Emperor Haile-Sillase I returned from his exile to Sudan, British colony.
- He secured British military support.
- Haile-Sillase led **Gedeon Force**, Anglo-Ethiopian troops from the Sudan.
- Major General Sir William **Platt** attacked the Italians in **Eritrea**.

- Lieut. Gen. Sir Allan **Cunningham** attacked the Italians from British East Africa (**Kenya**).
- He controlled Addis Ababa on **6 April 1941**.
- Emperor Haile-Sillase re-entered his capital on **5 May** 1941.
- He regained the throne and officially hoisted Ethiopian flag.

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