

# History P210/1 Notes

## Instructions.

- Read, Write and Answer Questions Below Topics please

### THE 1941 ATLANTIC CHARTER AND AFRICAN NATIONALISM

By 1941, World War II had become fierce. It led to the financial decline of the Allied forces, who sought for help from the USA. Led by the British Prime Minister Churchill, Allied alliance met the US president Franklin Roosevelt at a battleship of the Atlantic Ocean. The result of their meeting was the US support to the Allied powers. Roosevelt and Churchill hence signed the Atlantic charter in August 1941 with Russian leader, Stalin as the observer. The charter did not only influence USA to intervene in World War II but the document had profound effect on colonial territories especially in Africa.

### Reference questions:

- a) Explain the influence of the Atlantic Charter on African nationalism
  - b) Examine the impact of the 1941 Atlantic Charter on the growth of African nationalism
1. The signing of the Atlantic charter increased African political awareness. Africans under colonial domination came to realise that independence was a right but not a favour from the colonialist; The awareness of Africans was caused by the articles of the charter which stated that at the end of (World War II) all nations should be given a right to choose their own government and politics freedoms to be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. This gave the African people something to look forward to. They came to believe that at the end of the war, freedom from the imperial (colonial) rule in would be given to Africa and just like the rest of the world.
  2. The Atlantic charter confirmed the legitimacy of African aspiration for independence. It made the African struggle for independence to be internationally recognised. All along, the African Agitation (demand) for their political rights had been considered as unconstitutional and rebellious by the colonial powers. Many Africans were therefore scared of joining the political struggle because they never wanted to be regarded rebels and to put their lives and professions to risk. Hence, the signing of the Atlantic charter defined the desire for African independence.
  3. The Atlantic charter proclaimed (declared) the restoration of the sovereign right and self-government to states, which had been deprived of them by force. This was a promise of independence to many colonial territories but Africans in particular. The Atlantic Charter showed Africans that the entire world was not against them. They came to realise that nations like America were against what was being done unto them by colonial rulers. This therefore increased their sense of nationalism to fight for their independence after the Second World War.
  4. The Atlantic charter also demanded for the respect of the right of all peoples of the world to choose a form of government that they wanted to live under. Many educated Africans interpreted this article as an opportunity that would lead them to fully participate in the political affairs of their states; thus influencing the desire of Africans for political freedom.
  5. The signing of the Atlantic charter made Britain to declare her commitment to respect democracy and the right of the colonial people to self-government. When the British Prime

Minister Winston Churchill signed the agreement, it was made clear to the people of Africa and the world at large that Great Britain wanted a world of peace, of sovereignty, of independence. This increased African hope for independence across British colonies.

6. It also influenced American commitment to supporting the decolonisation process in Africa. America knew where the Africans were coming from; due to the fact that they, were both colonised and ruled by a Britain for many years, American government of Roosevelt felt Africa's pain and wanted to do something about it. After signing the charter, Roosevelt set out to encourage African leaders to actively lead anti-colonial struggles. In 1943, the US-president met the Moroccan sultan-Muhammad and motivated him to engage in the anti-colonial crusade against the French. The result was witnessed when the sultan immediately spearheaded the struggle for Moroccan independence.
7. The signing of the Atlantic charter exposed the Whiteman's conspiracy: while addressing the house of commons; Winston claimed the charter applied to European nations under Nazism (Germany influence) including France that had been occupied by Germany in the early years of World War II. This caused colonial resentment among Africans. The African question was, **"If it was not right for Germans to govern Frenchmen, then how could it be right for Europeans to govern Africans?"** It is on such basis that Africans became strongly firm on agitating for self-rule from European colonialism.
8. The Atlantic charter opened up the gates for the USA and the Soviet Union (Russia) to intervene in World War II in 1941. The decision of these two powers to join the Allied powers led by Britain and France was to help end the war and ensure the commitment of Britain and other colonial masters in implementing the Atlantic Charter. The end of the Second World War led to the rise of the USA and the USSR as new super powers, replacing Britain and France that had colonial empires in Africa. Their anti-colonial attitude influenced the decolonisation process in Africa. **American and Russian governments became close allies of Africans in pressurising for the implementation of the 1941 Charter, which fastened the decolonisation process in Africa,**
9. The Atlantic charter led to the formation of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) in 1945. The UNO became the new custodian (keeper) of world peace and rights of man. Africans petitioned their colonial masters to the UNO for their failure to grant them political rights. Therefore, the new world peacekeeping body became a platform for African struggle for independence. UNO established a "Decolonisation Committee" and a "Trusteeship Council" that became instruments of encouraging the decolonisation of Africa.
10. The Atlantic charter influenced the adoption of the universal declaration of human rights (UDHR) in 1948. This new charter for Human Rights adopted many of the articles of the Atlantic Charter on independence and political freedoms. The UDHR re-affirmed the right of the colonial people to self-determination and right of all people to have the freedom to decide their own political destiny. The UDHR therefore became an inspiration to Africans to demand for their independence.
11. The charter influenced the activities of the Manchester Conference. During the fifth Pan African Conference in Manchester, the delegates passed a resolution demanding for the

implementation of the Atlantic Charter and cautioned the reluctance of European powers to implement the 1941 Charter that had been publicized across the world. Pan Africanists quoted the sovereign right to self-government of states under foreign domination, as declared in the Atlantic Charter. It therefore influenced the activities of the pan Africanists in the struggle against foreign domination.

12. Consequently, during the Bandung conference of 1955 in Indonesia, the Afro-Asian delegates were influenced by the Atlantic charter to declare their support to self-determination and equally demanded for the respect of the sovereign right of the colonial people to be free from colonial domination. Led by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the delegates at Bandung adopted the policy of non-alignment as part of their isolationist strategy against European powers that still maintained colonial territories in Asia and Africa.
13. The Atlantic charter influenced the activities of West African Students Union (WASU) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria. WASU was an association of all African students pursuing further education in Great Britain. Immediately after the end of World War II, Members of WASU visited the "British House of Commons" and presented to the British Parliamentarians a memorandum (document) entitled "THE ATLANTIC CHARTER AND BRITISH WEST AFRICA". These WASU members wanted substantial political reforms, which would lead to independence in British West Africa, as proclaimed in the charter. These African students continued organising demonstrations, political debates and writing newspaper articles through which they condemned the British policy of refusing to implement the Atlantic Charter to which they were a signatory.
14. The failure of the European colonial masters to implement the resolutions of the Atlantic charter influenced Africans to resort to military means of demanding for their independence. Africans in Kenya organised the MairMau uprising in 1952. In Algeria, political movements like the FLN were founded, which declared an armed struggle against the French colonial administration.

### **THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION (UNO) AND THE DECOLONISATION OF AFRICA**

The United Nations Organization (UNO) was formed in October 1945 in San Francisco, USA. Its formation originated from the principles of the Atlantic charter of 1941. The UNO was formed to replace the defunct League of Nations which failed to preserve world peace and respect for the rights of man. Unlike the League, the UNO was committed to solving the concern of big powers dominating weaker states in the name of imperialism.

The UNO therefore got determined to do away with imperialism (foreign domination), which had greatly promoted gross violation of human rights and hence contributed to the outbreak of World War II. The role of the UNO in the growth of African nationalism was hence as follows:

#### **Impact of the UNO on African Nationalism**

#### **Reference Questions:**

- a) **How did the formation of UNO inspire African struggle for independence?**
  - b) **Explain the contributions of the United Nations Organisation to the decolonisation of Africa**
  - c) **Assess the role of the UNO in the growth of African nationalism**
1. The United Nations Organisation immediately adopted the resolutions of the 1941 Atlantic charter and this influenced the growth of African nationalism. The Charter of the UNO

uncorporated most of the articles of the Atlantic charter on independence and sovereign rights. Notable of the resolutions was "Restoration of the Sovereign Rights and Self-government to those who were deprived of them." Major Powers of the UNO called upon foreign governments to give the colonial people in Africa an opportunity to claim for their sovereign equality and independent existence without foreign manipulations. This hence legitimised and formalised African aspirations for self-rule.

2. The UNO set up a "Decolonisation Committee" to ensure that all colonised people of the world were free from all forms of foreign domination. The major role of this committee was to attend to grievances of people and states that were under domination, and monitor political developments aimed at preparing these colonies for self-rule. The Decolonisation Committee sent visiting missions to African colonies like Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Somaliland and Libya to supervise independence arrangements and constitutional progress. The committee mounted pressure against European powers to dismantle their colonial empires in Africa and Asia
3. Consequently, the United Nations Organisation established the "Trusteeship Council" with the responsibility of preparing the mandated territories for independence. Mandated territories were the former German and Italian colonies, and all territories which had been put under the defunct League of Nations. "Chapter XI of the UNO-Charter obliged the Trustee-powers to put into account the political interests of the peoples and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions." The Council was therefore, tasked to supervise political and constitutional reforms in the mandated states as part of transformation towards self-rule. Hence African states like Tanganyika, Rwanda, Togo, Libya, Somaliland and Cameroon immediately independent. The council sent commissioner Pelt Adrian to prepare the Libyan independence constitution and in 1954, it attended to the TANU proposals for self-rule in Tanganyika. Thus independence was given to Libya (1951), Somaliland and Togo (1960), Cameroon and Tanganyika (1961), and Rwanda (1962).
4. The UNO issued the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter" (UDHR) in 1948, which inspired African agitation for independence. The Human Rights Declaration spelt out fundamental rights and freedoms of all peoples of the world. The rights and freedoms presented in the articles of the UDHR included freedoms of speech, association, assembly, press, fair representation and the sovereign right to independent existence, among others. African freedom fighters used the UDHR charter to rise up and agitate for their rights and freedoms deprived of them by European colonial masters.
5. The UNO declared the years from 1950 to 1960 as a decade (ten years) of decolonisation. One of the objectives of the UNO was total decolonisation and granting of sovereignty and independent existence to all peoples and states under foreign domination. The body hence gave dominating governments a timeline by which they had to initiate political developments which would prepare Africans for self-determination. Therefore, African agitation for political freedoms was influenced by the activities of the United Nations.
6. The United Nations Organisation provided African nationalists with a political platform to address their anti-colonial grievances; seek for political guidance and pressurize imperial powers to end their colonial domination. In 1955, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika was given

an opportunity to address the UN General Assembly and consequently demanded for immediate decolonisation of Tanganyika, which was realised later in 1961. In 1966, the SWAPO was allocated a permanent seat in the General Assembly of the UNO to represent the Namibian people, hence Kerina one of the Namibian nationalists took up the seat. Such UN efforts encouraged decolonisation of Africa.

7. The International Peacekeeping Body passed strong condemnatory resolutions and imposed strict embargoes and sanctions against stubborn foreign regimes who delayed to withdraw from their colonial territories. The regimes targeted by the UNO included the Portuguese colonial regimes in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, the apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia, and the UDI-regime of Ian Smith in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The condemnatory resolutions threatened the political image of foreign regimes in Africa while the sanctions and embargoes caused diplomatic, trade and economic setbacks (disadvantages). Whereas strong UN-condemnations encouraged nationalist uprisings in Africa, the diplomatic and economic sanctions humbled the foreign governments to initiate political and administrative reforms which led to self-rule in their colonial territories,
8. Consequently, the United Nations Organisation passed and emphasised the observation of Resolution 1515 on independence which had an impact of the growth of African nationalism. The resolution legitimised the right to independent existence of all peoples of the world and denounced all cases of foreign domination exercised against the colonial people. The provisions of Resolution 1515 were adopted by the liberation committee of the OAU and used them to condemn Britain for looking on as the minority whites declared themselves independent in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) at the expense of independence for majority Africans.
9. The UNO directly participated in the decolonisation process of Africa through influencing and observing independence discussions between foreign governments and African nationalist organisations. The United Nations initiated such roundtable discussions to ensure a peaceful transition from imperialism to majority rule. In 1974, the UNO sent its delegation to preside over the Alvor Peace Talks between the Portuguese government and Angolan, nationalists, which led to the decolonisation of Angola in 1975. The UNO was also instrumental in independence discussions in Rwanda, Eritrea, and multiracial Peace Talks in Southern Rhodesia (1978-80) South Africa (1990-94) and Sudan (2005-2011), which resulted into liberation of majority blacks from racism.
10. The United Nations General Assembly provided a platform for the consolidation of Afro-Asian solidarity. African and Asian delegates always found the opportunity to stand together and use one voice during the sessions of the General Assembly, as they condemned domination by western powers. African nationalists interacted with other nationalists from Asia and the Arab world. Out of this interaction, there was the formation of the Afro-Asian-Arab solidarity. This solidarity or unity enabled the Africans to get support from member states like India and China which helped them in the struggle for independence.
11. The United Nations worked closely with and through the OAU to ensure total independence for Africa. Most of the UN support to the African decolonisation process went through the

OAU. The UNO and the OAU collectively put pressure on foreign governments in Africa to initiate political reforms in their territories. The OAU used the UN-General Assembly to promote the African cause for complete independence. An African delegation consisting of foreign ministers of Liberia, Tunisia, Madagascar and Sierra Leone was commissioned by the OAU to speak at the meetings of the UN Security Council (UNSC), addressing the issue of genocide (mass killing) in Portuguese colonies,' which, attracted international attention against the atrocities of Portuguese colonialists in Africa, and paved way for self-rule in Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique.

12. The United Nations Organisation influenced African nationalism and decolonisation process through sending observer missions to monitor elections in different African colonies. Most of the independence elections in Africa were influenced by pressure from the UNO in its attempt to completely liquidate imperialism and bring an end to colonial domination in the world. UN Observer missions were witnessed to Algeria in 1962, in South West Africa (Namibia) in 1990, in Eritrea in 1993 and South Africa during their first historical multi-racial election in 1994, among others. The supervision given by the United Nations ensured peaceful transfer of instruments of power from foreign governments to natives, hence inspiring African independence.
13. The United Nation Organisation recognised African nationalist organisations (political parties and liberation movements), thus inspiring independence attainment. In 1966 the UN General Assenbly agreed to recognise the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) as the rightful representative of Namibian national interests. Many nationalist organisations consequently petitioned for the intervention of the UNO in favour of their nationalist agitations as a strategy to seek the international body's recognition. In the due course, the UNO morale boosted the struggle for African independence.
14. The UNO extended direct support to the African states struggling for independence. Financial military and logistical support was extended to liberation movements through the UN-Committee to spearhead nationalist agitations against foreign domination especially in Southern Africa. Beneficial organisations included the South West African Peoples Orgasnisation (SWAPO) of Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) of South African consequently, the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) sought for assistance from the UN-Security Council during their quest for self- rule. The UNO hence became an ally of the African liberation movement, which sped the Colonisation process.
15. The organisation promoted African nationalism by supporting consolidation of African independence. It condemned and intervened in civil wars which broke out in Africa. In 1960, the UNO worked to preserve the independence of a very young state of Congo Leopoldville (Zaire) by condemning the Katanga secessionist attempt, and went ahead to deploy peacekeepers in the country. The UN-mission intervened in the Sudanese civil war (1955-2005), Nigerian civil war of 1967 -70 in Angola (1975-2000) and Mozambique (1977-1992)

#### **THE 1944 BRAZZAVILLE FRENCH AFRICAN CONFERENCE:**

This was a meeting of senior French colonial officials. Governors General and military officers of French Equatorial Africa (French Congo); Madagascar (Malagasy) and French West African colonies. It was held between January and February 1944 in Brazzaville the Capital of French Equatorial Africa. The conference was organised by General Charles de Gaulle the French leader and presided over (chaired) by Mr. Pleven the commissioner of colonies. Africans had

no delegates to represent them at the conference, but one black man, Felix Eboue from French Guyana attended.

**The Brazzaville conference was aimed at the following:**

- a. Thank African French colonies for supporting France against German occupation during World War II
- b. Lay strategies of diverting Africans under French rule from the idea of self-rule. The Second World War had created political consciousness or wind of change prompting Africans to demand for independence
- c. France was threatened by American anti-colonial activities in the Maghreb region (North Africa) especially in Morocco, hence the need to deal with American anti-colonial policy
- d. Lay strategies of orienting Africans into managing their own affairs
- e. It was to safeguard French interests in Africa and preserve French colonies from outside influence
- f. To plan for economic development of French colonies
- g. De Gaulle also targeted asking Africans for more war contribution<sup>^</sup> since World War II was not yet over, (This was only by promising Africans political changes) ,

**NOTE:**

**The conference was not aimed at preparing Africans for decolonisation hence its positive impact** on Africa was by accident. The final resolution at Brazzaville clearly stated that, "The works of France in her African colonies have no consideration of autonomy (independence) and self-government in near future..."

**Impact of the Brazzaville Conference on the decolonisation of Africa**

**Reference Questions**

- a) **How did the calling of the Brazzaville Conference in 1944 influence the collapse of French rule in Africa?**
- b) **Assess the impact of the 1944 Brazzaville Conference on the delonisation of Africa**
- c) **Of what impact was Brazzaville Conference on African nationalism?**
  1. The Brazzaville Conference increased African representation in the French Parliament (National Assembly) in Paris. Delegates at the conference resolved that all colonial peoples deserved to represent themselves in the Paris Assembly hence from 1945, French African territories were each required to send two representatives to the French National Assembly. The resolution of Africans representing themselves in the French Assembly was later included in the constitution of the French Fourth Republic. African opportunity to represent themselves in the French Parliament gave them a platform for political agitations geared towards self-determination.
  2. The conference led to the enfranchising of Africans in French colonial territories. The French colonial administrators agreed to grant Africans the right to vote for their representatives to the French Assembly and local parliaments with less colonial influence. As a result, one million Africans in the French colonies got empowered to participate in the election of representatives of their choice like Felix Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast and Leopold Sedar Senghol of Senegal. The rewarding of Africans with voting rights prompted them to demand for more political rights including their sovereign right to self-determination.

3. The conference provided for the establishment of native assemblies (territorial parliaments) in the French African colonies. These native or local parliaments empowered Africans to play local politics through electing local representatives to discuss solutions to problems created by the French colonial system. In the same way, French colonies witnessed political growth as many political organisations were created to compete for political participation and representation in the French Assembly and local parliaments.
4. Consequently, Africans were given civil rights like freedom of association which enabled them to form mass political associations that actively involved in the decolonisation process. These modern political associations were formed either at regional or country level. They included the "Independents d'outre Mer" (IOM) and the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA). The RDA was formed in 1946 with representative branches in Equatorial and French West Africa and was very instrumental in influencing political concessions (changes). Other parties included Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (BDS) formed in 1948, Union Soudanaise (US), Parti Démocratique de la Guinée (PDG) founded in 1947.
5. The Brazzaville conference elevated (promoted) the status of Africans in French territories which inspired African nationalism. The French authorities agreed to accord (grant) Africans in French colonies equal status as Frenchmen and also recognise them as equals to French citizens. The abolition of French harsh colonial policies and the granting of Africans voting rights and representation in the French parliament, as well as spreading French civilisation in Africa, were all steps towards granting Africans equal status as Frenchmen. The intention of granting Africans equal status as Frenchmen was aimed at diverting their attention from demanding self-rule but instead, it exposed the weaknesses of French rule, causing African resistance. Out of 16 million Africans in French West Africa, only 1 million could vote and of the 622 seats in French Parliament, Africans were given only 13 seats.
6. The Brazzaville conference denounced (called to an end) French atrocities (bad colonial policies) which the French government claimed had tarnished the image of France. The conference cautioned the colonial authorities in French, Equatorial and West Africa to reverse the harsh policies in order to win back African trust. Consequently, the policies of forced labour and arbitrary (arrest) without trial which characterised French colonialism in Africa were officially abolished. The Africans had suffered because of these bad policies and therefore, when they were abolished, it became a major step towards restoring African freedoms and later influencing Africans to agitate for independence.
7. The conference passed a financial resolution to promote investment and socio-economic development of French West African colonies. Consequently, in 1946, the French government formed the "Fund for Investment and socio-economic Development of Overseas Territories" (FIDES) to spearhead investment projects in her colonies. Between 1946 and 1957, France had invested about 425 million pounds in West Africa in transport (roads), education and health. Such developments facilitated the road to independence in French colonies of Guinea, Senegal, and Ivory Coast among others.
8. The Brazzaville conference recommended the extension of French civilisation to French



Africa through western education and French language. The French government instructed the colonial office to establish educational institutions: in French colonies through which free education would be extended to Africans. The French civilisation programme facilitated the rise of African elites who later engaged in political activities aimed at achieving self-government.

9. The French delegates at the conference resolved to change the status of the French territories in Africa from provinces to colonies. The conference abolished the use of "overseas territories" in regard to French colonies. The status of African colonies as overseas territories or provinces had destroyed all African hopes of regaining their lost freedoms through constitutional means, referring to French territories as colonies restored a ray of hope of Africans finally becoming free independent from French domination..
10. De Gaulle's speech in Brazzaville was of political influence to French Africa he said, It is France's duty to raise the Africans to a level where they will be capable of participating in their own country." He therefore commended Governors General in French colonies to recruit Africans in the different administrative departments as well as the civil service. Many Africans got appointed to administrative offices as clerks and administrators, while others served in the civil service. This colonial arrangement exposed Africans to leadership and service which became a steppingstone to agitate for bigger political roles in their respective states, thus shaking the pillars of French rule.
11. It laid the foundation for the De Gaulle referendum of 1958, which increased hope for independence in French West Africa. Aware of the political agitations across Africa, General de Gaulle decided to determine the fate of French rule in Africa. He began by influencing the formation of the Federation of French colonies of West Equatorial Africa. In 1958, de Gaulle organised a plebiscite (referendum) in which French colonies of West Africa would decide to be decolonised and lose French support, or remain under the French Federation and continue receiving French moral, financial and technical support. Sekou Toure led the Guineans to vote in favour of independence and on October 2, 1958, Guinea's independence was declared. Guinea's brevity inspired the independence of other French colonies of West Africa.
12. The unfulfilled promises made at the conference inspired radical activities of Africans towards demanding for independence. The French colonial unrests continued even after the resolutions at Brazzaville. French colonial authorities continued harassing and persecuting African politicians through arrests and shooting masses attending political rallies. Forced labour was only abolished on paper but mistreatment of African labour continued especially in the army and on plantations. Africans were hence convinced that French rule was dictatorial which increased their determination to demand for political freedoms.

### **THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIA TO THE DECOLONISATION OF AFRICA**

The connection between Africa and India sets from similar colonial backgrounds, especially with the African British colonies: India and British Africa formed the biggest part of the British colonial empire that existed until the second half of the nineteenth century. India's struggle against colonialism of the British took almost a century (about ninety years, from 1857 to 1947). The influence of India on African nationalism and the decolonisation process was determined by two great nationalists, first Mahatma Gandhi and later Jawaharlal Nehru,

### **Reference Questions-**

- a) Examine the impact of India's independence on the development of African nationalism**
- b) Discuss the contribution of India to the decolonisation of Africa,**
- c) Assess the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the growth of African nationalism**

1. The anti-colonial tactics used by Mahatma Gandhi helped to shape the strategy of anti-colonial struggle in Africa. During the period of Indian independence struggle, Gandhi used the principles of Satyagraha (or passive resistance) through non-violent methods. African nationalists and (freedom fighters) like Kwame Nkrumah of The Gold Coast, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, Albert Luthuli of South Africa and Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria adopted the policy of non-violence during the struggle against foreign domination. The non-violent methods also known as Gandhism involved boycotts on trade and colonial products, strikes, demonstrations and sometimes disruption of traffic flow in towns by sitting in the middle of the roads. Gandhi himself encouraged Africans to adopt the non-violence spirit if their efforts of struggling for independence were to be rewarding.
2. The activities of the Indian Congress Party (ICP) influenced African nationalists to form political movements. Many educated Africans especially from West Africa began mobilizing themselves into associations to struggle for political freedoms. In 1920, during a conference of nationalists of British West Africa in Accra, Joseph Casely Hayford, of the Gold Coast led other nationalists from Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to establish the National Congress of British West Africa. The congress was formed as a pressure group for demanding political reforms from the British colonialists, it demanded for more African representatives in the Legco voted by Africans themselves. Political organisations like the TANU of Tanganyika, the GPP of Gold Coast, the NCNC of Nigeria and the UNC of Uganda were all established due to inspiration of the ICP. Nkrumah himself admired the ICP to the extent that he adopted the ICP cap as the symbol of his party, the CPP.
3. Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi inspired the struggle against racism in South Africa. The principles of Satyagraha (passive resistance) were begun by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa where he lived before he was deported back to India by the Afrikaner leaders. Gandhi fought against racial injustices in South Africa and denial of equal opportunities to Africans, Indians and coloureds. Gandhi began the strategy of strikes, protest marching, civil breach of unfair laws and demonstrations, as a means of attaining racial justice such methods were further promoted by Xuma, Albert Luthuli and continued by Nelson Mandela; Walter Sisulu, Steve Biko and Mbeki. He wrote his popular publication "The Green Pamphlet" in 1896 while in South Africa. Through this book, Gandhi attacked racism and oppression of non-Europeans. Prominent Pan Africanists like Kwame Nkrumah and DuBois paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi for starting the fight against racism in South Africa through non violence and non cooperation.
4. Independent India provided massive moral and financial assistance to African nationalists which became useful in the course of the struggle for freedom in Africa. The Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru committed himself to the 'African cause by promising that, he will assist African to achieve their independence. He established an "African Fund" through which money grants were extended to freedom fighters through the Indian community in the respective African states. Immediate beneficiaries were the East African colonies like Kenya. The Indian financial aid to African nationalist movements added a brick to the success story of African decolonization process.

5. Independent India offered education scholarships to African students, which increased on the number of African elites that struggled for African independence. India's Nehru opened Indian Universities and other institutions of higher learning to African students. East Africa was most blessed with a number of Kenyans and Ugandans attending Indian education. African students interacted with Indian students which shaped their political development. They also got exposed to Gandhi's nationalist activities. Kirunda Kivejinja and John Kakonge of Uganda studied from India. On his return to Uganda, John Kakonge became a founding nationalist of the Uganda people's Congress and the first Secretary General of the party.
6. India had direct impact on nationalism in the Gold Coast. In the late 1940's, Nkrumah encouraged his people to embrace the Indian independence movement which had enabled Indians to defeat British colonial rule. Nkrumah customised Gandhism as "Positive action." He adopted the use of newspapers by establishing the Accra Evening News and the Cape Coast News Daily, through which the people of the Gold Coast de-campaigned the exploitative British rule, Nkrumah also borrowed the use of education campaigns and constitutional means like non co-operation with colonial government.
7. The decolonisation of India laid the foundation for the collapse of British colonial Empire. India and Pakistan formed the largest single British Empire and the most important of all British colonial territories,' hence granting her independence in 1947 was a shock to the whole world. It showed British commitment to decolonisation in both Asia and Africa. "India and the British colonies in Africa shared anti-colonial sentiments of racial inequality, land grabbing and economic exploitation of native resources." India's independence therefore gave a ray of hope to Africans that decolonisation was inevitable. It was thus very impossible for the British colonial office to deny Africans independence after serving India.
8. India's Jawaharlal Nehru served as a political counselor to African freedom fighters. Many African nationalists sought for political guidance from India after her independence. Upon granting independence to India, the British claimed that Africans were politically immature to receive independence. This forced Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast, Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, to consult with Jawaharlal Nehru to enhance their political development. In 1960, the Indian Prime Minister invited Uganda's Apollo Milton Obote to Bangalore India and coached him on political leadership. Nehru maintained contact with Kenyatta and through exchanging letters and in 1948 he appointed Apa B. Pant as Indian High Commissioner to Nairobi whose duties included providing legal advice to nationalists in Kenya.
9. Consequently, India militarised African nationalism. First, India provided military weapons to Kenya during the Mau-Mau uprising, and later provided a military solution against Portuguese colonialism. In 1962, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared a military attack on the Portuguese presence by driving them out of Goa using Indian tanks and artillery. Africans in Guinea Bissau and Mozambique were inspired to declare war against Portuguese colonial rule in 1963 and 1964 respectively, just like Angola had done earlier on in 1961. African freedom fighters in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia combined Gandhism with Nehru's military approach during their struggle against white domination.

10. Independent India used her position in the UN-General Assembly to demand for immediate African decolonisation. India led a group of member countries who voted for an end to colonialism throughout the world. These members of the United Nations came to be known as Non-aligned countries. Since joining the United Nations Organisation, India directed pressure on different departments of the body like the Decolonisation and the Committee Trusteeship Council. India's pressure to the Decolonisation Committee led to independence of Ghana while her influence on the Trusteeship Council enabled the timely decolonisation of Tanganyika and Italian Somaliland. India's voice in the United Nations therefore, became an important instrument against colonialism and racism.
11. In 1956, the government of Jawaharlal Nehru encouraged the censorship (banning) of racist films against the African race. The government ordered the Indian Central Film Board to deny license to all films which despised (abused) the image of the African person or race as primitive. Nehru's gesture (policy) was aimed at maintaining good relations with the people of African continent, and identifying with them in their trying moments as they struggled for independence. Some of the films banned or censored in India included, African Adventure, Snows of Kilimanjaro, Below the Sahara and The African Queen, among others.
12. Independent India also influenced African nationalism through encouraging the principle of Non-Alignment or positive neutrality. One of the aims of Non-Alignment was- the immediate decolonisation of the continents of Asia and Africa. Jawaharlal Nehru advocated for positive neutrality of weaker nations mostly from Asia and Africa as a step towards political freedom and economic strength. Non-Alignment emphasised non-cooperation of its members with either the Western Capitalist or Eastern Communist powers. It also encouraged a wide distance between independent states and their former colonial masters. India masterminded the first conference of Non-Aligned states in the Indonesian city of Bandung. This conference held in 1955 assured Africans of Asian support and laid the foundation for the Afro-Asian solidarity (cooperation). The Bandung conference therefore represented the beginning of the final phase of Africa's progress towards independence.
13. India took advantage of her position in the Commonwealth of Nations Organisation to put pressure on Britain and cause her to enforce total decolonisation in Africa. Soon after her independence, Jawaharlal Nehru the Indian Prime Minister influenced the British government to withdraw from the rest of British colonial territories of Asia and Africa. This eventually led to the independence of the British colonies in Africa like the Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya and Nyasaland (Malawi).
14. India sold to Africa Gandhi's policy of using Christianity against colonial exploitation. During the independence struggle of India, Mahatma Gandhi used Christianity and the Biblical teachings to condemn colonialism and agitate for equality and liberty which the British colonialists had denied to the Indians. The success of this strategy in India inspired African freedom fighters like Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Bishop Sithole Ndabaningi of Southern Rhodesia and Arch-bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in their campaigns against white racism and colonialism.
15. Gandhi's personality also set a good example to the African nationalists. He was a very good leader and willing to sacrifice himself on behalf of his people, and for the sake of

independence. As the leader of the independence movement in India, he inspired many African nationalists to borrow his trend of leadership against colonial rule. Examples of African leaders inspired by Gandhi's character included Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika and Nelson Mandela of South Africa among others. Mandela's refusal of freedom offered to him by apartheid dictator P.W. Botha in 1985 was in true sense of a nationalist shaped by Gandhi's dedication to the national cause of his people.

### **THE ITALIAN INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF ETHIOPIA (1935-41)**

The Italo-Ethiopian conflict of 1936-41 was a war between Benito Mussolini's Italy and Ethiopia led by Emperor Haile Selassie. The war broke out on October 3, 1935 when Italy attacked Ethiopia. At the time of Italian aggression, Ethiopia and Liberia were the only two states in Africa that had survived European imperialism. The invasion of Ethiopia by Italy was an extension of the scramble and epilogue (conclusion) to the partition of Africa.

Ethiopia had defeated an earlier Italian aggression at Adowa in 1896 during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. The Ethiopian effort to hold on to her 2000 years independence was stopped in 1936 when she succumbed (gave in) to Italian defeat and eventual occupation on May 6, 1936. Italy therefore violated the political virginity of Ethiopia by controlling the Abyssinian country for a period of five years.

The rise of Fascist Mussolini through the "famous march to Rome of September 27-30, 1922 and later establishing a dictatorial regime in 1923 created a platform for Italian desire to revenge the Adowa humiliation, and consequently re-establish a new Roman Empire by controlling Ethiopia.

The opportunity came in 1935 and was provoked by the following factors:

#### **Reference questions:**

**a) Account for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935**

**b) "Mussolini was primarily responsible for the 1935-41 Italo-Ethiopian crisis." Discuss**

**c) How far was the Whiteman's conspiracy responsible for the Italian occupation on Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941?**

#### **1. Mussolini's desire to revive Italian imperialism (colonial domination)**

The invasion of Ethiopia was due to Mussolini's desire to restore Italian domination. The emergence of Benito Mussolini came with his increased ambition of restoring Italian past glory that had been built on the aggressive activities of the defunct (former) Roman Empire. "Mussolini admired and praised the success of the Italian past during the Roman Empire and hence wanted to revive such glories of the Roman Empire." The Italian Dictator therefore wanted to re-establish a modern Roman Empire by extending Roman influence outside Italy, beginning with Ethiopia. He gave the people of Italy a very ambitious plan which included worshipping the Italian state and acquisition of new territories through a forceful and aggressive foreign policy.

#### **2. The anti-Italian policy of Haile Selassie**

Benito Mussolini attacked the Ethiopian monarchy to revenge against Haile Selassie's anti-Italian policy. Since his rise to power as the Military Governor of Harar Province, Ras Tafari adopted a diplomatic policy which isolated Italy. He completely ignored Italy in Ethiopian foreign relations. Even after signing the 1928 Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship, Ras Tafari continued isolating Italy, which frustrated Mussolini. In 1932, Emperor Selassie recruited foreign advisers from other European powers except Italy. He also appointed economic and

military experts from Sweden, France, Switzerland, Belgium as well as the USA. Mussolini took it personal hence the 1935 attack on Ethiopia was to enable Italy have influence in Ethiopia.

### **3. Italian ambition to revenge against their humiliating defeat at Adowa**

The desire by Benito Mussolini to avenge the humiliation suffered by Italy at the Battle of Adowa (Adwa) caused the war against Ethiopia. The Italian Kingdom had wished to capture and add Abyssinia to her African colonial empire which led to the outbreak of the first Italo-Abyssinian war between 1894 and 1896. The Italian force commanded by General Oreste Baratieri was defeated by Ethiopia at the Battle of Adowa on March 1, 1896. The people of Italy had not forgotten such humiliating defeat that did not only leave Abyssinia independent but also kept haunting them for years; Mussolini resurrected the Italian ambition of revenging against Abyssinia with enough confidence that an attack against Ethiopia could arouse the patriotic of Italians towards removing the shameful scar of Adowa.

### **4. Need to form the United Italian East African Empire**

Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935 with hope of establishing a united Italian East African Empire. During the scramble and partition of Africa, Italy acquired Eritrea and Somaliland, which she wanted to link up by establishing a railway line. Both Italian colonies were near Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and were at the same time very impoverished compared to Ethiopia, hence of less importance to Italy. Mussolini wished to improve on Italian position in Africa by conquering Ethiopia and joining it with Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. Emperor Haile Selassie came to be an obstacle to Mussolini's dream empire as he opposed the railway line passing through Ethiopia. Mussolini therefore found it necessary to annex Ethiopia, add her to Eritrea and Somaliland, so as to effectively establish the United Italian East African Empire.

### **5. Mussolini's determination to disgrace Ethiopia and end her pride**

The pride of the Ethiopian state of 2000 years of self-rule prompted Italy to attack Ethiopia. By the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, most of African continent had been shared and controlled by European powers. The two independent exceptions that survived colonialism were the young Republic of Liberia on the West African Atlantic Coast, created and supervised by the US-government since 1822, and the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) Empire in the Horn of Africa, whose sovereignty was confirmed after her defeat of Italy in the 1896 Adowa Battle. Since the rule of Emperor Menelik II, the Ethiopian Empire was proudly isolating Italy in its relations with Europe especially on matters of diplomacy and military alliances. Mussolini's desire to end the arrogance of the Ethiopian government and disgrace the independent Ethiopian Empire made the Italo-Ethiopian war inevitable.

### **6. The rise of fascist Mussolini and his desire to spread fascism**

The emergence of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his fascist ideology led to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Benito Mussolini developed the political ideology of fascism as means to help restore the social, economic, and cultural life of his country. He formed the National Fascist Party (PNF) with an aim of promoting military dictatorship, and this shaped his rigid military character. His coming to power led to the acceleration of fascism that promoted the ideology of survival of the fittest and the domination of weaker nations by powerful ones. The desire to spread fascism beyond Italian boundaries made Mussolini to look at Ethiopia as a possible venue.

### **7. Mussolini's ambition to have full control over port Massawa and Assab**

The need to have full control over Massawa and Assab caused the Italian attack on Ethiopia. Port Massawa was under joint control of the British and Italians, who most of the times failed to agree on patent issues regarding trade on the port. The port combined trade activities among the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. It exported agricultural products, especially nuts, coffee and hides. The British accessed Port Massawa and Assab from Sudan and through Ethiopia. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia was therefore to claim full control of

Ethiopia, deny the British access to ports thereby eliminating their interests in these ports.

### **8. The role of the 1934 Walwal incident**

The immediate cause of the Second Italo-Abyssinian war was the 1934 Walwal incident. This incident resulted from the ongoing conflict between the Kingdom of Italy and the Empire of Ethiopia. In 1930, Italy created a military fort of Italian and Somali officers at the Walwal (Welwel) oasis in the Ethiopian territory of Ogaden bordering Italian territory of Somaliland. Fighting occurred at Walwal in December involving Somali officers in the Italian forces and Ethiopian army of about 6000 men. Two Italian fighter planes bombed and destroyed the Ethiopian camp leading to the final conquest of Walwal. Mussolini used the incident to make unrealistic demands to Selassie which included a written apology, an indemnity (compensation) of about 20000 US dollars and a delegation of Ethiopian officials to salute the Italian flag at Walwal. Haile Selassie rejected the demands of Mussolini, who hence, used it as an excuse to attack Ethiopia the following year,

### **9. Need to civilize Ethiopia**

Italy claimed she attacked Ethiopia due to a civilisation mission. Mussolini claimed that the invasion of Ethiopia was not an aggression but rather it was aimed at promoting European civilization in a primitive and barbaric Ethiopian state. He went ahead to attack the League of Nations for asserting that he had a greedy heart which made him to invade Ethiopia a member of international Peace Keeping body. Mussolini questioned how the League tribunal could condemn him for civilising Ethiopia a backward and uncultured nation that deserved to be civilized.

### **10. The unfairness of the Versailles Peace Settlement**

The outcomes of the 1919 Versailles peace settlement influenced Italy to attack Ethiopia in 1935. The settlement was made at a conference convened by the victor powers of World War I led by Britain and France. The Versailles settlement was aimed at finding means of punishing Germany and her allies and to reward the allies of victor powers. Germany was hence made to lose her colonial possessions including the African territory of South West Africa (Namibia), Rwanda – Urundi, Togoland, Cameroon and Tanganyika. These were shared among the Victor allies. Italy's hope of getting more territories under her control met a dead end as she came out of the conference empty handed. This later compelled Mussolini to attack Ethiopia as a means of compensating for the loss at Versailles.

### **11. Mussolini's ambition to demonstrate Italian military strength**

The desire by Italy to exhibit her military strength made 1935 Italo Ethiopian war inevitable. Italy was regarded a military power since her wars of unification but the shameful defeat at the hands of Ethiopia during the Battle of Adowa in 1896 and the poor performance of the Italian army during World War I greatly affected her military prestige. Italy hence wanted her military strength to be felt once again. The chance came with the rise of Mussolini to power. "Mussolini had the determination to raise the military prestige of Italy in the eyes of other powers and that possible only if he was able to show that his army was not only strong enough to protect Italian boundaries but also to conquer other territories." He embarked on modifying the military sector by manufacturing sophisticated arms and ammunitions as well as training the Italian troops in modern warfare and military tactics. Hence Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in order to demonstrate Italian military might to the whole world.

### **12. Mussolini's allegation of Ethiopian Planning to attack Eritrea and Somaliland**

The alleged intention of Ethiopia to expel Italy from her colonies of Eritrea and Somali-land influenced Italy to invade Ethiopia. Soon after his coronation as the emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie embarked on modernising the Ethiopian forces as fast as the Empire's resources could allow. Mussolini suspected the re-organisation of the Ethiopian army as a plan by Selassie to attack the Italian colonies in the Horn of Africa. The Italian spokesperson had to

comment that Ethiopia was arming her troops in an updated European manner. This fear made the Italians to appeal to the Italian government and Mussolini responded by attacking Ethiopia.

### **13. Impact of economic crisis in Italy**

Europe after World War I influenced Mussolini to attack Ethiopia. The after reflects of World War I were a multiple of economic problems in Europe between 1929 and 1932, and this situation came to be known as the economic crisis. This economic situation severely affected every state in Europe but the condition of Italy was the unhappy. The war if: a high cost of living in Italy with a budget deficit of over 12,000 million Lire (\$228000 million) which made it impossible for the government to ensure proper economic planning. The Italian currency (Lire) was depreciated, unemployment had greatly increased due to collapse of industries, and many Italians were retrenched from their jobs while wages of those who employed were cut down. Italy had an adverse balance of trade as her import volumes compared to the exports. Such poor economic atmosphere made Mussolini to look at the virgin resources of Ethiopia as the only hope that would stabilise Italy's collapsing economy hence the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

### **14. The unfair Italian share at Berlin**

The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 had an effect on the outbreak of Italy Ethiopian conflict. The Conference was convened in Germany, organised by Bismarck the German Chancellor. At Berlin, Africa was partitioned like a piece of cake among the European colonial powers. Italy paid the price of entering the colonial race much later than other powers by acquiring the semi-arid territories of Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland. Her joining the colonial business late was due to lack of military and industrial resources like other powers. The Italian dissatisfaction at Berlin influenced her attempt to conquer Abyssinia which failed by 1896. With such unfair share at Berlin, Italy kept alive her dream of controlling Ethiopia, and the opportunity came in 1934-35 during the time of Dictator Mussol

### **15. The weakness of the League of Na**

The weakness of the League of Nations contributed to the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935. The League was formed on 1920 as an international peace keeping body. The major aim was to discourage further aggressions of one state over the other. In the charter of the League, it was stated that no country was to attack another member without a strong reason and if so, the issue would be amicably settled. The League however provided for free entry and exit hence giving Italy an opportunity to withdraw from the league. By the time of Italian aggression on Ethiopia, Italy was no longer a member of the League.

### **16. Japanese occupation of Manchuria**

Influence of Japanese invasion of the Chinese industrial province of Manchuria made Italy to attack Ethiopia in 1935. In September 1931, the Japanese Kwantung army invaded and occupied Manchuria, whose large agricultural sector turned her into the food basket of the Far East. Japan was heavily affected by the economic crisis hence looked at Manchuria as a territory to resettle part of her unemployed populace and invest her capital, a source of raw materials for her industries, a new market to expand her foreign trade and a source of wealth due to its timber resources and minerals. The major Powers of the League showed a negative reaction when China called for support and instead agreed that Manchuria was of military and strategic importance to Japan that also had a responsibility to protect the lives and property of Japanese in the province. Mussolini found a great excuse to invade Ethiopia well knowing that the principle of collective security was never upheld by the league.

### **17. Impact of the 1934 Stresa Front (Anglo-French conspiracy)**

The Stresa Front and the Italo-Anglo - French alliance gave Mussolini morale to invade Ethiopia. The Stresa Front was an agreement made during a tripartite conference in a small Italian town of Stresa. It was signed on April 14, 1934 between French Prime Minister Pierre



Laval, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, and Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. The three states represented at Stresa, France, Britain and Italy signed the treaty as an alliance against the German rearmament plan, which threatened peace and security in Europe. Mussolini discussed with British delegates his plans of making Italy 'great, respected and feared' through the invasion and conquest of Abyssinia and ultimately create an all-powerful Italian Empire in East Africa. Benito Mussolini believed that the signing of the "Stresa Front" would mean Britain and France would not interfere in the Italo-Ethiopian crisis. This encouraged him to organise a military invasion on Ethiopia in 1935.

### **1.8. The weakness of Ethiopian army**

The refusal to sell military hardware to Ethiopia convinced Italy to attack her in 1935. Britain and France refused to sell weapons to Ethiopia at a time when Italy was deploying troops along the Ethiopian border with Somali-land. Even though Selassie had embarked on modernising the Ethiopian army, Ethiopia could not build a formidable force without acquiring modern weapons.

The arms embargo (restriction on the sale of armaments) to Italy and Ethiopia favoured the former (Italy) who manufactured her own arms and ammunitions. This biased dishonesty of the European powers gave courage to Italy to attack Ethiopia, as she was aware of Ethiopian military weakness.

#### **1. Need for territories to resettle Italian desperate population**

The desire by Italy to acquire new territories for her surplus population led to the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Italy was in need of colonies to resettle hundreds of thousands of her people who were lacking work in their fatherland, Mussolini was concerned that Italians were no longer able to migrate abroad on account of the limitations imposed on immigration by other European countries. He claimed that Italians were hungry for land because they were abundant, productive and creative. The Ethiopian highlands had good and favourable climatic conditions with fertile arable soils conducive for Italian settlement and agriculture. Such influenced Italy to invade in order to realise economic activities and empower the Italian economy.

#### **2. Desire to exploit Ethiopia**

The conquest of Abyssinia would put the country's economic resources into Italian hands. Mussolini was eager to take up control of the all mineral resources in the mountainous country of Abyssinia. The Italian desire for raw materials for her industries and market for her finished goods also made it necessary for the invasion and occupation of Ethiopia. The high Ethiopian plateau was conducive for coffee, tea, nuts and tobacco growing. Ethiopia was also famous for exporting animal hides due to a larger percentage of her population engaging in pastoralism. Mussolini confirmed Italian desire to exploit Ethiopia by claiming that Eritrea and Somaliland lacked the economic potential that other European powers enjoyed in their colonies.

#### **3. Support from German's Hitler**

German support to Mussolini in his conquest of Abyssinia made the war between Italy and Ethiopia inevitable. In 1934, Mussolini and the great powers of France and Britain opposed Hitler's ambitious desire to violate the Versailles settlement and annex Austria to Germany. Austrians were also Germans but at Versailles, the victor powers of World War I decided to leave Austria independent because the statesmen did not want to create a strong and powerful Germany, which would be a source of danger to peace and security in Europe. Mussolini was drawn to Hitler during the Italo - Ethiopian conflict, which convinced him that Germany was a better friend than France and Britain. Whereas the big powers of the world opposed Mussolini for planning an attack on Ethiopia and imposed economic sanctions on Italy, Hitler stood with Mussolini and supported him to occupy Ethiopia.

#### **4. Impact of the Hoare-Laval Pact**

The Hoare-Laval Pact was a secret proposal made to Benito Mussolini in December 1935 by British Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare and French Prime Minister Pierre Laval to end the Second Italo - Abyssinian War. Hoare and Laval offered to partition Abyssinia to enable the Italian dictator achieve his goal of turning Abyssinia into an Italian colony. This support to Mussolini was aimed at preventing him from allying with Hitler. By this pact, Italy would gain the best parts of the provinces of Ogaden and Tigray, with economic influence all over the southern region of Abyssinia. Emperor Selassie was to retain control over only the parts of thenorth. Mussolini had agreed to the pact because he wanted to end the Abyssinian war which had continued due to determined nationalistic resistance of the Ethiopians. Even though the Hoare Laval Plan was not successful, it assured Mussolini of Anglo-French backing, which encouraged him to have full control of Ethiopia (Abyssinia).

#### **Please note:**

The Hoare-Laval Pact only confirmed Italian occupation of Ethiopia, but not the outbreak of the war. It was signed in December 1935] two months after the war had broken out.

#### **Impact of the Italo Ethiopian war**

##### **Reference questions-**

- a) Assess the impact of the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935-41
- b) How did the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 affect the people of Ethiopia?

#### **Negative effects**

1. Ethiopian resistance was crushed as the Italian troops finally captured the Ethiopian capital which ended the 2000 years of Ethiopian independence. By January 1936, the people of Ethiopia had been decisively defeated; however, the Ethiopian army managed to resist the Italian attack for about a few more months but finally gave in by May 1936 when the Italian army commanded my General Pietro Badoglio entered the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.
2. Consequently, the advancement of Italian troops to Addis Ababa led to the abdication and flight of Emperor Haile Selassie to exile in London through Djibouti. Emperor Haile Selassie had returned to Addis Ababa in April, the first time since the outbreak of the war. Selassie fled into exile on May 2, 1936 to escape possible capture by the Italian invading troops, and to solicit for external support and international sympathy that would enable him regain his Ethiopian throne. His family and several of his closest associates accompanied him. The loss of the empirical throne by Emperor Selassie led to a leadership vacuum in Ethiopia that dealt a final blow to the Ethiopian forces.
3. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia was a sign of humiliation to the Ethiopian monarch. It was a sign of naked aggression on an internationally recognised sovereign state. The once African symbol of dignity and freedom now fell to the Italian aggressors. The occupation of Ethiopia exposed the military weakness of the imperial regime of Haile Selassie, whose economic constraints could not sustain the resistance against Italy. The Ethiopian reputation built by Emperor Menelik II declined with Italian success over Italy in 1936. It was a sounding success to Benito Mussolini who inspired the Italian revenge of the Adowa (Adwa) defeat of 1896.
4. The war led to loss of lives and subsequent destruction of property. The use of poisonous gas and aerial bombing left the villages ablaze where Ethiopians suffered heavy casualties. Many of the victims were innocent women and children. Soldiers, elites, peasants and

priests also perished in the Italo-Ethiopian war.

5. The conflict caused and exposed divisions among Ethiopians. The grievances that were held against the Amharic tribe (Selassie's origin) by other tribes like the Galla, Sidona and Somali due to the tribal tendencies held by the Emperor's government made the other tribes to support Italian forces against the Ethiopian national army. Such gross disunity influenced the Galla to fight the Amharic, and the Italians to bribe the Ethiopians to identify the operation areas of the Ethiopian army. The Ethiopian army officials of Galla origin always led their forces into Italian ambushes.
6. The conflict ushered in a political crisis that contributed to the refugee crisis in the horn of Africa and the emergence of internally displaced people in Ethiopia. This refugee crisis exploded to the neighbouring states of Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea where many Ethiopians sought for asylum as Italy occupied Ethiopia.
7. On defeating Ethiopia, the Italians established their imperial rule. The Italian occupation brought Emperor Haile Selassie and the Royal Imperial House of Ethiopia to experience direct European rule which other Africa leaders had already experienced about fifty years before. The Ethiopian defeat of Italy at Adwa made the country survive colonial domination and exploitation which other African countries had faced from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her independence worked to create a sense of peace and prosperity of Ethiopian people within the borders of their own country. However, following the Italian occupation (1936-41) Ethiopians experienced land grabbing, forced labour and arbitrary rule of a European colonial master.
8. They introduced harsh and exploitative administrative policies like forced labour, excessive Coition, arbitrary arrests and execution of Ethiopians opposed to Italian leadership. All these deprived Africans in Ethiopia of their freedom.
9. Consequently, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia led to the introduction of fascism for which Ethiopia became a victim. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia was aimed at spreading his fascist ideology beyond Italian boundaries. The ideology emphasised survival of the fittest and the dominance of weaker nations by powerful ones. Ethiopia thus experienced military dictatorship and the uncompromising character of fascist Italians.
10. The Italo-Ethiopian crisis exposed the weakness and double standards of the League of Nations, which inevitably led to its collapse. Later on, the United Nations Organisation emerged to roll the boat of peace, security and justice in the world. Ethiopia received an invitation to the new international world peace keeping body.
11. The successful occupation of Ethiopia by Italy in 1936 prompted Hitler of Germany to invade Poland which was a sparking factor in the outbreak of World War II. The threat posed by the axis alliance and the refusal of German to withdraw from Poland made the allied alliance led by France and Britain to declare war on Germany, eventually making World War II inevitable.

### **Positive**

12. The brief Italian colonial occupation of Ethiopia witnessed socio-economic developments

in the country. Hospitals, schools and roads were set up! While Italian settlement led to growth of towns, hence urbanisation.

13. The Italo-Ethiopian crisis led to the formation of a guerrilla movement known as the "**Black Lions**" under the leadership of Ras Imru (Immiru). This Ethiopian liberation movement stood against ethnic differences in Ethiopia and ensured a successful struggle against Italy. The "**Black Lions**" movement made a major contributory factor that led to the defeat of Italy in 1941.
14. The war inspired the formation of a committee of Union in 1937. This was a step towards promoting unity among over 100 tribes of Ethiopia, as well as ending the divisions within the Ethiopian army that fought against Italian aggression.
15. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia led to international recognition of Emperor Haile Selassie and Ethiopia against Italy. Ethiopia and Haile Selassie became popular all over the world as the international community condemned the Italian naked aggression against an internationally recognised independent state of Ethiopia. Major Powers of the League like Britain channeled their support to enable the restoration of Ethiopian sovereignty.
16. The end of war in 1941 provided the opportunity for the re-organisation of the Ethiopian military. Haile Selassie realised the need for a strong modern military force hence encouraged training of many military officers in modern warfare technology. In collaboration with countries in Europe, Selassie sent military cadres to military schools in France and England. The Emperor also introduced modern military schools in Ethiopia so that more military generals could be trained. This great move towards the military was motivated by the Ethiopian defeat to Italy in 1936.
17. Following the increased international popularity of Ethiopia, the African state got the invitation as a founder member of the United Nations Organisation (UNO). After World War II, in 1945, Ethiopia was invited as one of the founder members of the United Nations organization. This did not only make the Ethiopian empire more popular, but also a major contributor to international peace and security.
18. It led to the rise of the Ethiopian Patriotic Church and the increase in its participation in the rational affairs of Ethiopia. The participation of the Ethiopian Patriotic Church in the struggle against the Italian aggressors was paramount in the restoration of Ethiopian sovereignty'. The Church mobilized the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians to die for their country. In 1938, Bishop Pedros was publically executed for refusing to broadcast against the patriots. The Italians also killed 380 monks in the ancient monastery of Debra Limonas after arms were discovered there this act of murder on the Church officials was a motivation factor in the Ethiopian resistance against the Italian aggression.
19. The Italo-Ethiopian crisis elevated the popularity of Ethiopia among Blacks in Africa and the world over. The war strengthened black unity and co-operation towards supporting Ethiopia against Italian occupation. The Blacks recognized Ethiopia as the last cathedral of African freedom and thus were profoundly shaken by the destruction of a country that had

been a proud symbol of African independence and black achievement amidst the era of colonialism. Protest spread from Lagos in Nigeria to New York in USA and London in England. All over the world blacks were protesting against Mussolini's naked aggression against a virgin Ethiopia that had stood as a symbol of black freedom of dignity.

20. The war influenced the co-operation of Ethiopia with Eritrea against Italian imperialism. The successful Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1936 was partly favoured by support from Eritrea. However, the good spirit of the Italian colonial government in Eritrea changed soon after Italian conquest of Ethiopia. Mussolini's administration stressed the racial and political superiority of the Italian people in the Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somaliland. Segregation became the hard and fast rule, and Africans in the three countries were reduced to the lowest class of society in their own homeland. The Eritreans hence worked closely with the Ethiopians to end Italian imperialism.
21. The war awakened racial consciousness of the Ethiopian people that they are Africans and that Ethiopia is part of the African continent. For longtime, Ethiopian rulers preferred seeing themselves as part of the Middle East rather than Africa. The widespread support given by Africans and blacks to Emperor Selassie and the Ethiopian people during the Italian occupation made them to develop a sense of belonging to Africa and not the Middle East. After Ethiopia regaining her sovereign freedom from Italian aggression, Emperor Haile Selassie became strongly active in the African affairs as one of the greatest Pan Africanists and elder statesmen of post-colonial Africa. No surprise that Haile Selassie got actively involved in the liberation of Africa and establishment of unity on the continent.

#### **REACTIONS OF THE BLACKS TO THE ITALIAN INVASION OF ETHIOPIA:**

The weakness of the League of Nations exposed the Africans to the Whiteman's conspiracy i.e. that the Europeans were ready to work together and dominate the blacks. Ethiopia being one of the only two surviving African states to retain her independence and international equality, the Italian invasion was disrespect and breakage of the Ethiopian sovereignty. This influenced the entire black world to come together to oppose and demonstrate their discontentment against Europeans.

**The blacks hence reacted to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia through the following!**

#### **Reference Questions:**

- a) **How did the Black world respond to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935?**
  - b) **Examine the reactions of Africans to the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopia war of 1935-41)**
1. Pan Africanists like Marcus Garvey immediately spoke out to condemn the invasion of Ethiopia by Italian dictator Mussolini. According to Marcus Garvey, Ethiopia was part of the great African race that was going to help Africans get rid of colonialism thus, Italy had committed a naked aggression against an internationally recognized independent country.
  2. In West Africa, the nationalistic newspapers called for the mass uprising to protest against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. This was meant to show a mass protest by Africans against European humiliation.
  3. In New York about 20,000 blacks went to the streets to demonstrate against the Italian rape of Ethiopia. This was an indication that blacks in the Diaspora (abroad) still had a

strong devotion towards their land of origin.

4. Jomo Kenyatta in a monthly Labour Publication wrote an article "Hand off Abyssinia". His article was aimed at condemning the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the only symbol and oasis of African independence. Kenyatta commented that his weapon against the Italian naked practice against Ethiopia was only the pen and paper.
5. Consequently, Jomo Kenyatta also vowed never to cut off his beard until Abyssinia was free again. This was aimed at persuading other Africans to involve in supporting the Ethiopian cause for resistance against the Italian occupation.
6. Upon news of the Italian invasion, Kwame Nkrumah, walked the streets of London with angry tears running down his cheeks. The "bad news" of Italian violation of Ethiopian sovereign independence therefore stimulated the Pan African identity of Nkrumah. According to Nkrumah, at that he could not even trust the space around him. It felt like as if the whole of London had declared war on him.
7. Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria produced a very dynamic and explosive article in the press, "Has Africa a God?" With this publication, these two devoted Africans were trying to question the wisdom of Italian claim to spread Christianity and western civilization in Ethiopia, but by use of poisonous gas and weapons of human destruction.
8. In West Africa and Nigeria in particular, the Abyssinian Association was formed to support the Ethiopia cause. The association worked to condemn the Italian aggression against Ethiopia and pressurized Britain to favour Ethiopian sovereignty against the ambitions of Mussolini. It tried recruiting volunteers to go and fight on Ethiopian side.
9. Consequently, the Ethiopian Defence Fund was put in place in Nigeria to help raise logistical, serial and financial assistance for the liberation of Ethiopia. These resources would later be instrumental in strengthening Ethiopian counter war against Mussolini's men.
10. West Africans under British rule held a meeting in Lagos to debate British position in the Italo Ethiopian war. During the Lagos meeting in Nigeria, a resolution was passed asking the British to stop pursuing her appeasement policy towards Mussolini and condemn Italy for occupying Ethiopia.
11. Africans under British colonialism threatened to boycott consumption of British and Syrian goods and to abandon working in government and British firms as a way of showing their discontent to British silence during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. They interpreted it as a quiet move remote European rule in Ethiopia.
12. In Britain, George Padmore, Danquah, Rasmark and Jomo Kenyatta organised the International African Friends of Ethiopia (I.A.F.E) to demonstrate their support towards Haile Selassie and the community in at large.

13. The **Jamaica**, a protest was organised by cultural nationalists calling themselves "Rastafarians" demonstrated in support of the African personality and show their concern for Ethiopia. The Rastafarians sang praises of Haile Selassie "**the Black Messiah!**" The leader of the Rastafarian demonstrators was later arrested for selling Haile Selassie's photographs.
14. In 1937, an International African Service Bureau was established to initiate African commitment against colonialism. This was not only to resist Italian occupation of Ethiopia, but at large to oppose European conquest of Africa with a new determination. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast, and Hastings Banda of Nyasaland were among the members.
15. On reaching London after fleeing Ethiopia, A group of blacks gathered to receive Haile Selassie at Waterloo railway station. Kenyatta, one of this black contingent embraced Selassie, which was a sign of African morale and unity of the African people against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.
16. From West Indies, a descendant of a former slave known as Griffins was very aggrieved following the Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia. Griffins reacted by dropping his name with immediate effect, and adopted the name of "**Has Makonnen**", to show his attachment towards Ethiopians during their trial moments.

### **REASONS WHY ITALY DEFEATED ETHIOPIA IN 1936**

#### **Reference questions:**

- a) **Discuss the factors that led to the Ethiopian defeat by Italy in 1936**
- b) **Account for the military success of the Italians against the Ethiopians between 1935 and 1936**

Many factors contributed to the Ethiopian loss of her 2000 years of independence and included

1. Mussolini took a lot more time to make preparations for an attack on Abyssinia. First, he adopted a rearmament policy by recruiting and training a very large army of more than 500000 men. He established a military industry to manufacture modern ammunitions. In 1932, he sent a high ranking Italian official to spy on Ethiopia and report on a possible chance of success in case of an Italian attack. The report given by the Italian spying official indicated that the political situation in Abyssinia were appalling (terrible) hence it would not be a difficult task if Italy organized a military attack on this state. From 1934, Mussolini's government spent a reasonable amount of Italian moneys to cause conflicts and rebellions among the Ethiopian people in preparation for the war. The clash at Walwal between the armies of Abyssinia and Italy was part of Mussolini's plan to invade and conquer Ethiopia.
2. Ethiopians were grossly disunited which enabled the Italians to take advantage of them. The people were mostly divided along tribal and religious lines. Ethiopia has a variety of ethnic religious and linguistic groups. The population comprises more than 100 tribes with the Amhara Tigre, Oromo (Galla) and Somali as the majority. Over 70 languages are spoken in Ethiopia. Sui divisions were also experienced within the army. The army officers from the Northern Province like Tigrean province looked at officers from the Southern

provinces of Harar and Wollo with suspicion. The Galla warriors for example wanted the war to end so fast that they always led the main Ethiopian army towards Italian ambushes. The Italians hence got a better opportunity to facilitate more divisions among Ethiopians, by bribing many non-Amharas and influencing them to desert and join Italian army, just like Gus, while others helped Italian troops to identify the operation areas of the Ethiopian army.

3. The military superiority of the Italians over Ethiopia was a great asset in the defeat and occupation of Ethiopia. The Italians had all sorts of military hardware like powerful bombs, aerial photographs and a well organised and trained army of more than 200,000 troops. The people of Abyssinia could not stand the Italian force who were thoroughly mechanised and fully equipped in every way. The Abyssinian army was full of volunteer fighters. It had very few professional soldiers who either had outdated tactics or had forgotten them since the reign of Menelik II. Abyssinians had practically no modern weapons of warfare. For the few that were available, some were faulty. The Ethiopians had only eleven (11) fighter planes, three (3) of which could not leave the ground and one (1) of them had been given to the Ethiopian Red Cross Society. The national forces had only 371 bombs, 13 anti-aircraft guns and most of their rifles could not fire. This enabled the Italian armies to weaken Ethiopian troops, penetrate farther into the hilly Ethiopian country and occupy the capital, Addis Ababa.
4. Consequently, the general weakness of the Ethiopian forces enabled the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian army comprised a total of about 1,000,000 but a maximum of 100,000 could fight effectively against the invading Italian troops. Majority of the fighters were volunteers with traditional fighting skills. Some of the fighters who volunteered to join the forces only because they wanted food and money. Most of the Ethiopian soldiers that fought the Italian were either sick or old. A tenth of them were women, another a tenth were priests who had no strong commitment to the national causes against Mussolini's men.
5. The weakness of the League of Nations was a disadvantage to Ethiopia. The League could not condemn the Italian action nor could she intervene by sending forces to check the Italian aggression. This left the Ethiopians at the mercy of Italians. The League failed to effect sanctions on Italy as the big powers (Britain and France) used the organisation to achieve their own needs. They recognized the Italian occupation of Ethiopia simply to appease Mussolini.
6. The Whiteman's conspiracy led to the defeat of Ethiopia such conspiracy made Britain and France not to respect the sanctions imposed on Italy by the League. They went ahead to effect the arms embargo, which was a ban on sale of military equipment to Italy and Ethiopia which solely affected Ethiopia to the advantage of Italy who manufactured her own weapons.
7. The poor financial status of Ethiopia at the time of the war made the defeat of the Ethiopian army inevitable. The Ethiopian imperial government of Emperor Selassie was so poor that it could not maintain an army in the fighting field for long. It was also expensive to transport fighting men from distant parts of the empire to the areas where fighting took place. The government hardly provided logistical support to the soldiers to ensure that they put up a tough resistance against the Italian invaders.



8. The invasion came at a time when Emperor Haile Selassie was unpopular at home. He was always faced with a lot of opposition especially from the Galla. There were even rebellions in some provinces like in the North. This made the resistance against the Italian invasion very weak.
9. The poor living conditions of the Ethiopian people led to the Italian victory. There were poor housing facilities, low wages for workers, unemployment and malnutrition which made the resistance even weaker. This is one of the reasons that made the Ethiopians to lose faith in the Emperor's government and thus could not give popular support to the national cause
10. The Italians received assistance from Somalia and Eritrea, the two Italian colonies that neighbored Ethiopia. This enforced the Italian fighters and gave them morale which enabled them to overcome the Ethiopian resistance.
11. The fleeing of Emperor Haile Selassie to exile left Ethiopia without a leader to direct any remaining morale of the Ethiopian fighters. If the emperor had not fled, maybe the Ethiopians could have put a commendable resistance against the Italian troops. Instead the Ethiopian forces had to flee the battle front while others surrendered to the Italian army which gave way to the Italian success.
12. Lack of a common strategy amongst Ethiopians led to their failure. The Ethiopian top leaders failed to agree on an effective strategy in organizing a counter war against the Italians. While the Emperor preferred the use of guerrilla tactics and timely retreats, the provincial governors wanted a more conventional war approach. This made the Ethiopian forces to lack proper direction, making their defeat inevitable.

Due to the above factors, the Italians could leave no stones unturned. They turned their tables against Ethiopians in revenge of the Adowa humiliation of 1896 and were determined to occupy Ethiopia. The defeat of Ethiopia hence became inevitable mainly due to the disunity of Ethiopians, coupled with the Whiteman's conspiracy and worst of all the Ethiopian military weakness.

### **THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND ITS FAILURE TO PREVENT THE ITALIAN INVASION OF ETHIOPIA**

The League of Nations was a world peacekeeping body established in 1920 following the proposal at the Versailles peace settlement of 1919. Its formation followed the suggestion by the President of the USA, Woodrow Wilson for an internationally recognised peacekeeping body charged with overseeing international peace and security, and to ensure that resolution of misunderstanding between and among states was through negotiation and arbitration than aggression.

Ethiopia was not a founder member of the League of Nations but registered its membership four years later. Upon the Italian threat of invasion, Selassie cried out to the peacekeeping body to intervene before the war erupted; the League however gave a deaf ear, thus showing inefficiency

The failure of the League to prevent the Italo Ethiopian war was due to the following:

**Reference questions:**

**a) Why did the League of Nations fail to avert the war between Italy and Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941?**

**b) To what extent did the League of Nations cause the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935?**

1. The league showed an impotent response towards the first international tension. This precedent occurred when Japan attacked and occupied the Chinese industrialized province of Manchuria. The unrealistic weaknesses of the League towards an aggression by a non-European power prompted Italy to attack Ethiopia expecting no reaction from the world peacekeeping body.
2. The League failed to effect resolutions of the 1932 Geneva disarmament conference. The resolutions were aimed at disarming Germany and Italy, the two powers that threatened European stability. The two powers were not to manufacture or import arms; however, the very two powers failed to meet the demands of the conference but the League looked on as they accumulated arms, which gave Italy military confidence to attack Ethiopia.
3. The League of Nations also violated the Geneva protocol, which had been imposed on the two belligerent countries; Ethiopia and Italy. The two Nations were not to import arms and no member state would connive with either of the two in trade items related to arms and ammunitions. However, the sanctions on Italy were violated; weeks after, items like oil, steel and coal found their way to Italy from Britain and France. These items were important for Italian arms manufacturing industry.
4. The death of Mr. Briand the French foreign minister in 1932 robbed the League of a resolute policy maker. Briand was a major political actor who advocated for a policy of settlement of all conflicts between member states of the League only by peaceful means. Thus after his death universal peace remained only a dream as men like Mussolini suddenly woke up to the crude realities of aggression like the case of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.
5. The weakness of the League of Nations was further witnessed when she failed to restrain aggressive nations from re-arming. Italy spent years reorganizing and rearming her military in preparation for an invasion on Italy. Had the League implemented her aims of disarmament, may be the Italian aggression on Ethiopia could have been averted.
6. The military strength of Italy also scared the League of Nations from intervening to prevent the crisis. Italy had manufactured and bought advanced and sophisticated military hardware such as planes, machines guns and bombs. To say that Italy was militarily stronger is not to suggest that the League of Nations was militarily weak; but the League feared military intervention because the cost in terms of blood and resources would have drained the international body.
7. The League also failed to avert the war because Italy was expanding her colonial possession just as other members had done. Britain and France the Major Powers of the League had acquired, colonies in a similar manner. They therefore lacked the moral

obligation to stop Italy from acquiring more territories in Africa more so -to invade an internationally recognised sovereign of Ethiopia.

8. The negligence on the part of the Major Powers of the League also rendered the body incapable of stopping the invasion on Ethiopia, Britain and France neglected Ethiopia as a weak poor third world country without international significance. They thought that the invasion would take a matter of days. They also did not anticipate international condemnation of Italy. To their surprise the entire Black World condemned the naked aggression on the free land (Ethiopia) left to Africa amidst a sea of colonialism.
9. Racism in the League led to the Ethiopian occupation by Italy between 1935 and 1941. European members of the League showed very high levels of racism in favour of Italy against Ethiopia. They too seemed to have shared Mussolini's argument against Ethiopia that the people of Ethiopia were barbaric, backward and practiced slavery; and so they needed a dose of European civilization. Hence prompting Mussolini to go ahead and invade Ethiopia.
10. The appeasement policy of the major powers of the League of Nations towards Mussolini i.e. France and Britain expressed the white man's conspiracy, which instead weakened the effectiveness of the league. They turned a blind eye towards the Ethiopian crisis in order to discourage Mussolini to disorganize Europe.
11. The League of Nations lacked the services of big powers that could have strengthened her stand against the Italian aggression. The League had a principle of free entry and exit, which prompted Germany and Italy to withdraw from the body in 1934. Russia had joined the League in 1934 but left in 1939. The USA on the other hand maintained her isolation so she did not join. This denied the league of ideas and services of these big powers, which could have avoided the crisis.
12. Member states were disunited, suspicious and had mistrust against each other after World War I. This made the League to lack spiritual unity and corporation that would have prompted successful unity in the body. Thus, when Italy attacked Ethiopia, no power was willing to call for intervention.
13. Members of the League were in deep economic crisis after the great economic depression of 1929 and therefore could not meet the budget of the League effectively. Hence, when the war started, the League of Nations got no meaningful assistance from member states as they worked - resolving their own economies.
14. Another contribution of the League towards the defeat of Ethiopia by Italy was that almost all member states including France and Britain recognised the Italian government in Ethiopia. The British had confirmed the Italian occupation of Ethiopia through the Hoare-Laval pact of 1935 although they condemned Italy at the beginning.

#### **REASONS WHY THE ETHIOPIANS DEFEATED ITALY IN 1941**

The defeat of Ethiopians by the Italians in 1936 did not push African resistance to silence. Africans in Ethiopia re-organized under a prominent liberation movement called the "Black

Lions" led by a devoted Ras Imru. Together with the defeated Ethiopian forces, they staged counter attacks against Italy. In 1941, the Ethiopians were able to throw out the Italians due to the following factors:

**Reference questions:**

**a) Account for the defeat of Italy by Ethiopia in 1941**

**b) To what extent did the outbreak of World War II in 1939 influence the 1941 Ethiopian victory over Italy?**

1. The formation of a guerrilla group (the Black Lions) that comprised graduates mainly with modern political and democratic concepts; the leaders of the movement headed by Imru were in the Ethiopian resistance to Italian aggression. The "**Black Lions**" movement mobilized the masses, provided pragmatic (strong) leadership and ensured solidarity amongst the Ethiopians. The guerrilla tactics employed by the "**Black Lions**" humbled the Italians in 1941.
2. The Ethiopians through tireless patriots like Ras Imru forged unity of purpose against the Italians. A committee of union was set up in 1937 to reconcile the antagonistic groups. The Ethiopians hence forgot their cultural and ethnic differences and fought under a general cause. This made the resistance popular amongst all groups of Ethiopian masses.
3. The Ethiopian Patriotic Church played a significant role in the defeat of the Italians. The Church mobilized the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians to die for their country. In 1938, Bishop Pedros was publically executed for refusing to broadcast against the patriots. The Italians also killed 38 monks in the ancient monastery of Debra Limonas after arms were discovered there. This act of murder on the Church officials was a motivation factor in the Ethiopian resistance against the Italian aggression.
4. The Ethiopians were haunted and motivated by the Graziani massacre of 1937. Marshal Graziani, the Italian viceroy (Governor) had announced the distribution of essential commodities to the poor Ethiopians in the city. Unfortunately, some of the members of the "Black Lions" were hiding in the crowd and threw grenades to Graziani, which injured him severely. The Italian troops retaliated by firing indiscriminately at the crowd and causing chaos in the city. The chaos spread in the country making the incident one of the major events in colonial history that tarnished the Italian image on the international scene.
5. The Italians carried out oppressive and exploitative policies against the Ethiopians. They forced Ethiopians to offer labour at public works like roads, hospitals, and schools; forced them to grow cash crops and imposed heavy taxes in Ethiopia. All these increased grievances in Ethiopia and attracted mass support to the anti-Italian uprising.
6. The Italian army was brutal and barbaric which cost Italian administration dearly. The army burnt Ethiopian huts and houses, raped Ethiopian women including those who surrendered, executed, and buried civilians in mass graves. This made the Italian leadership unpopular even from Ethiopians who had sympathised with the Italian administration.
7. The invasion received strong condemnation from African states and political leaders. Nationalists like Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Wallace Johnson and Nnamdi Azikiwe used the press

and other associations to demand Italian withdrawal from Ethiopia. They sent financial assistance and other logistics to Ethiopia patriots. Their activities attracted the International community to isolate Italy.

8. The change of mind by the British favoured Ethiopian Liberation. The British soon after Italy joined World War II on the side of the axis alliance, sent assistance to Ethiopians through the neighbouring states of Kenya and Sudan. This British support boosted Ethiopian resistance against Italy.
9. Consequently, the Italian involvement in World War II alongside the axis alliance weakened the hold on to Ethiopia. Italy was occupied in the war with less concentration on Ethiopia. She went ahead to withdraw many of her troops from Ethiopia. The British began viewing Italy as an enemy that deserved to be defeated. Apart from raiding Italian Somaliland and Eritrea, the British extended assistance to Ethiopia, which strengthened her resistance.
10. The stealth return of Emperor Haile Selassie to Ethiopia played a significant part on the side of Ethiopia. Through Sudan, Haile Selassie crossed into Ethiopia in January 1941 to strengthen Ethiopian resistance against Italian aggression. Therefore, the presence of Emperor Selassie boosted the Ethiopian camp that fought with determination until the Italians were thrown out.

### **IMPACT OF THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN CRISIS ON THE GROWTH OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM PAN AFRICANISM**

The war had a resounding impact on colonial Africa and the black race in other parts of the world discussed below

#### **Reference questions**

- a) **How did the Italian attack on Ethiopia (1935-41) influence the growth of African nationalism?**
  - b) **Assess the impact of the (1935-41) Italo-Ethiopian war on the growth of African nationalism**
1. Italo-Ethiopian war strengthened black unity and solidarity all over the world against white domination. Black men worldwide were profoundly shaken by the destruction of a country that had been a proud symbol of African independence and black achievement amidst the era of colonialism.
  2. The crisis caused political awareness and deepened the cause of African nationalists to struggle for independence. Africans came to know that the whites were determined to completely conquer the African continent mercilessly and therefore Africans had a cause to de-campaign colonial rule in Africa.
  3. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia exposed the Whiteman's conspiracy. Africans became unhappy with the British and the French who reluctantly failed to prevent Italy from attacking Ethiopia. Consequently, African resistance increased in British and French colonies in Africa through applied boycotts and demonstrations.

4. Consequently, the Ethiopian reaction to Italian rule became a lesson to the rest of African states under white domination. The Ethiopian resistance to Italian land grabbing, forced labour arbitrary arrests and poor taxation inspired the activities of Africans elsewhere against white orders. The methods used by Ethiopians against the Italians, which included violent attacks on Italian settlers and their installations were witnessed in Kenya, Angola, Algeria and British Central Africa where white property and investments became increasingly the targets of African patriots in the struggle for self-rule.
5. The invasion, had profound revolutionary impact on African nationalists' Nkrumah of the Gold Coast on reading a heading on a newspaper stand proclaiming a report "**Mussolini invades Ethiopia**" he lamented "**That moment, it was as if the whole of London had declared war on me...my nationalism surged to the fore.**" Jomo Kenyatta on the other hand vowed never to cut off the beard until Ethiopia was free again. All these were expressions of attachment towards Africa and hatred against foreign domination.
6. The crisis sparked off hostile press attacks against colonial rule mostly in West Africa. Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria produced a dynamic and explosive article in the press "**Has Africa a God?**" The two were questioning the wisdom of spreading Christianity by use of poisonous gas. Jomo Kenyatta wrote an article "**Hands off Abyssinia**" These articles inspired Africans elsewhere in Africa to agitate for the liberation of Africa.
7. The war militarised African nationalism. It changed the minds of Africans who had opted for peaceful means of transfer of power from colonial rule. The Africans began adopting a similar military approach, as the "**Black Lions**" which they thought was the only language the colonial roasters would understand. Case studies are the mau mau uprising in Kenya (1952-55) and the FLN war in Algeria (1954-62).
8. The Italo-Ethiopian crisis was one of the major events that led to the seating of the Manchester conference in 1945. The fifth Pan African conference at Manchester recognised the means employed by Ethiopians against Italy and demanded for the return of Africans from abroad to lead independence struggles in their respective countries.
9. The crisis provided a platform for Africans to air out their grievances against the evils of colonialism. Emperor Selassie at the League general assembly stated that the Ethiopian resistance to Italian rule was a case of defending the cause of all people that were threatened with foreign domination. This publicised the crisis for the sake of Africans and attracted international sympathy to the African cause for independence.
10. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia led to the rise of the Rastafarian sect, a black cultural nationalist movement in Jamaica. The movement rejected Christianity of the white race;

had the vision for worldwide Black liberation and regarded Ethiopia as the last cathedral of African collective security and the last piece of land left for Africans. The movement looked urgently for a radical cure of the sickness of colonialism in Africa. The Rastafarian movement therefore militarised the Pan African movement in its attempt to seek African freedom and independence.

11. The war marked the collapse of the League of Nations and dealt a final nail in the coffin of international collective security, paving way for the formation of the United Nations Organisation later in 1945. The UNO adopted a charter that emphasised equality of all nations and the sovereign rights to independence of states under oppression and domination.
12. Consequently, the Italo-Ethiopian war influenced the outbreak of World War II (1939-45) which had an impact of African Nationalism. Having seen Italy successfully occupying Ethiopia, Hitler led Germany to invade Poland in 1939, which was a sparking factor in the outbreak of World War II. World War II produced African ex-servicemen who used the military skills acquired from the war to fight against colonialism.
13. The crisis influenced black protests in America. About 20000 blacks and coloured Americans took to the streets in Cities like New York to demonstrate against the Italian rape of Ethiopia and show their support and sympathy to all African states that were under Europeans domination.
14. The Italian invasion of the Ethiopian monarchy influenced the activities of the West African Students Union (WASU) in London. Members of WASU organised an Ethiopian committee consisting of J.B. Danquah, Asomali, Jomo Kenyatta, and five members from West Indies. The African members later became leaders of the independence movements in their respective countries.

### **THE CAREER OF HAILE SELASSIE (1930 - 1974)**

His Imperial majesty Emperor Haile Selassie, the lion of Judah was born on July 23, 1892 to Ras Makonnen, a cousin brother to Emperor Menelik II. He was born in the province of Harar and was the 225th active successor of the Solomonic dynasty of the descendants of King Solomon and Queen Makeda (Queen of Shebah). He went to school at an early age of five years and by 1899, he had started learning French and English.

Haile Selassie was a man of remarkable mental abilities and exceptional talent. This brought him to a stately appoint at an early age of fourteen years as governor of arete in Harar province where he was born. At the age of 24, he became the regent of the realm (empire) became Ra; Tafari. He also became the crown prince or the next Negus Negast or **"King of Kings"** after while Empress Zewditu (Zauditu), the daughter of Menelik II.

His real names are however Ras Tafari Djiizmatch Makonnen. He was crowned emperor on November 2, 1930 with the most pompous style and gained the title of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie, meaning the **"Power of the Trinity."** Other titles adopted by Emperor Selassie included **"King of Kings"** and, **"The conquering Lion of Judah."**

## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE**

Emperor Selassie was deposed from his throne in 1936 when Ethiopia succumbed to Italian defeat. However, in 1941 a combined force of Indians, Ethiopians and British forces of the King; African Rifle (KAR) that Ethiopians defeated the Italian imperial administration. This enabled Haile Selassie to regain his throne. He was bestowed the title of "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" upon his return to Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie scored a number of achievements during his reign; hence, the Ethiopians referred to him as a man and a modernizer. His achievements included the following:

### **Reference questions:**

**a) Assess the achievements of Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia**

**b) How successful was Emperor Haile Selassie's reign between 1941 and 1974?**

**c) Examine the changes introduced by Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia from 1941**

1. Immediately after his coronation, Emperor Selassie introduced a constitutional decree that transformed Ethiopia into a constitutional monarchy. The decree became the country's first written constitution in more than 2000 years. The constitution combined both the country's customs and the cultures of the modern civilised and educated nations. The principal aim of the constitution was to bring together the people of Ethiopia as one family, united and controlled by one law, and governed by one Emperor. Haile Selassie was also hopeful the new constitution would create a long period of peace and prosperity in his empire after a series of wars and raids among different tribes.
2. In 1955, the emperor revised the constitution that created a national assembly comprising two sections, the upper and lower chambers. The upper chamber comprised mainly members of the Royal Imperial Family and close associates of the Emperor Selassie; while the lower chamber came to be known as the people's parliament. The revised constitution recognised voting rights of the Ethiopian people, which enabled them to vote for deputies (representatives) of the lower chamber through the secret ballot. This modern move towards political empowerment of the grassroots masses was an expression of greater democracy.
3. Emperor Selassie successfully established national unity in Ethiopia. Having a United Ethiopian Kingdom was Selassie's first major achievement as he believed that the power of unity would be protected by interests which bind Ethiopians permanently together. He was therefore able to do what other Great Ethiopian Emperors like Menelik II, Tewodros and Yohannes IV, only dreamt about, **"A unified Ethiopia."** The struggle to create a unified modern state was begun by Emperor Menelik II. Though Emperor Menelik did not live long enough to see his efforts bear fruits, Haile Selassie recognised him by unveiling his statue during his coronation (crowning) ceremonies.
4. He made a great contribution to his country by ensuring the total abolition of slavery and feudalism in the Ethiopian empire. Slavery and Feudalism had been strong age-old economic institutions encouraged by the previous emperors. Among the wars he fought in Ethiopia in his early years as a regent and later as Emperor were mostly against the Ethiopian provincial governors who opposed the Emperor's move to provide rights and freedoms to the poor communities in Ethiopia that were victims of oppression due to slavery and feudalism. He also established a department and a school for freed slaves to rehabilitate them from the inferiority complex of enslavement.



5. Haile Selassie made efforts to modernise the education system of Ethiopia. He established schools and colleges in Addis Ababa and other provincial cities of the empire. He sent Ethiopian students to universities in England, Egypt, France, and Syria. This was aimed at ensuring modern planning of education in the country. Emperor Selassie also upgraded **"Tafari Makonnen Secondary School"** that he founded in 1925, into a modern education facility. He recruited French and English teachers as instructors in the school.
6. Consequently, the ambition for higher education enabled the emperor to establish Haile Selassie I University. He even allowed a section of his palace in Addis Ababa to accommodate some of the important departments of the university. Foreign professors and expatriates were recruited from France, Belgium, Britain and Sweden to uplift the standards of university education in the country. This was a sign enough to show that Emperor Selassie was not a conservative monarchical leader.
7. Emperor Selassie modernised the health sector of the Ethiopian monarchy. He upgraded the Bet Sayda, Hospital he founded earlier in 1924 into a modern healthy facility. The Emperor set up more hospitals in Addis Ababa and in other provincial cities of the empire. He trained Ethiopian technocrats (experts) in the field of modern medicine, which was a quick radical move in the field of health. All this was due to his desire for improved health services for his people.
8. Emperor Haile Selassie modernised the Ethiopian military. The process of modernising the army began in 1932, immediately after the defeat of the Gojjam rebellion. The modernisation of the army went on as fast as the Ethiopian finances allowed. Selassie recruited military experts from Russia, Belgium and Sweden to train Ethiopian army officers in modern warfare technology. The French and Germans were employed to develop the Ethiopian air force. Emperor Haile Selassie sent military cadres to military schools in Egypt, France and England. The Emperor also introduced modern military schools to train Ethiopian military generals in modern military intelligence.
9. The emperor was credited for having a liberal attitude towards religion. He had a belief that religion was a personal matter that belonged to all peoples of Ethiopia. To demonstrate this, Emperor Selassie made imperial dominations to the Church and the Mosque alike. During his regime, he supported the Ethiopian Church to become completely independent from the control of the Alexandrian Patriarch Church.
10. Emperor Haile Selassie had great love for art. He devoted most of his money and time on cultural development especially in Amhara. He tried to support the established of cultural centers in Addis Ababa and other provinces. Selassie was extremely fond of classical music and readings in the field of philosophy, history and region; little wonder that he supported the integration of history, religion and MDD in the education curriculum of Ethiopia.

11. Selassie also emerged as a modernizer in the printing field. He made efforts to transform the Berhanenna Salam, or "**Light and Peace**," Printing Press into a modern printing press. He founded Press in 1923 during his days as a regent to Empress Zawditu. The press printed an Amharic newspaper with the title of "**Berhanenna Salam**." The newspaper published articles popularising the cause of reforming and modernising Ethiopia. A steady flow of literature, religious, and educational books in Amharic were published.
12. The emperor introduced modern political structures in Ethiopia where modern and important ministries like finance, internal and foreign affairs, health and communication were established. A council of ministers was also set up to strengthen administration of the empire. Haile Selassie put up a formidable civil service in Ethiopia. All these political developments elevated him to the position of a moderniser.
13. Haile Selassie introduced a school of aeration (piloting) where Ethiopia trained her own pilots, aircraft engineers and operators. By 1971, of all commercial airlines on the African continent, the Ethiopia airline was fully officered and ran by Africans.
14. The emperor introduced a five-year development plan in which he involved foreign technocrats to assist Ethiopia in her development programs. These technocrats (experts) from European countries like France, Sweden, Belgium, and Britain, as well as from the USA were an example of a cardinal (very important) relationship, the emperor had with Europe. Therefore, the ancient empire of Ethiopia shifted to modernity and overall progress.
15. He had a keen interest in all kinds of sports although with a personal bias in tennis, horseback riding and hunting. He facilitated sports such that during his regime, Ethiopia produced outstanding sportsmen and women including the legendary Abebe a successful long distance runner.
16. Haile Selassie is remembered for his attitude and care for the unfortunate and unprivileged. Hardly a day could pass without him visiting hospitals, orphanages and institutions of the disabled. He put some of his earnings in the disposal fund, which was charged with planning and administering institutions of the poor and the sick.
17. Emperor Haile Selassie had love for nature. Despite of his aging life, the Emperor found time to rest with his petties that included Horses, dogs and birds. He kept about thirteen lions in his Addis Ababa palace, together with many horses and parrots. This was an indication of modern care for nature during his private life.
18. During his regime, the emperor succeeded in securing and maintaining the Ethiopian seat in the League of Nations. Selassie had registered Ethiopia as a member of the league in

1924, during his reign as a regent to the Ethiopian throne. This enabled Ethiopia to interact with major European powers like France and Britain at the same level. It enabled Ethiopia to participate in influential decisions at the international level. Being part of the League of Nations also proved that Selassie had great desire for promote Ethiopian foreign affairs (relations). The League provided him with a valuable platform in his efforts to defend his country against the fascist-Italian attack which greatly threatened Ethiopian independence.

19. As a sign of concern to humanity, the leader of Ethiopia supported the opening up of the Ethiopian branch of the Red Cross. The emperor was impressed by the support given by the Red Cross to the victims of the Italian aggression and occupation of Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941. He therefore gave the body permanent premises in Ethiopia to continue with their humanitarian work towards Ethiopian people.
20. His international popularity led to the invitation of Ethiopia as one of the founder members of the United Nations organization in 1945. This made the Ethiopian empire not only popular but also a major contributor to international peace and security. Hence because of Emperor Haile Selassie, his country became part of the determining powers of modern world affairs.
21. Haile Selassie promoted Pan Africanism, through emphasising continental unity in Africa. His constructive influence was seen when he worked with Nkrumah of Ghana and Nasser of Egypt to reconcile the Casablanca and Monrovia groupings, leading to the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU Charter was signed in Addis Ababa on May 25, 1963 under the chair of Haile Selassie. This was a major step towards bringing together different peoples of Africa.
22. Consequently, Emperor Haile Selassie proudly sheltered the permanent headquarters of the OAU in Addis Ababa. This was a memorable symbol of the modern concept of Pan Africanism that called for unity on the African continent. This move by the emperor made Ethiopia become the center of African politics, replacing Accra of Ghana and Cairo of Egypt.
23. As a modern nationalist, Emperor Selassie stood firm behind the cause for complete freedom on the African continent. He worked closely with other African statesmen to ensure total decolonisation of the African continent from European dominance. He sharply criticised the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Zimbabwe and condemned the British government for failing to interfere and stop the Rhodesian rebellion that denied Africans freedom in their land.
24. Haile Selassie strongly supported peaceful settlement of interstate conflicts in Africa. He advocated for peace talks and initiated several peace missions to settle disputes on the continent. He used his good office to mediate in the Sudan civil war leading to the Addis Ababa Peace

Treaty signed in 1972 between the Sudanese government and the Anyanya Movement. The Emperor also mediated in the border dispute between Sudan and Egypt, among others.

### **Weakness of Emperor Haile Selassie**

1. Much as Haile Selassie was regarded a modernizer, he did not live to the expectations of some Ethiopians many things went wrong and many factors failed him during his nation building for instance,
2. The 1955-revised constitution did not fully democratise Ethiopia. The constitution gave the emperor absolute powers which turned him into a despot (dictator). Even when the parliament existed, its pressure was unnoticed. The emperor never allowed political pluralism as it would subject him to criticism.
3. Because the emperor came from the Amhara tribe, the tribe dominated all the affairs of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian masses were expected to speak Amharic as a national language during Haile Selassie's reign. Such exhibition of tribalism was also experienced in the political offices where nepotism became a formula for state appointments. Many Amharas maintained sensitive positions in the Emperor's government.
4. The emperor made Orthodox Christianity a state religion. Much of his religious attributes were directed to the Orthodox Church. This annoyed the Muslim community especially in the Eritrean province. The Muslims rallied behind revolutionists to bring about a fundamental change in Ethiopia by 1974.
5. During the era of Emperor Selassie, Ethiopia remained backward. The industrial sector was diminishing. A lot of unemployment existed and Ethiopians experienced poor standards of living. This was partially due to the foreign domination in the economic activities. By the time of his overthrow, the major means of transport in Ethiopia was by horses.
6. Consequently, the emperor employed foreigners as his government advisers. He appointed a Swiss for legal issues, an English adviser for internal affairs and a Swede for foreign affairs. He also, had an American who gave him financial advice. This was in no doubt promotion of neo-colonialism.
7. The emperor put his effort to improve infrastructure on a hard rock. This was because the roads and railway lines remained inadequate while a few that were existing had broken down. Many areas in the countryside as well as some towns remained remote, not connected or inaccessible. This was one reason why Ethiopia remained economically backward.
8. There was gross violation of human rights during Emperor Selassie's reign. The Ethiopians were deprived of freedom of worship, of speech, freedom of Assembly and of Association.

*This meant that the period Ethiopia was under Haile Selassie was dominated by undemocratic policies and political anarchy.*

- 9. The Emperor failed to reform the land tenure system. The land problem remained constant and affected many of the Ethiopian peasants. The mostly affected people were residents of Southern Ethiopia who were landless and stayed under cruel landowners that charged them heavy land dues. Therefore, Ethiopia suffered from feudalism and serfdom during Selassie's reign.*
- 10. Between 1972 and 1974, drought and famine befell Ethiopia and affected many of Ethiopian masses. Among the victims of these catastrophes were the Tigre, Oromo, Somali and the Eritrean community. The government of Emperor Selassie however did little to rescue the situation. Close to 200,000 masses lost their lives. This was one of the unrealistic treatments by Haile Selassie's government that led to its overthrow.*
- 11. Political instabilities in Ethiopia at the time were attributed to Haile Selassie's government. The emperor refused to recognise the internal self-government of Eritrea and the Ogaden claim by Somali residents. These continuously involved the Ethiopian community in war with Eritrea and the Somalia respectively. Many Ethiopians suffered due to these instabilities, which led to unpopularity of the Emperor.*
- 12. The Emperor was reluctant to improve on the conditions of the army. The soldiers were subjected to poor payments, poor living conditions, and nepotism during the process of promotion. Raised grievances in the army, which prompted young army generals like Haile Mengistu to plot a coup in 1974.*
- 13. The Ethiopian society by 1970 was facing an economic crisis characterised by unemployment, scarcity of essentials commodities, economic stagnation and acute inflation. This left many Ethiopian starving; the workers received low payments while the fresh graduates could hardly be posted. This prompted many Ethiopians especially youths to go on strike, hence exposing the weakness of the emperor as he was ageing.*
- 14. Emperor Selassie failed to curb down the high levels of illiteracy. By the time he was overthrown the illiteracy rate was 90-95%, the highest in Africa. Many of the illiterates were unemployed. This increased the unpopularity of the emperor.*
- 15. Biting poverty claimed majority of the Ethiopian population. Many of them could not afford to educate their children, cloth them or shelter them. It was hard for an Ethiopian during Haile Selassie's regime to meet the daily necessities of life, therefore, leading to poor standards of living.*

16. There was too much labour exploitation in Ethiopia during the regime of Haile Selassie. The working conditions were very poor in the country characterised by little pay because the government of Selassie had not regulated a just wage. The workers were also exploited through heavy taxation.
17. Corruption and economic mismanagement ruined the government of Emperor Haile Selassie. Many of his government officials squandered public resources to satisfy their selfish interests. They had little concern to the problems of the masses. The emperor did not attempt to convict the corrupt government officials, which called for military intervention.

### **THE DOWNFALL OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE**

In 1974, the Ethiopian monarchy was ousted (overthrown) by a group of young army officers. Earlier on in 1960, Ethiopia experienced an aborted coup for which one of the coup organisers was Haile Selassie's son. The 1960 coup was unsuccessful due to the high military intelligence of the emperor.

By December 1973, the situation in Ethiopia was appalling. Many of the masses were suffering from the drought and famine catastrophes were worsening. The ageing emperor (at 81 years) was advised to step down but he refused. In February 1974, a group of uncompromised young army officers led by Mengistu Haile Mariam staged an army uprising (mutiny) where they took over the army leadership. The junior officers established a provisional military advisory council (Dergue) to assist the ageing emperor in managing the country's affairs.

The Dergue gradually weakened the powers of the emperor and by September 1974, Haile Selassie was insignificant in governing Ethiopia. Consequently, members of the Dergue who included Haile Mengistu Mariam, Atnafu Abate and Aman Andom staged a coup on September 1, 1974 that finally led to the downfall of Haile Selassie's regime.

Upon his overthrow, the Emperor was taken from his palace in Addis Ababa and detained in an exclusive prison where he was tortured and mistreated. He died a year later under mysterious circumstances.

### **CAUSES OF THE 1974 ETHIOPIAN COUP (REVOLUTION)**

#### **Reference questions**

- a) **Account for the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974**
  - b) **Discuss the factors which led to the collapse of the Ethiopian monarchy in 1974**
  - c) **To what extent did Emperor Haile Selassie contribute to his own downfall?**
  - d) **Examine the factors for the rise to power of the Dergue military junta**
  - e) **Account for the rise to power of Mengistu Haile Mariam**
1. The drought and famine catastrophes worsened the situation in Ethiopia resulting to the downfall of Haile Selassie. Famine broke out in 1972 after a long drought, which had state earlier in 1971. Due to increased starvation, close to 200000 peasants perished especially the Galla, Shoa, Wollo, Somalia and the Eritreans. Later floods invaded Southern Ethiopia and swept away people's houses, gardens and property. The worst part was that, the government of Selassie showed a negative response, which discredited the emperor.
  2. Increased grievances in the army resulting from the appalling conditions made the 1974 coup inevitable. The officials in the army experienced meagre payments, poor living

conditions in terms of housing and sanitary, and discrimination during the process of promotion. All the grievances influenced the young army generals to turn the tables against the emperor's government.

3. The dictatorship of Emperor Selassie caused his downfall. The despotism of Selassie was increased after the 1955-revised constitution which gave the imperial house absolute powers. The emperor henceforth turned into a dictator. The parliament was dominated and its existence was never recognized. Democracy was abolished and the emperor could not allow political pluralism as this would subject him to too much criticism.
4. Because he was coming from the Amharic tribe, the emperor led the small tribe to dominate the socio-economic and political affairs of Ethiopia. Most of the lucrative and influential posts in government were given to people of Amharic origin and members of the royal family. This form of nepotism and tribalism forced the unprivileged clans and tribes to yearn for change.
5. Consequently, there was increased domination of Amharic cultures which forced other groups oppose the emperor's government. The non-Amharic were expected to speak Amharic language & national language during Selassie's regime. Other Amharic cultures were also forced onto the other groups such that the Oromo, Sidona and the Eritrean society supported the overthrow the government of Emperor Haile Selassie.
6. He made Christianity a state religion with the Orthodox Church dominating Ethiopia which caused the 1974 coup. Much of the religious attributes were directed towards the Orthodox Church. This annoyed the few Moslems in Ethiopia especially in the Eritrean province. Some of them rallied behind the revolutionaries to bring about a fundamental change.
7. The economic backwardness of Ethiopia made the downfall of Haile Selassie inevitable. By 1974, Ethiopia was one of the most primitive countries in Africa. The infrastructure was inadequate and the few available roads and railways had started collapsing. Industrialisation was very low; agriculture was declining with presence of poor communication systems. During the time of Emperor Selassie, the major means of transport was by horses.
8. Consequently, the economic problems in Ethiopia affected the popularity of Emperor Selassie. There was gross unemployment perhaps due to low levels of industrialization and the collapsing agricultural sector. The masses experienced scarcity of essential commodities and acute inflation. All these increased the suffering of masses and worsened the standards of living.

9. Emperor Selassie adopted a poor foreign policy that led to his downfall. He created an unfavourable relationship with USA, which led to economic exploitation of Ethiopia. Ethiopia was one of the leading coffee producers in Africa but all her coffee went to USA in exchange for American industrial products. Consequently, the US government determined the price of Ethiopian coffee. Such terms of trade made Ethiopia completely dependent on America. The young Marxist army officers rejected such policy and hence staged up a coup in 1974.
10. Consequently, Emperor Haile Selassie employed foreigners as his government advisors, which cost the popularity of his government. He appointed a Swiss as a legal advisor and English for internal affairs, an American for financial advice among others. Together with the continued relationship with Zionist Israel, the emperor was regarded by the Ethiopian masses as an agent of neo-colonialism and Zionism.
11. The increased political instabilities in Ethiopia caused the downfall of the Ethiopian monarchy. The emperor's government failed to solve the armed conflict in the Ogaden province. Consequently, the persistent Eritrean crisis since 1961 strained the Ethiopian army that was already concerned with poor welfare. This called for military intervention from the young Marxist officers.
12. The increased violation of human rights by Haile Selassie's government led to the collapse of the Ethiopian monarchy. The people were deprived of freedom of worship, freedom of association and of assembly. This meant that Ethiopians during the time of Haile Selassie were suffering like the rest of the Africans during colonialism. The emperor had put Ethiopia in the state of confusion and anarchy.
13. Failure by the emperor to reform the land tenure system made his downfall inevitable. The Ethiopian masses especially of the southern region either had no land or they were under the control of landlords who charged them high land dues. The poor land policy in Ethiopia was also perpetuated by feudalism and serfdom. All these increased the unpopularity of the ageing emperor among the peasants.
14. The high rate of illiteracy caused the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie. Ethiopia at the time experienced the highest rate of illiteracy on the continent of about 90-95 per cent of her total population. The few educated were concentrated in urban areas especially Addis Ababa. This left the villages with almost no one to introduce any changes. The high illiteracy was one of the explanations of the unemployment levels in the country.
15. Consequently, the emergency of the elite class in Ethiopia led to the overthrow of Haile Selassie's Government. By 1955, the number of western educated people was steadily increasing in the country. The elites were characterised by impatience, and the desire for radical changes. The elite class was greatly opposed to Haile Selassie's low pace of change, and this led to the 1974 revolution.



16. Corruption and economic mismanagement that characterised the government of Haile Selassie made his downfall inevitable. The government officials and the royal family embarked on exploiting and wasting Ethiopian resources for self-satisfaction. Haile Selassie ensured that a lot of resources were channeled for imperial functions. The emperor's tendency of banking a lot of money in foreign financial institutions like the Swiss bank in Geneva made the emperor unpopular, causing the 1974 revolution.
17. Poverty that claimed majority of the Ethiopian population led to military intervention through a coup. The Ethiopian peasants could hardly educate their children, feed them or cloth them. This was worsened by the poor working conditions in the country that were also experienced in the army. The failure by the government to address the economic problems of the peasants led to the downfall of the Ethiopian monarchy.
18. The overthrow of Haile Selassie was also a result of ambitious interests of young socialist officers, Atnafu, Mengistu and Andom. These military wanted to test power, reform the military and establish a socialist state in Ethiopia. They detested a conservative and mean Haile Selassie whodespite his ageing life had refused, tostep down. They formed the provincial military advisory council (Dergue) in February 1974, which later took over power from Selassie in September 1974.
19. The influence of the earlier successful coups in Africa led to the downfall of Emperor Selassie. The overthrow of Haile Selassie was therefore, a demonstration effect. The coups that had an impact on Ethiopia included the 1965 coups in Algeria led by Boumedienne against Ben Bella, and Congo led by Mobutu against Kasavubu, the 1966 coups in Nigeria e.g. the January coup of Igbo officers led by Nzeogwu against Tafawa Balewa and Ghana led by Kotoka against Nkrumah, the 1971 coup in Uganda led by Amin against Obote and the Ghanaian coup of 1972 led by Acheampong against Kofi Busia.