

THE CHALLENGES OF EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I IN POST-LIBERATION PERIOD

1.1 The Aborted (Failed) Coup D'état of 1960 in Ethiopia

Introduction

There had been various opposition against the Emperor Haile Sellassie rule in the post-liberation period. These oppositions were expressed in the form of plots and open rebellions either in group or individual. However, most of them had not significant effect. The root causes of the opposition Haile Sellassie's government were prevailing economic and social inequalities, national oppression and absence of democratic rights. For example, the 1960 coup d'état was an open rebellion. This topic mainly deals with the 1960 coup d'état of Ethiopia to overthrow the Emperor Haile Sellassie I government by some prominent individuals and their supporters.

Objectives

After successful completion of this lesson, students will be able to;

- analyze the cause of the 1960 coup d'état;
- explain the prominent coup makers and the other participants with their functions;
- describe the course and its consequences of the 1960 coup d'état; and
- point out the strength and weaknesses of the 1960 coup d'état.

Key Terms

- Coup d'état: the sudden overthrow of an existing government by a small group.
- Demonstration: a display which people to show their support or opposition for something.
- Hostage: someone who is taken as prisoner by force or involuntary controlled by outside influence.
- Rebel: rise in opposition or armed resistance to an existing government or leader.
- Proclamation: an official declaration issued by a person of authority to make certain

announcements or formal announcement made by a great seal of some matter.

- Abortive coup: bring to a premature end or unexpected termination of coup d'état

- ❖ The 1960 coup d'état was started in December 1960, when the Emperor Haile Sellassie I went to visit South Africa (Brazil).
- The coup took place from 13-17 December 1960 and it was the first of its kind. It was organized by educated officials to overthrow Emperor Haile Sellassie's government.
- The coup was led by Neway Brothers called *Birgader General* Mengistu Neway and his young brother Gername Neway.
- *Birgader General* Mengistu was the commander of *Kebur Zebegna* or the Imperial Bodyguard.
- Gername was educated from abroad and got his BA and MA in Wisconsin and Canada Universities and was graduated in Political Science discipline.
- After graduation, he returned to Ethiopia in 1954 and serviced as progressive provincial leader of Wolayta and Jijiga. Moreover, he influenced the Oromo People to ask question of infrastructure around the district and wrote about a tenancy problem.
- The other participants were Colonel Worqeneh Gebeyehu, Imperial Chief of Security, *Birgadier General* Tsige Dibu, Commissioner of Police Force and their supporters.

Causes of the Coup D'état

- ❖ The coup makers issued mainly the backwardness of the country in contrast to the newly independent African states and ineffectiveness of the Emperor.
- The newly independent African states were showing rapid progress in the pass of development.
- They realized that any peaceful way of change and reforms were impossible to bring up without coup d'état. Therefore, they prepared themselves for coup.

Course of the coup d'état

- ❖ The coup makers group (Neway brothers, *Birgader Gneral* Tsige Dibu, Colonel Worneh Gebeyehu and with their supporters launched tactical surprise attack and seized public

buildings and took as hostages some members of imperial family and high officials including 20 cabinet ministers. Bodyguard troops controlled Air Port, closed roads to the palace, and occupied telephone exchange. They detained the Empress and Asfa Wosen.

- They planned the future situation of the country and in the next day on 14 December 1960, the coup makers proclaimed a new constitutional government and declared the end of the Imperial regime. Crown Prince Asfa Wosen ordered to announce this coup by radio.

- Accordingly,

1. Crown Prince Asfa Wosen, eldest son of Emperor Haile Sellassie I elected as the head

of the state as a salaried constitutional monarch.

2. Ras Imru Haile Sellassie, (Close relative of Emperor Haile Sellassie I) selected for his liberal attitude, was to be the head of the government (Prime minister).

3. Major General Mulugeta Bule also elected as chief of the staff.

- Unfortunately, the coup was aborted (failed). Because;
 - A. the coup makers did not get the support of other leading officials, nobles, and mainly armies.

B. they faced the reaction joint the Army and Air Forces and the loyalists of the Emperor.

- They could not resist the Army and Air Force and the loyal of Emperor Haile Sellassie I like Asrat Medhin Kassa, Major General Merd Mengesha, Abiy Abebe, and others won victory after 17 December 1960.
- In the meantime, *Birgadier*- General Tsige Dibu was killed with 15 fighters of his colleagues including Mulugeta Bule on the exchangeability of rumble battle.
- The Neway brothers lost their hope and before left the capital, they shot machine gun on *Genete Le'ul* palace to kill hostages and wanted to escape from capital.
- Example Ras Abebe Aregay (anti-Fascist resistance leader), Ras Seyoum Mengesha (Prince of Tigray), Abba Hanna (the Emperor's confessor) and many of others about 18 were killed.

- Neway brothers tried to escape, however, after heard of this news, Emperor Haile Sellassie I quickly returned back to the capital to save his endangered throne and after reached the capital, the rebel leaders were unable to escape.
- Then, Germame was killed on the way of mount Ziquala and Mengistu also badly wounded. He later brought to trial sentenced to death and hanged on 28 March 1961 on Tekle Haimanot square by the judgement of loyal cabinet of Emperor Haile Sellassie I.

Consequences

1. Even though the coup was crushed, it influenced the University students' demonstration to oppose the Emperor by supporting the rebellion.
 2. It provided that the Ethiopian people understand that the power of Emperor Haile Sellassie I could be challenged and it was possible to depose the monarch.
- Because, formerly the people believed that in the Devine power of the Emperor. His majesty crowd as;

“ ሞላ አንበሳ ዘእምነገደ ይሁዳ ስዩሙ እግዚአብሔር ግርማዊ ቀዳማዊ ሃይለ ስላሴ ንጉሥ ነገስት ዘኢትዮጵያ። የኢትዮጵያ ህዝቦች ጃንሆይ የይሁዳ ዘር በእግዚአብሔር የተሰየሙ እና ሰልጣን የተሰጣቸው ናቸው፤ ስልጣናቸው በሰዎች ዘንድ የማይገረሰስ የማይሻር ነው ብለው ያምኑ ነበር።” ስለዚህ ሰማይ አይታረስም ንጉስ አይከሰስም የሚለውን ጽንሰ ሀሳብ ይዘው ይኖሩ ነበር።

This means that formerly the Ethiopian people believed that the Emperor as the descent of Jews and his power considered as the divine authority and did not opposed by others as inevitable. They inherited the adage of “the Sky did not plow and the King did not accuse.”

- However, after 1960 coup d'état, this concept was disproved.

REVISSION (CONCLUSSION)

The 1960 coup d'état in Ethiopia was an opened rebellion that attempted to overthrow the Emperor Haile Sellassie I government system. It was the first of its kind, and led by the educated officials. The coup makers planned the future situation of the country, declared the end of imperial regime and proclaimed the new constitutional government system. However, it was failed. Even though it was aborted, it alarmed the Ethiopian people that they aware it could be overthrow the Emperor Haile Sellassie I's authority and highly influenced the Ethiopian university students' for their demonstration to oppose the Emperor ruling system.

Review questions

Part I. Write "True," if the statement is correct and "False," if the statement is incorrect.

1. The 1960 coup d'état makers' major weakness was that did not get support from the armies
2. In modern Ethiopian history, among the occurrence of coup d'états, the 1960 coup d'état was the first of its kind.
3. The 1960 abortive coup had no significance political result in Ethiopia since it was crushed within a few days.

Part II. Choose the correct answer from the given alternatives.

1. Where the Emperor Haile Sellassie went to visit when the 1960 unsuccessful coup d'état was out break in Ethiopia?
A. Canada B. Switzerland C. England D. Brazil
2. What was the issue that the coup makers of 1960 that attempted highlights in their criticism of the Emperor Haile Sellassie I government?
A. Centralization of properties C. The oppression of nationalities
B. The backwardness of the country D. Lack of democratic reforms
3. The major result of the 1960 aborted coup d'état of Ethiopia was;
A. The overthrow of Emperor Haile Sellassie from power
B. Land reforms in Ethiopia
C. The aware of Ethiopian people that the Emperor authority could be challenge
D. Resulted to revise constitution of Ethiopia

4. In which battle that Gername Neway was killed, who was one of the leader of 1960 coup d'état of Ethiopia?

- A. at Genete Le'ul Palace C. at the way of Mount Zequala
B. at Arada Giorgis Church D. at Tor Hailoch station

Part III. Explain deeply the following questions.

1. Point out that who were the prominent leaders of the 1960 coup d'état and their tasks.
2. Describe that why the coup was failed, its strength and weakness.
3. Who were the proclaimed leaders as head of the state and head of the government, why they were selected?

References

- Anthony Mockler, *Haile Sellassie War* (New York: Olive Brach, 2003).
Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 2nd ed.* (Oxford: James Curry, 2002).
Edmund J. Keller, *Revolutionary of Ethiopia* (Bloomington: India University, 1988).
Grade 10th and 12th text books

Daily Lesson Plan

School's Name:

Topic: The Nature, Importance and Sources of History

Teacher's Name: Alemneh Ayalew

Sub-topic: The Meaning, Scope, Relation with other Disciplines,

Subject: History, Grade and Section: 9th

Importance and Sources of History

Date: 27/ 12/ 2011 E.C

Pre-requisite of the Lesson: The geography subject from grade 5th

Period:

- 8th in which the portions of history part.

Unit of the lesson: One

Rationality of the topic: Students to identify the purpose of history

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learning and to develop the sense of nationalism.

Specific Objectives

After learning this topic, students will be able to:

- explain the definition and scope of studying of history;
- differentiate the concept of history from story, and history from pre-history;
- describe the relation of history with other disciplines;
- tell the relevance or importance of studying, writing and learning of history; and
- identify the sources of history.

Stages	Time	Contents	Teacher's Activities	Students' Activities	Teaching Methodology	Teaching Media	Assessment
Introduction	2'	- The meaning, scope, relation with other disciplines, importance and sources of history	- Introducing the daily lesson topic and specific objectives. - Asking the question what you know about history?	- Students attentively listening daily lesson objectives and think more about them. - They actively participating to response the question.	- Explanation -Question and Answer		-Asking the oral questions as an intrusive element -What is the meaning of history?
Main Body of the lesson	11'	- The definition and scope of studying of history - The relation of history with other disciplines - The importance of history - The sources of history	- Explain deeply the meaning of history, the scope of study and its nature with short notes. - Open the group discussion and give the opportunities to students to analyze brainstorming question history is both a science and an art - Presenting the importance of history with short notes.	- They actively involving in responding the question by their background knowledge. -They actively follow up the teacher presentation with taking short notes. - They actively involving in their group discussion.	-Lecturing -Demonstration -Group Discussion -Story Telling	-The Chart shows that the various sources used by historians	-What are the differences between history and story? - Identify the concept of history and pre-history? - What does mean that history is both a science and an art? -Discuss the sources of history -Identify primary and secondary sources of history
Conclusion	2'		- Stabilizing to sum up the daily lesson about some important points that the definition, scope of the study and the relevance of history.	-They actively listen summarization and asking the question if there are un clear ideas.			

Teacher's name and signature

Department head's name and signature

Vice director's name and signature

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Comments.....

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