

Turkey and Ethiopia Relations: Historical Perspective (1920's to 1991)

Türkiye ve Etiyopya İlişkileri: Tarihsel Perspektif (1920'den 1991'e)

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Abstract: Historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia have received very little attention from the 1920's to 1991, because Turkey was moving away from its Ottoman heritage in this period. During this period, there is not enough literature on historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia. Even the insufficient resources available in both English and Turkish mainly address international relations, economic and humanitarian, anthropological and legal issues. Therefore, this study offers an overview of the historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia from the 1920's to 1991, seeking to explore the historical relations between the two countries. For this purpose, similar articles, researches, books, magazines, newspapers and internet sources were evaluated, examined and used. Until 1974 the relations between Turkey and Ethiopia were friendly. The opening of embassies in Addis Ababa (1926) and Ankara (1933) demonstrated this friendly relationship. Relations between 1974 and 1991 were not good. Moreover, relations between the two countries have changed with government changes and global events.


Keywords: Turkey • Ethiopia • Historical Relations • Government • Foreign Policy

Öz: Türkiye ile Etiyopya arasındaki tarihsel ilişkiler 1920'lerden 1991'e kadar çok az ilgi gördü. Çünkü Türkiye bu dönemde Osmanlı mirasından uzaklaşıyordu. Bu dönemde Türkiye ile Etiyopya arasındaki tarihsel ilişkiler konusunda yeterli literatür bulunmamaktadır. Hem İngilizce hem de Türkçe olarak mevcut olan yetersiz kaynaklar bile esas olarak uluslararası ilişkiler, ekonomik ve insani, antropolojik ve yasal konuları ele almaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Türkiye ile Etiyopya arasındaki 1920'lerden 1991'e kadar olan tarihsel ilişkilere genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. Makale, iki ülke arasındaki tarihsel ilişkileri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla benzer makaleler, araştırmalar, kitaplar, dergiler, gazeteler ve internet kaynakları değerlendirilmiş, incelenmiş ve kullanılmıştır. 1974 yılına kadar Türkiye ile Etiyopya arasındaki ilişkiler dostane idi. Addis Ababa (1926) ve Ankara'da (1933) büyükelçiliklerin açılması bu dostane ilişkiyi göstermiştir. 1974 ile 1991 arasındaki ilişkiler iyi değildi. Üstelik, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri, hükümet değişmesi ve küresel fenomenlerle değiştirdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye • Etiyopya • Tarihsel İlişkiler • Hükümet • Dış Politika

Introduction

Turkey and Ethiopia maintained their historical, diplomatic and cultural relations after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and creation of the Republic of Turkey. The aim of this article is to explore the historical relations between the two countries. However, it is beyond the scope of this article to include a thorough account of the historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia. This study will, instead, provide a general outline of the historical overview between the two countries from the mid-1920's until 1991. It should be noted here that the author does not consider Ethiopia (*Habesh/Abyssinia*) as a geographical body called *Habes Eyaleti*¹ during the Ottoman Empire. Rather, it just explores the

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¹ Habes Eyaleti, Abyssinian States, was the collective name given to the current Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti

historical relations between the Turkish Republic and modern Ethiopia which has received very little attention from historians. Under Ottoman rule for centuries since 1555, *Habes Eyaleti* shared a common history, religion and culture with the Ottoman Empire and by extension its successor, the Turkish Republic. Asserting that Turkey is part of the West with its secular state structure and capitalist economic orientation, the modern Turkish elite denied its cultural and/or religious proximity to the Middle Eastern and Eastern Africa including the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and dismissed the Ottoman heritage. With this line of argument Özkan presents the historical relations between Turkey and Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular during 1920's to 1991 which has received little attention, if not none².

However, contrary to the founding rulers of the Turkish Republic, the current political elites and historians are now putting a heavy focus on Turkey's Ottoman roots in a new way, in the literature termed "Neo-Ottomanism." In this respect, the book of Kavas (2015), a prolific historian and diplomat, gives useful insights into the history of Ottoman-Africa relations³. Many other significant books on Turkey-Africa relationships also were published during this time. Among the most important of these is Hazar's book (2011) on Turkish-African relations, which shed light on Turkey's economic and political interactions with Africa⁴. As a consequence, most of them are written on Ottoman/Turkish-Africa relations and take a diplomatic approach. These studies pay little attention to Turkey-Ethiopia historical relations although the two countries have the longest historical relations as will be discussed shortly. Therefore, this article provides an overview of historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia mentioning some major milestones, more or less chronological in arrangement, as general guide to the changing nature of their history.

The Two Decades (1920's-1945)

On 29 October 1923, the newly recognized Turkish parliament proclaimed its establishment and formally marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who led the Turkish war of national liberation and was later named Atatürk in 1934, Father of the Turks, was unanimously elected the first president of the Republic⁵. Then Turkey embarked on good foreign relations with the neighboring countries and the rest of the world. The World War I (WWI) had its own peculiar effects on Turkey and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia a regime change took place in 1916. At almost same time, WWI brought an end to the Ottoman Empire and resulted in the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923⁶.

Another historical similarity between the two countries is the political dynamics in the post-WWI period, that is, both countries experienced political and government changes. In this connection, Zewde noted that visionary and reformist individuals; Teferi Mekonnen, the later emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923-1938) ruled their respective countries although

and Sudan after Ottoman general Ozdemir pasha was appointed as governor of the region in 1555. It also represents the region under the rule of the Ottoman empire extending from the border of Egypt, Hijaz along the Red Sea to Sub-Saharan Africa. For further information about the *Habes Eyaleti* see, Orhonlu 1996.

² Özkan 2010, 536.

³ For further information concerning Ottoman-Africa Relations see, Kavas 2015.

⁴ Hazar, a former Turkish diplomat who served in different capacities including ambassadorial positions in various African states discussed Turkey-Africa relations in the era of globalization, for more see Hazar 2011.

⁵ Torumtay 1988, 233-236; Kent 2005, 184.

⁶ İpek & Biltekin 2013, 126.

in different historical contexts⁷. Precisely during this critical period, a reformist and charismatic Turkish leader, Atatürk stated he wanted to establish sincere relations with this poor but free African country⁸. Sevimli stated that Atatürk's peaceful foreign policy relations stemmed from his eternal principle: in Turkish the statement "*Yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh*" which literally means "Peace at home, peace in the world." He argued that for the first time in Turkish history, hostility and war were not central to the government's approach across borders⁹. Concomitant with this diplomatic relations were created with Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, the Balkans, Iran, Iraq, Soviet Union, USA, England, Germany, Italy and France¹⁰.

The scope of Atatürk's foreign relations was not limited to only those countries mentioned above. Africa was also included in Turkish foreign policy towards the outside world. In 1926, a delegation was sent to Ethiopia under the leadership of Ahmet Munir and this heralded the opening of the Turkish embassy in Addis Ababa and Munir become the Turkish ambassador to Ethiopia. In response, Ethiopia opened an embassy in Ankara in 1933 and Birhane Markos was appointed as Ethiopian ambassador to Turkey¹¹. Turkey was also one of the few countries that participated in the coronation of Teferi Mekonnen as Emperor Haile Selassie on 02 November 1930¹². As a result, it can be said that it was only three years after its foundation that Turkey opened its embassy in Ethiopia, the first Turkish embassy in SSA. The Ethiopian government warmly welcomed Atatürk's initiative because at that time poor Ethiopia was seeking more international recognition¹³. Following the appointment of Munir in Addis Ababa as ambassador, relations between the two countries increased through frequent diplomatic exchanges¹⁴. In addition, the opening of the Turkish consulate in African meant that not only diplomatic ties were established with neighboring countries, but also age-old friendly relations were improved with African countries such as Ethiopia.

During the Italo-Ethiopian war (1935-1936) and subsequent occupation of Ethiopia by Italy (1936-1941), relations between Turkey and Ethiopia continued. Considering the international dimensions of the crisis, Zewde noted that Italy aimed at occupying Ethiopia despite the opposition from the members of the League of Nations (LN) including Turkey¹⁵. As mentioned above, Turkish foreign policy relations under the leadership of Atatürk were shaped by the principle of "Peace at home, peace in the world." It is generally true that the Turkish foreign policy depends on this principle and works for nations with which Turkey established historical and diplomatic relations. Guided by

⁷ Zewde 2001, 169.

⁸ Jara 2015, 28-29.

⁹ Sevimli 2011, 1229.

¹⁰ Levine 2006, 401.

¹¹ Şimşir 2001, 166; Abdu 2012, 154; https://www.bisav.org.tr/arama.aspx/Bulten/202/1227/turkiye_nin_afrika_ya_acilim_politikasi (retrieved 10.09.2020).

¹² Detail about Haile Selassie coronation, see <https://www.derekbishton.com/the-coronation-of-his-imperial-majesty-haile-selassie/> (retrieved 18.10.2020).

¹³ Lewis 1995, 332.

¹⁴ Şimşir 2001, 167.

¹⁵ Zewde 2001, 187.

this foreign policy, Turkey entered the LN in July 1932 and become a fervent supporter of the principle of public and collective security¹⁶.

With the objective to maintain the flow of chronological order of the article, let me briefly discuss the Italo-Ethiopian war (1935-1936) in a few paragraphs below and Turkey's position. It seems plausible to analyze the war since the three countries were members of the LN and hence directly or indirectly it has an effect on the Turkey-Ethiopia relation.

To begin with, Italy attacked Ethiopian soldiers at Walwal, a border area between Ethiopia and Somalia. In fact, Walwal is deep inside Ethiopia. The Walwal incident of the 5th of December, 1934, posed a threat to the credibility of the LN as Italy violated the principle of joint military action against aggressors on any member states and the public security¹⁷. In other words, in the Walwal incident, Italy violated the collective security principle of the LN by unilaterally attacking another member of the League, Ethiopia. At this time, Ethiopia appealed to the LN to arbitrate in this incident. Nevertheless, the LN response was late, as Britain and France were dealing with the appeasement policy of the aggressor, Italy. For example, Pierre Laval, the French minister of foreign affairs, feared that France's duty would be opposed by Italy; because he had a meeting with Mussolini on the 7th of January 1935 and was apparently convinced that France would at least not oppose him on the issue of Ethiopia. Laval was content with the formation of French - Italian alliance against the reawakened German danger in African politics and, therefore, he could give up Ethiopia to keep this alliance¹⁸.

On the other hand, in Turkey the press and public media gave a clear support to Ethiopia by opposing the war. Still, doubts continued. Fearing the new French-Italian solidarity and worrying that it would constitute a great power bloc, Turkish foreign minister Rustu Aras offered a comprehensive Mediterranean alliance in February 1935. Aras did not confine his venture to London only, and he also reported to Rome, although Italy rejected Aras's offer¹⁹.

On the 8th March 1935, Ethiopia again applied for arbitration and also reported on Italy's continued military attack on the Ethiopia-Somalia border. The LN's General Assembly Council convened on the 20th of March 1935 to discuss possible action against Italy. Italy finally accepted the arbitration; however, some thought it was only to prevent action by the LN²⁰. European statesmen were right to doubt Mussolini's sincerity as he refrained from attacking Ethiopia but in reality, was taking diplomatic steps to buy time. In this respect, Zewde rightly noted that Mussolini had been preparing for the invasion of Ethiopia since 1932²¹. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the Walwal incident was just a convenient excuse and or pretext to open all-out war on Ethiopia.

On 9th April 1935, Turkey rather than worrying about integrity of Ethiopia focused on the Mediterranean and as a result returned to Italy's side and Turkish foreign minister Aras in February offered a join Mediterranean alliance to Italy. It was unfortunate, however, that this time Mussolini openly said no to the request²². But some days later, Mussolini accepted the Mediterranean agreement, with

¹⁶ Barlas 1998, 120-127.

¹⁷ Potter 1936, 43; Kayış 2020, 9.

¹⁸ Strang 2001, 799-801.

¹⁹ Kienitz 2016, 89; Baer 1976, 190.

²⁰ Zewde 2001, 178.

²¹ Zewde 2001, 178.

²² Kienitz 2016, 90.

some sort of military convention reservation. Belgrade, Athens and Ankara used this as a sign that Mussolini would accept their alliance request²³. Nevertheless, they were fooled by his act to buy time to get ready to invade Ethiopia by openly violating the LN's principle. On 25th June in an effort to stop Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia, the Italo-Ethiopian negotiations in the Hague were held but ended in failure. Mussolini ceased to hide that he will not be satisfied with anything but Ethiopia's annexation. Italy occupied Ethiopia on the 3rd October 1935 and four days later, the LN Council declared Italy an aggressor imposing an arms embargo. The sanctions determined on the 19th October were to be applied from the 18th of November 1935²⁴.

In February 1932, Japan conquered Manchuria and in 1933, in the Special Assembly of the League, 40 countries voted for Japan's withdrawal from Manchuria. However, Japan withdrew from the League the same year, instead of withdrawing from Manchuria. At the same time, Germany announced its withdrawal from the League and embarked on territorial aggression and a massive military building. In 1937, Mussolini withdrew from the League after the economic sanctions imposed on Italy by the League for the invasion of Ethiopia. The overwhelming consensus among international historians was the League was a failure, and that the Ethiopian crisis signified one of the last episodes in its history as often unbalanced and insufficient responses to the political problems of the interwar period²⁵.

Turkey has declared its commitment that it will apply all the sanctions that make the League's decision. Turkey was negatively affected by the NL's measure of declared economic and arms sanction on Italy. Correctly noted, Italy bought grain and coal from Turkey and Italy was one of Turkey's most important customers and sanctions created economic stagnation and for this reason resulted in significant economic losses. Moreover, Italy, which held the Twelve Islands, posed a military threat to the Anatolian region²⁶. Apart from economic problems as Barlas observed, Turkish-Italian relations suddenly turned into a mutual hate relationship. On the other hand, this time witnessed warm relations between Turkey and Ethiopia²⁷. In order to show his friendly relations and support for Ethiopia, an adept leader Atatürk promoted the Turkish consulate to ambassadorial level in Addis Ababa on 1 May 1935. Correspondingly, on 27 June 1935, Emperor Haile Selassie, sent a letter of congratulations to the Republic of Turkey the fourth time to Atatürk²⁸.

In this letter, written in the Amharic²⁹ language, emperor expressed his interest in strengthening the already existing relations as recorded in Şimşir, “በሁለቱ አገሮቻችን መካከል በመታደል ጸንቶ የሚኖረው እውነተኛ ወዳጅነት እየሰፋና እየጠበቀ እንዲሆን ምኞትዎን ተካፋይ መሆናችንን እናስታውቅዎታለን” (“...I want you

²³ Baer 1976, 121.

²⁴ Sbacchi 1976, 123-138; Zimmern 1936, 64.

²⁵ Mazower 2009, 109.

²⁶ Bein 2017, 78.

²⁷ Barlas 2004, 233.

²⁸ Barlas 2004, 246.

²⁹ Amharic (also called Amharigna) language has been the official and national language of Ethiopia before 1991. But following the downfall of the communist regime in Ethiopia in 1991 Amharic become only the working language (not official language anymore) of the federal government of Ethiopia. This is stipulated in the Ethiopian constitution of 1995 Article 5(2). According to 2007 population and housing census about 22 million people speak Amharic as their first language.

to know that I share your desire in order to further develop the warm friendly relations between the two countries”³⁰. On 14 August 1935, Nizameddin Ayazlı, Turkey’s ambassador to Ethiopia, was warmly welcomed by emperor Haile Selassie and conveyed the Turkish people’s sympathy and love for Ethiopia³¹.

Ambassador Ayazlı met once again with Emperor Haile Selassie on September 20th 1935 to discuss on how to strengthen friendship relations. In March 1936, two months before Addis Ababa was invaded by the Italians, Atatürk authorized ambassador Ayazlı to sign the Friendship and Trade agreement with war-torn Ethiopia. Turkey’s support rendered to Ethiopia during the period of occupation can be said to have different reasons. As noted by Şimşir, in his speech Atatürk made a few points why Turkey supported Ethiopia and, by extension, other African states under colonial rule. Turkey as a member of the League need effective implementation of the League’s principle of non-aggression and above all, Mussolini’s actions in Ethiopia, if not stopped immediately, could herald Italian actions in other regions in the future³². From Atatürk’s speech, we can understand Turkey sought to side with the unfortunate Ethiopia for both diplomatic and humanitarian reasons.

Turkey not only supported Ethiopia rhetorically but practically as demonstrated by a great and natural sympathy for Ethiopia during its hardest time. As indicated above, apart from the Turkish political leadership, the Turkish press and the public sided with Ethiopia in its darkest time when Italy opened war on Ethiopia in October 1935³³. Once Ethiopia fell prey to Italy, the Italo-Ethiopian war continued on different fronts with three phases: the first phase was the continuation of the war (1935-1937), the second phase was from (1937-1940) which was characterized by guerrilla war, and the third phase was from (1940-1941) also called the liberation phase. Despite the strong defense, in 1936 Ethiopia was seen to decline on all fronts. I will not explain in detail the 1935-36 Italo-Ethiopian war and the period of occupation (1936-1941), which is beyond the scope of this article³⁴.

Nevertheless, pertinent to this article, I would like to briefly discuss the Turkish soldier and his comrades who successfully fought on the side of Ethiopia against Italy. In the early 1930’s, the Ethiopian army was trained by foreigners such as Americans, British, Greeks, Russians, Swedish, and Belgians³⁵. During the Italian war of aggression against Ethiopia in 1935-36 on various fronts, there were foreign soldiers who led Ethiopian troops against the enemy³⁶. Among the many volunteers who joined the army of Ethiopia during this critical period three were Turkish soldiers namely Mehmet Vehip Pasha, Faruk Pasha and Tarık Pasha. General Vehip Pasha, the leader of the Turkish troops, or “Gallipoli Hero”, named after an Anglo-French operation against the Ottoman Empire, was described by Steer as a capable war general, stocky, white with trousers and sneakers, and Tarık Pasha

³⁰ Şimşir 2001, 664.

³¹ Şimşir 2001, 664-665.

³² Şimşir 2001, 179.

³³ For Turkish media outlets which criticized Italian war 1935-1936, see https://turkishstudies.net/turkishstudies?mod=makale_ing_ozet&makale_id=18077 (retrieved 10.11.2020).

³⁴ For more information on Italo-Ethiopian war (1935-36) and the period of occupation (1936-1941) see Zewde 2001; Morewood 2016, 80-81.

³⁵ Zewde 2001, 159.

³⁶ Zewde 2001, 159-160.

was referred to as a black man with short mustache, purebred Sudanese over his fifties³⁷.

Legendary and formidable, Vehip Pasha was a skilled soldier better suited to Ethiopia than almost any foreign advisers who trained and led Ethiopian troops. Vehip Pasha left Egypt, moving towards Djibouti by receiving financial support from the Ethiopian consulate in Port-Sait-Said, a city located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. According Nizamoğlu it is highly probable that the travel of Vehip Pasha from Egypt to Ethiopia occurred in June 1935³⁸. After the war broke out on the 3rd of October 1935, Vehib Pasha's popularity started to rise in the world. For example, on the 5th of October 1935, a reporter named Thompson of the Paris-based newspaper "Le Soir", interviewed Vehib Pasha. Accordingly, he described Vehib Pasha as energetic, who is not daunted in front of anything, and at the same time precise and cautious³⁹.

Furthermore, Nizamoğlu succinctly expounded Vehib Pasha's character as confident and determined which he has proven in the WWI has a profound effect on the Italian colonial armies⁴⁰. Vehip Pasha and his friends joined the Ethiopian troops led by *Dejazmach*⁴¹ Nesibu, the commander of the southern front. The Turks, together with Nesibu's Belgian advisers, formed a strong line of defense against the Italian army⁴². Soon Nesibu appointed Vehip Pasha to the general staff of the southern front. Using his proven military skills and ability Vehip Pasha created a sturdy line of defense for the Ethiopians known as the "Hindenburg Wall", named after the German defense line in the WWI. The Hindenburg line ultimately proved to be a perfect defensive wall. General Rodolfo Graziani, the Italian commander of the southern front, was unable to overcome the Hindenburg Wall and as result he stopped for several months to drill⁴³. Due to General Vehip's defensive strategy, the Italian army led by General Graziani faced the stiffest resistance and made only limited progress, even though they waged war from three directions in April 1935⁴⁴.

On the 31st of March 1936 the Ethiopian army led by the emperor himself attacked the Italian troops advancing to Maychaw in Tigray. Despite their heroic fighting, the Ethiopians lost the battle of Maychaw and on the 2nd of April 1936 the emperor finally ordered to withdrawal and retreat in great disarray⁴⁵. When Nesibu heard that the emperor had fled, he immediately left the defense of the southern front and went to Djibouti with Vehib Pasha, Tarık Pasha and Faruk Pasha by train. They took a taxi from Djibouti to Zeyla and from there by ship Vehib went to Aden, finally to Egypt and lived there until his return to Turkey in 1939 shortly before his death in 1940⁴⁶.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the role of Vehib Pasha in helping Ethiopian armies in their fight against Italian forces was immense. Furthermore, this tells us that Turkey maintained

³⁷ Steer 1936, 189.

³⁸ Nizamoğlu 2011, 276.

³⁹ Nizamoğlu 2011, 276-277.

⁴⁰ Nizamoğlu 2011, 281.

⁴¹ *Dejazmach* literally means the commander of the Gate is a traditional Ethiopian military title in charge of Ethiopian armed forces consisting of the main body, vanguard, the right and left wings.

⁴² Steer 1936, 342.

⁴³ Hazar 2011, 40-41.

⁴⁴ Zewde 2001, 168.

⁴⁵ Zewde 2001, 179.

⁴⁶ Nizamoğlu 2011, 286.

good relations and helped Ethiopia, not only as a state but also through Turkish military personnel who showed great sympathy to Ethiopia during this hard time. In 1941 with the help of the Allied powers, Italy was defeated in East Africa and thereby forced also to evacuate from Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie, taken as a symbol of liberation by Britain arrived in Addis Ababa on the 5th of May 1941⁴⁷.

From 1941 to 1991

Emperor Haile Selassie tried to encourage his country's modernization during the post-1941 period by extending and improving diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Since the 1950's after consolidating his power, the emperor focused on international affairs ranging from playing great role in the formation of the African Union to participating in the Bandung Conference (1955)⁴⁸. Generally, it is true that in the 1950's and 60's Ethiopia's foreign relations expanded and obtained greater attention.

As compared to the Italo-Ethiopian war period discussed above, the relations between Turkey and Ethiopia witnessed friendly approaches during the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's. For, example, in 1957 an important development took place in the history of Turkey-Ethiopia relations. This was the decision of the Turkish government to re-establish diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. In this regard, Jara noted that Turkey re-opened her embassy in Addis Ababa and Fikret Özdoğanlı was appointed as Turkish ambassador to Ethiopia in January 1957⁴⁹. He further indicated that after a year ambassador Özdoğanlı left his position to ambassador Sacid Sohel and Sohel continued his duty until January 1960⁵⁰. It is said that the reciprocally friendly initiatives of Turkey were seen as a good move and of interest to the Ethiopian government. Furthermore, in response to Turkey's diplomatic initiatives, Haile Selassie decided to open the Ethiopian embassy in Ankara in 1959⁵¹.

In the years following the re-establishment of relations, significant improvements were observed between the two countries in political, economic and cultural areas. As noted by Abdu, there was a friendship match between the national football teams of the two countries in Ethiopia in October 1962 and in Turkey in December of the same year. He further claimed that as part of his diplomatic tour to Europe and Asia, Haile Selassie visited Turkey in 1967 and 1971 and this revitalized their historical relations and friendship⁵².

It is worth noting here that Haile Selassie's focus on international affairs was driven not only with the aim of strengthening Ethiopia's diplomatic relations but also increasingly his interest in the consolidation of absolutism. From Turkey's point of view, this interaction can be seen from the focal point of rising power diplomacy. Moreover, it can be tentatively argued these developments show both countries were determined to revive the warm relations of president Atatürk's period.

⁴⁷ For the second Italo-Ethiopian War <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/second-italo-abyssinian-war-1935-1936/> (retrieved 19/11/2020).

⁴⁸ Zewde 2001, 165.

⁴⁹ Jara 2015, 29-30.

⁵⁰ For all lists of Turkish ambassadors to Ethiopia, visit <http://addisababa.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/MissionChiefHistory> (retrieved 03/12/2020).

⁵¹ Abdu 2012, 176.

⁵² Abdu 2012, 179-183.

In 1974 the Ethiopian Revolution erupted and brought about the dramatic transformation of Ethiopia from Haile Selassie's feudal monarchy to the Stalinist dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. After 1974, relations between Turkey and Ethiopia, where political change occurred and led to drastic transformation in foreign policy, began a rather rougher path. Accordingly, Mengistu Haile Mariam switched to the Soviet Union and become an ardent supporter of communism. In this regard, Henze and Jara precisely stated Ethiopia's foreign policy shifted from the West to the East and allied with socialism⁵³. Moreover, in the words of Osmond, "Haile Mariam reoriented Ethiopian politics towards the USSR and their communist allies"⁵⁴.

When it comes to 1980's, Turkey remained loyal even much closer to the Western and the USA during Turgut Özal's premiership⁵⁵. Supporting this point, Jara in his study of the economic revitalization between Turkey and Ethiopia in the era of globalization asserted that the former maintained strong ties with the Western camp⁵⁶. Seemingly, this position of Turkey and Ethiopia on opposite sides of the bipolar super powers led to the deterioration of relations between them. Finally, in 1984 the communist government of Ethiopia closed its embassy in Ankara and this event signaled the end of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Ethiopia⁵⁷. The relations between them remained fragile until the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the communist regime in Ethiopia in 1991.

Conclusion

This article addresses the historical relations between Turkey and Ethiopia from the 1920's to 1991 largely chronologically focusing on some historical landmarks such as the formation of the Turkish Republic, the Italo-Ethiopian war, the onset of the Cold War and subsequent changes of global patterns, and finally the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. It is in this historical context that the article describes the changes and continuities in Turkey-Ethiopian historical relations. It is shown that the year 1926 marked the beginning of their friendly relations with the opening of the Turkish embassy in Addis Ababa and, following suit, Ethiopia also opened her embassy in Ankara in 1933.

During the Italo-Ethiopian war (1935-1936) the relations remained cordial as demonstrated by President Atatürk's opposition to Italian war on Ethiopia. Moreover, Turkish volunteer soldiers individually and in group fought on the side of Ethiopia against Italian forces. After Italy evacuated Ethiopia in 1941, the relations between the two countries continued and gained substantial momentum when emperor Haile Selassie himself visited Turkey in 1967 and 1971.

Relations were not cordial during the Ethiopian communist regime (1974-1991). This was because the Ethiopian government adopted socialism as its guiding principle thereby allied itself to the USSR and its Eastern bloc allies, whereas Turkey maintained its relations with the USA and Western powers. The rift between the two countries reached its peak when Ethiopia closed its embassy in Ankara in 1984 and relations remained rough until 1991. On the whole, it is possible to conclude that the Republic of Turkey and Ethiopia have had the longest relations in Africa.

⁵³ Henze 2000, 194; Jara 2015, 29-30.

⁵⁴ Osmond 2016, 254-255.

⁵⁵ Ataman 2002, 130.

⁵⁶ Jara 2015, 29.

⁵⁷ Jara 2015, 30.

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