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Education and Development in Ethiopia: the History of Dubious Correlation

Abstract

During the last five decades Ethiopia experienced three systems of political governance, each of them distinguished by its education policy: the imperial (soon after WWII until 1974); the military /socialist (until 1991), and the current federal system (from 1994).

This study shows the growth of the crisis of the education sector in Ethiopia, which is very much a result of the absence of range of realistic assessments of the role of education in social reproduction. As things now stand, the great majority of those students who completed grade four failed to score a pass grade. The expansion of secondary education, the continued growth of vernacular languages and the shortage of funds appear to lead the education sector from crisis to system collapse. The paper also discusses the implications of the crisis in terms of communication breakdown.

Introduction: Context, Scope¹

In most sub-Saharan African states education (broadly defined as a system of learning from textbooks and carried out in large classes) is a phenomenon that has a strong colonial legacy. Mostly carried out by missionaries, education during the colonial times stressed some values at the expense of others. One of the highly privileged values was the acquisition of a foreign (European) language. In many aspects the record of colonialism in the field of education was dismal. There were far too few schools and students. The curriculum was impervious to local, national or regional specificities. Students in

¹ This paper is extracted from a larger study on the history of the Ethiopian education sector. A full paper is accepted for publication by the Nordic Africa Institute. An Italian translation of the complete research report commissioned by the Faculty of Education of Bologna University is due to be published in late spring of 2006.

Makerere, Lagos and Accra studied the same subjects, be it literature, economics or political science. The situation was similar, but more pronounced at the French and Portuguese African colonies.

Imperial rulers were not initially keen to encourage widespread education to their colonial subjects. The extent of Imperial engagement depended on the length of the colonial rule and the resource base of the colony. To the extent Imperial rulers invested in education they did so in cooperation with the Metropolitan religious institutions. It was only at the height of the Second World War and in anticipation of its aftermath that the British Imperial authorities in London began to pay attention to the issue of colonial education. In fairness, there were individual educators who wrote and campaigned for the introduction of what we nowadays would call best practices in Africa. These voices were however quickly suppressed by neglect and shortage of sources. Moreover, these pioneer European educationalists were not engaged in the evolution of education that would be accepted and appreciated by the majority of the African citizens. They were rather developing educational programmes for an Africa that would develop along the best European footsteps.

On the eve of the independence of African colonies (1957–63), most of them had their educational infrastructure in place. These were the medium of instruction and the curriculum to follow. Ethiopia, the major focus of this study, has not really been colonised. Many historians agree that the Italian colonial presence between 1935 and 1941 was too brief to be considered as colonial presence. Yet the education system that the Ethiopian government implemented was very similar to those that prevailed in African states that were colonised for longer periods.

The task of the post-colonial African state was already defined. Its task was to build on and expand what already existed. The educational system that African states inherited from the colonial times was indeed crisis ridden, although this did not become apparent during the 1960s. The euphoria that accompanied the decolonization process gave little space to assess the scope of the threat. Furthermore, there was a widespread but unwarranted belief by Europeans and North Americans that independent Africa would readily rectify the mismanagement of colonialism. One of the major instruments that African states were expected as well as encouraged to deploy was education. It was during the decolonisation process that the most powerful discourse, namely the discourse that argued for a causal link between education and national development had a very privileged position. Developed by education economists such as Theodore Schultz and Foster Harbison, this discourse at times covertly and at times by implication argued for the introduction and perpetuation of Western values and curriculum.

The major focus of this paper is to contextualise the dilemmas of education in Africa in general and that of Ethiopia in particular. Its main purpose is to demonstrate that the crisis of education, despite phenomenal growth of enrolment, has deepened and the education system is in fact on the verge of collapse. The impact of education on socio-economic development of the country remains highly insignificant. More than 45 per cent of the population survive on income of one US dollar per capita and about 80 per cent

of the population struggle to make ends meet with less than two US dollars per capita. Crisis and system collapse are interpretations of the actual state of the education system and of the extent to which its various components are organically linked. A major methodological tool for such interpretation is a discursive analysis of relevant episodes and instruments. The major political and ideological changes and their impact on education policy belong to the realm of episodes, whereas the curricula, medium of instruction, the resource base and the views on the role of education constitute the key instruments. Discursive analysis is most often political as well as ideological. Hence discursive analysis as used by the founder of the concept (Michel Foucault) may be carried out within an established discourse. The dominant education discourse, for instance, emphasises the positive role of education on overall development of society. Discursive analysis may also be carried out as a contribution to the evolution of a counter discourse or simply as a further elaboration of the hegemonic discourse.

The goal of this discursive analysis is to contribute to a shift in the discourse on the role of education in the survival of the Ethiopian political and cultural society. The key instrument in the evolution of a new counter discourse is the role of indigenous languages at all stages of the education system. The persuasive value of discursive analysis depends on the experience and reading of the author as well as on the constellation of power holders such as professional organisations and political parties.

Since the 1940s Ethiopia experienced three systems of political governance, each distinguished by its education policy. The first system of governance was the imperial system that started soon after WWII and lasted until 1974; the second was the military/socialist system that lasted until 1991. The third and current federal system of governance became fully operational since 1994. In this section I shall briefly describe the salient aspects of the educational policies of the different systems of governance as they bear a great deal of importance on the future trajectories of the education sector.

Education Policy of the Imperial System of Governance, 1941–74

The golden age of modern education in Ethiopia is usually dated to the years between 1941 and 1970.² The education sector with the late majesty the Emperor as frontline minister was by far the best staffed and financed. With the Emperor at the helm of power the Ethiopian government believed strongly on the centrality of education as vehicle of progress. It is debatable what the Emperor meant by education and progress but, his numerous statements on the subject indicate that modern education would enrich Ethiopian civilisation.³

The beneficiaries of modern education were those who were born from the mid 1930's until the end of the 1940s. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s there were far too many

² For a brief historical outline on the history of modern education, see Tekeste Negash, 1990.

³ See the paper by Richard Pankhurst in this volume [Ed.].

schools than students; and incentives such as clothing, school materials and boarding were quite common. Brilliant students were enticed to join vocational secondary schools (such as agriculture, laboratory science and teacher training) through free food and lodging. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the University College at Addis Ababa had to compete for students with the various vocational and technical secondary schools. Jobs were plenty and salaries were closely tied to academic qualifications. During this period the return to investment in education was clear to grasp. After just few years of education, children from humble backgrounds found themselves in high positions with income that could have been more than 10 times the per capita income of their parents. Education was free and it appealed more to the poorer section of the population; the rich and the aristocracy were less enticed by the economic returns of education.

The Emperor and his government might have believed that they were laying down the foundations for the modernisation of the country but they did not pay enough attention to the communication gaps between the generations that modern schools were creating. In practice, the Ethiopian government had no coherent strategy. Curriculum was ad-hoc and left to teachers who came from different countries with different backgrounds. The first primers for primary schools in the official language of the country were first developed in 1955, nearly 15 years after the demise of Italian colonial occupation. As early as 1958 one of the pioneers in Ethiopian education pointed out that the curriculum in place was incapable of producing citizens who had the capability to interpret, enrich and adapt the heritage of the country to new needs and to changing conditions. The curriculum might have been irrelevant but all those who went through the system could still count to find public employment with good remuneration.

Between 1941 and 1970 the Ethiopian education sector was undoubtedly influenced by two major ideas about what education is good for. The first one was the Emperor's conviction that modern education, preferably carried out by Lutheran Missionaries, was an excellent strategy to educate and train citizens who respected their king, country and religion. The modernisation process that the Emperor came to lead needed a considerable amount of young people to staff the growing sector of the state apparatus. Ethiopia's growing integration with the Western world in general and the African continent in particular was an additional factor that encouraged the growth of the modern school in the urban and semi-urban areas of the country. The Emperor spoke on the role of education in the context of Ethiopian civilisation. Moral studies (that included civics and religion) subject was an important component. Moreover, with the exception of one technical school, the rest of the schools offered only academic programmes. In the academic year of 1961/2 there were a total of 225 435 students in all primary schools in the country. The total number of secondary school students was 8 695. And the only University College in Addis Ababa had a total number of 950 students 39 of whom were female students.⁴ By 1970 Ethiopia had an estimated population of about 30 million. Total enrolment was in the range of 1.1 million students out of a cohort of over 10 million. The secondary

⁴ UNESCO, *World Survey of Education: Higher Education*, 1966, pp. 448–450.

school population amounted to 4 per cent of the age cohort and out of which about 25 per cent were unemployed.

The second idea that shaped the Ethiopian education sector is that put forward by UNESCO on the role of education in the economic development of a state. Although advocated by UNESCO, the basis for the argument was largely derived from the pioneering study carried out by Theodore S c h u l t z. A towering figure in the field of the economics of education, Schultz wrote and campaigned for investment in human capital via the promotion and eventual expansion of the education system.⁵

The empirical research that S c h u l t z undertook in the USA showed a direct link between investment in education and increase in income both at the individual and at the collective level. Schultz demonstrated that it was because the American working population had invested in education and health that the national income could rise so dramatically between 1930 and 1950. S h u l t z went on and argued that up to 50 per cent of the rise in earnings could be explained by the returns on educational investments. The tone of optimism in which S c h u l t z wrote his papers and his overflowing confidence on the direct role of education for development, led to a serious distortions and misconceptions of what can be achieved by education. At any rate, the writings of S c h u l t z, coming during the eventful decade of decolonisation, were soon adopted by international agencies such as UNESCO. I have argued elsewhere that S c h u l t z's research is not applicable in developing countries like Ethiopia. For a start, S c h u l t z did not take into account the role of economic growth for education. It is only when the economy is growing that investment in education can lead to returns in terms of higher income for the individual investor and consequently an increase in national income. In stagnating or stagnant economies returns to educational investment can actually be negative as a growing number of unemployed and unemployable secondary school graduates could witness.

Moreover, for S c h u l t z education was essentially the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills that enables those who acquire it to organise their lives in a qualitatively superior manner. Such understanding involves that what is taught is appropriate and relevant. The education system that operated in Ethiopia during the 1941 and 1970 era was geared to the production of academicians who could best be entrusted with clerical tasks. That the curriculum of Ethiopian schools was highly irrelevant to the historical experience and current socio-economic situation of the country was pointed out as early as 1958. The Ethiopian experience indicated that certain conditions had to be fulfilled before education can be considered as a human capital investment with a good return.

Ever since S c h u l t z's seminal study, the debate on the links between education and development continued for over 20 years. S c h u l t z and UNESCO continued to propound a direct link between investment in human capital and development of a society. These arguments were highly appealing to countries who had just recently freed themselves from colonial rule. Colonialism, as it was explained in the 1960s and 1970s, was a system that

⁵ T. Schultz, *Investment in Human Capital: The role of education and research*, New York: The Free Press, 1961.

paid far too little attention to the educational needs of its subjects. S c h u l t z's hypothesis on education as a powerful vehicle for economic development became widely known in the early 1960s when most African societies were in the process of gaining their independence. A series of studies that stressed the role of African educational systems as developers and mobilizers of human capital for the modern sector of the economy were produced throughout the 1960s and 1970s.⁶ There was, however, a sharp division of opinion as to how much education was needed to produce an impact on the development of a society. Most of education economists appeared to stress secondary and higher education as decisive factors for development, whereas sociologists of education focus on primary education. Partly as a consequence of the theories on the role of modern education, African educational systems in general and the Ethiopian educational system grew at phenomenal rates. It was only in the mid 1980s that a sort of consensus was reached whereby education began to be seen as one of several variables needed for successful and sustainable development within the context of a state.

The golden age when education was a profitable investment came to an end in the early 1970s. The public sector could no longer absorb secondary school graduates produced by a continuously growing number of schools. As early as 1973, up to 25 percent of the secondary school graduates were unemployed. At the time when so many secondary school graduates were roaming the streets of Addis Ababa and other towns in search of white collar employment, the country had a gross enrolment rate of about ten percent. Thus one of the most paradoxical situations in Ethiopian modernisation history was the huge level of unemployment among the young and educated when the country was virtually illiterate. The paradox becomes clear when one takes into account that the level of literacy was not more than 10 percent of the cohort population. Total enrolment in both primary and secondary sectors increased from 35 000 in 1946 to 95 000 in 1955. In the 1962–63 academic year there were 8000 students enrolled in grade 8, whereas total enrolment in grades 9–12 of public and private schools was 9 940.⁷ At the same year, enrolment in grades 1–8 reached 304 138. Ten years later (1974) total enrolment reached 1.1 million.

The education system that prevailed in the country from the 1940s until the end of the 1960s could be described as an elitist system in so far as it reached some of the urban and even less of the rural population. It could also be described as a very generous public good delivered free of cost to those who lived close to access it. Moreover, although we lack a good empirical documentation, the main beneficiaries of education were not the children of the ruling elite but those coming from ordinary and poor households. Households whose destiny brought them to cities and towns benefited from the coming of

⁶ F. Harbison, *A Human Resource Approach to the Development of African Nations*, Washington DC: American Council of Education, 1971; Ch. C o c l o u g h, *Primary Schooling and Economic Development: A Review of the Evidence*, (World Bank Staff Working Paper 399), Washington DC: The World Bank, 1980.

⁷ Mulugeta Wodajo, 'Secondary Education and Manpower Requirements of the Second Five Year Plan', *Educational Journal of the University College, Education Students Association: Bulletin* 11 (1963/4).1963/4. [I was one of those 8000 students enrolled in grade 8 in 1962/63 academic year].

the school compared to their rural cousins. The modern school, especially the secondary school was and still remains an urban phenomenon. Yet in view of the considerable unemployment among the educated, one could hardly sustain the argument that the Ethiopian education system was elitist.

Historians of Ethiopian education would certainly raise a number of questions as to the policy making capacity of the Ethiopian Imperial government. Meanwhile, it is possible to argue that ever since the late 1950s, UNESCO, the World Bank and USAID were major partners in the planning of Ethiopian Education. It may be debated as to which one of these partners had more power and influence, although it might turn out that UNESCO had the upper hand. One of the most persuasive messages that UNESCO preached in all developing world was the role of education in economic development. Making full use of the seminal studies of Theodore Schultz, F. Harbison and others on investment in human capital, UNESCO showed the way how countries like Ethiopia could expand their educational system.

The first such effort was the Addis Ababa Conference on African Education held in 1961 where all African states participated. One of the resolutions of the Conference was the commitment of African states to achieve universal primary education by 1980. By the end of 1960s, however, the Ethiopian government and its partners (mainly the World Bank) realised that the sector was experiencing a delicate crisis. The education sector was producing far too many secondary school graduates who could not be easily absorbed by the modern economy. At the same time the great majority of Ethiopian school age children had no access to primary education. Universal primary education by 1980 was a goal that soon proved to be highly unrealistic.

The problem of widespread illiteracy and the anomalous situation of secondary school graduates roaming the streets in search of employment called for a series of education sector reviews. The modern economic sector was too small to accommodate the growing pool of secondary school graduates. There was a widespread dissatisfaction with the education sector from secondary school students who depicted the future in bleak terms. The conservative elements of the Ethiopian church and nobility argued that there was very little Ethiopian in the curriculum and that those young Ethiopians who passed through the school system were disrespectful of their society and its institutions. From abroad there was also a growing dissatisfaction of Ethiopia's lagging performance in its effort to achieve universal primary education.

The first Ethiopian education sector review took place in 1971–2 and was made up of an international group of experts. Its main mandate was to devise strategies for spreading universal primary education while at the same time resolving the acute problem of unemployment among secondary school graduates.

The first task of the Ethiopian education sector review of 1971–2 was to control the entry to secondary education. Fully cognisant of the social upheaval that unemployed secondary school graduates were capable of, the planners of Ethiopian education reasoned that secondary education need not grow beyond the natural population increase, estimated at 2.1 per cent *per annum*. Throughout the 1960s, the number of secondary school students

has been growing at the rate of 12 percent *per annum*. As I pointed out earlier, although only 4 per cent of the appropriate age group attended secondary education, the wish of the Ethiopian government to try to think in terms of supply and demand had indeed everything to commend. The implementation of the sector review would have gone a long way in solving the problem of unemployed secondary school graduates.

The second task of the 1971–2 education sector review was to make the rural population as the main target of its educational policy. The slow pace in spreading education into the rural areas was deplored both by the Ethiopian government and its partners. The year 2000 was set as the year when Ethiopia would extend universal primary education to all its citizens. The experts who framed the sector review (51 Ethiopians and 31 international experts) opined that it was the right of all citizens to get basic primary education of minimum 4 years. The recommendations of the Education Sector Review of 1971–2 would have had far reaching implications had they been implemented. It is interesting to note that there are great similarities between the 1971–2 sector review and the education policy of 1994 that is currently in use. But to this I shall return later in this section.

Here it is important to note that the quality of teaching was far better during the imperial system of governance than what came to prevail in the succeeding regimes. At the secondary level for instance most of the teachers were native speakers of English and Pupil-teacher ratio was below 40:1. It is another matter whether the subjects, especially those dealing with the human and social sciences were responsive to the history and culture of Ethiopia, which they were not. It is perhaps important to note that most of those who currently hold political power have got their training during the Imperial era.

The 1971–2 education sector review was made public at the time when the Imperial system was internationally accused of denying the existence of a serious famine in the northern parts of the country that might have killed more than 100 000 people. There were several other factors as well that contributed to a social and political upheaval. The consequences of a sharp increase in the price of fuel on cost of living; the dissatisfaction of a growing number of soldiers on how the government managed the secessionist rebellion in Eritrea; the highly politicised university students who assumed the role of the opposition; and the pool of unemployed secondary school graduates all combined to bring a total defeat of the system of government that had for centuries operated in the country. Moreover, the opposition of teachers and secondary students were legion; these two groups had nothing to gain of a policy that favoured the countryside over the urban landscape. The Imperial system was abolished in 1974 and with it went also the new education policy that was worked out by the Education sector review.

The Socialist System of Governance and its Education Policy, 1974–91

The Ethiopian political system that prevailed in the country between 1974 and 1991 was the complete antithesis of the Imperial one. Ethiopia was declared a republic and ruled by a socialist/communist workers party. The economy was socialised; urban and

rural lands were put under state control. The path of scientific socialism was deemed the most appropriate strategy to bring out the country from its backward stage of development. The Cold War was indeed a decisive context which made the transition from the pro-West alliance of the Imperial system to that supported and protected by the Soviet Union. Buttressed by the ideological position of the Soviet Union and its East European allies, the Ethiopian government began to put more emphasis on the role of education for development. Socialist education stressed the inculcation of ideology as a prime objective with Marxism and the value of production as the main pillars. The United States of America, one of the main partners in the development of the Ethiopian education sector, was replaced by educational experts from Eastern Germany. The disruption of relations with the Western World in general and the United States in particular signalled the decline of English as a medium of instruction. At the height of the US-Ethiopian cultural relations there were up to 400 Peace Corps teachers from the United States in Ethiopia.

The Socialist regime had no difficulties in criticizing the poor performance of the Imperial system in the field of education. Ethiopia was depicted as the poorest country in the world and this poverty was allegedly brought about by the Imperial (feudal) system of rule. The educational policy of the Imperial system was simply dismissed as elitist and academic. The new leaders, who soon proclaimed a republic, promised that they would transform the economy and hence pull the country out of its poverty. In this framework, the education sector was assigned a key role. The fundamental aim of education, as expressed by the Ethiopian government in the early 1980s, was to cultivate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the young generation, to develop knowledge in science and technology, and to integrate and coordinate research with production so as to enable the revolution to move forward and secure productive citizens.⁸ The entire Ethiopian society was in one way or another subjected to political indoctrination. The political economy of Marxism/Leninism was made a subject at all levels of the education system.

A new curriculum was duly produced where five new subjects namely, (i) agriculture, (ii) production technology, (iii) political education, (iv) home economics and (v) introduction to business were added. This meant that Ethiopian secondary students had to follow 12 subjects. This was in sharp contrast to the format of the curriculum of the Imperial period where students followed not more than seven subjects. The inclusion of additional subjects without prior planning and adequate infrastructure led to the further deterioration of pedagogical conditions. The actual situation of Ethiopian education sector during the Socialist-communist epoch of Ethiopian current history is narrated in a small study I published in 1990.⁹

The Socialist regime inherited a sector with structural distortions where a considerable portion of secondary school graduates faced unemployment. During the first few years of power, the Socialist regime gathered together all new and old secondary school students

⁸ Cf. Tekeste Negash, *The Crisis of Ethiopian Education: Implications for Nation-Building*, (Uppsala Reports on Education, 29), Uppsala 1990, p. 20.

⁹ *Op. cit.*

and sent them to the countryside to preach to the peasantry the gospel of the new Socialist revolution. With a stroke of the pen the new leaders solved, at least for the moment, the crisis of that sub-sector. Moreover, the new leaders continued to expand the education sector so as to prove the old regime wrong. At the risk of sounding too Malthusian, the reign of terror (the war between the government and armed opposition and where more than 60 000 young people might have been killed¹⁰) might in some way be related to the existence of unemployed educated youth in the country.

Between 1975 and 1989, enrolment grew at a rate of 12 percent thus covering about 35 per cent of 7–16 year school age cohort. Table 1 demonstrates the rate of growth during the two periods. Expansion of the education sector, was however, not accompanied by a comparable increase in resources. On the contrary, the Socialist regime intensified the use of the shift system (where students follow their studies either in the morning or in the afternoon) so as to maximise the utilization of school premises. The shift system which began towards the end of 1960s became a permanent feature during the 1974–91 period. While enrolment continued to grow at the rate of 12 per cent per annum, the government intensified the recruitment of Ethiopian teachers to fill the gap left by expatriates, especially at the secondary schools.

By the mid 1980s, the Socialist government could no longer ignore the widespread public dissatisfaction with the quality of education. But as is often the case, the government and the bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education and the amorphous public had different understandings. For the government quality issues meant that the content “must fully prepare the students to meet the objective demands of the nation and the ideological needs of our society”. These needs and demands were to be fulfilled by “the implementation without delay the programme for expansion of technical and vocational education in line with the manpower demands of the country”¹¹ For the officials of the Ministry of Education, teachers and university employees, the decline of quality was discussed in terms of the growing pupil-teacher and pupil section ratios as well as by the decline of the proficiency of teachers in the use of English as medium of instruction. The educational system of the Imperial period might have lacked relevance, but as Christopher Clapham noted “a fairly good education for a relatively small number of children had under the Socialist regime been transformed into quite a poor education for a much larger number of children”.¹²

Yet the manpower demands of the country for people trained in technical and vocational education remained extremely modest. The labour force of the industrial sector increased from 63 000 to 80 000 between 1978 and 1984 or at the rate of 2430 new workers per year. The private sector that could have absorbed educated labour continued to grow at a snail pace. As late as 1990, the entire manufacturing sector (or modern sec-

¹⁰ Cf. R. Lefort, *Ethiopia: an heretical revolution?*, London: Zed Press, 1983.

¹¹ Negash, *The Crisis...*, p. 18.

¹² Ch. Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, quoted in E. Poluha, *The power of continuity: Ethiopia through the eyes of its children*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2004, p. 182.

tor) of the Ethiopian economy employed not more than 100 000 people out of a labour force of about 30 millions.¹³ Ethiopia was rural in the end of 1960s and still remains rural with an estimated 85 per cent of the population firmly engaged in agriculture in the year 2004.

In 1983, the socialist government commissioned an evaluation of the education system with a view of devising strategies for the “implementation without delay the objectives of education”.¹⁴ The evaluating commission, financed heavily by UNICEF, World Bank, Swedish International Development Authority summed up its work by the end of 1985.¹⁵ I have discussed elsewhere the findings of the evaluating committee.¹⁶ Here it is sufficient to mention that the Ethiopian government hardly benefited from it. It is most probable that the evaluation committee failed to attempt to answer the shortcomings of the sector as perceived by the government. It is also possible that the committee perceived the decline of quality as of largely technical nature that could be resolved with the infusion of additional funds geared to the upgrading of teacher competence in teaching methodology and subject matter. By the end of 1980s, although the socialist government remained committed to its own brand of ideology on the aim of education, the instruments it used to create socialist citizens were extremely inadequate. By the time I had the opportunity to carry out a study on Ethiopian education in 1988¹⁷ I could observe that the sector was in a crisis created by a misconceived policy of the role of education in the development of a society.

Although the rate of expansion of the education sector was uniform from the 1960s well into the end of 1980s, such expansion was carried out at the expense of teaching and learning environment. Very little resources were made available for the recruitment of sufficient teachers so as to keep the pupil-teacher ratio at the range of 40 to 1. Even less resources were made available to get and develop pedagogical materials; most of the budget for education went to salaries. The non-salary component became even less during the socialist regime. The curriculum department, heavily dominated by expertise from East Germany did what it could to develop text books designed “to meet the objective demands of the nation and the ideological needs of our society”.¹⁸ The curriculum was permeated with ideological texts as well as texts on agriculture and on the primacy of technology.

The progressive withdrawal of teachers whose native language was English and the overcrowding of classes, led to the decline of language proficiency among teachers and

¹³ T. N e g a s h, *Rethinking Education in Ethiopia*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996.

¹⁴ See N e g a s h, *The Crisis...*, pp. 18–20.

¹⁵ The evaluation committee was divided into four panels: i) Curriculum development and teaching-learning process; ii) Educational administration, structure and planning; iii) Educational logistics, supportive services and manpower training; and iv) Educational evaluation and research. The evaluation committee produced ten volumes, all of them in Amharic. All these findings were summarised in English in 1986. See: *Final Report of the Evaluative Research on the General Education System in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa 1986.

¹⁶ N e g a s h, *The Crisis...*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ For more detailed discussion see N e g a s h, *The Crisis...*, p. 18.

students. By 1980 the Ministry of Education toyed with the idea of replacing English with Amharic for junior secondary (grades 7 and 8). The problem of the medium of instruction was also confronted by the Evaluation Committee of 1983 which advised the government to study the issue further within the context of a new language policy. By 1990, one could say that English had effectively ceased to be the language of instruction; although it remained as the language of text books for all subjects for junior and senior secondary education.

The socialist government worked under the lie that education was the key instrument to inculcate Marxist-Leninist ideology and to produce productive citizens. It portrayed itself as a regime that has done more to spread the benefits of education compared to the Imperial rule that it replaced. It is of course doubtful whether the socialist regime has achieved any of its objectives. Education might indeed be considered as one of the areas of priority but throughout the 1980s, there were other areas that siphoned more and more resources. The civil war in northern Ethiopia and the strenuous political situation in the western and eastern parts of the country had to be financed by tightened budgets and compulsory contributions from Ethiopians in all walks of life. More than fifty per cent of recurrent budget committed to the defence of the country, there was little money left for other sectors of the economy. Fortunately for the socialist regime, the Swedish assistance to the education sector continued unabated and Sweden was by far the biggest donor. The development of primary education in the rural areas that took off soon after the demise of the imperial system was made possible by the targeted flow of Swedish funds. From 1975 until 1990, more than fifty percent of all schools built in Ethiopia were partially financed by Sweden.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the education sector as a whole functioned in an environment that was hardly conducive to either teaching or learning.

Although there might have been a broad consensus as to the shortcomings of the education sector, opinions were divided as to the implications of the crisis. The education Evaluation committee had for instance concluded its massive survey by identifying the bottlenecks in terms of resources and training. Others argued on the long term negative impact of an educational system that ignores the inculcation of values that keep a nation/polity/society cohesive and forward looking.²⁰ While donors like UNESCO and SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) were positively impressed by the consistent literacy campaigns and the spread of primary education from about 10 percent of the age cohort to about 35 per cent by 1989 carried out by the Ethiopian government. But the question remained as to the implications of the spread or expansion of education on poverty in general and the alleviation of poverty in particular. For the great majority of the Ethiopian population socialism is associated with the spread of the equality of poverty. The replacement of the private sector by state institutions made everyone, with the exception of high political functionaries uniformly poor. In 1991 the socialist system

¹⁹ Negash, *Rethinking Education ...*, (op. cit. in n. 12).

²⁰ See Negash, *The Crisis...*, pp. 72–83.

of governance was defeated by the regional/ethnic armed insurgents. The education policy of the Socialist regime was also abolished.

The Federal System of Governance (Functional since 1991)

The political cum military organisation (Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF) have reconfigured Ethiopia as a federal state. According to the constitution that came into effect in 1994, Ethiopia is composed of nations and nationalities that freely and voluntarily adhere to it. All member nations have the right to opt out of the federation. At present Ethiopia is made up of nine federal states and two chartered cities. A new era dawned on Ethiopia, that of the federal system of governance equipped with an appropriate educational policy that became operational in 1994. The educational policy of the new government is thus the third policy in the history of the country since 1945. The major feature of the new educational policy is the introduction of ethnic languages as mediums of education for primary education. Overnight more than a dozen languages were deemed fit to function as mediums of instruction. A similar feature related to the language issue is the choice by the Oromo Liberation organisations for Latin script (to write the Oromo language) instead of the Geez text used to write Tigrinya and Amharinya. Since 1994, Ethiopia has according to its constitution no official language; Amharic and English are considered as working languages.

The landscape of Ethiopian education has since 1994 changed dramatically. Gross enrolment ratio increased from ca 35 per cent in 1990 to 70 per cent in 2004. The Ethiopian government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular have been extremely efficient in mobilising external funds (bilateral and multilateral) for the expansion of the education sector. Most of the expansion is financed by the growing flow of foreign aid and loans as well by a growing contribution from the communities. However, the area of education where growth has been most dramatic is Higher education. Enrolment in all sectors of higher education (diploma, undergraduate and post graduate) increased from 18 000 in 1991 to 147 000 in 2003. This rate of increase is indeed impressive by any count. What has even been more impressive is the growth of the private sector in the provision of higher education.

In 1996 I attempted to argue that the state ought to leave the formal education sector in the urban areas to the private sector. The underlying argument was that there were enough households who would and could finance private schools for their children. It is worthwhile to note that I was referring to the primary and secondary sectors. I did not imagine that the private sector could be an important partner in the development of higher education. In 1996 there were very few private schools in the country and none of them were involved in higher education. By 2004, however, more than 35 000 students were following their studies at the private colleges that had mushroomed since 1997. At the end of 2004 there were more than 37 private colleges (or tertiary institutions) in the country. Another aspect that augurs very well indeed is the number of female students.

In the private institutions of higher learning more than 50 per cent of the students are women whereas in the institutions run by the state and the various regions, female enrolment is far below 20 percent. This is indeed a revolution that the EPRDF government has wittingly or unwittingly unleashed in the country.

The main impetus for the rapid expansion of the education sector (from the primary to higher education) is the belief in the role of education in either the alleviation of poverty or poverty eradication and the flow of external financial assistance. The 1994 educational policy does not draw on close links between the provision of education and the alleviation of poverty. The aims of education as specified in the policy document are indeed modern in the sense that the needs and potential of the individual student are put in the centre.²¹ It appears, rather that the inspirational ideas on the role of education for the development of society (and hence for the reduction of poverty) came from donors. More specifically, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Policy, that the Ethiopian government was obliged to submit to the World Bank as partial condition for continued loans and aid, lay behind the policy of rapid expansion. Another document that has provided a strong framework for the logic of rapid expansion is the United Nations Millennium Development Goals where the International Community is committed to assist poor nations to provide universal primary education to their citizens and reduce by half the number of people who live below the poverty line of one dollar per day.²²

Even though the current government has succeeded very well to mobilise external funds for development (according to some sources Ethiopia receives to the tune of 2 billion USD per year), most of the budget for the education sector has to come from internal sources. Parents have been partners in financing the education of their children, although the burden on some households is too heavy. However, as has always been the case the allocated budget is far too small to manage the education sector.

It is debatable whether the rise in gross enrolment that Ethiopia has experienced since 1991 is significantly different from the rate of increase of the earlier educational regimes, i.e. 1941–74 and 1975–1991. Table 1 indicates that there was a predictable and uniform rate of expansion of the primary and secondary sectors since the 1960s. The major change is to be found in the field of higher education. Since 2000 the government has diverted a considerable amount of resources from the general education budget into higher education. Higher education, the World Bank study noted, takes up 20 per cent of the educational resources and benefits only 1.7 per cent of the cohort population.²³ Ethiopia has now a comparable number of university students as many nations in Europe about a century ago.²⁴

²¹ “The Education and Training Policy”, that was issued by the Ethiopian government 1994, is reproduced as an appendix in Negash, *Rethinking Education*

²² ‘United Nations Millennium Development Goals’, in: United Nations, *The role of the United Nations in the 21st century*. New York: United Nations, 2000.

²³ Education in Ethiopia: Strengthening the foundations for sustainable progress, 2004:107-10.

²⁴ World Bank, 2004.

Table 1. Enrolment²⁵

Academic year	Primary (grades 1–8)	Secondary (grades 9–12)	Higher (post-secondary)
1956/7	135 467	4 845	466
1974/5	1 042 900	81 000	6 474 (1973/4)
1990/91	3 926 700	454 000	18 000
2002/03	8 743 265	627 000	147 954

Table 2. Enrolment in Public and Private Colleges and Universities, 2002/03²⁶

Public institutions	90 687 male students	21 685 female students
Private institutions	20 828 male students	14 574 female students
Total	111 685 male students	36 269 female students

I am indeed tempted to agree with the concluding statements of the World Bank that the current Ethiopian government can look back with justifiable pride in the progress achieved in the field of primary education but not for the same reasons.²⁷ The educational systems that functioned in Ethiopia until 1994 were not elitist. The rapid rise of gross enrolment in primary education hides a series of structural imbalances. Whereas enrolment in urban areas is nearly universal, it is only about 45 per cent among rural children. Moreover, 25 per cent of newly enrolled rural children drop out before making it to the next grade and nearly fifty percent of them hardly stay in school for five years.²⁸ With the exception of Addis Ababa, completion rates are very low in the rest of the country. According to the data assembled by the World Bank, for the country as a whole, it is

²⁵ Sources: UNESCO, *World Survey of Education: Higher Education*, 1961; World Bank, 'Higher Education Development for Ethiopia', *Pursuing the Vision. Africa Region, Human Development: Working paper Series*, 65, April 2004; Negash, *The Crisis...*, Ch. McNab, *Language Policy and Language Practice: Implementation Dilemmas in Ethiopian Education*, Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1988; Teshome Wagaw, *The Development of Higher Education and Social change: An Ethiopian experience*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990, p. 167.

²⁶ Source: Ministry of Education, *Education Statistics Annual Abstract*, for 2002/03.

²⁷ World Bank, 'Education in Ethiopia: Strengthening the Foundation for Sustainable Progress', *AFTH3. Human Development Department, Africa Region*, August 26, 2004, pp. 30–31. I quote: "A decade after launching its 1994 new Education and Training Policy, Ethiopia's governments can look back with justifiable pride on the progress achieved. The very rapid growth of primary education reflects a genuine commitment to transforming the country's historically elitist system into one that serves all of Ethiopia's children."

²⁸ World Bank, 'Education in Ethiopia', p. 51.

only about 30 percent of school age population who complete the first four years of primary education. And about 20 per cent complete 8 years of schooling.²⁹ In spite of the continuous polemic, the current government has done very little to expand and consolidate primary education in the rural areas. Rural Ethiopia is still short changed. Urban children irrespective of their economic status have a far greater chance of completing primary education than rural children. The disparity in schooling is much wider between children in urban and rural areas than between boys and girls or even between rich and poor.³⁰ In other words, the urban/rural divide is far more decisive on the educational destiny of children than gender and class.

The most important contribution of this federal government is that it opened up education to private providers, a move that has proved to be extremely successful. Higher Education in Ethiopia is no longer the monopoly of the state. The private sector has made its presence felt by capturing more than 25 percent of all enrolments. What is even more remarkable is that more than fifty percent of those enrolled in private institutions of higher learning are women. In public universities enrolment is heavily skewed in favour of male students. Although there are more women in diploma programmes (up to 20 percent) their number decreases drastically in degree programmes. In 2002/3 there were 1915 students enrolled in post graduate (Master of Arts and Master of Science) out of whom 135 were female students. Yet I believe that this government, compared with its predecessors, can indeed look back with justifiable pride for creating conditions for the economically well off households to finance the education of their children.³¹ The implications of institutionalising private education are difficult to predict but could well be very negative on the political evolution of the society. Polarisation of the society may be one such negative effect. However, some of the negative effects could probably be offset by a comparable investment in the public institutions of higher learning accessible to disadvantaged groups in the society. It remains to be seen how the government would manage the emerging effects of such, for states like Ethiopia, a revolutionary decision.

Taken as a whole, however, the Ethiopian education sector is on the brink of collapse. The rapid expansion of primary education was achieved at a heavy price. According to the World Bank study that was conducted in 2004, the Ethiopian education sector has signs of distress. A key indicator of this distress is the deterioration of pedagogical conditions as exemplified in the pupil-section ratio and in the real spending per student.³² In 2001–02, Ethiopia's pupil-teacher ratio of 65:1 in primary education and 52:1 in secondary education are among the highest in the world. Pupil-section sizes have also risen extremely high averaging about 75 and 82 students per section. What the World Bank diplomatically describes as distress of the Ethiopian education system I believe ought to be described as a system on the brink of collapse. The World Bank study raises the right questions:

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

³¹ Allowing or encouraging the establishment and proliferation of private schools is bound to affect the aim of education as either a public or an essentially private good.

³² World Bank, 'Education in Ethiopia', 2004.

These are: Does universal primary education mean getting all children to complete eight years of primary education? Does producing skilled workers mean turning out as many graduates as the education system can put through the upper levels of the system?

By bringing experiences from other comparable countries the World Bank study appeared to argue that five years of primary education is enough to achieve a permanent literacy. Moreover, the World Bank study argued that Ethiopia would not be able to provide a universal primary education of eight years duration even if it were to increase its budget up to 4.5 percent of GDP. An achievement study commissioned by USAID among fourth and eighth graders showed the average percentage of correct answers for all subjects (they were tested in Reading, English, Mathematics and Environmental Sciences) was 48 percent among fourth graders and 41 percent among eighth graders.³³ In 2001–02 in the Oromiya region eight grade students who sat for the regional examination managed to get 33 percent of the questions right.³⁴

Lessons Learnt and Missed

Although it might prove difficult to fully answer it, it is I believe worthwhile to raise the question as to whether this government could have learnt some lessons from the experiences of the previous governments. The crisis of the education sector has always been closely related to supply and demand. The education sector functioned well when graduates could find ready employment. The quality of education in terms of relevance to cultural, historical and economical needs of the country was not given sufficient consideration as long as returns to investment in education (human capital) functioned well. The major crisis of the education sector of the imperial system of governance dealt with problems of employment of secondary graduates. The 1971–72 education sector review was mainly concerned of controlling the flow of entrants to secondary education. The recommendations of the education sector review were far looking and, according to my judgement very sound. The education policy that would have come into operation in 1973 was strenuously opposed by teachers and secondary students and was thus shelved aside when the imperial system of governance itself was abolished.³⁵

The socialist regime inherited an education sector of a rather good quality but that reached a fewer number of people. Moreover, it inherited an education system that produced more secondary school graduates than could be absorbed by the modern sector of the economy. The position of English as a medium of instruction from grade 7 onwards

³³ *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 147. The 33 percent average refers to the average of the percentage correct answers for eight subjects. This means for some subjects, such as English, the score might have been much lower.

³⁵ The 1971–72 education sector review called for expansion of primary education in the rural areas and for the controlled growth of secondary and higher education. Teachers and students in Addis Ababa and other towns opposed the recommendations of the sector review, partly because they considered the education policy as part of the imperial system that they wanted to change.

was not in any way threatened. Up to 1973 up to 70 percent of junior and senior secondary teachers were foreigners (mostly from the United States and some from India).

It appears as if the socialist regime did not even bother to read the background papers that the education sector review used for its assessment. The socialist regime introduced a new element, namely that of using education to inculcate ideological values. The educational policy of the imperial system was hurriedly dismissed as “feudal and elitist”. Hence the secondary and primary sectors expanded at the rate of 12 and 15 percent respectively. Whereas the expansion of the primary sector was probably in line with the ambitions of the imperial policy, the continued expansion of the secondary education sector was the making of the socialist regime. Between 1976 and 1988 the country was yearly producing about 70 000 secondary school graduates, few of whom could get employment in the urban/modern sector of the economy.

However, the aspect of education that worried the socialist regime was the decline of the quality of education measured by the level of proficiency of English as a medium of instruction. By 1983, when the issue was finally given an official recognition, nearly all foreign teachers had left Ethiopia. The teaching of English as a foreign language and English as medium of instruction was left to Ethiopian teachers to manage the best they could. It is possible to argue that Ethiopian teachers, products as they were of the imperial system of schooling, might have managed the situation had it not been for the serious deterioration of the teaching/learning conditions brought about by overcrowding of classes and subjects. The national and international expertise advised the socialist regime to continue to expand universal primary education of eight years and secondary education. The same expertise further advised the infusion of resources to reduce the extremely high pupil-teacher ratio as it had a direct bearing on learning. Furthermore, the expertise doubted the wisdom of using English as a medium of instruction in junior secondary schools (grades 7 and 8) and advised a comprehensive review of matter.

The socialist regime did very little of the advice it solicited. Its priorities shifted to defend itself from insurgents who were conquering more terrain especially since 1988. The socialist regime was defeated and the mantle of state power was captured by a coalition of armed insurgents with entirely different agenda on the role of education.

The federal system of governance virtually dismantled the structures that the earlier systems had painstakingly built. To start with education became the affair of the regions; hence the authorisation of the use of local languages for primary education, i.e. up to grade 6. Second, the federal government made it clear that it would hence forth concentrate on primary and junior secondary education up to grade 10. Right at the outset, the federal state heeding the advice of the World Bank announced that it would introduce cost sharing from senior secondary education upwards.³⁶ The regionalisation of education and the early advantaged position given to primary education led on the one hand to the growth of gross enrolment in primary and higher education. Ironically enough, it is higher

³⁶ The idea of cost sharing, first announced in 1994 became operative in 2003 both for college and secondary school students. See World Bank, *Higher Education...*, 2004.

education sector that has taken the lion's share both in terms of enrolment and costs.³⁷ Gross primary and secondary enrolment did rise but not dramatically as claimed by the World Bank studies and the federal regime as can be seen from table 1. Enrolment grew since the early 1960s at a rather uniform rate of about 12 per cent. What is however different during the federal regime is the decline of quality of education due to steep rise in pupil-teacher and pupil section ratios. It is now a common feature for instance of a chemistry or history section at any public secondary school in Ethiopia to have between 75 and 85 students. Sections up to 100 students each are by no means rare. It is also a common feature for a secondary school teacher (for instance a teacher of History) to be responsible for eight sections with an average total about 1000 students.

One of the consequences of the unplanned and underfinanced expansion of the sector was a marked decline in the quality of education. The meaning put into the decline of the quality of education varies depending on the user. For teachers and concerned parents, decline of quality was measured by the inability of students to read texts. The government is repeatedly accused of pursuing the politics of ridiculing teachers' concern about decline of quality. The government reasoned that the expansion of the education sector was by itself a qualitative input. The World Bank on the other hand describes the decline of quality in terms of the worsening of pedagogical conditions.

Analysis of the decline of the quality of education at the primary level of education (the first eight years of schooling) generally deals with the capacity of the sector to provide permanent literacy to as many students as possible. Here the focus is on the rural/urban divide. Most of the urban children tend to complete six years of schooling, whereas, in the rural areas the rate of completion is at the most 30 percent. Huge classes (of up to 100 students per section) and the distances that students have to travel to go to school appear to be the main reasons for poor rate of completion.

Rhetoric notwithstanding, the federal government has in actual fact not invested enough in infrastructure and teachers. The combination of too few teachers and too few class rooms has led to a serious, according to the World Bank study, deterioration of pedagogical conditions. The most recent study on Ethiopian education to which I have already referred to several times, views the problem from the perspectives of the economics of education. And hence the study proposes that the recruitment of unqualified teachers and the introduction of cheap construction materials would free sufficient funds that could be used to reduce the dangerously high pupil-teacher and pupil-section ratios.³⁸

The World Bank study argues that the standards for teacher recruitment and school construction do not take into account budget constraints. In Ethiopia, as the standards for teacher recruitment and school construction exceed budget constraints, these have been achieved through cutbacks elsewhere that eventually compromise their ability to provide effective services. That these has indeed happened in the Ethiopian system can be seen

³⁷ World Bank, *Education in Ethiopia*, 2004, p. 82. Ethiopia spends more than one hundred times as much per student in higher education as on a pupil in grades 1–4.

³⁸ World Bank, *Higher Education Development in Ethiopia: Pursuing the Vision*, (Africa Region, Human Development: Working Paper Series, 65) April 2004.

from the following features: (a) a severe shortage of teacher and classrooms throughout the system leading to very high pupil-teacher ratios (among the highest in the world) and section sizes; (b) a sizable share of schools with very large enrolments; (c) large share of teachers in grade 5–8 and 9–12 who do not meet the certification standards; and (d) very limited spending on school administration and non-salary pedagogical resources.³⁹

This excellent study, it has to be noted, has its limitations. Carried out by a panel of economists, this study does indeed provide many issues for policy development on how to make the education system function in a cost effective manner. The World Bank study deals mainly with how the system functions. Other equally important issues for policy development such as language of instruction, the linkages between primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the system are best left to national governments to decide. The major concern of the World Bank study is to gauge the distance covered by Ethiopia towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. The World Bank noted that standards of teacher recruitment and school construction are so high that these two structural properties put effective constraints. Hence the World Bank lends support to some practices applied by regional states where non-qualified teachers are recruited to meet teacher shortages. The World Bank study also supports alternative school designs that cost a fraction of the school construction standard set by the Ministry of Education.

The World Bank study hypothesises that access and learning outcomes would ideally improve without putting heavy emphasis on the public purse. What is required, the study argues, is the adaptation of teacher recruitment and school construction standards to local realities in order to avoid inevitable deterioration of the poor conditions in schools (high and rising pupil-teacher ratios, overcrowded classrooms and schools and a dearth of instructional materials). This according to me is a false hope. The gains that could be made out of the massive recruitment of “paraprofessionals” and the reduction of construction costs could hardly be of such magnitude that they could lead to a significant reduction of pupil-teacher and pupil-section ratios. The same goes with the synergic effects of the policy of decentralisation as a promising development. But it is important to bear into account that the improvement of the education system’s performance via decentralisation would require, among other things, changes that give parents and communities a real say in how schools are run, increase accountability at all levels in the system, and provide appropriate information flows to give concrete meaning to the concept of accountability.⁴⁰

If implemented the proposals put forward by the World Bank could perhaps for a short while lead to a reduction of pupil-teacher and pupil-section ratios. The proposals that affect recruitment where the principle of equal pay for equal work has not yet made an inroad would certainly be eventually regretted by the unqualified teachers who would be asked to survive on less than half of the salary of their counterparts who had passed

³⁹ World Bank, *Education in Ethiopia*, 2004, p. 151.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

through the institutes of teacher training. The additional proposal that there is room for the government to save money by narrowing the income per capita gap between the salary of a teacher and the income of an average Ethiopian farmer would in effect mean the reduction of teachers' salaries. It is doubtful whether the federal system of governance would go so far to antagonise such an influential group as teachers.⁴¹

There are two lessons this federal government could draw from the experiences of the earlier educational systems. The first is the tendency of the education system to produce graduates that could not be absorbed by the economy. Policy makers of the imperial regime were indeed aware of this problem and tried to deal with it. The educational praxis of the socialist regime continued to pour out secondary graduates into an essentially stagnant economy. Most of the secondary graduates continued to be unemployed and we do not know the extent to which this collective mass of educated but unemployed and unemployable youth might have undermined the legitimacy of the socialist regime to rule.⁴² The socialist regime, it appears tried to limit the damage by a firm commitment of providing employment to all those who managed to get a diploma or a degree from the institutions of higher learning.

The second lesson that the federal regime could really consider is the relevance of English as a medium of instruction. The regionalisation of education and the wide spread use of regional languages for primary education could have diverted the attention of the government at least during the first few years of its coming to power from appreciating the problems associated with the use of English. More than ten years later, the federal government either refuses to review earlier experience, or is completely unaware of the negative impact of the use of English as a medium of instruction.

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⁴¹ It is worthwhile to note that the World Bank proposal is quite well known at least in the Amhara region. Teachers at Debre Sina (northern Shoa) informed me that they have been told by the regional education bureau that each one of them is earning ten times the salary of an Ethiopian peasant. The hidden threat of salary reduction is too visible.

⁴² It is difficult to establish a cause and effect relationship between high unemployment and political instability of a regime. There are, however, a number of studies that illustrate the role of university and secondary school students in the downfall of the imperial system. See: R. Balsvik, *Haile Selassie's students: the intellectual and social background to revolution, 1952–1977*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1985; J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Messay Kebede, *Survival and Modernization: Ethiopia's Enigmatic Present: A Philosophical Discourse*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1999. In an earlier study (Negash, *The Crisis ...*, 1990) I argued that an educational system that produces unemployable youth could either lead to rebellion or to the increasing growth of authoritarian rule. But the argument is not empirically substantiated.

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