

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

First of all, I would like to thank the Ethiopian Economic Association, not so much for inviting me as one of the participants at this Forum as for organizing such a forum, whereby discussions on issues of concern to the country's development have been made possible. As it is generally known, intellectuals in the developed countries have nurtured the tradition of coming together, on set occasions, for discussing issues of concern in order to enrich their respective professions. With us, however, the same culture does not appear to have developed in as much as one would have liked it to. Precisely because this Association has taken the initiative toward contributing to the development of such a tradition, it is only to be lauded for setting an example to be emulated by others. But more especially, because the dialogue so initiated is of such nature as to allow for broaching various branches of knowledge in their interconnection, the Association should be appreciated for opening up the opportunity for professionals in different disciplines to participate in the discussions.

To begin with, then, it should suffice to suggest a general, working definition of the concept of development, with no particular need for going into the complex ramifications attending it. In general terms, let us assume that, if a country, such as Ethiopia, which finds itself at a rather low level of development, registers a given amount of improvement in the economic, social and political spheres, that country is headed in the direction and along the path of development. In a similar vein, because education is assumed to be one of the inputs for development and, as such, contributes to the production of educated and skilled manpower, it serves as an instrument in bringing about development. This, I think, should suffice by way of a general understanding of the relation between the two concepts.

Yet education can play a key role in bringing about development only if and when certain conditions have been met, not merely because education alone is provided as a matter of course every time new regimes are ushered in and out. The following are generally considered to be the conditions that need to be met for education to properly serve

the needs and requirements of development:

- a. [The desired] education should have [clearly articulated] aims and such aims should focus on the development needs of the country; be capable of solving the target society's problems; and, also, reflect that society's needs
- b. When these educational aims are articulated in terms of policies, all those sectors of society, but especially teachers, parents, educational experts as well as government and non-government stakeholders and supporters, etc. that constitute the main stakeholders should participate, not as a matter of courtesy but genuinely, in the process of formulating and designing those policies.
- c. Education should be based on the country's overall development plan, be administered and managed in accordance with the level of the country's economic development, and with such level of quality as to ensure sustainable development outcomes, while at the same time ensuring the equitable participation of all.

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Now that I have said this much by way of a preamble, I shall go directly to my topic, which, as has been announced prior to this meeting, is "Education and Development in Ethiopia." The paper is divided into eight parts, in which an attempt has been made to give a survey of the process the country's educational system has gone through over the different periods of the country's history, the contributions it has made to the country's development and the reasons for its failure to achieve what it ought to have brought about. The paper concludes by attempting to project some visions concerning the fate of education in Ethiopia of the Year 2020 (E.C). I would like to make it known to my audience that throughout the paper dates have been given in the Gregorian calendar, except where necessary, in which case they shall be indicated as otherwise.

II. THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Education is not exactly new to a country that is home to an ancient civilization. Ever since the advent of Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia in the fourth century A.D, religious education, including writing as part of its curriculum, has been given by the Church, albeit to a minority of the population, as a result of which the country has ranked as the only Sub-Saharan country with its own indigenous system of writing. Similarly, Qur'anic education has been given by Islamic educational institutions, particularly among communities inhabiting the eastern and western parts of the country.

However, because of the focus of the education provided by both religions was more on the here-in-after world rather than on secular concerns, the contribution they made towards development, but more particularly in the area of the economic sector, amounted to nothing much to speak of. The paradox in all of this is that, although the country boasted its own indigenous system of writing, the majority of its population had to use, until quite late in the modern period, their thumb-prints for signatures, as a result of which Westerners, who are seldom tired of coining epithets for Third World Countries had dubbed Ethiopia "The Land of the Thumb Print!"ⁱ

Modern education, which is believed to be one of the basic inputs for development made its belated debut on the Ethiopian scene with the advent of the twentieth century. Prior to that, however, Catholic and Protestant missionaries had introduced subjects in modern education as a secondary function of their main goal of disseminating their respective denominational doctrines, particularly in the northern parts of the country.

As a result, towards the end of the nineteenth century, of the laying of the foundation of a centralized system of administration and the beginning of the relative modernization of the country's economy, and especially due to the country's expansion of its diplomatic relationship with the outside world since the victory of the Battle of Adowa, modern education began to make its marks on the social scene.ⁱⁱ In 1906 Menelik issued what was to be probably the first educational

proclamation to meet, it appears, the demands of this newly discovered interest. The proclamation made pronouncements not just about the benefits of education in general but also, and in particular, about the usefulness and sensibility of vocational/technical training. When looked at from the perspective especially of vocational/technical training, the proclamation appeared to exude a sense of being far ahead of the general sensibilities of the time. The reason for saying this is that, let alone at the time of the proclamation, people's attitude toward vocational/ technical training, even until now, has not been the kind one can dare call inviting. To have a glimpse into the nature of the proclamation, a partial quotation thereof:

Up until now a person knowledgeable in the crafts used to be held in scorn; for this reason, no one made any endeavor to learn and be educated; if we continue to live in this harmful way churches will close down; in fact there will be no trace of Christianity. In other countries, not only do people learn about each and everything that has come to be known but they also create things anew. Hear Yee, therefore, that, as of this moment, both boys and girls should all attend schools beginning the end of their sixth birthdays. As for those families who are found unwilling to send their children to school, when the parents pass on, their properties shall, instead of being inherited by their children, be taken over by the Government. It is my Government that shall provide both the schools and the teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Menelik was not satisfied with just issuing proclamations. He went

beyond words and decided to open schools. But because the clergy and the aristocracy were against change and because they also felt modern education posed a threat to the Orthodox Faith they professed, they were strongly opposed to the idea of it all. But Menelik II, the enthusiast of change that he was, proved wise enough to concoct a strategy by which to slacken the resistance of the opposition and struck upon the idea of bringing teachers of the Orthodox Faith from Egypt and wrote the following letter to Abuna Qerlos, the then Patriarch of the Sea of Alexandria:

**To Our Holy Father
Abuna Qerlos:**

We have in our mind a big noble idea of establishing schools [here]. When Our Holy Father Abuna Mathewos, who heard of this idea of Ours informed us of the availability of many educated and capable people in "our country Egypt," We told him, "Do [please] write to Our Holy Father Abuna Qerlos yourself and have him send us [teachers]. Behold, We have written you accordingly, and, if you find [the teachers we need], We would be happy if, upon witness hereby of the Seal of Abuna Mathewos [for genuinity] Your Holiness would let us know at the soonest possible opportunity [about the possibility of sending us the teachers] by telephone. Our reason for sending to you, rather than bringing [teachers] from other countries, is in consideration of the idea that it would be better if our Brothers-in-Faith were to come to us on grounds of matters both of Faith and other concerns.

*Written on this 28th day of Sene 1988
At Addis Abeba^{iv}*

Not very long after that, there was a positive response from Egypt to the

letter and, in 1908, the first modern school was opened bearing the name of Menelik II. The school first opened its door to about one hundred children of the aristocracy, so as to set a good example for the general community. But most of the members of the aristocracy, though not happy about the idea of school, and certainly not intent upon sending their own children, sent members of their retinue, particularly those they did not take a liking to, merely out of respect for Menelik's injunction. Even then, those so sent to school created havoc by absenting themselves from the school, as a result of which Menelik wrote letters to the members of the aristocracy to once again send the delinquents back to school. One such letter, sent to one of his followers, reads as follows:

**To Negadras Haile Girogis;
Addis Abeba:**

The following students who were sent to the ferenji (expatriate) teachers under your responsibility have been reported to me as having been delinquent on their attendance of school. They are: Abebe Wolde Mikael, Abebe Yirgu, Abate Ayitenfisu, Bekele Zegeye, Beshah Tekle Haymanot, Gebreyes Gared, Zewdie Zemedagegnehu, Kifle Woldehitsan, Zewdie Gizaw, Qitaw Zelelew, Worku Aschenafi, Shewarega Woldhitsan, Simret Wolde Michael. I hereby order that the above named children go back to school. If, however, these children fail to go to school and pursue their education, you [plural] shall be held responsible for payment of the wages of the teachers.

*Written on this 30^{eth} day of
Tahisas 1901
At Debre Libanos^v*

It was including the writing of such exhortatory letters by means of

which Menelik II attempted to familiarize the people with modern education. Because at the time translators or interpreters were in high demand, the school focused on the teaching of French, English, and Arabic. Moreover, it was related, some provincial governors, following the example set by Menelik, had opened a few schools at their own expenses. It has also been reported that Menelik had opened three other schools outside of Addis Abeba.

Although the foundation for modern education had been laid down, the progress made along that line was rather slow until the opening in 1925 of the Teferi Makonnen School, the second such institution in the country's history. Following the opening of this second school, other schools were opened at Dessie, Gore, Dire Dawa, Neqemte, Yirga Alem, Jigjiga, Assebe Teferi, Ambo, Jimma and Debre Markos. What needs to be especially noted at this point is the opening in 1931 of Empress Menen School, the first all-girls school in the country's history. The overall picture of the country's expanding modern education was as follows: There were twenty-eight government schools with a total enrollment of over four-thousand students until the Italian invasion [of 1935]. There were about two hundred students pursuing their education in the different European countries as well as in the United States of America. Of these latter, ten were young women.^{vi}

III. EDUCATION DURING THE ITALIAN INVASION

The Italian invasion spelled a catastrophe for the as-yet-burgeoning modern education of the country. Aside from deliberately liquidating the few educated young people the country boasted of at the time, Fascist Italy pursued, on the very morrow of its occupation of the land, an educational policy based on colonial principles. Accordingly, the education provided to Ethiopians did not exceed the fourth grade level, and its avowed aim was to produce an educated manpower capable of serving its Italian masters, inculcated with the idea of the greatness of Italy's Fascist Government. Moreover, in accordance with the principle of 'divide-and-rule', and as officially proclaimed, the medium of education was Amharic in Addis Ababa, Oromigna in Oromo regions, Sidamigna in Sidama, Kafficho in Kafa, and Somale in Somali regions.^{vii} Fascist Italy introduced this language policy in order to divide the people along linguistic lines, deprive them of their sense of unity and, accordingly, rule them at its free will. Fortunately, however, the one saving grace for the country was the short-lived rule of Fascist Italy.

IV. EDUCATION IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ITALIAN INVASION

With the Italian invasion over, one of the issues given priority in the country's rehabilitation program was the resumption of the education disrupted by the invading forces. One reason for the special attention given to education could probably be the Government's tacit

recognition that Ethiopia was defeated by the invading forces of Fascist Italy because of its backwardness. Such thinking was given a much better articulation in the following couplets of the patriots:

*If it [the invader] came through
Maychew or the Ogaden /
it couldn't have penetrated [so far]
Only it came via the sky* /
a terrain we are not familiar with.*

The effort of rehabilitating schools, as it were from scratch, immediately after the defeat of the invading forces of Italy was a real challenge, whether financially, in terms of manpower or material resources. More than anything else, however, because of the liquidation by the forces of Fascist Italy of the few educated people the country had produced, there was an extreme shortage of teachers. What the country managed to deploy was mostly those with the traditional church and missionary education, as there were non available who had undergone professional teachers' training education. One payroll list, at the time, shows that the number of employees, including teachers that the Ministry of Education had at its service in 1942 was only seventy. And the budget allotted for education in 1942 was not more than a mere six-hundred thousand Birr.^{viii} The total number of students for 1943 had reached 19,000. It has been indicated, however, that, within a matter of six years, the number of students had grown to about 53,000.^{ix}

* The allusion to the sky is a reference to the air raids, which were all new to the patriots, since, during the Battle of Adowa, the Italians, not possessed of an air force, came by land and were summarily defeated [trans.].

Another important point worth noting about this period [of transition] was the fact that Britain had a tremendous influence and was very much heeded, albeit for a short period of time, as a result of the role it played in driving out of the invading forces of Fascist Italy. Because of this, the influence it wielded over the educational system was inevitable. As is well known, before the Italian invasion, much of the orientation and syllabus of the education had tilted in favor of French, while during the transition the balance tilted in favor of the British way, so that English took the lead as the language of instruction. Attempts were made at the time to make the curriculum adapt, as much as possible, to that pursued by the English in its colonies in Africa.

Moreover, students who reached the twelfth grade were made to sit for what was then known as the English "Matriculation" exam. All these point to the fact that the country's modern education was concurrently exposed to two foreign influences in the short time since it made its debut on the country's historical scene. Although the number of students did not hit the 95,000 mark until 1954/55, the University College of Addis Abeba, the first institution of higher education in the country's history, was opened much earlier in 1951. As one could easily guess, when the College was first established, the instructors, one may even say all of them, were expatriates. Because the number of students at the beginning was less than one hundred, one could say it was much easier [and cheaper] to have them educated abroad.

The British educational system was just underway, and the country barely beginning to get used to it, when in the 1950s the American system began making a headway, replacing the former and exerting its influence not only on the curriculum but also on the textbooks. With regard to the teaching staff, a particular role was played by what were at the time known as "Peace Corps" volunteers. At the same time the British system, which operated on a 4+4+4 scheme, gave way in 1963/64 to the 6+2+4 scheme; that is to say, primary education consisted of 6 years, while junior secondary education was allotted 2 years and senior secondary education 4 years. The American system, it can be observed, constituted a third foreign influence on the country's educational system.

There is one important point to be noted at this juncture. Until this moment, the country's development had proceeded on the basis of a one-year-plan. It was since 1957 that the existing five-year plan was introduced. According to this new plan, the country's educational system was so designed as to focus on the production of skilled manpower and the improvement of the quality of education. However, before the plan showed any tangible effect, the second five-year plan had already started by 1962. In a similar manner, before the outcome of this second-five year plan became visible, the third five-year plan had just begun in 1972 when the 1974 revolution suddenly appeared on the scene.

Although the outcome of the educational system registered during the first five-year plan was

not known, the process, it appears, continued as usual. By 1959/60, student enrollment had risen to a quarter of a million. Be that as it may, a variety of criticisms^x was directed at the educational system.

To mention but a few:

- a) Educational opportunities were open to only a few;
- b) The dissemination of education was not equitable (for example, in terms of gender distribution, the enrollment of girls at the primary school level was 32%, while at the secondary level it was 29%; similarly, when we consider the distribution of high schools among the different provinces in 1974, of a total 124 high schools, 70 were shared among Addis Ababa, Shewa and Eritrea);
- c) The curriculum was more academic than vocationally/technically-oriented;
- d) The attrition rate at the different levels was high; for example, of the total number of students enrolled in grade one, only 6% made it to institutions of higher education.
- e) The curriculum hardly reflected the needs and problems of the country;
- f) The educational system was so centralized at the leadership and administrative levels that it became victim to bureaucratic fetters.

Although the criticisms enumerated above are not that contestable, there is perhaps one point that needs to be put into perspective. While the claim that only a few had access to education at the time rings true, it should be noted that, of those few, the ones who benefited most were those who came from poor families, not [as one might have tended to

think] those from the aristocratic and wealthy families. Even when those from the latter social groups had the opportunity, a good majority of them did not put it to good use, because, as the saying had it, they had everything served on a silver platter. Therefore, the argument that it was to the children of the aristocracy and the wealthy that educational opportunities were given, whether deliberately or inadvertently, could not possibly take the credit away from the government for, as the *ferenjisi* would say, one must give the devil his due.

Other than the criticisms just pointed out, something took place that added to the existing negative image of the country's educational system. This unseemly occurrence was the 1961 African Educational Conference of Addis Ababa. At this conference, it was revealed that, compared to that of the other Sub-Saharan African countries as well as those countries that had just then won their independence, Ethiopia's educational participation at the primary school level was 3.3%, while at the secondary level it was an even more embarrassing 0.5%.^{xi} There was only one country that was better off than Ethiopia. This revelation proved to be quite an embarrassment to the government.

Since the major aim of the conference was to assess the progress Africa had made until that moment in the area of education and, therefore, to set down a mission for the Continent's future, of the decisions that the conference made, the main one had to do with providing primary education to all school-age children by the year 1981. Based on this decision, the

Ethiopian government had then tried to increase the primary school enrollment with the aid of a loan that it secured from the World Bank. And yet, for all the missions set down at the conference, the country's primary and secondary education enrollment level did not exceed the 12 per cent mark by 1974/75.^{xii} And the overall picture for the continent as a whole in respect of the 1961 vision was that, if there was anything that came to pass, it was simply the year 1981.

4.1 The first ever review of the country's educational system

It appears that the Ethiopian government, prodded by the cumulative effect of the criticisms directed, as mentioned earlier, against the shortcomings of the educational system and the embarrassing exposure of its dismal record by the Addis Ababa African Education Conference, decided in 1972 to undertake a comprehensive, national study of the country's educational system, then known as the "Education Sector Review."^{xiii} The main aim of the study was to make a general review of Ethiopia's educational system, on the one hand, and to suggest ways in which the education could contribute to the country's development and unity on the other. The people involved in the study were 80, more than half of which were Ethiopians. However, the participation of teachers and parents, whose concern in the main the issue happened to be, were not, as one would have expected. In the end, among the solutions the study proposed, the Government's choice with respect to primary education was to carry the majority of all

those enrolled through the fourth grade, and only twenty per cent of the rest through junior high school. This strategy was to the liking of neither the teachers nor the parents. Moreover, since the moment intended for the implementation of the reviewed program coincided with the outbreak of the 1974 revolution and, also, because the study came up against tremendous opposition, it never saw the light of day.

4.2 Ethiopian university service

If any account of the educational process of this period were to conclude without mention of this event, one would certainly and inevitably feel that something is amiss with the story. It is probably some forty years ago that something occurred in the country's higher education institution, an occurrence that could in all probability have been considered some kind of portent. That phenomenon was the Ethiopian University Service Program, which was started at the then Haile Selassie University, the present Addis Abeba University.^{xiv} The main aim of the program was to deploy university students in a one-year service to the general community after the end of their junior year, that is, before they graduate from the University. Accordingly, beginning in 1965, students were sent out in the main to the different parts of the country, during which time the majority of them were made to teach in the high schools, while the rest provided different services in those professions for which they were trained. Beyond providing services to the community, one could

discern, the program provided the students with the opportunity to know the people from a close range and to have insights into the kinds of problem they lived with.

It could be seen how much of a contribution such a program could make to the development of the country and, beyond that, how much it could help bring together the people and the student sector on a common ground of shared thinking and mutual consideration. Consequently, considering that, if such program were seriously and properly reviewed and given another chance at implementation among students of institutions of higher education, the country's development endeavors would assume a new significance, the program is worth giving due consideration and focus even now. And most probably, it could even prove a better and more beneficial alternative to the cost-sharing program currently adopted in institutions of higher education.

Summary

While this period was one in which modern education was introduced into the country, the manner of its introduction, however, was not as smooth as one might think. In the case of Menelik, the Emperor had to go a long way to persuade and convince the clergy and the aristocracy, while Haile Selassie, for his part, had to entice students by opening up boarding schools. These were two aspects of the stratagem employed at the time. And there is no question about the fact that the education so introduced and began to take root was more or less effectively used in the service

at least of producing intellectuals to run the existing bureaucracy of the time.

What is most likely debatable is the question of how much this modern education has contributed to the country's development. Before responding, either positively or otherwise, to this question, it is important to pose one other question. It may, therefore, be necessary to give prior consideration to the question of what development aims education should have to begin with, and under what circumstances or conditions such an education should be administered in order that it may be able to contribute to development. Accordingly, then, not only the kind of education provided in the past, but also that which is going to be provided in the future should be considered from this perspective. At the same time, however, one more thing should be noted: It appears that it was because the students of the 1960s and 70s of the period under consideration went to school and acquired some considerable knowledge that they assumed for themselves the role of the conscience of their people and struggled for a revolution to materialize. Consequently, it may not be that far from the truth to conclude that their vision, first and foremost, was to bring about a revolution on the country's political scene and, then, concurrently to extricate their fellow citizens from the suffering they were in and usher in the development needed for the purpose, in which case, then, the kind of education they went through was not, after all, in vain.

V. EDUCATION DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

It would not be an exaggeration to characterize the educational system of this period, from its very beginning, as one founded on and geared in the service of campaigns: to cite but a few examples, 'Development Through Cooperation Campaign', 'Literacy Campaign', the 'Metekel and Gambella Campaign'. Beginning with the dawn of the revolution in 1974, it was proclaimed that the country's education should reflect the interests and needs of the revolution, while with the proclamation in 1976 of the National Democratic Revolutionary Program,^{xv} the fundamental aims of the country's educational program was declared to be in the service of eradicating illiteracy and developing technology, literature and art. In the course of time this aim came to be subsumed under the slogans of 'education for production'; 'education for scientific research'; and 'education for socialist consciousness'.

Not long after the outbreak of the revolution, it was proclaimed in 1975 that teachers and students of institutions of higher education should be sent out for development activities under the "Development-Through-Cooperation- Campaign" program, as a result of which the educational process was interrupted for two years throughout the country. What needs to be noted at this juncture is that there appears to be no research-based evidence as to the outcome of the campaign so

enthusiastically pursued for such a long stretch.

Outside of the Development through Cooperation Campaign, however, because the educational process was so geared as to expand primary school education, the number of primary schools that was about three thousand in 1973/74 grew more than double to about 8000, while student enrollment increased to about 34%.^{xvi} When compared to the 12% enrollment level before the revolution, this figure was indeed very high. Conversely, however, because of the decrease in the budget allotted in the 1980s for education to 9% from the 17% allotted in 1974, the quality of education was severely affected and put into question. This deterioration in the quality of education was reflected in the shortage both of textbooks and teachers. Because of this, by way of making up for the shortage, 5000 high school graduates with no training in teaching whatsoever were hired for very low pay, and these were known as "subsistence teachers." These teachers were so-called because they, but particularly those deployed in the rural areas, were provided with grain and other forms of subsistence from the rural community. An interview conducted with the then Director of the Menelik II School would serve as a glimpse into how precarious the standard of education was at the school at that time:

There are 11,600 students enrolled in Menelik II school both in the regular, day program and the night school. The ratio of the students to the available teachers is so high that there was no way that any given teacher could

attend to the needs of each student, so that the scenario looked as if teachers and students were conducting some form of distant education. To speak of a simple instance, any given teacher could not assign homework to his students. The number of students in one class is seventy to eighty. And of these, while only thirty make it, why most of them fail even the teacher does not know.^{xvii}

As pointed out above, because the educational system was in such a critical condition, in 1983, the government deemed it necessary to establish a committee to undertake what was known as "Evaluative Research of the General Education System."^{xviii} The aim of the research was to evaluate the state of the country's primary and secondary education, identify specific problems and suggest solutions. Accordingly, various committees were organized to look into the different aspects of the problem, carried out an extensive study and presented their findings, along with the solutions, by 1986. However, even though the findings of the research were presented to the government, the evaluation was hardly given any attention, and, instead, the government acted on its own and issued its own ten-year perspective plan and was about to implement the plan when, once again, a change of regime took place and the new plan met with the same fate as the "Education Sector Review" of old and faded into oblivion.

Other than the problem of quality in the country's educational system at the time, one other thing that must be taken note of is the fact that, no sooner had the revolution erupted than America's influence on the country's educational system was

taken over by that of the Soviet Union, which makes it the fourth time for the educational system to come under the sway of yet another foreign influence. Because of this, with regard, in particular to the curriculum, over and above those courses given as part of the regular program, courses imbued with socialist thinking became compulsory at every level of the educational system. This indicates that the education so provided at the time, rather than being based on considerations beneficial to the country's development, was determined by the extent to which it reflected the political orientation of the existing government.

5.1 The campaign to eradicate illiteracy

Probably one of the efforts made during this period, and one that needs special mention, is the issue of eradicating illiteracy, an issue that had been neglected, consciously or otherwise, for many years by Ethiopian governments until the period in question. As has been pointed out earlier, what made the prevalence for such a long time of illiteracy in the country rather ironic is the fact that the country had, since the early days of its history, been a proud owner of a written language. It is to be remembered, however, that, although the government then had not given that much attention to the issue of eradicating illiteracy, there were groups who had in the 1950s made some efforts along this line under the slogan of "the soldiers of literacy".

What makes the educational orientation of this period rather

different from the preceding period is the deliberate attempt made, beginning with 1979, to eradicate illiteracy. Such a step was taken perhaps as a result of the awareness of the current regime of the impossibility of pursuing a socialist ideology--which was its avowed political ideology--with only a mass of illiterate society behind it. The campaign, which had for a slogan: "each and every educated person should educate one other person", was intensified throughout the country. By the time the campaign reached the 11th round in 1990, it was declared that the rate of illiteracy had gone down to 24%^{xix} from a staggering 93% in 1974. UNESCO for its part awarded the country for the effort it made to eradicate illiteracy and for the results it achieved in the process. What needs to be noted, however, in this connection is that any campaign to eradicate illiteracy is not a one-time affair, because illiteracy, like some diseases, has a tendency to relapse. To prevent such a relapse, therefore, it needs a constant follow-up. It may even be the case at the present moment that those who had been pronounced literate and were awarded certificates at the time may still be in possession of the certificates, but may have suffered a relapse of the disease of illiteracy. Since, however, it appears there are no studies based on concrete data, it would be difficult to say for sure how things stand now in this regard.

5.2 Regarding higher education

Regarding higher education, because the government's focus at the time was, in the main, directed toward eradicating illiteracy and

increasing the enrollment rate at the primary school level, the growth registered in the area of higher education was insignificant, and the enrollment in tertiary education had not exceeded the 15,000 mark.^{xx} The one time perhaps higher education showed any improvement during this period was in 1978, when, for the first time in the history of the country's educational system, programs in graduate study were launched. And this had its own reason. Because of political and other reasons that followed in the footsteps of the revolution, the country's intellectuals had left the country in numbers unprecedented until that time. Moreover, because expatriate teachers, particularly those affiliated with Addis Ababa University, left the country, the University was deprived of its academic manpower. Moreover, of those who were sent abroad for further education, only very few came back. For example, a study conducted in 1992 indicates that, of the 135 Ethiopian university teachers that were under the employ of the University in the 1970s, about half had left the University for other countries in the 1980s.^{xxi} Moreover, as a 1983/84 report by the then Academic Vice President of the University indicates, of the 300 staff members sent abroad for further education, only 22, or 7%, returned.^{xxii} It thus appears that programs in graduate study were launched in order to overcome this shortage of teachers as much as possible.

5.3 The 1985 student-teacher campaign

Another point that needs to be raised in connection with higher education is the resumption of the culture of campaigns. Because of

the problems created following the 1985 famine, both teachers and students of institutions of higher education were once again ordered to interrupt their education and set out on the campaign trail, this time to Metekel and Gambella, to build huts for the purpose of settling those who were affected by the famine in other areas of the country. All the while, however, the campaigners were neither consulted about the whole venture and neither were prior preparations made for the campaign itself. It was inevitable that the wisdom of such a hasty measure was questioned. The questioning had nothing to do with being sent on a campaign to help the people in need. Rather, it had to do with whether the measure was genuinely taken by the government, or if the government had other motives behind taking such a hasty measure. The answer, however, does not seem to have been known for sure, even to this day. Be that as it may, there was nothing of any significance that the campaign brought about in terms of concretely helping the settlers.

Nevertheless, if there were anything to conjecture about the whole undertaking, it was that the government's attitude towards the teachers and students of institutions of higher learning was not exactly healthy and that it was in the main nurtured on suspicion. If there was anything that the campaign brought to light, it was the fact that, unless government and the educated sector could meet face to face in an open dialogue, any effort to extricate the people from their problems and, beyond that, to develop the country, would not succeed, because of which such a lesson would have its use in the future. It appears, then,

that education would prove beneficial to development when the two parties come together in dialogue about the country's development and manage to have a common vision on the basis of which to move towards that end.

5.4 Educational proclamations issued during this period

In the said period, about four proclamations concerning education had been issued. The first is Proclamation No.54/1983, which declared private schools turned over to public ownership. As a result of this expropriation by the government of private schools, government schools had come under pressure. On the other hand, however, although the system had been declared socialist in its ideological orientation, government officials and the wealthy had their children sent to schools opened to cater to children of foreign communities and missionary-run schools.

Proclamation No.62/1983 was issued to provide for the establishment of the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, while Proclamation No. 103/1983 gave the mandate of administration and control of schools to school committees established by urban or rural dwellers, in short, to the people.^{xxiii} This proclamation was something to be supported in principle and the culture growing on its basis to be strengthened and popularized. Because schools are especially there to serve communities from a very close range, they need to be closely linked with the communities they serve and, accordingly, be

administered by them. Perhaps, also, such a mandate over schools given to communities could possibly make an end to the government's unnecessary intervention in the affairs of schools. Although in principle the Proclamation was implemented at the time, there nevertheless appears to be no evidence that it had helped put an end to government intervention in the affairs of educational institutions. There was a fourth proclamation, Proclamation No.107/1985, which concerned the administration of institutions of higher learning.

5.5 Summary

The period in question, in particular, witnessed an attempt on the part of the current regime to fashion the "new individual" in accordance with the precepts of socialist ideology. However, let alone molding the new individual, precisely because of the various problems--both political and otherwise--that the government created, even the already existing intellectuals were not accommodated enough to stay in their own country and make their share of contribution, the result being the exodus of many to foreign countries, in the process causing such shortage of educated manpower as the country could not recuperate from even to this day. Because of this, the country's fate became one of *producing and passing its yield over to others,* as popular lore would put it. Of any quality achievements registered during this period, however, was the attempt to rid the country of illiteracy, an attempt deserving of praise, whether one liked the regime

or not, though one does not know the present fate of those who, at the time, had been certified as having been freed of their illiteracy.

On the other hand, because the relationship at the time between the educated sector and the government was not based on mutual trust, the country's intellectuals were not in a position to contribute their share to the country's development. It is, consequently, difficult to say for certain how much the country's educational system had contributed to development.

VI. EDUCATION SINCE 1994

6.1 Education and training policy

In the immediate aftermath of the removal of the previous [military] regime from power and the establishment of a transitional government in 1991, a committee to design an educational policy aimed at transforming the existing educational system was established. Accordingly, forty-four people drawn from the Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa University and some twenty-two government offices were formed into a committee to undertake a study toward that end, and the result was the preparation of a document known as "Education and Training Policy,"^{xxiv} which was implemented as of 1994. It may be necessary at this juncture to point out something about the designing of an educational policy in order to provide some insight into what it should include. Any intention or plan to design an educational policy should, first and foremost, take into

account the needs and problems of the people and, secondly, it should be aimed at bringing about the development of the country in question. If so much is granted, then all those who have a stake in the educational system should be allowed - and not as a matter of mere courtesy - to actively participate in the designing of that policy.

Consequently, the participation of teachers in the designing of such a policy is not a matter for debate, for the simple reason that, once the policy starts being implemented, it is the teachers who play a crucial and determining role, especially in the learning-teaching process. Such participation would serve as an initiative in itself for the teachers to willingly and capably help implement the policy, over and above the call of their professional duty to do so. Neither is there any alternative to allowing parents, as well, in the process of designing such an educational policy, the reason being that there is none like parents with so much concern and enthusiasm for their children's education. Consequently, no other body or agency can tell parents that it alone knows what is good for them as well as for their children and that, therefore, their active participation is neither needed nor wanted. Most above all, as long as one of the main and fundamental aims of any educational policy happens to be that of serving development, all those stakeholders, such as employers for instance, have a crucial role to play in the designing of the policy and ensuring that it actually serves the causes of development. When it comes to the participation of teachers in the designing of the educational policy,

although teachers in Addis Abeba and some of the regions had the opportunity to participate during the discussion of the policy draft, according to the report of the discussion,^{xxv} the opinions given were of a nature that simply endorsed the draft in its entirety rather than serving to contribute to the enrichment of the policy, a process that calls the motives of the discussion into question. Moreover, since at the time the teachers' association was split into two that, too, would have thrown doubt on the discussion on the policy draft. Likewise, there is no evidence as to the participation in the discussion of parents and others with similar vested interest in the policy. It is, then, against such background that the policy became implemented.

6.2 Enrollment and quality of education

Be that as it may, a review of the performance of the educational system from 1994 to 2004, that is ten years after the implementation of the new Education and Training Policy, may help assess its current standing and the possible trend it might follow in the future. According to the government's own data of 2004,^{xxvi} access to education at the different levels looks as follows:

- a. Student enrollment at the primary school level has increased to about 9.5 million, or about 68.4%. Of these, about four million, or 42% are girls.
- b. While the number of high school students (9-12) has hit the 700,000 mark, 16% of these are girls. The vocational-technical stream, which has been given special focus, has

registered about 87,000 students, of which girls constitute 47.5%.

- c. In the area of higher education, the number of students in government institutions of higher learning has reached 130,000, of whom females constitute 23%.

When it comes to teachers, their number in primary school has increased to over 140,000, women's share in this being 33%, while the number of high school teachers has increased to 15,000, of which women constitute 8%. All in all, the total number of teachers at both the primary and secondary levels has reached 165,000. As the figures indicate, student enrollment in the specified educational levels has improved over the past, and this is to be commended. There is one important point, however, that needs to be noted. That is, when it comes to opening up educational opportunities, both the quantitative and qualitative aspects should be given equal consideration, to which there is no other alternative. On the one hand, in order for access to education to be equitable, it must be administered for all without discrimination because of gender, religion, location (rural vs. urban), or economic status (rich as against poor). On the other hand, the quality of education must be ensured and maintained so that the individuals partaking of the education provided would be equipped with the necessary knowledge and capacity, such that they would benefit themselves while at the same time contributing to the development of the country. Otherwise, education qua education will be meaningless, and the money expended in its administration will only be as good

only as something thrown to the winds. Now, this is where the educational system of poor countries finds itself in a dilemma. Because, when they focus on increasing their student enrollment, the quality of education would end up getting the short end of the stick. Conversely, when the focus is made on quality, enrollment will find itself on the losing end. This happens because the poor countries do not have the financial means, the manpower, and the material resources for them to meet both ends of the demand simultaneously, and all because of their poverty.

Because of this, some countries choose to focus on increasing enrollment at the expense of maintaining quality. Perhaps, opting for increasing enrollment may prove a temporary advantage, whether seen in terms of political interest or paying lip service. Because enrollment opportunity is expressed in quantitative terms it may sound a pleasant tune to those who hear it publicized. Conversely, paying less attention to the quality of education may prove equally advantageous in that it finds its concrete expression in terms of results long after the students have joined the world of work, for which reason their shortcomings could remain unexposed, albeit for the time being. That may be why, given the moment at hand, numbers seem to matter more than quality.

As it has been attempted to show what the education and training policy looks like from the perspective of increasing enrollment, it is only appropriate to give some insight into its achievements in terms of maintaining the quality of

education. One of the criteria by which the quality of education is measured is the knowledge and professional capacity of teachers at the different educational levels. In accordance with this measure, then, while the Ministry of Education requires those teachers teaching in the first cycle (1-4) of the primary level to at least have certificate, according to the data for the year 2003 made available by the government,^{xxvii} 97 per cent of the teachers at this level have met this requirement. While those teaching in the second cycle (5-8) of the primary school level are required to at least have secured their diploma, a 2003 report indicates that only 31% have attained this qualification. And while those teaching in high school (9-12) are required to have a first degree from an institution of higher education, only 39 per cent have been found to meet this requirement. The other measure of the quality of education is the ratio of teachers to students. With regard to this issue, while the official policy of the Ministry of Education puts this ratio for the primary education level at 1 teacher for 50 students, according to a 2003 data, the ratio had reached 1:64. While this ratio should be 1:40 at the secondary level, it has been indicated that the actual ratio was 1:45.

Yet another criterion for measuring the quality of education is the availability of textbooks. With regard to this issue, the official directive of the Ministry of Education requires 1 textbook per student. But according to a 2003 report, the ratio was 1 book for 2.5 students. Similarly, although the official textbook-student ratio for high schools is 1:1, according to the

same 2003 report the ratio was 1:1.5.

6.3 Higher education

It may only be appropriate to revisit the state of Ethiopia's higher education in connection with the problem of quality of education. Student enrollment in institutions of higher education is now on the increase as compared to the past. As a 2003 government document points out, while the number of students enrolled in institutions of higher learning in 1992 was only 15,000, the institutions presently boast an enrollment size of 130,000, 20 per cent of which are females. Even then, while the enrollment in the other Sub-Saharan African countries accounts for 3 per cent [of the population], that of Ethiopia is only 1.5 per cent.^{xxviii} That the enrollment size in the country's institutions of higher education is as low as it has been pointed out is rather worrisome. The fact that six additional universities have been opened and thirteen more are planned in the near future in order to give enrollment a relative boost is a positive and promising sign indeed. All this is to be lauded.

However, if the country's development must show tangible results, the numerical size of the educated manpower should be paralleled by the amount of substance in its knowledge and the extent of its professional capability. And for this to happen, the education provided should be qualitatively upgraded, which, in turn, means that the inputs necessary for the ensuring of the desired quality should be provided for. What, otherwise, is going to be

done when those who graduate from institutions of higher education are found wanting once they have joined the practical world of work in their respective professions? Are such graduates going to be recalled back to the university, as it happens in the West to a car set out onto the market once it is found malfunctioning?

When talking about the quality of education in primary and secondary education, one of the criteria cited was the ensuring of the availability of teachers in the desired number as well as quality. With regard to this issue, though it is impossible at the moment to supply concrete evidence, it can be safely surmised that there is quite a shortage of teachers in institutions of higher education compared to the current size of student enrollment. According to one government data,^{xxix} the number of Ethiopian teachers in institutions of higher education in 2003 was 3097, of which 176, or 5.7% were females. The number of expatriate teachers was 397, which brings the total number of teachers to 3944. One reason for this shortage of teachers in institutions of higher learning is the difficulty of getting Ethiopian teachers in terms both of the desired quantity and quality. As we all know, a second degree is required to teach at institutions of higher education. The other, and even more crucial, problem, is the fact that, compared to other professional areas, the benefits accruing to those in the teaching profession are not of the type that attract prospective teachers, particularly when it comes to salary. It then appears that those who had earlier on joined the teaching profession at institutions of higher education are observed

switching to jobs at other institutions in search of even a relatively higher pay. Concerning this situation, a study conducted in 2000^{xxx} indicates that, in the six years between 1993 and 2000 alone, over a hundred senior university instructors had left their job. It has also been pointed out in the same study that, of those who left the university for other jobs, a good number of them were from the faculties of medicine, science, technology and business and economics.

Moreover, the fundamental reason for the present shortage of teachers in institutions of higher education was, as it has already been pointed out earlier, the exodus to other countries of intellectuals that started with the onset of the revolution [in 1974]. Because this situation still persists, of those teachers sent abroad for further education, the number of those who return upon completion of their education is not that significant. Moreover, it is to be remembered how much the dismissal in 1993 of the forty university teachers has contributed to the shortage of teachers the university is experiencing at the moment. As things stand now, the solution provided for this shortage of teachers is the importation of expatriates at very much higher pay rate [than that for Ethiopians]. Even then, the teachers so imported do not appear to meet the need in terms both of quantity and quality. On top of this, however, for how long is the country going to keep relying on outside teachers? For better or worse, doing the best one could to keep nationals from running away from institutions of higher education might provide a more sustainable solution. Otherwise how

many of the things that the country needs are going to keep being imported-foreign currency, food aid, etc.!

Regarding research, one of the missions of institutions of higher education is undertaking research activities side by side with conducting the learning-teaching activity. Because both activities are closely linked, the learning-teaching process is especially nurtured and yields results when supported by research. Otherwise, the learning-teaching process becomes sterile. Moreover, research is expected to contribute towards the solution of development problems and supplying the sector with new findings. That is why institutions of higher education are expected to strengthen the research component of their activities. However, since research is not a matter of wishful thinking, at least the basic inputs necessary for conducting meaningful research are needed, such as researchers, to begin with, and financial and material resources. But most above all, the institutional environment must be such that the researchers have the freedom to think, write and disseminate their research findings. It is difficult at present to present evidence as to whether these inputs are available to the existing institutions. Perhaps what can be asserted is that there are some institutions engaged in research activities, but it is difficult to say in concrete terms to what extent the few research undertakings have contributed to the country's development. Yet another problem in the area of research is the fact that the few research undertakings, rather than being carried out in consideration of the country's

crucial problems, appear to be both determined and guided by the agendas of foreign donor agencies, something that needs to be given due attention in the future. In short, research in institutions of higher education should be given special focus so as to enable it to play a key role in the country's development.

6.4 Technical-Vocational Education

It is to be remembered that technical-vocational education had not been given due attention in the previous educational system. The reason for this inattention may be, on the one hand, the low esteem in which the society held technical-vocational education and, on the other hand, the consideration on the part of the government that the cost of providing this kind of education was somewhat higher compared to that spent on academic education. At any rate, the number of technical-vocational institutions in the country as a whole was not even 20 until 1995.

With the implementation of the new Education and Training Policy, special attention has been given to the sector, and the number of institutions catering to technical-vocational education increased to 159 by 2004, while the total number of students grew to 87,000, of which females constituted 47 per cent.^{xxxii} When this figure is considered from the number's perspective alone, it appears to indicate the growth of a healthier attitude among students toward professional and technical education. On the other hand, however, it is difficult to know for sure, due to lack of any research-

based evidence, whether or not this change in attitude among students is accounted for by lack of a better alternative.

There is a point that needs to be raised in connection with this issue. Technical-vocational education requires a lot of expenditure, and as the number of students joining the institutions increases the cost to see them through the required training will go up even higher. In such a scenario, the need to accommodate the increasing number of students may compromise the quality of training, resulting in inadequately trained graduates. An even more crucial question with regard to vocational-technical education is the following: When students graduate from these institutions, would they get employment, or be in a position to be self-employed, and become self-sufficient, to begin with, and also be able to contribute to the country's development in the process? The answer to this question is determined by the economic growth of the country. And, since no reliable economic growth can be expected in the foreseeable future, there may be apprehension on the part of all concerned that the whole venture may result in the creation of a population of the educated-jobless, or to make the nomenclature more palatable, a population of unemployed professionals.

6.5 Educational Administration and Management

One of the criticisms directed against the educational system during the previous regime was that the administration and management of education was so much

centralized that virtually all decisions, including minor ones, were made by officials of the Head Office, [i.e. the Ministry of Education], as a result of which the administration was tied down by bureaucratic chains and, therefore, was inefficient. Moreover, the administrative structure was such that it did not take account of the concrete conditions in which it operated.

Accordingly, with the view to bringing about solutions to these and similar other problems, educational administration and management became decentralized under the new Education and Training policy. However, for such a decentralized system of administration to be effective, what is needed, first of all, is sufficient and adequately trained manpower. And yet, it was with the full awareness of the lack of such trained manpower that the Policy was implemented. On the other hand, those previously appointed as high school directors were for the most part people with a first degree in educational administration and management. After the implementation of the new policy, because of the belief that the directors should be elected by teachers, the individuals who assumed the positions were those whose area of expertise was not educational administration and management. The irony in all of these, however, was the fact that there were people at Addis Ababa University with first and second degrees in the profession as well as those who were in training for the same degrees. It is therefore questionable as to why those without the necessary training were put in those positions while there

were others with the relevant training and qualification for the job, and how in the world the desired educational management and administration was expected to run effectively and efficiently, given the scenario just described.

6.6 Language of Instruction

It is to be remembered that Amharic was the language of instruction at the primary school level from 1963 until the moment the new Education and Training policy was designed and implemented. Since the implementation of the new policy, it was decided to conduct primary school education in the mother tongue. There is nothing particularly questionable, or wrong, pedagogically speaking, that is, about the use of the mother tongue in education. However, as has been mentioned earlier, because the communities in question did not participate at the time the new policy was being designed, there were problems regarding its implementation. Consequently, when the mother tongue began to be used as the language of instruction, surely problems ensued around the issue.

If, however, the policy had the society's consent and good will to begin with, it could have been possible to get solutions with the collaboration of the people. Moreover, when a mother tongue is used as a language of instruction for the first time, because it is new, its immediate and hasty application without some kind of pilot-test and prior preparation was bound to entail problems. To mention but some of these problems:

- a. Teachers with a knowledge of the respective mother tongues

- were not trained ahead of time before the policy was implemented;
- b. Textbooks in the various mother tongues were not prepared in sufficient numbers and the required quality;
 - c. Lack of prior research to determine, where there happens to be one primary school, the language distribution and ensure that students are not pressured to learn in a language not their own;
 - d. On the other hand, although students were made to pursue their education in their mother tongue at the primary school level, they were also made to learn Amharic and English as subjects.^{xxxiii} And again, when students join high school, they are made to use English as the language of instruction. It does not appear that all the psychological problems students face due to the switching between languages has been duly considered and studied. Consequently, because the students may end up being confused except, maybe, when it comes to their respective mother tongues, and the picture we look at may not be so bright, the problem needs to be researched into and given serious consideration.

6.7 Summary

It has so far been attempted to look into what the new Education and Training Policy has achieved so far, as different from the past, and what it aims to achieve in the future. Next is an attempt to summarize these in their pros and cons:

1. While the enrollment of students in the primary level has increased tremendously, it has been observed, however, that the quality of the education given at that level has been questionable.
2. The number of students in the technical-vocational education and training sector has shown quite a tremendous increase, as compared with the small figure in the past, which is commendable. Yet the question arises as to whether the country's economic situation is in a position to make jobs available to those who graduate from the sector, or create opportunities for them to be self-employed, help themselves and, at the same time, contribute to the country's development in the process.
3. The increase in enrollment in the country's institutions of higher education is an achievement to be registered on the positive side. On the negative side, however, the difficulty of obtaining the required number of teachers with the required level of qualification has put the quality of the institutions' education into question.
4. With regard to educational management and administration, the lack of sufficient numbers of professionals in educational management and administration with the concomitant level of qualification, as well as the misplacement of the few qualified in the area, has put into question the adequacy and efficiency of the management and administration of the country's education.

There is one important point that should be raised at this juncture. An all-out effort is being made throughout the country to increase the student enrollment at the primary school level in order to meet the 2015 goal of "education-for-all." This effort should be supported as far as principles go. However, it appears that all the effort so far expended is intent on simply increasing the size of enrollment, not on the quality of education provided. Consequently, what is worrisome is not whether the 2015 goal could be achieved or not so much as it is the lack of educational capacity bequeathed to the country's prospective students due to the lack of quality in the education currently provided.

VII. WHAT IF THE PRESENT SCENARIO WERE TO CONTINUE?

Suppose the question arises of the possibility of the country's educational system continuing into the future as it has done hitherto. Suppose, in other words, the existing education and training policy were to proceed without the participation of the people and with no reflection of their interest. This would mean that education and development would proceed their separate, un-coordinated ways, as they have done in the past. This being the case, then, it is possible to make some educated conjectures about the future based on what is happening at present. For example, regarding primary school enrollment, the effort to attain the goal of "education for all" by 2015 is expected to continue uninterrupted, at least up to the

projected year. Since, for this reason, the focus of the country's education would be on increasing student enrollment, it would not be very difficult to estimate that the quality of education would plummet to more or less the same proportion. And the possible danger that this deterioration of the quality of education could entail would leave behind a problem for the country's educational system with no possible and easy solution to even imagine.

Similarly, enrollment in the technical-vocational education and training sector would continue to grow. Because, however, technical-vocational education and training requires enormous investment in terms both of financial and material resources, the quality of education in this sector, too, would be compromised. More crucial than this is the question of whether the country's economic situation is in a position to make jobs available to those who graduate from the sector, or create opportunities for them to be self-employed, help themselves and, at the same time, contribute to the country's development in the process. What is, therefore, worrisome is the possibility of the number of the educated-jobless going ever on the increase.

When it comes to institutions of higher education, here, too, the projection is that student enrollment in the sector would continue to grow. At the same time, however, it can be safely conjectured that the present shortage of teachers at these institutions as well as the quality of education would deteriorate. Not just that, when the graduates from these institutions happen to join the world of work and are found wanting, the possibility of their

being able to contribute to the country's development will fall into doubt. In short, the educational process can gain weight in numerical terms, but would be very much doubted in terms of productivity. As is well known, it is not only numbers that matter in education; more meaningful and significant in terms of bringing about change in the course of the country's development is its quality. This is one truth about education that needs to be underscored.

VIII. VISION 2020

Speaking of visions about one's country, I am reminded of a joke that I once heard. It is told of in the eighties that the leaders of the two superpowers went to pay their respects to Jesus, each of them asking Him in turns: "How much time, oh Lord, before my country gets to the pinnacle of development?" Jesus responded, without much deliberation, that America would have to wait twenty-five years, while Russian had fifty years to go. Since nobody thinks any less of himself than others, the leader of our country gets the chance to ask the same question of how much time before his country gets to where the other two would. Jesus was somehow struck at the question, pondered a while, and retorted: As far as the fate of your country is concerned, Sir, let alone me, even my Heavenly Father, I am afraid, does not have any idea when that would happen!" Now, what do you expect me to say, ordinary mortal that I am, to such a question! I relate this joke to point out to the difficulty of making predictions. When things are

generally considered, it seems to me that, let alone about the fate of one's country, many of us would find it easier and be happier to be asked about our past lives than about what would befall us in the future. Could this perhaps be that we happen to be the denizens of an ancient country that we have always been? At any rate, one would not, as the saying has it, 'deprive oneself of precious sleep for fear of nightmares'. So let me say what I have to, dreams or nightmares notwithstanding, and leave the rest to you to do what you would with it.

For starters, here is what I think. The fundamental aim of the country's educational system will not be to deliver itself, as it did in the past, unto the purpose of maintaining in power every government that comes along the way, but will rather make the country's development its point of focus; similarly, come the time for designing the country's educational policy, in place of the moribund thinking that "I, it is, that knows what's good for you," people will have full and active participation to take things into their own hands in the process. Because of this, the education policy that used to change every time a new government came to power will, if and when necessary, be changed on the basis only of the people's demand. Taking these starting points as a launching pad I shall venture the following projections as my visions of Ethiopia for the year 2020 (E.C):

1. The school enrollment at each and every educational level will be worked out in accordance with the country's overall development plan, not as a make-believe scheme just to

- keep up the numbers. Since, because of such planning, increase in enrollment and quality of education will go hand in hand, they will contribute in tandem to the realization of the country's development.
2. Because increase in enrollment and quality of education will be kept in balance and, as a result, development will take place, the number of the educated jobless, far from growing as per the present moment, will decrease by the day.
 3. The country's educational system has been subjected to five different kinds of foreign influence from the moment of the introduction of modern education to the country until the present moment. To recapitulate, first came the French, then British followed by Americans, then Russian, and, now, indirectly through the World Bank, Americans, once again. Throughout all this process, there is nothing that Ethiopia's education did not try its hands on being, except being Ethiopian. It is, therefore, my vision that Ethiopia's education will be free from all such foreign influences and will assume its true role as an expression of the peoples' cultures and needs.
 4. Students of Ethiopia's high schools and institutions of higher education will take the initiative to organize themselves of their own accord and mobilize themselves for the task of providing sustainable services in the promotion of their country's development according to the dictates of the different professions for which

they have been educated and trained.

5. Ethiopian teachers will have one common objective and make important contributions to the country's development and, at the same time, freely organize themselves under one national teachers' association and mobilize themselves to ensure the enrichment of and respect for the teaching profession.
6. The country's intellectuals and the government, both of which have hitherto been regarding each other as sworn adversaries, will, for the sake of the country's development, tone down their mutual suspicion and make concerted efforts to extricate the country from the state of poverty in which it finds itself at present.
7. As for the intellectuals who have been forced into exile, short of actually returning to their homeland, they will create a self-help national organization wherever they may be and contribute all they could to the country's development. Similarly, because in the coming future there will be a willingness to participate in the country's development, the exodus to other lands of Ethiopian intellectuals will be on the ebb.
8. In this age of globalization, knowledge is ever more becoming a valuable resource. Accordingly, some of our country's investors will start thinking beyond profits and establish a few private colleges, or universities, in which quality education will be given. And in the year 2020, these institutions will be famous and serve as

monuments both for the development of the country and the good names of their owners.

Allow me, then, with your blessings voluntarily offered into the bargain and granting me, if not all, just part of my wishes and/or visions, to wrap up my presentation. Before I wind up altogether, however, I shall cite a couple or so lines by an anonymous poet. As we all know, it is to be remembered that students of former times, because of, it appears, being exposed to the kind of education given at the time they went to school, were said to have felt conscientious enough to voice their concern about the need for change. For all that, however, their voice was felt like nothing more than an echo in a void, and they hardly had anyone to lend them their ears and listen to their outcries. Since the lines below are very much a reminder--at any rate to me--of those situations, I shall duly use them as a closing occasion for my presentation. The lines, freely rendered from Amharic, read as follows:

*A squawk for help is an outcry
A scream, too, is an outcry in
search of ears
A lament is an outcry--for anyone
out there who cares
Every squawk, every scream,
every lament
Is a signal that something's gone
amiss
Each of which indifference tries to
hush
All of which it bids to silence with
a crush
What, pray tell, would one, then,
try.
When silence itself becomes the
outcry!*

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Third Round Next
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Schedule

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 June 24, 2005