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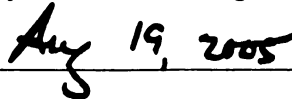
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**THE HISTORY OF ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY, 1900-2000**

By

Solomon Addis Getahun

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, 1900-2000

By

Solomon Addis Getahun

The dissertation is a study of the history of Ethiopian immigrants in the US, who are estimated between 250,000 and 350,000; and who came to the U.S. between the 1950s and 1990s. The majority of these Ethiopians are victims of the "Red Terror" which hit hard cities like Addis Ababa and Gondar. For this reason, I also assess the role of the "Red Terror" as a "push" factor, and its ramifications on Ethiopians at home and abroad. Their migration history, beside other things, reflected the hegemonic role of the U.S. in the post-1945 period; and the development and nature of the Ethiopian and American relationship since then. Thus, I explored the nature of Ethiopian and American friendship in relation to migration.

The Ethiopians in America are roughly categorized into two groups. The first group comprised highly educated Ethiopians, tourists, businessmen and government officials, who failed to return home because of the 1974 Revolution. The next band, however, encompassed those brought to the U.S. from refugee camps, mainly from Sudan, between the early 1980s and the mid 1990s.

The Ethiopian immigrants are ethnically diverse and at times acutely divided in terms of regional or ethnic origins. The latter phenomenon, especially, has become more glaring after the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, which is an ethnically based

organization, took power in Ethiopia in 1991. This ethnic division, coupled with the difference in manner of entrance, levels of education, degrees of exposure to the outside world prior to arrival to the U.S., religion, political affiliation, the desire to return are some of the variables that characterize Ethiopians in the U.S. Their diversity has tremendous impact, both positive and negative, on their adjustment to their new surrounding and their survival as a distinct group in the U.S.

Either due to the actions of the Refugee Resettlement Bureau of the US Government or simply as the result of internal migration, certain U.S. cities appear to be dominated by a single Ethiopian ethnic group, or people from certain province. I examined the causes of such developments and its implication on the host society and the immigrant community.

Despite such anomalies, Ethiopians are affecting the society, culture and politics of the United States. Their community organizations and churches are popping up here and there. Ethiopian restaurants are common in major U.S. cities, and the Ethiopian cuisine is becoming part of the U.S. diet. In some cities, the cab and parking attendant business are almost dominated by them. American politicians have also begun appreciating Ethiopian voters. Similarly, American-based Ethiopian opposition political parties are trying to influence America's foreign policy on the Horn of Africa while some Ethiopians are observed in fostering economic development either through technology transfer, investment or remittances. Surely, this achievement was not gained without a problem: how did the Ethiopians adjust to American life? I looked at the many adjustment problems that Ethiopian immigrants faced, and their relationship with Americans and how the latter viewed them. I also displayed the ethnic, political and regional tension among Ethiopian immigrants, and their survival as a distinct ethnic group in America. What is more, I probed into the role of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and other organizations in maintaining this distinct Ethiopian identity.

PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When I came to Michigan State University, I initially proposed to my advisor, the late Harold G Marcus, to study the "The Impact of the Matama-Humera Commercial Farms on the City of Gondar," which could have been an extension of my MA Thesis, "The History of the City of Gondar." However, two things convinced me to change my focus of study from economic/urban history to migration studies. One of the reasons was political developments in Ethiopia, especially in Gondar province. The current ethno-centric regime in Ethiopia slashed almost a quarter of the province and annexed Humera and merged it with Tigray, the home province of the ruling party, the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) while ceding Matama to the newly created and ethnically based Bene Shanguel-Gumuz territory otherwise known as Region 7. In light of these new circumstances, I found it difficult, if not impossible, to do my research on the proposed area.

The second and most important rationale, however, was my experience in Seattle, Washington. While I was volunteering in the Ethiopian Community Mutual Association in 1995 in that city, I witnessed interesting things. There were many Ethiopians who did not read and write English and thus badly needed translation services, yet, there were very few Ethiopian volunteers who could help. What is more, in spite of the existence of an Ethiopian community center, which allegedly espoused to serve all Ethiopians, there were also ethnic based community associations such as Tigrayan, Oromo, Somali and regional Ethiopian organizations like the Gondar Mutual Association, to name the few. What intrigued me most was not their existence, since the official administrative policy of the ruling government in Ethiopia is ethnic in origin. I thought that such division within and among Ethiopians in Seattle was a reflection of what was going on in Ethiopia. It was the rivalry and at times the animosity within and among these associations which mesmerized and enticed me to commence my own research about Ethiopians in Seattle. I began interviewing

people. Meanwhile after hearing from one of his students about me, a sociology professor from University of Washington, Joseph W Scott, who was consulting with the Refugee Women Association in Seattle, sought my help. One day the association brought him an Ethiopian refugee for counseling, but, neither she nor he could understand one another. He needed an Ethiopian to help him, and he contacted me. My acquaintance with Prof. Scott further encouraged me to take the matter of Ethiopians in America very seriously. It was as the result of these encounters that I decided to study Ethiopians in America.

Research into the history of contemporary Ethiopian immigrants requires the utilization of archival, oral and secondary sources. Some of my data came from participant observation and a careful tabulation of oral histories. To get a balanced view of the life of Ethiopians in America, using the snowball method, I conducted random interviews across all sections such as refugees and exiles, different gender and social groups, men and women, the old and the young, the rich and the poor. In addition, leaders of community organizations such as Ethiopian Community Mutual Associations, Tigray, Oromo and Gondar Associations were interviewed. My being Gondare also helped me to know intimately who is whom in cities like Seattle and the impact of transnationals of Gondar origin on Gondar. To further strengthen my observations, transnationals or returnees that comprise business owners, government officials, and students who reside in either Addis Ababa or Gondar were also interviewed. All the interviews were open-ended.¹

Using the annual Ethiopian soccer tournament, which brings Ethiopians together from all over the U.S. to one of the American cities, as an opportunity for research, I was also able to randomly distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews in California (Bay Area/San Francisco)

¹ See the attached list of interviewees and survey respondents at the end of the bibliography. A total of more than eighty interviews and surveys were conducted. Of these, nineteen respondents and interviewees were females. The interviewees and survey respondents range from university provost to a parking cashier and nursing home assistants; and from ambassadors to people engaged in money laundering.

and Washington DC in 2001 and 2002 respectively. I also used other venues such as the August 2001 Kalamazoo, Michigan, conference on Development Issues in Ethiopia to distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews.² I have also videotaped some of these events and interviews.

While the financial help from the Department of History and the Graduate School at Michigan State University helped me to conduct surveys and interviews in the aforementioned cities, the Fulbright Dissertation Grant enabled me to stay in Ethiopia for a year; and explore the impact of Ethiopian-Americans on Ethiopia and examine the role of the Red Terror as a "push" factor. During my stay in Ethiopia, in addition to conducting interviews, I examined various archival materials at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library of the Addis Ababa University, the archives of the Investment Bureau of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Immigration Office, Ethiopian Tourism Commission, the Ministry of Justice, The Expatriate Affairs Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gondar Municipality and Administration. The Cultural Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa also facilitated my quest for information on Diversity Visa lottery applicants and winners in Ethiopia from the Consular Section of the embassy.

At the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) library, in the manuscript section, I found declassified U.S. State Department files that dealt with relations between the Imperial Government of Ethiopia and the United States between 1940s and 1950s. From these files, in addition to nature and volume of military and economic aid from the U.S., I learned that their relationship was not always smooth. In this same section, I also found pamphlets of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) which were the main opposition parties against the defunct military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam (1974-1991). From

² The Ethiopian American Foundation, a non-profit organization that seeks to help Ethiopian students and academic institutions in Ethiopia, organized the conference. Since 2001, the conference has become an annual event that is held either in Ethiopia or the U.S.

these pamphlets, I learned about the nature and character of these political parties and the circumstances that brought them at loggerheads. Their actions contributed to the mass exodus of the Ethiopian intelligentsia to foreign lands, mainly to the U.S. At the IES, I also found a list of some seven hundred (700) people with their pictures and names of government offices where they were working. The notice urged every Ethiopian to hunt down these counter- revolutionaries, and execute them on site. Among the hunted were central committee members of EPRP and Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF now EPRDF).

At the Expatriates Affairs Office of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, I found various monographs which contained figures and descriptions of Ethiopians who resided in the various parts of the world including the U.S; a memorandum of understanding between the Ethiopians in the United States and EPRDF; various research papers on the Ethiopian Diaspora in the US . . . etc. The head of the Expatriates Affairs Office also gave me business cards and a list of Ethiopians who came to his office either seeking help or expressing their intentions while in Ethiopia. Most of them were from U.S. I also interviewed the Officer about the Diaspora community in the U.S., the purpose and intention of his office regarding the Ethiopian Diaspora; the capabilities and shortcomings of his office . . . etc. The Expatriates Affairs Office also provided me with an ID card to use the library in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There, I found no archival sources. Then, I contacted and interviewed the American (North and South) and European section chief of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to his appointment to this post, he worked at the Ethiopian Embassy in the United States quite for sometime. I asked him if I could see some archives that deal with Ethiopia and the U.S. Though willing for an interview, he declined my request for access to the archives.

My endeavor at the Ethiopian Investment Office, Addis Ababa, was much more successful. There, I found data on Ethiopian-born foreign nationals, including "Ethiopian Americans," who

invested in Ethiopia or proposed to do so. The data included the amount of capital they invested or proposed to invest, type of project they were engaged in, the region or regions where they invested, the nature of the company these investors had . . . etc.

I went to the Ministry of Interior, Immigration Office, and enquired if they have any data on Ethiopians who came from abroad. They informed me that the available data was not sorted by country of origin or destination; and their archive was not very well organized. However, they brought me the 1993-1994 incoming and outgoing passenger log that contained names, citizenships, passport numbers, origins and destinations . . . of incoming and outgoing travelers. I tabulated the figures, both by gender and citizenship of Ethiopians who came to Ethiopia or left for U.S. at that time. The Ethiopian Immigration officials also provided me with a compiled list of all Ethiopian-born foreign nationals who were given "Green Card" to work, invest and live in Ethiopia. The data also contained how many of these Ethiopian-born foreign nationals were from the U.S., Europe . . . etc. The Immigration officials also informed me that the Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) might have the information I am looking for. I contacted the Ethiopian Airlines Public Relations Officer. After a series of unsuccessful attempts, I stopped seeking information from EAL.

While in Addis Ababa, I also contacted the Ethiopian Tourism Commission Office. I was referred to their statistics department. The Department made available annual figures for the last twelve or so years for tourists who visited Ethiopia from around the world including the U.S. While the figure for some of the years was broken by country of origin, the rest was not. Nevertheless, it was an invaluable archival source. It helped me to assess the volume of traffic between U.S. and Ethiopia and its financial implications.

Looking for information on remittance, I went to the National Bank of Ethiopia. In addition to providing me with an invaluable data on remittances since the 1970s, they also gave me information on one of the international money transferring agencies, the Western Union: its places

of operation throughout Ethiopia, number of branches, its partners outside the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) etc.

The Red Terror being one of the “push” factors for Ethiopians in the U.S. and the Diaspora, I visited one of the centers for victims of the *Derg* regime, Rehabilitation Center for the Victims of Torture (RCVTE) in Addis Ababa. I interviewed the director of the rehabilitation center, himself a victim of torture, about the purpose and achievement of the center. The director also allowed me to copy some of the manuscripts that contained narratives of victims of rape, torture . . . etc.

To further understand the nature and magnitude of the Red Terror, I went to the Ethiopian Federal Court, the Special Persecutors Office, seeking information not only on victims of the *Derg* but also the perpetrators of torture, rape and mass killing. The chief judge gave some nineteen (19) pages of indexes of cases that the Special Persecutors Office was following. He also regretfully informed me that some of the cases, in fact most of them, are pending and active. Hence, before the cases were tried and closed, I cannot get access to these files. However, I was welcomed to watch some videos and listen to audiotapes of the some the trials.

My quest for archival information on the Red Terror in Gondar—one of the cities that suffered most in the days of the revolution and one of the major sources of Ethiopian immigrants/refugees in the U.S.—was unsuccessful. The files, I was told, were transferred to Addis Ababa. The Gondar Municipality, however, provided me with invaluable information on Gondare (people of Gondar origin) returnees who were given free land. The Municipality also granted me access to its marriage registry. From the register, I tabulated transnational marriages (1991-2002), between Ethiopians from abroad and Gondares in the city.

Yet, despite the strenuous effort to present a comprehensive view of Ethiopian immigrant/refugee community in the U.S., the dissertation has certain limitations. As I trudged through my thesis, I realized that instead of studying Ethiopians in America as a whole and

throughout the United States, a regional or even ethnic based approach in a single American city might be better suited to thoroughly understand the odyssey of Ethiopians to the U.S., their patterns of settlement and their adjustment. Yet, I also realized that focusing on Ethiopian immigrant/refugee community in a single city or state also has its own drawback. Since immigrant/refugee settlement patterns are affected, beside other variables, by ethnic/regional affiliation, a study of a certain Ethiopian community in a certain American city might present a lopsided view of Ethiopians in America.

Though there is a plethora of literature on migration to the United States from the various parts of the world and from which I benefited immensely, some of the pitfalls in this dissertation were due to the lacuna of literature that deals with African immigrants in general and Ethiopians in particular. The handful of works that exist such as *The African Émigrés in the United States* were focused on reasons why Africans are not interested in going back to their country and how much immigration to U.S. had drained Africa's trained manpower,³ while Alusine Jalloh and Stephen Maizlish's collection of articles on the African Diaspora solely dealt with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its role in Diaspora formations.⁴ The very latest work on the African Diaspora, by Isidore Okpewho et al, except for a couple of articles that addressed African immigrant women, and the role of the African American Caucus in the U.S. foreign policy making concerning Africa, does not say much on the new African immigrants in the U.S. In short, they are mainly interested in the slave trade and its impact rather than on the postcolonial African Diaspora formations.⁵ Joseph

³ Kofi Konadu Apraku, *African Émigrés in the United States: A Missing Link in Africa's Social and Economic Development* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

⁴ Joseph E. Harris, Alusine Jalloh, and Stephen E. Maizlish. *The African Diaspora*. 1st ed. (Arlington: A&M University Press, 1996).

⁵ Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali Al Amin Mazrui, *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999)

Harris' *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* is no exception.⁶ Obiagele Lak's article, *Towards a Pan African Identity*, though acknowledging the existence of the new African Diaspora, his main focus was not on African immigrants in the U.S. but on African returnees to Ghana.⁷ The latest edition of *Immigrant America*, too, though an all inclusive and scholarly work, doesn't say much about immigrants from Africa except for a passing remark on African immigrant's higher educational attainment prior to their arrival to the U.S. vis-à-vis other immigrants.⁸ However, there are a few exceptions such as April Gordon's *The New Diaspora- - African Immigration to the United States*, besides acknowledging the existence of a new African Diaspora and the need to study it, has pointed out the major factors for such development.⁹ John Arthur's *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States*, is another exception.¹⁰ It is the first comprehensive account of post-1960s African immigrants in the U.S. Besides dealing with crucial issues such as manner of entrance into the U.S and adjustment problems thereof, the author pointed out African immigrant's reluctance to settle permanently. Some of the shortcomings of the book are it attempts to view Africans as one. It also tries to address all aspects of African immigrants in America.

The very few monographs that studied Ethiopian immigrants in America such as *The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources*, despite its immense contribution in understanding how much the 1974 Revolution had decimated the

⁶ Joseph E. Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1993).

⁷ Lake, Obiagele. "Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghanaian," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 68 (Jan. 1995), 21-36.

⁸ Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996)

⁹ April Gordon, "The New Africa Diaspora: African Immigration to the United States," *The Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (Spring 1998), 79-103.

¹⁰ Arthur, John A. *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport: Praeger, 2000)

intelligentsia and their exile life in America, portrayed the Ethiopians as highly educated.¹¹ In so doing, it disregarded the existence of the many uneducated Ethiopians, some of them peasants with little or no knowledge of urban life; and who are thus struggling to survive. These Ethiopians, according to the 1990 U.S. Census, constituted 36 per cent of the total Ethiopian immigrant population in the U.S. do not understand English. Some of them do not even read and write their own language. In order to fully comprehend Ethiopian immigrants in America, the statement, which assumed that they are highly educated, needs to be given the benefit of doubt.

One reason for such misrepresentation of facts might have emanated from the timing of the book. It was written in 1991 which seems to have left out many of the refugees, who began arriving into the U.S after 1980, among whom a sizable number of illiterates were found. The division among Ethiopians immigrants in the U.S. has been very well noted and the causes of this friction have not been addressed, though highlighted. Though the book has a chapter on the adjustment of Ethiopians in America in which politics in exile, cultural differences between Ethiopian parents and their American children, citizenship, economic achievement ...etc were discussed; issues of gender and race are absent from the discourse. Despite such shortcomings, the book is one of a kind and more than an eye opener on the Ethiopian immigrant saga in U.S.

Tekle Woldemikael's article on Ethiopians and Eritreans, though a good addition to the study of Ethiopian/African immigrants in America, lacked empirical data for Eritreans in spite of the author's claim to have studied both groups.¹² There are also a couple of books on Ethiopians, which either narrate the story of escape from Ethiopia,¹³ or the ordeals of a specific ethnic group in

¹¹ Getachew Metaferia and Shifferaw Maigenet, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources, (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991)

¹² Tekle M. Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans" in Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Refugee Handbook, David W. Haines (ed.), (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 147-170.

¹³ Avraham Shmueland and Arlene Kushner, Treacherous Journey: My Escape from Ethiopia (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, Inc, 1986); Taddese Seyoum Teshale with the Assistance of Virginia Lee Barnes, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee (1944-1991) Sojourning the Fourth World (New York: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1991)

refugee camps in Sudan. These books, though helpful in understanding the manner of exit, the role of ethno-national organizations in refugee camps and refugee lifestyle, have lesser significance in understanding the life of an Ethiopian immigrant in the U.S.¹⁴

John Sorenson's *Politics of Social Identity: 'Ethiopians' in Canada*, as the title might indicate, is mainly focused on the identity crisis among Ethiopian immigrants in Canada.¹⁵ This was partly done while exploring ethnic based associations, operating in Canada. Though it is true that Ethiopian identity is contested by various ethnic and nationalist groups, there is no clue by which these same ethnic groups or nationalities, who refused to be considered Ethiopian, defined themselves. This is a major issue in molding their own identity vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who contest it. The author also highlights on Ethiopians' encounter with racism and their reaction against it.

The handfuls of dissertations on Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. are either clinical studies focused on the psychological problems/stress of Ethiopians on their way to the U.S.¹⁶ or anthropological studies concerned with community development.¹⁷ Kathryn Moran's work, for instance, emphasized political and ethnic fragmentation within and among Ethiopians in Los Angeles. The study is limited to a single refugee community. Besides, Moran seems to believe that some of the disagreement among Ethiopian immigrant's community association is the result of a tradition that has no rules of order during deliberations. The Ethiopians, according to the author,

¹⁴ Bulcha, Mekuria, "Conquest and Forced Migration: An Assessment of Oromo Experience," in Seyoum Y. Hameso, Trevor Trueman, and Temesgen M. Erena, ed., Ethiopia Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy (London: TSC, 1997); Gaim Kibreab, "Refugees and Development: A Study of Organized land Settlements for Eritrean Refugees in Eastern Sudan, 1967-1983," Ph.D. dissertation, Uppsala University (Sweden), 1985.

¹⁵ John Sorenson, "Politics of Social Identity: Ethiopians in Canada," Journal of Ethnic Studies, Vol. 19, No. 1, (199), 67-86.

¹⁶ Bantirgu Tadesse Mammo, "Psychological effects of prolonged stress on Ethiopian expatriates in the United States," PhD dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1995; Cubie Allen Bragg, "The impact of psychosocial stressors on depression and anxiety of Ethiopian immigrants," PhD dissertation, The Union Institute, 1995.

¹⁷ Kathryn Myers Moran, "Community, Cohesion, and Conflict: Ethiopian Refugees in Los Angeles," Ph. D. Thesis (University of California, Los Angeles, 1996)

discuss "without rules of order," which is untrue. The Ethiopian society is extremely hierarchical. Every body's place is delineated in the society based on age, wealth, knowledge, education, ... etc. Therefore, although it doesn't follow the 'western' pattern of order, village or other meetings were held in orderly fashion chaired by either the notable of the locality, the elders of the community, government authority, or a religious figure. In fact, instead of disorder quietness and calm seem to dominate much of such gatherings for the norm is to be meek and quiet until asked. Rather the source of the problem in discussions and other public gatherings among Ethiopians in America, I contend, is of transitional nature. It is the contradiction between endorsing "modernity," western style of debating, or using both.

Although Moran's acknowledgment of ethnic diversity within and among Ethiopian immigrants is very rewarding, the treatment of Eritreans as separate but homogeneous ethnic group is far from both historical fact and anthropological observation. There is no as such Eritrean ethnicity. It is neither a nation-state nor composed of a single ethnicity like Somalis, for instance. Eritrea, at best, is a geographic unit that encompasses at least five ethnic groups: Kunama, Saho, Beja, Tigre, Afar...etc.¹⁸ The political and ethnic fragmentation among Ethiopians in America was also wrongly attributed to the political culture of the "*zemenä messafint*", the Era of Princess, a late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century political phenomena in which Ethiopia was characterized by regional strife, which the author parallels it to the current situation in Ethiopia, and the Ethiopians in America. But, a closer look at the "*zamana mesafint*" reveals that it was a period in which regional lords vied against each other to be the supreme ruler, king of kings. That does not reflect the current situation prevalent among Ethiopians in Ethiopia and the Diaspora, where political strife is

¹⁸ For Eritrea's ethnic composition, see G. K. N Trevaskis, Eritrea: A Colony in Transition, 1941-1952 (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Testfatsion Medhanie, Eritrea: Dynamics of a National Question (Amsterdam: B. R. Gruner, 1986)

primarily aimed at secession.¹⁹ Furthermore, the concept of "*agar* or *hagar*," which literally means country, was portrayed as a rigid form to mean my 'village.' Yet, in reality it is more fluid like any other mark of identity. Accordingly, when a foreigner asks an Ethiopian where is he/she from, his/her response is Ethiopia, which equals '*hagar*,' (country). But, if a fellow Ethiopian posed the question, then '*hagar*' might refer to a certain region, district or village depending upon the person who solicited the information. If both of them are from the same province, then the respondent will specifically refer to his district, town or village as '*hagar*' than Ethiopia.

Lack of empirical data that shows progress through time is another source of predicament. For instance, establishing the exact number of Ethiopians in America is difficult because the available data are incomplete. Prior to the 1980s, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had never broken down the number for Africans by country of origin. Also, the U.S. Census figures for Ethiopians since 1990 are contested—the figures understate their number for the following reasons: A sizable number of Ethiopians reside in low-income government housing. Though illegal, these Ethiopians share their living quarters with other Ethiopians, but they do not report them and hence the census misses such Ethiopians. Cultural norms, too, prevent the Census Bureau from having a relatively exact count of Ethiopians in America. It is improper for Ethiopians to inform a stranger about the size of their family. The absence of census tradition of any sort in Ethiopia until very recently makes conducting surveys among Ethiopians very difficult. Like all other immigrant groups in America, there are illegal aliens among Ethiopians are unaccounted for. On the other hand, the figures that are posted by many Ethiopian immigrant community centers in the U.S. and other unofficial sources are also problematic. These figures are, more than often, highly inflated. Hence, caution is required when using them. Moreover, although certain ethnic groups and people

¹⁹ See for instance, Mordechai Abir, Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes, the Challenge of Islam and the Re-unification of the Christian Empire, 1769-1855 (New York: Praeger, 1968)

from certain regions seemed to be more numerous than other Ethiopians in the U.S., the INS and other immigration offices do not tabulate their data based on ethnicity such as Amhara, Oromo, Tigre, Ethiopian-Somali, or on regional origin like Gondare, Shawe or Wallege. Hence, I would like to forewarn my readers that the numeric evidence in this dissertation concerning ethnicity and regional origin are estimates. What is more, although Muslims and non-Ethiopian Orthodox Christian believers such as Catholics and the many denominations of the Protestant sects might have come to the U.S., the study of religion is primarily focused on Orthodox Christians because they are the majority among Ethiopians in America. Furthermore, though I found the interdisciplinary approach that combined history and sociology in the study of migration very rewarding, it might offend some specialists in both disciplines, for which I apologize, and I leave it to subsequent researchers to fill in the gaps and refine the study of Ethiopian immigrants/refugees in America.

I am thankful to all who were involved in my education. However, my appreciation especially goes to my mentor, friend and father figure, the late Prof. Harold G. Marcus—May God bless his soul. I also would like to thank Prof. David Robinson and James C. McCann, for their meticulous guidance and assistance, and for filling the void created as the result of the unfortunate and unexpected death of my advisor. Without their help the dissertation would not have become a reality. My deepest gratitude also goes to Prof. Darlene Clark Hine, Leslie P Moch, Kenneth Waltzer, and Steve Gold for their advice, constructive criticism and moral support throughout my study at Michigan State University (MSU). My gratitude also goes to Prof. Fred W. Barton, Director of the Learning Resource Center at MSU, who tirelessly edited and reedited my dissertation and gave it its current look. I also would like to acknowledge a good friend and source of inspiration, Prof. Joseph W Scott for his support in showing me the right path, pursuing further education in America, and convincing me that it could be done. I also would like to thank Prof. Tekle Haymanot,

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ABBREVIATIONS

AESM: All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement
ANC: African National Congress
COR: Sudanese Commission of Refugees
ECD: Ethiopian Community Development Council
EDU: Ethiopian Democratic Union
EDORM: Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement
ELF: Eritrean Liberation Front
EOC: Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPLF: Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRA: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army
EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP: Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party
ERA: Eritrean Relief Association
ESFNA: Ethiopian Sport Federation in North America
ESUNA: Ethiopian Students Union in North America
ETV: Ethiopian National Television
EVD: Extended Voluntary Departure
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
ICM: International Committee for Migration
ICMC: International Catholic Migration Committee
IES: Institute of Ethiopia Studies.
INS: Immigration and Naturalization Services
IRCA: Immigration Reform and Control Act
IRC: International Rescue Committee
MAG: Military Advisory Group
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCO: Non Commissioned Officer
OAU: Organization of African Union
OLF: Oromo Liberation Front
ORA: Oromo Relief Association
PMAC: Provisional Military Administrative Council
PMGE: Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia
RCS: Refugee Counseling Services
RCVTE: Rehabilitation Center for the Victims of Torture
RST: Relief Society of Tigray
SPLA: Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army
SWAPO: South-West Africa People's Organization
TLF: Tigray Liberation Front
TPLF: Tigray Peoples Liberation Front
UNHCR: United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees
UN: United Nations
U.S: United States
ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union

INTRODUCTION

Either because of the relatively recent nature of migration from Africa to the United States or simply as the result of an oversight, there has been little or no study conducted on post-1960s African immigrants in the U.S.¹ Therefore this dissertation, which is the study of the history of Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. who are estimated between 250,000 and 350,000, and who came to the U.S. between the 1950s and 1990s, will enrich the study of migration while helping to further understand immigrants from the Third World in general and those from Africa in particular.

The migration history of Ethiopians to the U.S., among other things, reflects the nature and development of the Ethio-American diplomatic relationship since 1903,² and the hegemonic role that America played in the world since the post-1945 period. The Ethiopian and American relationship began on an official basis in 1903 with the sending of the Skinner Mission to Ethiopia, and remained relatively uneventful until the 1930s, and the Italian occupation (1936-1941).

The arrival of the American Mission in the early twentieth century does not seem accidental. America was then transforming itself from a republic to an empire, sending its troops to Cuba, Haiti and its navy, "the Great White Fleet," around the world. It had been involved to a certain degree in developments in the Far East such as China and in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905.³ Meanwhile, Ethiopia had defeated Italian colonialism successfully in 1896 which inspired oppressed people throughout the world and those of the black "race" in America. The defeat of the Italians convinced the rest of the European powers to acknowledge Ethiopia's independence and

¹ In fact, although Africans/Ethiopians may have resided in the U.S., there was no data on Africans as such in America. The 1970 US census does not have any information on African immigrants, while the 1980 U.S. census indicates their existence by simply referring to them as Africans, as if Africa was one country, while there is country specific information for immigrants from other parts of the world.

² See Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia of To-day: An Account of the First Mission Sent by the American Government to the Court of King of Kings, 1903-1904 (New York: Longmans, 1906)

³ For an excellent summary of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century, see Robert D. Schulzinger, U.S. Diplomacy Since 1900, 5th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

send their emissaries as a gesture of good will. Thus, it appeared logical for the U.S. to send its delegates to the court of Menelik as part of the 'good will,' and as a blooming global power. Until after the Second World War, the relationship between the two countries was uneventful. The only significant interest exhibited towards Ethiopia was from the African American community. This interest was not consistent, and the response from Ethiopian officials was not as warm as African Americans expected.⁴

The Italo-Ethiopian war of 1936 and the outbreak of the Second World War disrupted the relationship between the two countries, at least at the official level. It was during this time that many African Americans volunteered to fight beside Ethiopians while others engaged in fundraising. Nevertheless, the then isolationist stance of the U.S. government deterred African Americans from helping Ethiopia.

By the end of the Second World War, however, things begin to take a different turn. America, which emerged as one of the most powerful nations, began following an aggressive foreign policy. In the meantime, Emperor Haile Sellassie, who was trying to circumvent British imperial aspirations, sought Franklin Roosevelt's help. Accordingly, the two countries signed an agreement which paved the way for Ethiopians to come to America, mainly for technical training. Although Ethiopia's relationship with Europe predated that of U.S., and in spite of the existence of European-educated Ethiopians in various government positions in the 1940s who could have influenced decision-making, more Ethiopians were sent to the U.S. than any other country up to

⁴ For the unofficial contact between the USA and Ethiopia, especially for the relationship between African Americans and Ethiopia see William R Scott, "A Study of Afro-American and Ethiopian Relations: 1896-1941," Dissertation, Princeton University, 1971; Negussay Ayele, Ethiopia and the United States, Volume I: The Season of Courtship (NP: Ocopy.com, 2003).

that point. Thus, the presence of Ethiopians in America, which began with the sending of a handful of Ethiopians for further education in the 1920s, grew into thousands by the 1970s.⁵

Moreover, in the 1970s about 10,000 Americans have worked in Ethiopia and with other expatriates helped Ethiopians to be aware of the outside world. Although Ethiopians continued to go abroad for further education, they always returned to Ethiopia to take up the excellent opportunities available to them throughout the 1960s. Permanent migration, as such, was virtually unknown among Ethiopians prior to the 1974 Revolution.

The 1974 Revolution drastically changed this scenario. While Ethio-American relations went down to zero level, and while the number of Americans and other expatriates who were in Ethiopia were substantially reduced, the number of Ethiopians living abroad, mainly in the United States, increased by tens of thousands. By the late 1980s, in addition to the political exiles, more than 25,000 Ethiopians had settled in various parts of the U.S. Most of these Ethiopians were educated. Here, one finds a paradox. It was these educated Ethiopians who condemned Haile Sellassie's government as "lackey of U.S. Imperialism and Zionism." It was also these same Ethiopians who chanted "Yankee Go Home;"⁶ and yet, they all came to America. This paradox can partially be explained by the hegemonic role and involvement of the U.S. in Ethiopia in particular and the world in general. As Saskia Sassen aptly summarized it: ". . . The emergence of a global economy—and the central military, political, and economic role played by the United States in this process—contributed to the creation abroad of pools of potential emigrants and to the formation of linkages between industrialized and developing countries that subsequently were to serve as

⁵ For a comprehensive understanding of Ethiopian and American diplomatic relations in the post war period, see Harold G Marcus, The Politics of Empire: Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974 (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press INC, 1995).

⁶ For the anti-American imperialism stance of Ethiopian students see Randi Ronning Balsvik, Haile Sellassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1985).

bridges for international migration."⁷ Similar opinion was also held by Rubin G. Rumbaut, who indicated that "as the United States has become more deeply involved in the world, the world has become more deeply involved in America—indeed, in diverse ways, it has come to America."⁸

Therefore, while the emergence of the United States as a Super Power since the 1940s partly elucidates the migration of Ethiopians to the U.S., a series of changes in the U.S. immigration law also contributed to Ethiopians coming to America, as well as the diverse origin of immigrants in the U.S., especially since the 1960s. It is true that America always had been a country of immigrants but not all immigrants had been admitted into the country. Those who were welcomed were primarily from North and Western Europe, and this was the scenario until the 1960s. But these days, the main immigrants to U.S. are coming from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.⁹

This shift in the composition of immigrants and pattern of migration to the U.S. was initiated in 1965 when President Johnson signed a bill that ended the National Origins Quota which had been in place since the 1920s. The new amendment, among other things, abolished the old

⁷ Saskia Sassen, Globalization and its Discontents (New York: The New Press, 1998), 34.

⁸ Ruben G. Rumbaut, "Origin and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in Contemporary America" in Ruben G. Rumbaut and Silvia Pedreza (ed.), Origin and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), 24; see also Donna Gabaccia, From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the US, 1820-1990 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 8-11.

⁹ Between 1800 and 1925, which Douglas Massey refers to as "the industrial period" of migration, 48 million Europeans left for Australia and the New World of which, however, 85 per cent of them left for five major centers of migration. These destinations were Argentina, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA. Of these countries, the US took 60 per cent of the European immigrants. Thus, by 1900 America had a population of about 76 million of which some 24 million were immigrants who came to this country between 1880s and 1920s. See Douglas S. Massey et al., World in Motion: Understanding International Migration at The End of The Millennium, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1, 2-3; see also Donna Gabaccia, "The 'Yellow Peril' and the Chinese of Europe: Global Perspectives on Race and Labor, 1815-1930" in Jan and Leo Lucassen (ed.), Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 178-179; Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, 2nd ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 47-56; Gary Gerstle, "Immigration and Ethnicity in the American Century" in Harvard Sitkoff (ed.), Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford university press, 2001), 275, 286-287; Leslie Page Moch, "The European Perspective: Changing Conditions and Multiple Migrations, 1750-1914" in Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (eds.), European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 124-125; Desmond King, Making Americans: Immigration, Race, And The Origins of The Diverse Democracy (Cambridge: Harvard university press, 2000), 52.

preference system and gave priority to reuniting families.¹⁰ The 1965 legislation also sought to eliminate the bias against South and East Europeans and non-Europeans, and to regulate the flow of immigrants through a series of elaborate systems of general preferences and quotas. Under this law preference was given to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and professionals. The emphasis on family was meant to ensure that the new immigrants would come, as usual, from Europe because it was Europeans who had families already settled in U.S. But, the outcome was different. Non-Europeans dominated the new immigrants such as Southeast Asians, Mexicans and people from the Caribbean.¹¹ The highly skilled immigrants from the Third World who had been admitted because of their skill, and those 'guest' workers (mainly Mexicans) who meant to return after their job was done, began using the new immigration law. It appears that with the enactment of the 1965 immigration law, Pandora's box had been opened. These changes, in part, were the results of the Civil Rights Movement that brought an increasing openness towards Catholics, Asians and Jews.

Yet, developments in Cuba and Southeast Asia further revealed that America had no coherent refugee policy, and that the existing immigration law was inadequate to deal with refugees and illegal immigrants at a time when America was increasingly becoming a global player. As a result, the Refugee Act of March 1980, which incorporated the United Nations definition of a refugee—a person who is unable or unwilling to return to place of origin "because of persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution"—was passed. This law provided the legal frame for admitting hundreds of thousands of refugees, who were primarily fleeing communism, such as people from

¹⁰ Under this preference system, unmarried children of US citizens were given highest priority. Second preference was given to unmarried children and spouses of resident aliens. Skill was moved from 1st to 3rd. Other relatives of citizens and aliens got 4th and 5th while needed workers were allotted 6th. The 7th preference was left for refugees.

¹¹ Elliott Robert Barkan, And Still They Come: Immigrants And American Society, 1920 to the 1990s (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc, 1996), 73-76, 101-102, 115-119; Gerstle, "Immigration," 286-287; Sassen, Globalization, 32; Roy Beck, The Case Against Immigration: The Moral, Economic, Social And Emotional Reasons For Reducing US Immigration Back To The Traditional Levels (New York: Norton & Company), 16, 18; King, Making Americans, 238-243, 247-250; Roger Daniels and Otis L. Graham, Debating American Immigration, 1882-Present (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2001), 33-34.

Cuba and Southeast Asia.¹² Consequently, America's immigration policy appeared to be increasingly influenced by Cold War politics. Anyone who was against communism was welcomed. Thus Ethiopians, communist or otherwise, who were opposed to the military junta that had befriended the U.S.S.R. since the late 1970s, were admitted to the U.S. as people who voted against communism with their feet.

The majority of these Ethiopians were victims of the "Red Terror" which hit cities like Addis Ababa and Gondar hard, and hence played the role of a "push" factor. Yet, these Ethiopians comprised two distinct groups. The first group consisted highly educated Ethiopians, tourists, businessmen and government officials who came to America prior to the 1974 Revolution, but failed to return home because of the revolution. Among these, the majority were students who were sent by the Imperial Government, their parents, or were given scholarship by the American government. In most instances, these students were from the well-to-do families or sons and daughters of men with connections in high places. However, there were also students, though few in number, who belonged to the lower class yet, who distinguished themselves in the academia, and were sent to America. The next "wave" however, encompassed those brought to the U.S. in the 1980s from refugee camps, mainly from Sudan. They mainly constituted of political refugees who left their country because of the mass killings, which was known as the "Red Terror" and mass arrests by the military junta, and people who were victims of drought, famine and resettlement. The refugees have diverse social, economic and educational backgrounds. Among them, one finds

¹² Barkan, And Still They Come, 118; Daniels and Graham, Debating American, 47-48; Michel Mignot, "Refugees From Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, 1975-1993" in Robin Cohen (ed.), The Cambridge Survey Of World Migration (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 452-456; Naomi Flink Zucker and Norma L. Zucker, "US Admission Policies Towards Cuban and Haitian Migrants, in Robin Cohen (ed.), The Cambridge Survey of World Migration (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 447-451.

* Robert Skinner was instrumental in sending a mission to Ethiopia. He tabled the proposal, sending a mission to Ethiopia, in 1900 to the then American president, McKinley. See Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day: An Account of the First Mission Sent By the American Government to the Court of the King of Kings (1903-1904) (New York: Longmans, Green & CO., 1906), ix.

people with a Ph.Ds and peasants with no education whatsoever. Yet, members of this group were politically conscious. Some of these refugees were members or sympathizers of EPRP, AESM . . .etc. Before the demise of their parties, they had supported and fought for the Marxist-Leninist ideals. At one time or another, they might have been imprisoned or tortured by the military junta. Almost all of them had stayed in refugee camps, mainly in Sudan.

The Ethiopian immigrants were ethnically diverse and at times acutely divided into Amhara, Oromo, Tigre or, in terms of regional origin such as Gondare, Shawe, Walge . . . etc. The ethnic and regional tensions among Ethiopians became more glaring after the rise of the TPLF (Tigray Peoples Liberation Front, also known as Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which is an ethnically organized party, to power in Ethiopia in 1991. This ethnic division, coupled with the dissimilarity in manner of entrance, levels of education, degrees of exposure to the outside world prior to arrival to the U.S., religious, political affiliation, and the desire to return or not, are some of the variables that also characterized Ethiopians in the U.S.

In relation to their adaptation to immigrant life in America, Ethiopian immigrants also faced some of the most common immigrant adjustment problems, such as changing roles in the family, generation gap between the old and the young within the family, language barriers, downward mobility and child rearing mechanisms.

Their diversity and the tension that arose from it and the many adjustment problems they faced had tremendous impact, both positive and negative on their adaptation and integration into their new surroundings and their survival as a distinct group in the U.S. Either due to the actions of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) of the U.S. Government, or as the result of internal migration, both of which could be influenced by a set of interrelated factors, certain U.S. cities appeared to be dominated by a single Ethiopian ethnic group or people from a certain province, which has its own implications for both the host society and the Ethiopian community. This

concentration is especially true in light of the racial categorizations of the U.S. society. The Ethiopians, because of their lack of colonial experience, were not aware of "racial" divisions. But, in America, where things have "racial" labels and the society is highly "race" conscious, Ethiopians appeared to be at a loss in defining themselves vis-à-vis the host society, while the latter categorized them as African American.

Yet, despite such anomalies, Ethiopians are having an impact on the society, culture and politics of the United States. Their community organizations and churches are popping up here and there. Ethiopian restaurants are not uncommon in U.S. cities, and the Ethiopian cuisine is becoming part of the U.S. diet. Certain American cities now have "Ethiopia Day" on their calendars while others like Los Angeles have dubbed a section of the city as " Little Ethiopia." In some cities, the cab and parking attendant business are almost totally dominated by Ethiopians. American politicians have also begun appreciating Ethiopian voters. Similarly, American-based Ethiopian opposition political parties are trying to influence America's foreign policy in the Horn of Africa while some Ethiopians are observed trying to foster economic development either through technology transfer, investment or remittances in Ethiopia.

Using chronology as the main frame and interlacing it with a thematic approach, the dissertation, "The History of Ethiopian Immigrants in the United States, 1950s-1990s," is systematically organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the background of the study. It deals with Ethiopia's bilateral relations with the United States in the 20th century and explores its progress, or lack of, with the various rulers and regimes that came to power: Emperor Menelik II (r. 1889-1913), Empress Zawditu (r. 1916-1930), Emperor Haile Sellassie (1930-1974), the *Derg* (1974-1991) and TPLF/EPRDF (1991 to present), and seeks to show how this bilateral relation laid the foundation for future migration of Ethiopians to the U.S. In relation to this, the number of

Ethiopians educated in the U.S., both from the civilian and military sector, will be brought to light. However, the emphasis of this chapter is on the post-WWII period.

The second chapter deals with Revolutionary Ethiopia in relation to the Red Terror and the exodus of Ethiopians to the neighboring countries, especially Sudan. Here, in addition to showing state-sponsored repression as a factor that initiates refugee flows from countries like Ethiopia, the chapter also illuminates the often-overlooked rivalry among various guerrilla movements and their repressive natures as another cause for refugeeism. The nature of exodus (the way to Sudan), the life of Ethiopians in Sudanese refugee camps (how the Christian, Jewish and Muslim; and male and female Ethiopians fared in Sudan), is also scrutinized. Finally, the airlift of Ethiopians to the U.S. is discussed beginning with why America became more willing to airlift Ethiopians than other Africans.

Life in America, patterns of settlement and adjustment problems are the main themes of chapter three. Here, issues related to settlement such as who settled Ethiopians and why they settled them in such a way are explored. Reasons for internal migration, and the nature of occupation and how Ethiopians found them, and the various adjustment problems that Ethiopians went through such as downward mobility, shifting gender roles and confronting the American racial divide will be also be discussed. The chapter also deals with class, ethnic and ideological differences that also encompass differences in manner of entrance and level of education among Ethiopians. The nature and implications of internal ethnicity on both the host society and the immigrant community is also evaluated.

Chapter four covers the establishment of community organizations such as the Ethiopian football federation, Orthodox churches and the Ethiopian immigrant press. The impact of political, ethnic and regional as well as class difference on community organizations, and the ramifications of these differences on the process of adjustment on the Ethiopian immigrant community is treated.

Chapter five examines transnationalism such as the impact of Ethiopian-Americans on Ethiopia: remittances (both financial and intellectual), the introduction of the fast food culture or the McDonaldization of Ethiopia and what it means in a country where life is not as fast paced as in America and where Judaism, Christianity and Islam have a strong hold. The change in attitude towards migration and refugeeism among Ethiopians is also discussed.

Finally, the conclusion addresses the shifting contours of Ethiopian and American relations in the 20th century. It specially examines why and how America failed to stop the 1974 Revolution, which some referred to as "the creeping coup" in spite of its strong influence and hold over Ethiopia. It also probes into the increased migration of Ethiopians into the U.S. and its potential in influencing Ethio-American relations, in particular and U.S. policy towards Africa in general. Meanwhile it also addresses the impact/contribution of Ethiopians on the country of origin. Their input on the democratization process and liberalization of the Ethiopian economy; and their role as agents of "Americanization." Questions regarding the fate of the second generation and the role and survival of Ethiopian community organizations in the increasingly Americanized Ethiopian immigrant populations are also raised. In all these, the political squabble among Ethiopians in America and how ethnic and regional differences coupled with different class background have further strengthened the disagreement within and among Ethiopians and prevented them from establishing a pan-Ethiopian association in America. In line with this, the conclusion also highlights the ongoing asylee/immigrant and refugee rivalry for leadership role within and among the Ethiopian community in America. Finally, the conclusion reflects upon the continually increasing number of Ethiopians in America and the changing attitude among Ethiopians at home towards migration.

CHAPTER I

ETHIOPIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND EARLY MIGRATION OF ETHIOPIANS TO AMERICA, 1903-1974.

Chapter I. 1. Ethiopian and American Relations Before 1945

Ethiopian-American relations officially began in 1903 with the arrival in Addis Ababa of an American trade mission led by the American diplomat, Robert P. Skinner, making Ethiopia one of the first African countries to establish a diplomatic relationship with the U.S.¹ The arrival of the American mission was not serendipitous: America was then, as Robert McMahon aptly described it, transforming itself from a republic to an empire.² It had sent its troops to Cuba, Haiti and its fleet, "the Great White Fleet," around the world. It was becoming involved, to a certain degree, in events that impacted the Far East such as China and the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. The American media viewed the growing Ethiopian-American relations as part of the "manifest destiny," the success of America's "open door policy for trade"; and as one of the logical outcomes of becoming a world power which "must have a world field for its activities."³

At the turn of the 20th century, Ethiopia was emerging from the abyss of civil war and the threats of colonialism. Not long before, in 1896 at the Battle of Adwa, Ethiopia had defeated Italian colonialism successfully which guaranteed its independence. The defeat of the Italians also convinced the rest of Europe to acknowledge Ethiopia's independence and send emissaries to

¹ Foreign Service Dispatch No. 287: From Joseph Simons, American Embassy, Addis Ababa, to the Department of State, Washington DC, April 20, 1955. The Embassy dispatch contains a brief history of Ethiopian-American relations. See also Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day; Harold G. Marcus, The Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913 (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 75; Bahru Zewde, A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974 (London: James Currey, 1991), 111; Hagos Mehary, The Strained U.S.-Ethiopian Relations (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1989), 30.

² Robert J. McMahon, "The Republic as Empire: American Foreign Policy in the 'American Century' in Harvard Sitkoff (ed), Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 80-101.

³ Quoted in Harold G. Marcus, Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years, 1892-1936 (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1998), 87-88.

seek favors from Emperor Menelik II (r.1889-1913).⁴ Thus, it was logical for the U.S., too, to send delegates to the court of Menelik as a gesture of "good will," and in the service of its own self-recognition as an emergent global power.

Aside from ambitions of an emergent world power, American interest in sending a mission to Ethiopia was also driven by the desire to have unfettered access to international commerce. As Robert P. Skinner, who first tabled the idea of sending a mission to Ethiopia in 1900 and who became the first American representative in Ethiopia, summed it ". . . to investigate and report upon the trade possibilities of Ethiopia, to safeguard our existing interest by the negotiation of commercial treaty—these were the motives which had prompted the organization of American mission."⁵

After the signing of the agreement, "The Treaty of Amity and Commerce," in 1903, America quickly supplanted Europe as the main destination of Ethiopia's major export items, coffee and hides. For instance, some three years after the establishment of the U.S. Mission in Ethiopia, America's share of Ethiopia's total foreign trade (\$2,316,000) accounted for more than half, \$1,389,600. Of these, coffee and hides took the lion's share. A 1920s American Legation report from Addis Ababa also indicated that though American Khaki dominated the textile market in Ethiopia, much of the profit went to European and Arab middlemen who had direct access to markets in Ethiopia than American business. Hence, the consular office suggested establishing an

⁴ Marcus, The Life and Times of Menelik II, 198, 214; Bahru, A History, 81, 111; Harold G. Marcus, A History of Ethiopia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 101, 103, Robert L. Hess, Ethiopia: The Modernization of Autocracy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 59. For a detailed account of the civil wars in the 19th century Ethiopia, see Seven Rubenson, The Survival of Ethiopian Independence (London: Heinemann education Books Ltd, 1976).

⁵ Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day, 94, 91.

American warehouse at Djibouti. The office also believed that there is a potential market in Ethiopia for American products such as autos.⁶

The Ethiopian and American relationship was further strengthened when Ethiopia offered an American company the chance to construct a barrage over Lake Tana. The choice of an American company was motivated because of three major reasons. One was Ethiopia's suspicion of European, especially British ulterior motives over the Nile River and adjoining Ethiopian territories. The second was that working with America would bring the latter to Ethiopia's side in an event of confrontation between Ethiopia and the European powers. The third was Ethiopian leaders' belief that America posed no threat to Ethiopia—A sentiment which was also well understood by Americans. For instance, Skinner attributed Emperor Menelik's warm welcome to the American mission to "the popular convection that American friendship had no dangers [emphasis added], and would be a source of moral strength to the nation, [Ethiopia].⁷ A 1931 U.S. Legation report from Addis Ababa to Washington also has it that "the Emperor [Haile Sellassie] and his Ministers have long sought our friendship for selfish political reasons, of which the most important was to have an ally against potential British, French or Italian aggression [emphasis added]."⁸ On a similar note, John Spencer, who was Haile Sellassie's advisor for almost half a century, explained Ethiopia's preference for U.S. in the following manner: ". . . during the first third of this century [ie.20th century] the United States had remained diplomatically as well as geographically distant from Africa caused [Emperor] Haile Sellassie to turn to it with confidence

⁶ See "Voluntary Report" From Legation of the United States, Addis Ababa, Minister and Council General, Addison Southard, to Assistant Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, November 28, 1929; see also Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day, 92-93,185.

⁷ Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day, 82.

⁸ From Addison E. Southard, Legation of the United States, Addis Ababa to the Honorable, Secretary of State, Washington, No. 810, September 12, 1931.

and in the hope of fostering closer relations with that non-colonial power [Emphases added].⁹ In the same vein, Harold Marcus, one of the foremost Ethiopianist historians, concluded that Haile Sellassie "sought to break Europe's economic dominance of the Ethiopian economy by seeking new and less dangerous trading partners [emphasis added]."¹⁰ Accordingly, the construction of the Lake Tana dam was awarded to an American company, J. G. White Engineering.

However, before commencing work, the company had to allay the fears of the British who had interest over the Blue Nile River and its source, Lake Tana; and the Italians who considered the northern half of Ethiopia as under their sphere of influence. To this end, both England and Italy had consular offices in Dangla (Gojjam) and Gondar (Bagemidr and Samen province) respectively. As part of their colonial design, the Italians also suggested that the Addis Ababa-Lake Tana Road, which was part of the Lake Tana Dam project, pass through Desse (the capital of Wallo, a northeastern province of Ethiopia that also adjoins the Italian colony of Eritrea) and thence to Gojjam. If accepted, their suggestion would have hastened the construction of the Assab-Addis Ababa road, which would have strengthened their clout over Ethiopia. The French, on their part, opposed the construction of the Addis Ababa-Lake Tana road through Desse to Gojjam. They believed that this road would threaten their profit from the Ethio-Djibouti Railway and ultimately the welfare of their East African colony, Djibouti. The construction company also has to deal with local magnates like *Ras Hailu Takla Haymanot*, the hereditary ruler of Gojjam (where both Lake Tana

⁹ John H. Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Sellassie Years (Algonac: Reference Publications, Inc., 1984), 6, 7.

¹⁰ Marcus, A History of Ethiopia, 126; Marcus, The Life and Times of Menelik II, 198-199; Harold G. Marcus, Haile Sellassie: The Formative Years, 1892-1936 (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1998), 87; James McCann, "Ethiopia, Britain, and Negotiations for the Lake Tana Dam, 1922-1935," The International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1981), 667-699.

and the Blue Nile River are located) and one of the richest and most powerful notables of Ethiopia.¹¹

The desire to lessen European influence over Ethiopia and the realization that America had no colonial ambition over Ethiopia also induced the latter to seek American advisors. Consequently, in 1930 a certain Everett A. Colson became financial advisor to the Ethiopian state. He became one of the most trusted foreign advisors in the court of Haile Sellassie. Upon his death in 1937, a fellow American, John Spencer, took Colson's place to become one of the most trusted consorts to the Emperor until the 1974 Socialist Revolution.¹²

Another American who served the Ethiopian state prior to the Italian invasion was Frank Ernest Work. Prior to his appointment as educational advisor to the Ethiopian government, he was Professor of History and Social Science and a Registrar at Muskingum College (Ohio) where Ethiopian students, Malaku Bayan, Worqu Gobana and Bashahwerad Habta Wold, were sent to study. These were the first Ethiopian students to study in the U.S. A "confidential" U.S. Legation memo from Addis Ababa revealed that it was these students, especially Malaku Bayan and Bashahwerad Habta Wold, who, by their recommendation, landed the professor the job of an advisor in Ethiopia. "The two boys" said the confidential memo "requested the legation to report their desire to assist His Majesty in influencing the latter's wish of long standing for a personal, impartial, and loyal general advisor and assistant, to be close at hand at all times and to assist His Majesty in any way possible . . . A loyal personal friend, a good Christian, a man with sound

¹¹ "Confidential," from James L. Park, Charge'd Affairs, the Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa, to the Honorable Secretary of State, Washington, No. 422, May 17th 1930; see also Department of State, Near Eastern Affairs, "Memorandum of Conversation by Telephone with Gano Dunn, President, J. G. White Engineering Corporation, NY.," March 4, 1930; From Addison E. Southard, Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to the Honorable, Secretary of State, Washington, No. 330, January 20th 1930.

¹² It is not uncommon, in fact it is a tradition, to have one or more foreigners as trusted advisors in the royal court of Ethiopia since earlier times. Among the 19th century Emperors, Tewdors II had two trusted British advisors, John Bell and Walter Plowden; Yohannis VI had another British advisor, Kirkham; Menelik II, the Swiss Alfred Ilg; and Lij Iyasu had the Syrian Hasib Ydlibi. See Bahru Zewde, Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 173-174.

judgment, who would not endeavor to exploit the important confidence placed in him . . . the two young men report that they had proposed such a man, an America, [Frank Ernest Work] to His Majesty.¹³

Another outcome of Ethiopian-American diplomatic relations was the sending of Ethiopian emissaries and students to the U.S. Prior to 1903, though Ethiopian emperors or empresses were known to send delegates and students to the various parts of the world, none had been sent to America. Upon his arrival at Menelik's court, one of the things that Skinner suggested to the emperor was sending Ethiopian students to American colleges and schools, and organizing an Ethiopian exhibit as part of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition which was to be held at St. Louis. While Menelik promised to look into the details of organizing and sending an Ethiopian exhibit to St. Louis, he was very enthusiastic and receptive to Skinner's suggestion of sending Ethiopian students to the U.S. As Skinner reported ". . . Yes, that will come' said . . . [Menelik]; 'our young men must be educated. We have much to do.'"¹⁴ However, because of Menelik's ill-health and the political uncertainty that ensued in the country, sending Ethiopians to America has to wait until his daughter's, (Zawditu) ascension to the throne. Thus, it was Empress Zawditu (r. 1916-1922), who sent Ethiopian students for the first time to study in the United States.¹⁵ They were Malaku Bayan, Worqu Gobana and Bashahwerad Habta Wold. Their sponsor was a Presbyterian missionary, Dr. Charles Lambie, who had come to Ethiopia in 1918 upon the request of the Ethiopian government to help curb the influenza epidemic that was ravaging the country. The Ethiopians were initially sent to the Muskingum College in Ohio, where they stayed from 1922-1929. The arrival of

¹³ See the letter "Confidential" from James L. Park, Charged Affairs, Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa to the Honorable, Secretary of State, Washington, No. 444, June 11, 1930; from Addison E. Southard, Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa to the Honorable, Secretary of State, Washington, No. 474, June 20th, 1931; Bahru, Pioneers of Change, 90.

¹⁴ Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day, 79, 102.

¹⁵ Gebra Egizabher, Powers, Piety and Politics, 126. Though Menelik did not put it into effect, the American diplomat, Skinner, had suggested that it is good to send Ethiopians to the USA for education. Thus, Zawditu's action could be the culmination of Skinner's suggestion, See Skinner, Abyssinia of To-Day, 103-104.

Ethiopian students in 1922 must have been a very unique event at Muskingum. They were introduced to President Harding. Because of their uniqueness, the local population referred to them as "the Muskingum boys" or the "princes." Moreover, because of their strange Ethiopian names, the community also dubbed them with much more convenient ones: "Mathew, Mark and Luke."¹⁶

Another group of Ethiopian students came to the U.S. in 1930s. They were Makonnen Desta, Engeda Yohannis and Mekonnen Haile.¹⁷ They did their studies on the East Coast. The latter group attended prestigious universities like Harvard and Cornell. Among these Ethiopian students, two of them, Malaku Bayyana and Makonnen Desta, became the first American-educated medical doctors in Ethiopia. Thus, by the beginning of the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935, six Ethiopian students had studied in America.¹⁸ Of these, Malaku Bayana is of great interest for two reasons: his role among the African American community, especially during the interwar period; and the fact that he became the first Ethiopian student, for that matter the first Ethiopian, to settle in America permanently.

Empress Zawditu also sent Ethiopian emissaries for the first time to the U.S. in June 1919. The envoys included *Dajazmach* Nadew, *Kanitiba* Gebru, and *Bilata* Hiruy. The purpose of the envoys was to congratulate the Allies on their victory in the First World War.¹⁹ Another group of messengers were also sent to the U.S. in 1927. The leader of the mission was the British educated

¹⁶ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*, 89-90.

¹⁷ Haile Sellassie appointed Mekonnen Desta as minister of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in the immediate aftermath of the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1941. See Haile Sellassie I King of Kings of Ethiopia, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress*, Vol. II, Edited and annotated by Harold G. Marcus, et al., (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 167.

¹⁸ Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*, 89-91, 95; Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), 681.

According to Pankhurst, however, the number of Ethiopian students in the U.S. was eight. He also indicated that by 1920s there were 63 students in France, which was the largest, 25 students in England, 10 in Switzerland, 10 in Italy, 20 in Lebanon, 19 in Egypt, 12 in Sudan, while Germany and Belgium had 2 each. In addition, there were 39 students sent by the Roman Catholic Church to Vatican.

¹⁹ Gebre-Igizabher Elyas, *Powers, Piety and Politics: The Chronicle of Abeto Iyasu and Empress Zawditu of Ethiopia* (1909-1930), (edited and trans.) Reidulf K. Molvaer (Köln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 1994), 103; Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*, 46, 183, 187.

Hakim Worqinah Eshate, alias Dr. Martin. This time, the group was entrusted with the task of negotiating a deal with one of the American engineering companies, J. G. White Engineering, for the construction of a dam on Lake Tana. The delegation, in addition to talking to officials of the company, met with President Coolidge. Following this, there were two more Ethiopian delegations to the U.S. prior to the World War II. These were in 1930 and in 1933. They were led by *Kentiba Gebru* and the Emperor's son-in law, *Ras Desta Damitaw*, respectively. The purpose of the missions was seeking a loan and an American financial advisor, Colson; and to pay a special visit in return for the visit of Murray Jacoby, who was America's official representative at Haile Sellassie's coronation in 1930.²⁰

It was also during this time that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Bureau allotted a quota of 100 for Abyssinians to immigrate to the U.S.²¹ One wonders what prompted the Immigration office to provide a quota for Ethiopians at a time when America was following an "isolationist" foreign policy, and closing its doors to immigrants save those from North and Western Europe.

It is also unclear whether any Ethiopians used the quota. Immigration and Naturalization figures do not mention Ethiopian immigrants until the 1980s, though available data indicates the existence of Africans in the U.S.²² One can also argue that Ethiopians were averse to migration

²⁰ In addition to Mr. Jacoby, the American delegations also included Gen Hart, who was the Aid-de-camp of President Wilson; and a certain Mr. Cook, a ceremonial advisor at the State Department. See Foreign Service Dispatch, No. 287: From J. Simons, U.S. Embassy, Addis Ababa to the Dept. of State, Washington DC, April 20, 1955. See also Bahru, *Pioneers of Change*, 39-40, 91, 187; William N. Huggins and John G. Jackson, *An Introduction to African Civilizations: With Main Currents In Ethiopian History* (New York: Avon House Publishers, 1937), 88

²¹ Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 208.

In addition to Ethiopia, the INS has also allotted 100 quotas each for the following African countries: Egypt, the two Cameroons, Morocco, and South Africa.

²² See for instance, U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Services, *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 8, No. (July 1959), 14; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (July 1960), 14; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 42; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (July 1961), 14; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (January 1963), 42; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (January 1964), 42; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (October 1965), 88; *I and N Reporter*, Vol. 14, No. 2

until the 1970s,²³ since they had limited exposure to the outside world in general and America in particular. Moreover, Ethiopian-American relations were still new and few ties existed.

There is an early twentieth century photograph of Ethiopians who allegedly immigrated to the U.S. via Ellis Island; and some historians have used it to substantiate the presence of Ethiopians as early as the 1910s in America.²⁴ A closer scrutiny of the picture, however, seems to suggest otherwise. They were not migrants but rather visitors to an exposition on a world fair.²⁵ They were dressed in regalia and some had spear and shield—not a normal luggage for arriving immigrants.²⁶

In the 1930s, Ethio-American relations entered a turning point, at least at an official level: Ethiopia was, once again, threatened with Italian colonial aggression while America's official interest and involvement in the world beyond its shores dwindled.²⁷ The only visible cooperation

(October 1965), 88; I and N Reporter, Vol. 15, No. 3 (January 1967), 42; I and N Reporter, Vol. 19, No. (July 1970), 14; I and N Reporter, Vol. 20, No.2 (October 1971), 28.

The Report, however, progressively provides figures for immigrants from specific African countries, as opposed to the general number, since the 1960s. Accordingly, the data for "immigrants admitted by country of origin, birth, sex and age" for the continent will include Egypt, South Africa and other in late 1950s; and Tunisia in 1961; Algeria in 1962; Nigeria in 1964; Cape Verdi Islands in 1967 . . .etc., which seem to have been dictated by political developments in the Africa: the beginning of the of colonial rule in Africa.

²³ Peter H. Koehn, Refugee From Revolution: U.S. Policy and Third-World Migration (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 273.

²⁴ Eric Foner, "Who is an American" in Culturefront, Vol. 4, No. 3, (Winter 1995-1996), 7; See also Winston James, Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in America, 1900-1932 (New York: Verso, 1998),

²⁵ In those days, "ethnological" exhibits in world fairs was not uncommon. See Curtis M. Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893" in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, (eds.), Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 344-366. Another instance in which the Western World brought Africans as a showpiece was the story of Sarah Bartmann, alias, Hottentot Venus, who was taken from South Africa and exhibited in France and other parts of Europe in the early decades of the 19th century. It was only recently, 2002, that her deceased remains, which was on exhibition in the French Museum, was sent back to South Africa. See Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Towards an Iconography of female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature" in Henry Louis Gates Jr. (ed.), Race Writing and Difference (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 225, 231-235; Michale Wallace, "Modernism, Postmodernism and Problem of the Visual in Afro-American Culture" in Russel Ferguson, et al., (eds.), Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), 45.

²⁶ See for instance the cover picture on John Bodnar, The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 59.

²⁷ For an excellent summary of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century, see Robert D. Schulzinger, U.S. Diplomacy Since 1900, 5th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). For the declining American official interest and the rising African American interest on Ethiopia see Brice Harris, Jr., The United States and the Italo-

between the two countries was on an unofficial basis; and this, too, was shaped by African American support for Ethiopia: The existence of an independent black African nation kept the hope for freedom and equality of African-Americans alive.²⁸ Thus, with the news of the Italian fascist aggression against Ethiopia in 1935, African American interest in Ethiopia became intense. Accordingly, either to mobilize their support or the support of Americans at large, Emperor Haile Sellassie sent Melaku Beyan, a former student in America with a deep sense of Pan-Africanism, to New York, as a representative of his country. There, Melaku Beyan established an organization, the Ethiopian World Federation, and a newspaper, *The Voice of Ethiopia*. While Melaku and his African American wife, Dorothy H. Beyan, served as First Vice-President and Executive Secretary of the organization respectively, prominent African Americans such as Dr. Lorenzo H. King and Warren E. Harrigan worked as President and second Vice-President in that order. The organization had an advisory board that also served as chapters in parts of the U.S. Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Members of the advisory board were *Lij Worku Gobena* (Aden), *Lij Andarege Messay* (Djibouti), Mr. Michael Dei-Anang (Ghana), *Ato Lorenzo Tazaze* (England), Hugh G. Bell (New York), *Ato Akililu Habteworld* (Paris), Mr. Richard Rathebe (S. Africa), Prince Nayabongo and Dr. Ernest Calibala (Uganda), and Prof. Leo Hansberry, Dr. W. H. Jemagin, and Mrs. Mary C. Terrell (Washington).

As it could be witnessed from the above, Melaku's attempt in rallying Americans on Ethiopia's side was more successful among African Americans; and this was not an accident.

Ethiopian Crisis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 23; William R. Scott, The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 39-40.

²⁸ For a comprehensive understanding of Ethiopia's place among blacks, both in the U.S. and the Caribbean, see Fikru N. Gebrekidan, "Bond Without Blood: A Study of Ethiopian-Caribbean Ties, 1935-1991" Vol. I and II, PH.D Dissertation, Michigan State University, 2001, especially chapters One and Two; also William N. Huggins and John G. Jackson, An Introduction to African Civilizations: With Main Currents In Ethiopian History (New York: Avon House Publishers, 1937); William R. Scott, The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); William R. Scott, "A Study of Afro-American and Ethiopian Relations: 1896-1941," PH.D Dissertation, Princeton University, 1971; Negussay Ayele, Ethiopia and the United States, Volume I: The Season of Courtship (NP: Ocopy.com, 2003).

Melaku's racial solidarity with African Americans dates back to his student years in America. He even reputed to have convinced Haile Sellassie to employ African Americans than white Americans. As one of the U.S. Legation's confidential report noted:

The Emperor has been also encouraged . . . by certain Ethiopian students returned from the United States who have seen the racial problem there in some of its more acute angles and who have apparently found many American Negroes quite competent to serve in this country as advisors and teachers. Several American Negroes have recently come to Ethiopia as a result of the encouragement of these Ethiopian students, of whom one of the most influential in the movement appears to be the Malaku who is known to the Department as a student in medicine at Howard University . . . Because of . . . [his western education] Malaku has been able to have some of his opinions brought to the notice or attention of the Emperor . . . The Emperor has, therefore, been humored to let Malaku know through appropriate channels leading down from the royal court that he is inclined to receive and perhaps accept recommendations for the coming here of Americans Negroes qualified to advise or teach.²⁹

So much was Melaku's sympathy for African Americans, it also alarmed the U.S Legation in Addis Ababa. In 1931, the then Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Heruy Walda-Sellassie, expressed his desire to visit the U.S. While the Legation assented to his request, it advised the State Department that Melaku somehow be prevented from contacting the Ethiopian delegation to the US. The Legation believed that Melaku's active engagement with the delegation would negatively affect the latter's attitude towards the United States. The Legation also forewarned Washington that the head of the delegation, Heruy's, skin complexion was darker than most Ethiopians and hence would probably be more susceptible to Melaku's view of America. What is more, though difficult, something also has to be done against Harlem so that the latter would not turn the delegation's tour of the U.S "a gala occasion." As noted in the Legations "confidential" memos:

Because of Malaku Bayan's close affiliation with the American Negro at Howard University and elsewhere the Legation hopes that arrangements can be made to keep him from assuming a leading activity in the reception and guidance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the United States . . . The Legation respectfully suggests that control of the visitor's movements, entertainment, etc., etc., be placed in the hands of a white American who will have the tact and skill to avoid embarrassing situation . . . this Ethiopian official is unfortunately darker than most Ethiopians and looks like a Negro. He is not a Negro, or at least he would indignantly resent being so classified.³⁰

²⁹ "Confidential," from Addison E. Southard, the Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to the Honorable, the Secretary of State, Washington, Dispatch No. 492, July 30, 1930.

³⁰ "Confidential," from Addison E. Southard, the Legation of the United States of America, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to the Honorable, the Secretary of State, Washington, Dispatch No. 706, April 30, 1931.

Although Melaku was able to galvanize African American support and although there were African Americans who were even willing to fight on behalf of Ethiopia, their effort was thwarted by America's neutrality policy which forbid all Americans from engaging in an international war. Despite this, African Americans continued to find ways in the 1930s to help Ethiopia: their assistance ranged from condemning Italy's aggression of Ethiopia, to offering material donations and volunteering to fight in the war. Some even managed to go all the way to Europe to consult with the exiled emperor.³¹

Chapter I. 2. Ethiopian and American Relations between 1940s and 1970s: The Coming of Ethiopians to America

The warm attitude of African Americans towards Ethiopia created one foundation for strong Ethiopian and American diplomatic ties in the post-war period. The positive regard of the American government towards Ethiopia also helped Emperor Haile Sellassie break British control of Ethiopia during the interwar period, 1941-1945. The British, who assisted Ethiopia in defeating fascist Italy, viewed Ethiopia not as a free and independent country but as an occupied enemy territory (OET) whose fate was to be decided after the war. It denied Haile Sellassie the right to appoint his advisors without the prior knowledge and consent of the British. The emperor could not declare war or a state of emergency. The British also controlled the country's finances. In the latter instance, they introduced their colonial currency, the East African Shilling, into Ethiopia. In addition, they also controlled the police force and the army. They even monitored the emperor's communications. It was in this environment that the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of January 1942 signed. Although this

³¹ Their newspapers and pamphlets such as the Pittsburgh Courier, the Amsterdam News, the Chicago Defender, the NAACP's Crisis had expressed their protest and indignation against Italy; and America's indifference towards this injustice. See Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race*, 105-20; Harris, *African American Reactions to War in Ethiopia*, see chapters 3, 4, and 6; Negussay, *Ethiopia*, 141-151.

agreement acknowledged Ethiopia as a free and independent state, it also confirmed the power of the British over all others, and left a huge chunk of Ethiopia's territory under British control.³²

To offset the British hold on Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie turned to the Americans. In 1943, he sent Yilma Derssa, the then Vice-Minister of Finance, to the U.S. under the pretext of attending the UN Conference on Food and Agriculture so as not to alarm and antagonize the British. But the real intent was to negotiate lend-lease agreement with the U.S. While conveying the Emperor's request, Yilma also informed the State Department of his intention to hire African American teachers and technicians. After getting the green light from the State Department, Yilma began recruiting African Americans from his dormitory at Howard University.^{33*}

Haile Sellassie's decision to enlist African Americans in his government partly emanated from a "conviction that his administration would benefit from the immigration of educated blacks, whose careers in Ethiopia would not be warped by 'that superior feeling of arrogance ill concealed by white men or women.'"³⁴ African Americans, on their part, had always viewed Ethiopia as the bastion of freedom and thus a source of pride and hope. As expressed in the words of Margery

³² Department of State: Map Intelligence Division, Office of the Intelligence Collection and Dissemination, OIR Report No. 4493, October 13, 1947 (secret). See also Haile Sellassie I King of Kings of Ethiopia, My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, Vol. II, Edited and annotated by Harold G. Marcus, et al., (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 171-176; Bahru, A History, 179-184; Anthony Mockler, Haile Sellassie's War (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2003), 372-374; Negussay, Ethiopia, 164-166. For a detailed account of the Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement of 1942 and 1944, and the Agreement itself see Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 153-159; 464-478.

³³ Harris, African American Reaction, 142-143; Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay, 105-106. For the total number of technicians, medical professionals, engineers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, masons . . . etc that Yilma asked the U.S. was 286. See Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 19-20; Negussay, Ethiopia, 171-172.

* Because of racial segregation in the U.S., the Ethiopian delegation could not have a decent lodging in town. Thus, Yilma Deressa has to be contented with the only decent place for a black man in Craver Hall, at Howard University. In those days, racial discrimination against Ethiopian officials was not uncommon: The first Ethiopian delegation to the U.S., too, had been refused service in one of New York's restaurants. Such incidents must have alerted Ethiopians about the conditions of African Americans while strengthening the racial solidarity and commitment across the continents. See Harris, African American Reaction, pp. 143, 154.

³⁴ Harold G. Marcus, Haile Sellassie I: The Formative Years, 1892-1936 (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press Inc, 1998), 138.

It was not the first time that Haile Sellassie sought the support of skilled African Americans in modernizing his country. Almost all successive delegates that he sent to the U.S. such as *Hakim Warqineh*, *Ras Desta*, and *Kentiba Gabru* had discussed with leaders of the African American community the possibility of African American immigration to Ethiopia. See Huggins & Jackson, An Introduction, 88-89; Bahru, Pioneers, 40, 91.

Perham, " . . . The country [Ethiopia] has in the world of ideas an importance beyond that of her physical position. To the subject peoples of the world . . . this independent African kingdom has long been a focus of interest and of transferred hopes . . . This interest is felt strongly ... amongst the more politically conscious Africans [and] it reaches a strength and significance akin to that of Zionism."³⁵

Some African Americans were not only eager to help Ethiopia they were also willing to immigrate permanently. Accordingly, Joseph Harris noted, " . . . the period from 1930 to 1944 saw the emigration of several African Americans . . . to Ethiopia as permanent settlers and the sojourn of several advisors and technicians."³⁶ African Americans not only became the first American immigrants to settle in Ethiopia, but also were precursors for American sojourners in the years to come.

The U.S. State Department saw an advantage in helping Ethiopia. In the American domestic scheme of politics, the department believed, helping Ethiopia "would indicate in a concrete way the interests of the United States in the stake which Negroes have in the war."³⁷ . . . [It would demonstrate] to African Americans that the government was fighting their war, too." Internationally, as Harold Marcus observed, " . . . Washington could proudly broadcast its commitment to self-determination, stress its traditional anticolonialism, . . . and reveal to the world that White House was as much concerned with the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Axis-occupied countries as with winning the war."³⁸ Second, America also considered that Ethiopia, given the necessary expertise, could supply needed food for the Allies. Third, it could also be one of the landing sites for the growing American aviation industry. Fourth, and above all, the future of

³⁵ Perham, The Government, 396; Bahru, A History, 81-82.

³⁶ Harris, African American Reaction, 153.

³⁷ Quoted in Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 14; Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay, 104; Negussay, Ethiopia, 168.

³⁸ Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 2; see also Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay, 103-104; Negussay, Ethiopia, 168.

the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, hitherto dominated by England, seemed uncertain for the latter's energy had already been sapped by the war, and could not withstand opposition to its dominance in the region. As result, America was ready to supplant England, and thus, Ethiopia's potential strategic significance in the emerging Cold War era seemed invaluable.³⁹

Consequently, in December 1943 a dozen African Americans arrived in Addis Ababa. Most of them were teachers appointed as instructors and headmasters in the various schools in Addis Ababa and Harar; and in one case as editor of the only English language daily, the *Ethiopian Herald*. Following their footsteps, another group of African Americans, this time pilots and technicians, came to Ethiopia. These were men who trained the first Ethiopian pilots and who opened pilot training schools at Orma Garage, located in front of the present day Sheraton Hotel, which became Police Garage during the post-independence period. The training school was later on moved to Old Airport, adjacent to the locality that is commonly referred as Tor Hayloch and situated on Jimma Road.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the State Department also extended America's lend-lease agreement and sent a delegation, the Fellows Mission, named after its leader, Perry Fellows, in 1943. This mission, while laying the groundwork for the expansion of post-1945 Ethio-American relations, also recommended the need for infrastructural development, education, public health, locust control . . . etc. These recommendations were finally concretized as part of President

³⁹ Marcus, *The Politics of Empire*, 3, 5, 21, 29; Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, 103; Bahru, *A History*, 184-185.

⁴⁰ Marcus, *The Politics of Empire*, 27-28. For a detailed account of African Americans such as their names, skills, and appointments they had in Ethiopia, see Harris, *African-American Reaction*, 144-150.

Nevertheless, African American interest on Ethiopia which reached its peak between 1890s and early 1940s, had markedly declined since the post-war period. This was so because of Ethiopia's defeat in Italian hands in 1935 that ended Ethiopia's role as bastion of independence source of hope for freedom. Besides, the decolonization process presented African Americans with a wider option than Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the Civil Rights Movement and the progress made thereof convinced African Americans to look inward than across the continent. And finally, the 1974 Socialist Revolution and subsequent developments such as famine, war and the very migration of Ethiopians to the U.S., either as political asylees or refugees, seemed to have obliterated the positive image that African Americans, for that matter anyone in the world, had for Ethiopia. See Fikru N. Gebrekidan, "Bond Without Blood," 83.

* It is worth noting that unlike other African countries Ethiopia had its own western educated intellectuals prior to Italian occupation. However, the Italians regarded these independent intellectuals as a threat to their colonial domination; and thus totally wiped them out. Hence, modern education has to literally be reorganized from scratch in the post-war period; and the role of Americans in this regard was tremendous.

Truman's Point Four Agreement that was signed between the Imperial Government of Ethiopia and the United States, on May 15, 1952.⁴¹

New developments in the Middle East such as the radicalization of Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser and the subsequent Egyptian demand in the early 1950s that the British evacuate the Suez Canal alarmed the USA. The U.S. had intended to curb the encroachment of Soviet Russia in the Middle East with the cooperation of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan from the East; and a coalition of Arab states, primarily centered in Egypt, to form a secondary line of defense to look after the Canal and the Straits of Bab el Mandeb (Red Sea). But, since Egypt was reneging, Washington "began to fall back upon Ethiopia as its turnkey in the Red Sea."⁴² The result was a military pact, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA), between Ethiopia and the U.S. signed on May 22, 1953.

The May 1953 agreement, guaranteed the U.S. the Qagaw Station Military Base to use until 1978. This base was named after the Ethiopian battalion that fought in Korea beside U.S. troops. The agreement also stipulated that America would train and equip three Ethiopian divisions, as well as promising a steady supply of American weapons, fighter planes, and frigates to Ethiopia. To oversee this, the U.S. sent the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Ethiopia.

America's willingness to help Ethiopia seemed to have other purposes, too. According to Robert Wood, a former U.S. army general, the U.S. military assistance program "funds purchases

⁴¹ Foreign Service Dispatch, No. 287: From Joseph Simons, American Embassy, Addis Ababa to The Dept. of State, Washington DC., April 20 1955; see also Bahru, A History, 181.

⁴² From James S. Lay, Executive Secretary, Executive Office of the President, Washington to the National Security Council (NSC) Planning Board, September 26, 1956. See also Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 87-89; Baffour Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia: Military Assistance and the Quest for Security, 1953-1993 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 117-18; Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953-1991 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 13-22; Peter Schwab, Haile Sellassie I: Ethiopia's Lion of Judah (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 92-94. Israel's survival strategy as a state somehow converged with U.S.'s global concerns in the Middle East. The former had formed what it called the "periphery triangle" against threats from Arabs especially Egypt, Syria and Iraq. While Iran and Turkey constituted the two nodes of the triangle, Ethiopia became the third. As a result, Israel's involvement in the Ethiopian armed forces was also tremendous. See Ian Blank & Benny Morris, Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 185-187, 427.

from American industry for shipment overseas. . . [and] brings to our country some 10 to 15,000 foreign military students annually exposing them not only to American military knowledge but also to the American way of life [emphasis added]."⁴³ In addition, Americans also believed that those who were educated in America were "destined to play a major role in charting Ethiopia's future course."

Hence, the aforementioned agreements seemed to have defined the growing relationship between the two countries for the coming decades. As Bahru summed it up ". . . the 1950s and 1960s might therefore justifiably be described as the American era [in Ethiopia] . . . The American impact was felt in many facets of Ethiopian life, but perhaps most conspicuously in the spheres of military organization, communication and education."⁴⁴

Chapter I. 3. American Education and the Ethiopian Armed Forces, 1950s-1970s

The external connections of the Ethiopian armed forces remained very diverse until the 1950s: Belgians and Swedes trained the Imperial Bodyguard. Many officers were also sent for training to St. Cyr and Sandhurst military academies in France and England respectively. Since the aftermath of independence and until the 1953 defense agreement between the United States and Ethiopia, the British served as advisers while actual training and operating of the different branches of the armed forces was entrusted to various governments: the Swedes ran the air force and the Holatta Military School; the Norwegians dealt with the navy while Indians taught at the Harar Military Academy.⁴⁵ However, by 1950s such diversity gave way to U.S. predominance in Ethiopia. In 1953, the British Military Mission to Ethiopia (BMME) withdrew from the country, which paved the way for Ethiopia to ask military assistance from the USA.⁴⁶ The Egyptian revolution and the

⁴³ Quoted in Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia, 23, 27.

⁴⁴ Bahru, A History, 185.

⁴⁵ Markakis, Ethiopia, 253-256.

⁴⁶ Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 77-78.

coming to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt convinced the U.S., which felt its position in the Middle East threatened, to entertain Ethiopia's request. The latter, in the mean time, had acquired the strategically important Red Sea province of Eritrea, which further enticed the U.S. to sign a military pact with Ethiopia in 1953. As the memorandum of the U.S. Executive Secretary indicates, Ethiopia was considered important because, "the willingness of Egypt to do business with Soviet bloc countries intensifies the Egyptian capacity for disruptive activities in Northeast Africa. The uncertain attitude of the Saudi Arabian Government with respect to the airbase at Dhahran and the problem of the Trucial states in the Arabian Peninsula raises the desirability of considering Ethiopia as an alternative site for American installations."⁴⁷ Thus, the Ethiopian-American treaty was signed in 1953. As a result, Ethiopia granted U.S. rights to continue using the Qagnaw Station, a former Italian radio communication center, in Asmara, while America, in turn, agreed to train and equip the Ethiopian armed forces.⁴⁸

Though the American influence was concentrated from the outset on the ground forces, the navy and the air force, too, finally came under the U.S. umbrella. The air force, specially, was a showpiece of the American military presence in Ethiopia: Ethiopia was the earliest country to have a supersonic jet fighter in sub-Saharan Africa. The exception among the armed forces was the Imperial Bodyguard which the Swedes continued to train while the police force was instructed and equipped by the West Germans and Israelis. The latter also provided anti-insurgency training in the 1960s.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ From James S. Lay, Executive Secretary, Executive Office of the President, Washington to the National Security Council (NSC) Planning Board, September 26, 1956.

⁴⁸ Foreign Service Dispatch (Secret) No. 176: From Joseph Simons, American Embassy, Addis Ababa to Dept of State, Washington DC., January 16, 1956. See also Bahiru, A History, 185-186; Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia, 55-58; Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953-1991 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 13-22.

⁴⁹ For Israel's assistance, both in the military and civilian sector, see Ariel Sharon with David Chanoff, Warrior: The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 172-174, 419-420.

Despite this, America remained the main supplier of almost all weapon systems, organization, education and communication equipment to the Ethiopian military. For instance, financially the Ethiopian armed forces remained the major recipients of U.S. aid. Between 1946 and 1972, U.S. military aid amounted to over \$180 million—a military assistance that made Ethiopia the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in Africa south of the Sahara. This aid accounted for 60 per cent of the total U.S. military assistance for sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁰ By way of military personnel training, too, America remained dominant. Between 1950 and 1968, out of the 3,753 Africans trained under the International Military Education Training (IMET) program in the U.S., 2,646 were Ethiopians. Of the 1,670 African military trainees who attended school in the U.S. between 1972 and 1976, more than half of them were Ethiopian officers. So much so, even today no sub-Saharan African country has equaled the number of Ethiopian military officers trained in the U.S. between 1950 and 1978, which was almost 4,000. This figure remains the single largest number for U.S. trained military personnel in sub-Saharan Africa even today.

⁵⁰ Bahiru, A History, 186; Markakis, Ethiopia, 257-258; Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 89-95; Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia, 73-74. See also for detailed account of U.S. military assistance: Type of weapons and manpower training. Department of Defense Security Assistance Agency: Military Assistance and Foreign Military Sales. May 1973, Foreign Military Assistance Facts, November, 1975; December, 1976, December, 1977, and December, 1978; and Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Construction sales and Military Assistance Facts, September 30, 1992.

Table 1: Ethiopian Military Personnel Trained in U.S., 1950-1970s ⁵¹

Year	No. of Ethiopian Trainees in the U.S.	Total
1950-66	2267	2267
1967	181	
1968	198	
1969	147	
1970	154	
1971	140	
1972	160	3115 (124 were from other countries)
1973	158	
1974	148	
1975	129	
1976	138	3874
1977	54	3928
1978	0	3928

While Table 2 displays the number of Ethiopian military officers trained at facilities in the United States, one of them was Mengistu Haile Mariam, there were also some 23,000 Ethiopian service personnel (the total number of the Ethiopian army was 40,000), including at least twenty who subsequently became members of the *Derg*, were given advanced training directly from United States personnel stationed in Ethiopia. By the time of the 1974 revolution, Ethiopia's armed forces were almost totally dependent on the United States for training, hardware and spare parts.⁵²

As Haile Sellassie's quest for more weapons and trained manpower continued in the 1960s and 1970s, the number of Americans sojourning in Ethiopia also increased: by 1970, there were about 170 members of MAAG while the number of the U.S. military personnel at Qagnaw Station increased from 1,300 in 1964 to 3,300. In addition to MAAG and Qagnaw, there were 87 naval personnel working with the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit in Ethiopia. There were also

⁵¹ Compiled from Department of Defense Security Assistance Agency: Military Assistance and Foreign Military Sales, May 1973, Foreign Military Assistance Facts, November 1975; December 1976, December 1977, and December 1978.

⁵² Thomas P. Ofcansky and LaVerle Berry, ed., Ethiopia: A Country Study, 4th edition (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993), p. 292.

2,800 Americans attached to the Agency for International Development, as business people and educators. Furthermore, in the same year about 1,500 non-official Americans resided in Ethiopia.⁵³

In addition to providing training to the military, America was also actively involved in the development of Ethiopians' infrastructure. The U.S. was instrumental in establishing and strengthening the Ethiopian Civil Aviation. As the result of an agreement concluded between the American Trans-World Airlines (TWA) and Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) was setup in 1945. Since then and till 1971, TWA provided managerial and supervisory service to EAL.

The U.S. was also engaged in maintaining Ethiopia's road network, which had been laid by the Italians. This was done with the establishment of the Imperial Highway Authority (IHA) in 1951. The Highway Authority was modeled after the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), which was also American dominated, financed the construction and maintenance of roads in Ethiopia. Until 1962, when the Ethiopians took over the administration, managerial personnel for IHA had to get an American approval. The American multinational company, International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), besides repairing destroyed telephone lines, was a vehicle for the establishment of the Imperial Board of Telecommunications in 1952.⁵⁴ In addition to its involvement in the military and Ethiopia's infrastructural development, America was actively engaged in teaching and providing scholarship to Ethiopian students from the civilian sector.

⁵³ Baffour Agyeman-Duah, The United States and Ethiopia: Military assistance and The Quest for Security, 1953-1993 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 44; Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 89; Markakis, Ethiopia, 257.

⁵⁴ Foreign Service Dispatch, No. 287: From Joseph Simons, American Embassy, Addis Ababa to The Dept. of State, Washington DC., April 20 1955; see also Marcus, The Politics of Empire, 96; Bahiru, A History, 186-188.

Chapter I. 3. 1. American Educational Assistance to Ethiopia and the Migration of Ethiopians to America, 1950s-1970s.

Although it was during the reign of Menelik II (r. 1889-1913) that Western education was first introduced into Ethiopia,⁵⁵ it was Emperor Haile Sellassie who succeeded in furthering modern education in the country. He and his wife opened schools in Addis Ababa and encouraged other notables to do the same. The Emperor paid the cost of education in the schools. Besides, he also accelerated the sending of Ethiopian to foreign lands. Not only that, unlike earlier times, the United States became a major place where Ethiopians were sent for higher education.⁵⁶

Aside from reasons mentioned in the previous section for sending Ethiopian students to the U.S. before the Second World War, Haile Sellassie's preference to send more Ethiopians to the U.S. in the post war period might have been for the following. One, on the immediate aftermath of the war, many European powers were weakened to provide assistance to countries like Ethiopia. Even if they were not, there was little or nothing that obliges them with Ethiopia. Unlike their former African colonial territories, there was little or no bond (economic, cultural, political or moral) between Ethiopia and countries like England and France. Two, it might simply have been the consequence of an increased diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and the U.S. Three, as the number of American educated Ethiopians who were working in the various branches of the imperial government increased, their influence might have also increased to affect decisions concerning education and related matters. Four, the American educated Ethiopians might have exhibited a favorable image of America upon the public and the Ethiopian authorities which in turn might have resulted in sending more Ethiopians to the U.S.

America's preeminence as the main destination of Ethiopian students was guaranteed when Ethiopia changed its language policy. Since the introduction of modern education in the early

⁵⁵ Gebre-Igziabihier, *Prowess, Piety and Politics*, 13-14.

⁵⁶ John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy and a Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 145-146.

20th century Ethiopia, French served as the primary medium of instruction besides other languages.⁵⁷ Thus, when Haile Sellassie tried to reestablish modern education on the aftermath of the Italian occupation after 1941, the choice of instructional language was a problem. French, English and Amharic were interchangeably used as mediums of instruction, often, depending upon the instructor's country of origin, and of these languages French was dominant. However, after 1950 the then Ministry of Education & Fine Arts, with the blessing of the Emperor who himself was a fluent French speaker, decided to use English as the medium of instruction and as a subject in Ethiopian schools. This paved the way for the employment of Anglophone expatriates for teaching. By 1968, Anglophone expatriates comprised 47.7 per cent of the teaching staffs in Ethiopia. Most of them were used in high schools. The largest groups of the expatriates were Indians. Soon, however, the American Peace Corps Volunteers began challenging the hitherto Indian-dominated field. In 1962, the Peace Corps Volunteers numbered around 566, which was the highest in Africa.⁵⁸ Ethiopians, including university students who were required to give one-year teaching service before graduation, filled the remaining positions in the high schools.⁵⁹

The American Peace Corps Volunteers, though they could be inexperienced and unfamiliar with Ethiopian culture and tradition, influenced the young generation of Ethiopians in many other ways. They were "idealistic and willing to work harder than their regular Indian or

⁵⁷ Richard Pankhurst, Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935 (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), 682.

⁵⁸ Bahru, A History, 189; Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 36; for a first hand experience of Peace Corps' life in Ethiopia in early 1970s, see James W. Skelton, Jr., Volunteering in Ethiopia: A Peace Corps Odyssey (Denver: Beaumont Books Inc, 1991).

⁵⁹ Markakis, Ethiopia, 151; Teshome G Wagaw, The Development of Higher Education and Social Change: An Ethiopian Experience (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990), 187-223; see also Andrew and Diana Quarmby, The Ethiopian University Service Report No. 7E (Geneva: The International Service for Volunteer Service, 1969). The report talks about the origin and development of the university service, the attitude of Ethiopian students towards the Service, the salary and number of participants in the Service between 1964 and 1969; and it projects to 1970.

Ethiopian professional colleagues."⁶⁰ Moreover, they also imbued the "secondary school youth with ideas of freedom of thought, and expression and the need for a representative government."⁶¹

Americans also began dominating Ethiopia's higher education institutions. In 1950, the University College of Addis Ababa was established. Initially, the Canadian Jesuits, who were administrating the Tafari Makonnen School, were employed to run the college. But as time went on, the Americans, not only pushed the Missionaries out of the administration, but also dominated the teaching staff. The establishment of similar institutions such as the College of Agriculture in Harar and the Public Health College in Gondar, both under the sponsorship of the American Government, further enhanced America's grip on the educational establishment of the country. For instance, in 1969 there were 452 HSIU staff of which Ethiopians comprised a little more than a third while 60 per cent were foreigners. Whereas these were drawn from 13 countries, 83 of the total were Americans. Not only that, among Ethiopian university instructors, most were American-educated. Moreover, American institutions such as the U.S.A.I.D and the Ford Foundation covered expenses of the university that ranged from financing the construction of university buildings, purchase of books and payment of the salaries of the American instructors. So much was America's interest and involvement in Ethiopia's higher education institutions, Vice President Nixon visited HSIU in 1957 while the then American Ambassador to Ethiopia, Edward Corry, met HSIU students on many occasions. The last American official to visit HSIU was the U.S. Undersecretary of State, Nicholas Katzenbach.⁶²

The administrative structure of Haile Sellassie I University and its manner of enrollment and evaluation "was indistinguishable – and still is, for that matter- from that of a standard

⁶⁰ Teshome, The Development, 206.

⁶¹ Teshome, The Development, 207, 209-210. For opposing view on the American input on democratizing Ethiopia, see Addis Hiwet, "A Creation Political Vocation: Reflections on the Ethiopian Intelligentsia," A paper prepared for the conference on: The Ethiopian Left and the Revolution, New York, May 29-30, 1987. No page numbers.

⁶² Balsvik, Haile Sellassie's Students, 199; Markakis, Ethiopia, 152.

American college.⁶³ What is more, until 1974, the vice-presidential position was, it appeared, a post reserved for an American.

By 1973, there were about 10,000 students in the various colleges. Yet, despite the establishment of higher education institutes in the country and the increasing number of students attending these institutions, Haile Sellassie kept on sending many students to foreign countries. Though they were sent to different countries, by 1960s the number of students sent to the U.S. began to surpass those sent to other countries. For instance, in 1948 there were a total of 158 Ethiopian students abroad. Of these, 49 students were in England, 21 in the Egypt, 20 in the U.S, 19 in Canada, 17 in Switzerland, 16 at Beirut, 4 in Greece, 4 in Sudan, 3 in Palestine, 2 in France, 2 in India and 1 in Belgium.⁶⁴ By 1968-9, however, America accommodated 523 students while France took 193, U.S.S.R. 131, United Kingdom 119, Germany 118, Italy 114, and the United Arab Republic 108.⁶⁵ By 1973, on the eve of the fateful revolution, America accommodated more than 1,000 Ethiopian students.

Although the Ethiopian government provided financial support to some students, and although a few managed to pay their own tuition, American agencies such as Point Four, the African-American Institute (AAI), the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD), Fulbright and USAID were major sources of scholarships.⁶⁶ Consequently, the training of Ethiopians in America which started with three students in the 1920s,⁶⁷ surpassed the thousand mark by the early 1970s, which made Ethiopia the third country, behind Nigeria and Egypt, with the largest number of African students in the U.S. In this same period, the number of Ethiopian in the U.S. surpassed that of Kenya for the first time. By 1973, Nigeria had 4092; Egypt, 1148; and Ethiopia,

⁶³ Bahru, A History, 189.

⁶⁴ From George R. Merrell, the Foreign Service of the United States, American Legation, Addis Ababa, to the Honorable Secretary of State, Washington, Dispatch No. 49, July 1, 1948.

⁶⁵ Markakis, Ethiopia, 155.

⁶⁶ Bahru, A History, 188.

⁶⁷ Gebre-Igziabihier, Prowess, Piety and Politics, 13-14; Bahru, Pioneers, 89-95.

1046 students in the U.S. The other trend in 1973 was that the number of self-supporting Ethiopian students had increased from a zero to 104 in the same year, which might indicate a positive economic development at home and the individual Ethiopians ability to finance their children's education abroad. Yet, one has to also be cautious: Some of the self-supporting students might be working in the U.S. and supporting themselves rather than being supported by their parents.

Table 2: Ethiopians Educated in the U.S., 1950s-1970s⁶⁸

Year	Total	Male	Female	Graduate	U. Graduate
Before 1951	20	—	—	—	—
1952	5	—	—	—	—
1953	13	—	—	—	—
1954	28	—	—	—	—
1955	62	57	5	20	23
1956	110	103	7	34	73
1957	151	144	7	42	92
1958	151	141	10	46	63
1959	145	135	10	46	74
1960	170	155	15	66	74
1961	171	149	22	76	65
1962	176	158	18	84	71
1963	171	150	21	85	80
1964	220	193	27	24	100
1965					
1966	294	254	40	126	137
1967	323	281	142	148	154
1968	361	289	72	160	169
1969	422	358	64	198	204
1970	540	431	88	199	274
1971	759	589	146	269	464
1972	883	655	174	262	544
1973	1046	729	204	305	707
1974	1289	930	247	350	887
1975	323	281	42	148	154

Table 1 indicates that between 1950 and 1975, around 8,000 civilian students had been sent to America. Of these students, 79 per cent (6,182) were male while female students

⁶⁸ The data is compiled from International Education, Open Doors 1954/55 up to 1975.

See also Institute of International Education, Open Doors, 1973 (New York: Institute of International Education, 1973), 14-15.

accounted for 20.98 per cent (1,642) that mirrored the gender gap in educational attainment between male and female students in Ethiopia.

Table 1 also shows the disparity between undergraduate and graduate students. While undergraduate students accounted for 65.64 per cent (5,136) of the total Ethiopian students sent to the U.S., graduate students comprised 34.35 per cent (2,688). The larger number of undergraduate students might indicate the incompatibility between the number of high school complete students and the number of colleges that could accommodate them in Ethiopia.

However, the source data, *Open Doors*, did not provide figures for the male/female ratio on both graduate and undergraduate Ethiopian students in America. Yet, given the very broad gender disparity among Ethiopian students in America, one can safely surmise that male students must have dominated both the graduate and undergraduate programs in America.

By late 1970s, Ethiopians who were attending school and others who had found their way to the U.S. as tourists or government functionaries numbered, according to Akalou Woldemicael, about 5,000.⁶⁹ Judith Bentley, who studied refugees, and the Ethiopian Community Development Council that coordinates Ethiopian community associations' activities and oversees refugee resettlement in the U.S., estimate that between 15,000 and 25,000 Ethiopians resided in the U.S. respectively.⁷⁰ Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, who studied the educated Ethiopians in the U.S. believed that there were some 30,000 Ethiopians in America prior to the 1974 Revolution.⁷¹ Almost all were longing to go home but they were alarmed by the brutal measures of the military junta, otherwise known as the *Darg*, which overthrew Haile Sellassie's regime in 1974.

⁶⁹ Akalou Wolde Micael, "Ethiopians and Afghans in the United States: A Comparative Perspective," Journal of Northeast African Studies. Vol. II, No. 1, (1989), 55-74.

⁷⁰ Judith Bentley, Refugees Search for a Heaven (New York: Julian Messner, 1986), 116-117; vii; Joachim Henkel, "The Ethiopian Refugee Situation: An Overview of the Ethiopian Refugee Situation," Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, Proceedings of the Ethiopian Community Development Council (September 15-16, 1983, Washington, D.C.), 21.

⁷¹ Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 63.

During the first four years of the revolution, the junta executed more than 30,000 people. As a consequence, by the early 1980s “roughly 80 per cent of the students, 60 per cent of the businesspersons, and 20 per cent of the tourists from Ethiopia who entered the United States [prior to the revolution] did not exit upon the expiration of their temporary non-immigrant visa.”⁷² The defection of the Western educated Ethiopians had commenced. By 1986, an estimated 22 ambassadors, 40 senior diplomats and 14 cabinet ministers had defected to the west, mainly to the United States. These were the first Ethiopian-Americans, those who had come as students reflecting the enlarged Ethiopian-American relationships in the 1950s and 1970s.

1.3.2: Some Aspects of Ethiopian Asylees/Immigrants in America, 1950s-1970s.

As could be concluded from the above, Ethiopians of the pre-1980's America (who are also interchangeably referred as asylees or immigrants) were, most often, the sons and relations of the ruling class. In fact, the history of migration informs us, it is usually a more affluent class that first migrates to foreign lands.⁷³ These, Ethiopians were sent to America for education either by the Imperial Ethiopian Government or by their families. A few Ethiopians who had distinguished themselves in academia were also given this opportunity.⁷⁴

Because of their upper class origin and levels of education, the pre-1980s Ethiopians in America projected an image that portrayed Ethiopians as one of the most highly educated African immigrants in the U.S.⁷⁵ Ethiopia's positive image, exemplified most importantly by Emperor Haile Sellassie's, further strengthened this image.

⁷² Peter. H. Koehn, Refugees From Revolution: U.S. Policy and Third-World Migration (Boulder, Westview Press, 1991), 273; see also page 297 footnote.

⁷³ Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, II .Ed (New York, The Guilford Press, 1993), 21.

⁷⁴ John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy and a Traditional Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 155; Bahru Zewde, A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974 (Addis Ababa: AA University Press, 1991), 188.

⁷⁵ Kofi K. Apraku, African Émigrés in The United States: A Missing Link in Africa's Social and Economic Development (New York, Praeger, 1991), xxi, 1-9; Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferraw, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 6, 8.

In the same period, there were also others who came to the U.S. as tourists or government functionaries. This, coupled with the defection to America of most of the Western educated Ethiopians such as ambassadors, senior diplomat and cabinet ministers on the immediate aftermath of the 1974 Socialist Revolution further strengthened the upper class profile of Ethiopians in America.⁷⁶

The pre-1980s Ethiopians in America represent the largest number of Ethiopians educated abroad. These students, however, were not homogeneous. Those who came between 1950s and 1960s were older and most of them graduate students. They were also, by and large, scholarship recipients. On the other hand, students of the latter years, 1960 to 1970s, were younger, undergraduate students and mostly privately funded.⁷⁷

The provincial origin of the pre-1980s Ethiopians in America also indicates an overrepresentation of people from Shoa and to a lesser degree from Eritrea and Wallega provinces. This was so because of the availability and easy access to modern education in these provinces, especially in Shoa. Kinship ties which by and large determined recruitment and promotion in government offices, awarding of and scholarships also favored people from Shoa.⁷⁸ Consequently, throughout Emperor Haile Sellassie's rule, Shoa had the largest concentration of schools and universities and constituted more than two-thirds of Ethiopian officials, both noble and educated. The remaining officials were primarily from Eritrea and Wallega.⁷⁹ A scenario that also reflected in Ethiopia's diplomatic core, most of whom became exiles with the onset of the

⁷⁶ Peter H. Koehn, Refugees from Revolution: U.S. Policy and Third World Migration (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 297; Akalou, 55-74.

⁷⁷ Getachew and Maigenet, The Ethiopian Revolution, 62.

⁷⁸ Markakis, Ethiopia, 232, 247; See also Teshome, The Development, 106.

⁷⁹ Teshome, The Development, 106.

Revolution.⁸⁰ Clearly, the pre-revolution Ethiopians in America were distinct from the refugees of the 1980s in terms of regional origin, ethnicity and class background. Most of them were from Shoa; and the sons and daughters of the well-to-do Ethiopians, hence, they were members of the upper class.

The pre-1980s, Ethiopians in America were also politically active. This was so especially after the attempted military coup d'état of Mengistu Neway in 1960. They established a student union, Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA). It was an organization which strongly opposed Haile Sellassie's government. It had different chapters throughout the U.S. that served as a political platform to critic the imperial rule. After 1971, however, ESUNA was divided on ideologies which it pursued to overthrow the monarchical rule, on the country's many ethnic groups and nationalities, and related issues. With the onset of the 1974 Socialist Revolution, the student organization totally disintegrated. Many of its members were divided between supports and opponents of the *Derg* while some sided with the various secessionist movements such as ELF, EPLF and TPLF; and others choose to engage in organizations that support refugees and some entirely left the political realm. "Since there is no strong community-based organization that unites all Ethiopian nationalities," said Getachew and Maigenet, "there is no platform for discussion and dialogue among Ethiopians. Thus, Ethiopians are left in disarray except for the nationality based organizations or political resistance groups."⁸¹

The sojourner mentality among the pre-1980s Ethiopians in America also inhibited the establishment of community organization/s. As Getachew and Maigenet indicted "even though the number of Ethiopians who came to the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s increased

⁸⁰ Markakis, *Ethiopia*, 250-251; for the history of Ethiopian education in Eritrea, see Adane Taye, *A Historical Survey of State Education in Eritrea* (Asmara: EMPDA, 1991), 73-137; Teshome G Wagaw, *Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect* (Ann arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 95-102.

⁸¹ Getachew and Maigenet, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 63, 65.

significantly . . . most were on student visas. Generally, there was a sojourner mind set among these Ethiopians; hence, there was no desire nor effort made to establish an Ethiopian community in the United States until the late 1970s" and early 1980s.⁸²

Another reason for the absence of community organizations, Ethiopian restaurants and shops that cater for the pre-1980s Ethiopians in America was the nature of their settlement. They were found dispersed throughout the U.S. pursuing higher education. Their number was also too small to sustain Ethiopian community organizations, restaurants and shops. Yet, they supported each other in other ways. For instance, if an Ethiopian arrives in America, either he/she would seek out Ethiopians or would be contacted by Ethiopian/s in the locality. In those days, there were no Ethiopian restaurants and shops which could have served as meeting places.

Due to lack of numeric data on the pre-1980s Ethiopians in America, excepting the very few guesses and estimates, their whereabouts is unknown. The very few studies conducted on pre-1980s Ethiopians in America indicated that they were found in relatively large numbers in cities like Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles, and Dallas.⁸³ Of these cities, Washington DC was noted for being the main center of Ethiopians as early as the 1960s. This was due to several reasons. Washington D.C was the domicile of many of the Ethiopian elites and their children who were attending school. The existence of an Ethiopian embassy in this city and the embassy's concern on Ethiopians was another factor. It is said that in the 1960s, Ethiopian ambassadors were interested in Ethiopian students in the U.S. On Ethiopian national and religious holydays, the embassy was noted for hosting parties for Ethiopians in America. The existence a large service sector in the metropolis also drew Ethiopian students or ex-students who sought jobs. "The

⁸² Getachew and Maigenet, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 63

⁸³ Tesfai Kiflu, "Abyssinians in America: A Cultural Perspective," *The Mid-Atlantic Almanack, the Journal of the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association*, Vol. 2, (1993), 95-105; Tekle M. Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," in *Case Studies in Diversity: Refugees in America in the 1990s*, ed. David W. Haines (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 277; Getachew and Maigenet, 66.

flourishing social and cultural environment has become a home-substitute to many first generation Abyssinians."⁸⁴ These circumstances, in turn, attracted Ethiopians from other states to come to Washington DC. By late 1980s, Washington DC had some 16,000 Ethiopians and half a dozen Ethiopian restaurants and shops scattered around the Adams Morgan area.⁸⁵

While the aforementioned Ethiopians constituted the first group of Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S., the events that forced them into exile, the end of Haile Sellassie's rule also became a turning point in the history of Ethiopia. It ushered in an era of "refugeeism" among Ethiopians. According to Peter Koehn "most Ethiopians were unfamiliar [that was then] with the very concept of a 'refugee' and repelled by the idea of moving abroad permanently."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Tesfai, "Abyssinians in America,"102.

⁸⁵ Getachew and Maigenet, The Ethiopian Revolution, 66; Walter Nicholls, Washington's Little Ethiopia: A New Cluster of Restaurants Bring Exotic Appeal to Ninth and U Streets," Washington Post, (May 18, 2005), F01.

⁸⁶ Koehn, Refugees, 273.

CHAPTER II

REVOLUTION IN ETHIOPIA: THE COMING OF REFUGEES TO AMERICA (1970s-1990s)

Chapter II.1. Some Major Causes for the Refugee Crisis in Ethiopia: The Red Terror, War, Famine and Cold War Politics

During the past century, masses of refugees came to the U.S. from virtually every part of the world. Countries use the 1951 Geneva Convention that defines an individual as a refugee based on a model of European refugee concerns. As defined in Article 1A(2) of the Convention,

The term 'refugee' shall apply to any person who . . . as a result of events occurring before 1st January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.¹

This definition, whose point of reference was the European refugee experience prior to the 1950s, narrowly assumes that it is a repressive political system that causes refugeeism. However, this does not address all causes of refugeeism in African and other parts of the world.²

¹ For the Convention, the 1967 Geneva Protocol and the 1969 Organization of African Union's (OAU) Convention on refugees; and country specific refugee laws, see Ebenezer Q. Blavo, The Problem of Refugees in Africa: Boundaries and Borders (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999), Appendices; Renu M. Anand, African Refugees: An Overview (New Delhi: Khama Publishers, 1993), Appendices.

² Although the 1967 Protocol had removed one of the limitations of the 1951 Convention which based its definition to events related to the II WW, the Protocol had failed to address other issues that could cause refugeeism in the world. One of such issues is humanitarian crisis such as natural calamities, human right violations, and socio-economic deprivations. As a result of this narrow definition, while the politically and socially persecuted were given international protection, the internally displaced, who are literally refugees, were not accorded similar privileged simply because they have not crossed international boundaries. Moreover, the term 'persecution' remained uncertain and undefined. What is more, it only refers to 'persecution' by governments while individuals could also be harassed, tortured, jailed, raped, and even killed by various yet opposing guerrilla movements within a country. Furthermore, though a person can seek refugee status, he/she was given this 'privilege' if the host government or international agencies operating in the host society believed that the person indeed needs protection and thus deserves a refugee status. The problem here is that while the attitude of the host government towards the refugee is greatly affected by the bilateral relation between refugee sending and receiving countries while the stance of the aid organizations is also equally influenced by Cold War politics. Hence, both officials of the host societies and international aid agencies that operate in a particular country subject refugees to arbitrary judgment, abuse and all sorts of exploitation. See Anand, African Refugees, 3-12; Gilbert Jaeger, "The Definition of 'Refugee': Restrictive Versus Expanding Trends," World Refugee Survey 1983. U.S. Committee for Refugees 25th Anniversary Issue, 5-9; Assefaw Bariagaber, "Political Violence and the Uprooted in the Horn of Africa: A Study of Refugee Flows From Ethiopia," Journal Of Black Studies, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Sep., 1997), 28.

The circumstances that have produced massive refugee flows in Africa are different from that indicated in the Geneva Convention. African refugeeism has resulted from drought, famine, flood, and arbitrary demarcation of boundaries, from decolonization, post-independence conflicts, apartheid, and inter-guerrilla warfare, as well as flight from recruitment into the military or guerrilla forces . . . etc.³

In the late twentieth century, it was Africa and the Africans who have suffered most from the refugee crises. For instance, in 1983 there were a total of 7,816,200 refugees in the world. Of these, 1,921,000 (24.57 per cent) were from Africa; 256,400 (3.28 per cent) E. Asia and the Pacific; 30,000 (0.38 per cent) Europe; 312,500 (3.99 per cent) Latin America and the Caribbean; and 5,295,600 (67.75 per cent) from the M. East and S. Asia.⁴ After almost a decade, in 1991, the refugee crisis in Africa had not changed much: While the total number of refugees in the world was 16,689,300, Africa's share also grew to 5,444,450 (32.62 per cent) while South Asia and the Middle East comprised 9,797,200 (58.7 per cent); Latin America had 118,950 (0.71 per cent); East Asia and the Pacific made up for 592,100 (3.54 per cent) and the rest, 737,600 (4.41 per cent), were Europeans.⁵ In those two decades, almost one in every three refugees in the world was African.

Of the African refugees of the past decades, many have been from Africa south of the Sahara. The majority of these have been from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia,

³ Blavo, The Problems of Refugees in Africa, 9-10, 11; Anand, African Refugees, 29-46; Chris J. Bakwesegha, "Forced Migration in Africa and the OAU Convention" in Howard Adelman and John Sorenson (ed.) African Refugees: Development Aid and Reinterpretation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 3-4; CIMADE, INODEP, MINK, Africa's Refugee Crisis: What's To Be Done?, Michael John (trans) (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 23; Patrick Matlou, "Upsetting the Chart: Forced Migration and Gender Issues, the African Experience" in Doreen Indra (ed.), Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 128-129; Aderanti Adepoju, "The Dimension of the Refugee Problem in Africa," African Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 322 (Jan., 1982), 21-35; Assefaw Bariagaber, "Political Violence and the Uprooted in the Horn of Africa: A Study of Refugee Flows From Ethiopia," Journal Of Black Studies, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Sep., 1997), 26-42.

⁴ U.S. Committee for Refugees, World Refugee Survey 25th Anniversary Issue (New York: U.S. Committee For Refugees, 1983), 60-63.

⁵ U.S. Committee For Refugees, World Refugee Survey (1983), 60-63; World Refugee Survey (1991), 32-36

Djibouti and Sudan), an area that has been in "permanent emergency" for decades.⁶ For instance, in 1981 there were 2,966,100 African refugees and 3,366,300 internally displaced Africans. From these, Ethiopia accounted for 1,743,800 refugees and 2,400,000 of the internally displaced persons in Africa.⁷ This was in just six years after the Ethiopian Revolution. Until this time, refugeeism was unknown among Ethiopians. What caused all this misfortune in Ethiopia and what sustained it until the early 1990s?

Chapter II. 1.1: The Red Terror

When the Provisional Military Government (*Derg*) grabbed power in 1974, like many other military regimes in Africa, it promised that it would hand over authority to a civilian government as soon as possible, but as it turned out, the *Derg* stayed in power for almost two decades.⁸ During those years, the military regime had faced staunch opposition from Marxist-Leninist student-based organizations such as the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (AESM) and the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party (EPRP).⁹ Nevertheless, some of the differences that existed between EPRP and AESM since their inception began widening; and finally they ended in the alliance of the latter with the military government.

⁶ Tim Allen and David Turton, "In Search of Cool Ground" in *In search of Cool Ground* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc, 1996), 1-22; Ken Hackett, "Horn of Horror," *Sunspot*, November 26, 2003. See the website at http://www.sunspot.net/news/opinion/oped/bal-op.famine26nov26_0_1256945.story.

⁷ CIMADE, INODEP, MINK, *Africa's Refugee Crisis*, 25. For the latter years, see U.S. Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey 1983*; *World Refugee Survey 1986*; and *World Refugee Survey, 1991*.

As it could be seen, while eastern Africa stood first in the total number of refugees within the continent, southern, central and western Africa came second, third and fourth respectively. Besides, while Ethiopia was the single largest refugee producing country in the late 70s and early 80s, it was also one of the countries that accepted a sizable refugee population from its neighbors. The ratio of refugee to the total population in Ethiopia was 1:60 while this figure could be even bigger, 1:5, in some parts of the country such as Itang (southwestern Ethiopia). See Bakwesegha, "Forced Migration in Africa," 4-5.

⁸ John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 58.

⁹ See Fantahun Tirneh, *The Ethiopian Students: Their Struggle to Articulate the Ethiopian Revolution* (Chicago: Nyala Type, 1990); Andargachew Tirneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-1987: A Transformation From an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Autocracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Randi Ronning Balsvik, *Haile Sellassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1985).

Despite a cohesive appearance, the *Derg* was an agglomeration of officers and enlisted men whose ideological background varied from adherents of the extreme left to that of liberal democrats who advocated a mixed economic policy and continued association with the West. The diversity of opinion that prevailed within the *Derg*, and the mantle of collective leadership the *Derg* projected slowly shifted to the one-man rule. The chairman of the *Derg* and one of the American-educated generals, Gen. Aman Andom, was accused of conspiring with the West against the Revolution and killed after a pitched battle at his home in Addis Ababa on November 23, 1974. On that same day, the Junta conducted the first mass killings, the extrajudicial execution of 60 officials of the former regime—shocking the world: the Secretary General of the United Nations openly sent a letter of protest to the *Derg*. Many countries condemned the massacre while America suspended all aid, except humanitarian aid, to Ethiopia. Many Ethiopians who were living abroad, including the Foreign Minister who was in New York, sought asylum in the U.S.¹⁰

Either due to the pressure from within its ranks, or as an attempt to end its isolation at home as well as abroad, the *Derg* called for a united front of all revolutionaries against what it called reactionary forces: feudalism, capitalism and imperialism. However, EPRP rejected the calls believing that to work with the Junta was to give legitimacy to a regime that hijacked power and held it undemocratically. Besides, the EPRP thought that it had enough strength to handle the situation by itself. As Malaku Tegegn, one of the leading members of EPRP, noted " . . . by 1976, the EPRP was in command of the revolution so much so that quite a substantial segment of the

¹⁰ Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 190; Andargachew Asseged, *Bacher Ytagache Regim Guzo: MESON Baetyopiya Hizboch Tigle Wust* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 2000), 192-200; Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 77-81; Teferra Haile-Selassie, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1991: From A Monarchical Autocracy to A Military Oligarchy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), 138-144; David A. Korn, *Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 10-13.

Derg members had realized that Ethiopia was ungovernable without the cooperation of the EPRP.¹¹

Nevertheless, the EPRP's sense of invincibility was soon dashed when the *Derg*, once again, continued weeding out counter revolutionaries from within its ranks: Gen. Getachew Nadew, Major Sisay Habte and their supporters, mainly military officers, were slaughtered in July 1976, accused of plotting a coup. The final showdown between Mengistu Haile Mariam, who now increasingly dominated the *Derg*, and the others who opposed him, took place on February 3, 1977. On that day, Gen. Teferi Bante, another American-trained officer, who had been elected chairman of the *Derg* upon the assassination of Gen. Aman, and other *Derg* members with liberal views were massacred while they attended a meeting.¹²

Side by side the *Derg*, which by now was synonymous with Mengistu, and its supporters such as AESM, organized urban and rural dwellers into *kebeles* (local) militias conducted rigorous house to house searches, jailed people whom they suspected to be counterrevolutionaries, and confiscated arms. Those who resisted or tried to escape were shot on sight.¹³ EPRP condemned the *Derg* action as fascistic, and accused individuals and parties such as AESM who had allied with the government as traitors and collaborators, *banda*, and declared a class war on them.^{14*} The

¹¹ Melaku Tegegn, "EPRP: An Historical Background and a Critical Assessment of Its Experiences" A Paper Prepared for the Conference on The Ethiopian Left and the Revolution, May 29-30, 1987. No page numbers; See also Marcus, *A History*, 194; Teferra, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 152, 178; Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London: NLB, 1981), 120; Genet Ayele, *Yeletana Colonel Mengistu Haylamraiam Tizitawoch* [Memoirs of Lt. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam] (Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing Enterprise, 1994EC), 31.

¹² Marcus, *A History*, 195; Andargachew, *Bacher Ytaqache*, 357-383; Teferra Haile-Selassie, *The Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-1991: From a Monarchical Autocracy to a Military Oligarchy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), 195-198; Genet, *Yeletana Colonel Mengistu*, 62-63; Korn, *Ethiopia*, 19, 23-26.

¹³ For the gruesome stories of torture and killings during the Red Terror see Babile Tola, *To Kill a Generation: The Red Terror in Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C: Free Ethiopia Press, 1989).

¹⁴ See *Democracia*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (1968); Vol. 3, No. 7, (1968); Vol. 3, No. 9, (1968); Vol. 3, No. 11, (1968). For AESM's reaction, see *Yasafew Hizb Dims*, No. 47, (1968), "*Liyu Etm*" (special issue, 1969); and No., 58, (1969). See also Andargachew, *Bacher Ytaqache*.

* Andargachew Asseged was one of the leading members of AEPSM. His book, which describes and critically examines the Ethiopian student movement both at home and abroad also assesses the role of his party in the Ethiopian Revolution.

political situation was exacerbated when Somalia invaded Ethiopia; and the Eritrean secessionist movements, Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) and Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), taking the state of affairs as an opportune moment, intensified the war against Ethiopia in the North. In the meantime, the invasion of Somalia and the *Derg*'s response against it helped the latter portray itself as nationalist. The EPRP, however, had supported both Eritrean secessionists and Somalia's irredentism.¹⁵ This gave the *Derg* and its cronies the necessary pretext to condemn the EPRP as unpatriotic and counter revolutionary. Following this, Mengistu Haile Mariam, who now had emerged victorious, officially declared the "Red Terror" and "*nasa ərmija*" ("kill freely") in February 1977 against the EPRP and all others who opposed the rule of the *Derg*. To this end, Mengistu and his supporters organized the infamous Revolutionary Committee at the national, regional and local level, which they instructed to search, jail or kill anyone whom they suspected of anti-revolutionary tendencies.¹⁶

As a result, each *Kebele* (local) and *Kefetegna* (higher) of urban centers in the country were equipped with detention centers run by the *Kebeles*. What is more, there raised competition between the various urban association (*kebeles*) "in scoring the highest number of executions" ¹⁷ of counter revolutionaries, which thus spread the wanton killings. Between 1977 and 1979, even children, 10-12 years old, also became targets.

In those years and after, peaceful demonstrations against the government were banned and considered as anti-revolution. Hence, the 1977 May Day rally, which the government suspected as being EPRP organized, was ruthlessly suppressed. In the night of April 29 alone, the

¹⁵ See *Demcracia*, No. 18, 1967.

¹⁶ Melaku, , "EPRP: An Historical Background," 114; Teferra, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 198-199; Halliday and Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 124-125. For a detailed information on prison condition, torture and the killings in Ethiopia, see Babile, *To Kill a Generation*; Amnesty International, *Human Rights Violation in Ethiopia*, (London: International Secretariat, 1978), 14-17; Genet, *Yeletena Colonel Mengistu*, 28-36.

¹⁷Teferra, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 201; Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 210-211; Babile, *To Kill a Generation*, 137-156.

Kebele (urban militias) squads gunned down well over 500 youth in Addis Ababa. The killing orgy continued and by May 1977, around 1000 youths had been killed and their bodies strewn throughout the streets of Addis Ababa. For fear of retribution by the government, hospitals refused to treat the wounded. Besides, to get a deceased body one has to pay Eth.\$100 (\$1.00=Eth\$2.07).^{*} There were also people who had been detained, whose whereabouts remain unknown.¹⁸

The EPRP, on its part, tried to respond in kind. Accordingly, it started assassinating what it believed were government "agents." *Kebele* and AEPSM cadres retaliated by indiscriminately showering bullets on pedestrians. The mutual elimination of the revolutionaries became intense during 1977-1978. As a consequence, an estimated 30,000 people were killed and their bodies dumped on the streets of Addis Ababa.^{19*}

Similar mass killings and detention had taken place throughout the country. In Gondar, for instance, the 1977 May Day celebration and the December 7, 1978 (*Hidar* 29, 1969 Ethiopian calendar) peaceful demonstrations held in the city ended in blood bath. In the latter instance, the *Derg* employed the newly trained *Nebelbal* (Flame) Brigade to decimate the demonstrators. As a result, unknown number of students, teachers and urban dwellers were killed while hundreds were jailed. The only high school in the city as well as the province, Haile Sellasse I Comprehensive

¹⁸ Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 211; Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretical Revolution* (London: Zed Press, 1981), 3; Babile, *To Kill a Generation*, 140-146.

^{*} The exchange rate of the dollar to the birr was constant, at least officially, during the reign of the Haile Sellassie and the *Derg*. After 1991, however, it is the market that regulates the rate of exchange; and hence the figure for the exchange rate might vary from time to time.

¹⁹ John Cumbers, *Living With The Red Terror: Missionary Experiences in Communist Ethiopia* (Kearney: Morris Publishing, 1996), 110-111; Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, *The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 2.

^{*} There is an ongoing controversy as to who started the killings: The *Derg* or EPRP. Moreover, so far the exact number of people massacred as the result of the Red Terror is not known. Mengistu and his officials, however, claimed that not more than 2000 have died as the result of the Red Terror while the newly established Special Persecutors Office of the Ministry of Justice of Ethiopia puts the figure around 6000. EPRP was also alleged to have killed 1319. The latter constitute people who were members AESM, the Junta and members of the *Kebele* associations. This figure, however, does not include EPRP's own members, *anja* (splinter) that the party "liquidated." See Genet, *Yaletena Colonel Mengistu*, 32-33, 179-218; Babile, *To Kill a Generation*, 90-118, 161-164.

Senior Secondary School, was closed; and many people left the city either for the rural areas or to the neighboring country, Sudan. In the summer of the same year, the junta began what is commonly referred as "*afessa*" (mass detention); and those who were detained were summarily executed outside of the city, at Samuna Ber. Unable to stave off the opposition, the Junta then commenced *nesa ermjia* (kill freely), a measure directed against anyone found on the streets of Gondar; and the red terror (*qay shibr*) in September of the same year. To tame the city in particular and the province in general, the *Derg* stationed more than four-division strong army in the province.²⁰ This was in addition to the urban and rural dwellers association militias, the police and paramilitary (*fetno*) forces.

Torturing of political detainees, in all its forms and guises, was common practice. One commonly used interrogation method of the *Derg* "soaking the feet of the detainees in boiling water for a time and then suspending them upside-down and beating the soles of their feet until the skin gave way to blood and the raw flesh and finally to the bare bones."²¹

One major consequence of the "Red Terror" was the decimation of the urban youth and the country's intelligentsia. The other, beside the psychological and physical damage wrought upon the survivors, was the forced exile of thousands of educated and visionary Ethiopians in search of safety and security.

Chapter II. 1. 2. War Between the Government and the Various Guerrilla Movements; and Within the Different Guerrilla Forces

Besides waging urban guerrilla warfare in the main cities, EPRP also organized rural military bases in Assimba, Tigray. Attempts had also been made to establish similar bases in the various parts of the country. However, EPRP's endeavor to have military bases in central, southern

²⁰ See Genet, *Yaletena Colonel Mangstu*, 203-204.

²¹ Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 212; Babile, *To Kill a Generation*, 143-200.

and eastern parts of Ethiopia failed miserably.²² However, its initiative in the North in 1974/5 succeeded for a number of reasons: First, the lowlanders of northern Ethiopia in particular and the highlanders in general, have a tradition of resistance, *shiftinat*.²³ Second, in this region rifles are marks of manhood and symbols of higher status in the community,* hence, peasants had always been aligned with anyone who offered them rifles. Similarly, they were lured in the hope of getting rifles if they joined EPRP's military wing, the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Army (EPRA). Third, the actions of the *Derg*, such as deposing the aging Emperor had shocked many peasants in the North. One good example was the Gaint (Gondar) peasant revolt opposing the overthrow of the Emperor. The revolt was brutally crushed using mechanized brigades and F5-E jet fighter aircraft. Fourth, the nationalization of the rural land and the prohibition of the use of hired farm labor had further intensified peasant protest in the North. Many peasants in Tigray, Wallo and parts of Northern Gondar were either engaged in trade or work in other's farms for additional income. In view of that, the nationalization of commercial farms in the Matamma and Humara areas (northwestern part of Ethiopia) that used to provide employment opportunities for these peasants ceased to exist. Many of the Humara-Matamma lowlanders, in a show of defiance against the regime, "killed their cattle, destroyed buildings, burned down the Bank of Humera, and either took their farm equipment and harvested grains to the Sudan or destroyed it."²⁴ As a result around 200,000 peasants, most of them from Tigray, lost good sources of income. Finally, the destruction of

²² John Young, *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia. The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16; Mega Publishing Enterprise, *Terrarochin Yangataqata Thwulid* (The Generation that Moved Mountains) (Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing Enterprise, 1989 EC), pp. 27-30. (Hereafter, *Terrara*.); Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generation, Part II Ethiopia: Transformation and Conflict* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 89, 92-93, 338-339.

²³ See for the warrior tradition of these parts of the country, Teshale Tibebe, "War Culture and the Quest for Democracy in Ethiopia" in *Imbylta*, Vol. I, No. I, (Summer, 1990), 7-9.

*In pre-revolution Ethiopia, weapons and their traffic was unregulated. Hence, by the time of the Revolution there was an estimated 9,000,000 pistols and rifles in civilian hands. Of these, people of Addis Ababa alone had 300,000 of the rifles and pistols. Yet, the series of house-to-house searches that the *Kebeles* conducted during the height of the Red Terror and in the subsequent years, almost all Ethiopians were unarmed, save the *Derg* and its' cronies. Hence, rifles and pistols become the source of authority. See Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*, 210.

²⁴ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 93, 101.

their farms had other repercussions: Peasant-traders who used to trade between Humera-Matama and Gondar, and Humera-Matama and Tigray had been negatively affected. Though the *Derg* revived the farms at a later date,²⁵ its attempt to control trade and the many customs checkpoints, was discouraging.²⁶ These peasant-traders were often left with no choice except leaving the country for Sudan or joining one or the other guerilla movements operating in the region.

The establishment of military bases in Northern Ethiopia either by EPRP or the many other anti-government movements had dire consequences for the peasants of the region. For instance, in addition to carrying out guerrilla attacks against the *Derg*, EPRP also conducted raids against peasants whom it considered "bandits."²⁷ At times, however, the term bandit could also include peasants who opposed EPRP. To neutralize these "bandits" EPRP's army sometimes took military action, including holding their families hostage.²⁸

Peasants could also suffer, in addition to the *Derg* military campaigns and bombardments, as a result of the rivalry between two or more guerrilla movements. By the time EPRA established its position in Tigray, the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) had also commenced its activities in the same province. In addition to the TPLF, the Tigrayan Liberation Front (TLF) was also operating in Tigray. However, the TPLF was able to successfully wipe out the rival, TLF and its peasant supporters, from Tigray. While the leaders of TLF were lured to their execution in the guise of merger, ²⁹ its combatants were either co-opted into the ranks of the TPLF, killed, left for Sudan or surrendered to the government.

The TPLF action did not stop there. Since its inception, the organization had political differences with EPRP: As its name suggests, the TPLF wanted independence from Ethiopia (a

²⁵ *Addis Zemen*, 38th Year, No. 60, Friday Hidar 13; and No. 105, Wednesday, Ginbot 5, 1972 E.C.

²⁶ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 94.

²⁷ Kiflu, *The Generation*, 371.

²⁸ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 111.

²⁹ Kiflu, *The Generation*, 390.

political objective which the organization entertained until 1989) while EPRP was a pan-Ethiopian organization. TPLF's acceptance of the Eritrean issue as a colonial question was another source of friction between TPLF and EPRP.³⁰

The scarcity of resources such as manpower, food, and territory in Tigray further intensified the rivalry between EPRP and TPLF. As Kiflu Taddese, a leading member of EPRP and the architect of the urban guerrilla struggle, noted "... the TPLF and the EPRA traversed the same area. Unlike the contacts with other organizations, EPRP's relationship with the TPLF was a necessity for the survival of both armed groups, who had differing political goals and conflicting objectives."³¹

Many EPRP members had also a very low regard for the TPLF, citing their lack of Marxist-Leninist theoretical sophistication, lack of academic distinction and peasant background.³² The TPLF, also known as *Wayane*, accused EPRP of being a chauvinist and demanded that it should leave Tigray for the Tigrayans and began attacking EPRP cadres. EPRP was also accused of attacking TPLF cadres. The whole scenario, as Kiflu Taddesse, one of the founders of EPRP/EPRA, put it "... both organizations would involve themselves in a conflict to win over a peasant association. Conflicts will also arise when recruiting peasant militia and TPLF members were enraged when many peasants continued to support the EPRA. The conflicts were not confined to the EPRA and TPLF alone, but also the ELF, which operated in the Tigray-Eritrean border. Conflicts might arise because of territorial claims or grazing land that the villages on the Eritrean and Tigrayan side wanted to control."³³ The rivalry and confrontation between EPRP and TPLF was militarily resolved on March 25, 1978. EPRP lost almost half of its fighting force, EPRA,

³⁰ Kiflu, The Generation, 339, 389; Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 213-214; Young, Peasant Revolution, 99, 111; Africa Confidential, Vol. 19, No. 13, January 23, 1978.

³¹ Kiflu, The Generation, 390.

³² Kiflu, The Generation, 392; Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 214.

³³ Kiflu, The Generation, 394; for opposing view as to who began the killings see, Young, Peasant Revolution, 109.

and left Tigray once and for all: Some of its fighters left for Eritrea while others left for Gondar, Wallo and Sudan.³⁴

After some five months of repose in ELF-held territory in Eritrea, the remaining force of EPRA departed for Northern Gondar where EPRA had established a base in 1975, and where it had been conducting some military operations since then.³⁵ The forces from Tigray, the new arrivals from the urban centers, mainly from Gondar, had inflated EPRA's numbers in the region. As a result, EPRA was able to conduct a series of military operations throughout the Gondar province. In some of these operations, EPRA subdued peasants of the region either after it had killed some of them or confiscated their cattle. The latter action was most effective in breaking peasant resistance. Despite this initial setback, EPRP/EPRA was able to lay down a very strong foundation among the peasants of Bagemider and Semen. In these areas the peasants, besides serving as militia, had become party members and provided leadership to local party committees.³⁶

As in Tigray, the peasants of Bagemider and Semen (this name was changed to Gondar after the 1974 Revolution) suffered from both the *Derg* military campaigns and the rivalries between EPRP and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU). The latter was established in 1975 and mainly consisted of former government officials, including the grandson-in-law of the late Emperor who managed to escape capture. The organization was able to mobilize about 10,000 peasants and hired laborers from Gondar and Tigray region. In fact in 1977, the EDU had controlled Humera-Matamma areas; and was on the door of the city of Gondar. Such daring action by the EDU had forced the *Derg* to pull its mechanized unit of the Third Division from Harar and transfer it

³⁴ Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 214; Tesfaye Mekonnen, Yidras Lebele Tareku (Addis Ababa: Birana Electro Asatame, 1985), 149–150.

³⁵ Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 214; Young, Peasant Revolution, 111.

³⁶ Kiflu, The Generation, 417–419, 421.

to Bagemider and Semen province. From then and until its demise, the *Derg* stationed more than four divisions in the province.^{37*}

Meanwhile, certain areas of the Gondar province (Walqait and the districts in Wagara) became a bone of contention between EPRP and EDU. The former, using legal channels, was sometimes able to arm its peasant supporters against EDU.³⁸ One of the consequences was a battle between EDU and EPRP that involved peasants of the province, and in which the peasantry was either killed, its property destroyed, or the peasantry was forced to leave its villages and follow the footsteps of the organization it supported.

EDU also operated in Tigray. Yet, its activities in Tigray were not as successful as it was in Gondar. Like EPRP, EDU had to vie against the TPLF. EDU was able to survive for some time, mainly in the Shiraro area, but finally the TPLF defeated EDU, and wiped it out of Tigray. This coupled with the *Derg's* counteroffensive in 1977, forced EDU out of Ethiopia into Sudan. Since then, it failed to exist as a viable force against the *Derg*.³⁹

The significance of the defeat of EPRP and EDU in the northern and northwestern parts of Ethiopia is not in their lost bid for power, but their effect on the urban youth and the peasantry of the regions where they have had military or political operations at one time or another. EPRP introduced Marxist ideas to the peasants of the region, opened schools, recruited and trained militias, and it had even co-opted some peasants as cadres and party members. EDU too had done similar things, with the exception of exposing the peasant to Marxism-Leninism. Thus, when

³⁷ Botbol, "Ethiopia: Political Power and the Military," 69; Africa Confidential, Vol. 18 No. 16, (August 5 1977); Addis Zemen 34th Year, No. 688, Tuesday, Miyazia14, 1967 EC; Abera, 27; Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 207.

* When Col. Mengistu was asked about the Red Terror in Gondar and his lieutenant's, Major Malaku's, brutal deeds, Mengistu tried to justify the action and proudly proclaimed that to curb 'anti-revolutionary' activities in the region, he stationed more than four army divisions in the province. See Genet, Yaletena Colonel Mangstu, 203-204.

³⁸ Kiflu, The Generation, 422-423, 424.

³⁹ Young, African Guerrillas, 39-40; Andargachew, The Ethiopian Revolution, 207; Dawit Wolde Giorgis, Red Tears: War, Famine, and Revolution In Ethiopia (New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1989), 118.

these organizations lost, almost all their peasant members had to leave their villages for Sudan. By joining the EPRP or EDU, the peasants had antagonized the *Derg* which had recaptured some of the so called "liberated areas" that had been either under EPRP or EDU.

The peasants had also alienated themselves from their kin while trying to implement EPRP or EDU's programs. Even if they had not, they had to leave their locale. Soon after the departure of EPRP and EDU, the TPLF, the deadliest enemy of EPRP, had begun its incursions into the region.⁴⁰

In this same period, the contradiction between the Christian dominated EPLF and TPLF on one hand and the Muslim dominated ELF on the other, had reached a stage of no return. Accordingly, the ELF fought both fronts and suffered casualties. Finally, the *Derg's* 1980 Red Star Campaign forced the ELF to retreat, like EPRP and EDU, to Sudan.⁴¹ *Africa Confidential* reported that the Sudanese government had disarmed 3000 ELF fighters who had entered Sudan for repose.⁴² In addition to military reverses, a sizable number of disillusioned EPLF and ELF members had chosen life in exile in Sudan.⁴³

There were also instances in which contending opposition forces killed civilians. One such example was the 1988 joint EPLF and TPLF massacre of 300 Afars of the Bori region. The Bori, though supportive of Eritrean independence, were sympathizers of the ELF.⁴⁴ However, this does not mean that the TPLF-EPLF alliance was devoid of problems. At the height of the 1984 famine, the EPLF refused to let in relief supplies via Kassala, Sudan, into Tigray. This forced the TPLF to open a new relief supply route that starts from Tamben, crosses western Tigray, passes through Wolkait (in North Gondar), and enters Sudan. Not only this, the TPLF had also instructed hundreds

⁴⁰ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 24, No. 19, September 21, 1983.

⁴¹ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 21, No. 16; David Pool, "The Eritrean Liberation Front" in Christopher Clapham (ed.) *African Guerrillas* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998), 27.

⁴² *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 22, No. 25, December 9, 1981.

⁴³ Kiflu, *The Generation*, 177.

⁴⁴ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 30, No. 17, August 25, 1989.

of thousands of peasants to leave their village for Sudan, partly to cope with the famine situation and partly for propaganda reasons. This mass dislocation and the congregation of thousands of people at Wadi Hauli camp, near the Sudanese border, resulted in epidemic and innumerable deaths of the young and the old.⁴⁵ It also introduced the Tigray peasant to refugeeism on a massive scale. Although many of the famished peasants had stayed in famine relief refugee camps in Sudan until the TPLF told them to return, some had strayed into other refugee camps and beyond.

In 1989, some Eritreans had to flee to Sudan not because of the *Derg*, but to avoid conscription into the ranks of the EPLF which was getting ready for a showdown with the *Derg*.⁴⁶ As John Young notes "villages in Eritrea would sometimes be surrounded by EPLF fighters and youth selected and taken away at a gun point for military training . . . [Thus, many Eritrean youths] left their homes to avoid being forcefully conscripted into the EPLF."⁴⁷

In sum, the Ethio-Somali war and the counter offensive of the *Derg* against the secessionists in the North such as the EPLF, the ELF, and the TPLF had resulted, beside other things, in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people: By 1978/79, about 300,000 people from Eritrea, more than 600,000 from Harar and Bale left for Sudan and Somalia respectively.⁴⁸ Thus, in the early 1980s there were about 2 million Ethiopian refugees in the neighboring countries. Moreover, in August 1985, which was the height of the *Derg*'s military offensive in Eritrea, between 400-700 refugees were flocking to Sudan, every day.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Giday, "Tigray Eyaya Bey," 45.

⁴⁶ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 31, No. 6, March 19, 1990.

⁴⁷ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 127.

⁴⁸ David R. Smock, "Eritrean Refugees in Sudan," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1982), 451, 453-454; Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, *The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 5; see also *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 21, no. 17, August 13, 1980.

⁴⁹ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 26, no. 20, October 1, 1985.

Chapter II. 1.3: Drought, Famine and an Ill-Advised Economic Policy

The military campaign also began taxing the already declining economy: From the days of the revolution, Ethiopia's military spending grew at an average rate of 19 per cent annually. In 1974 Ethiopia's military expenditure was \$105.8 m. By 1988, however, this figure had reached to \$1, 500m, which represented 54 per cent of the country's GDP.⁵⁰

Meanwhile since 1974, agricultural production was declining at an average rate of 0.4 per cent every year while population growth was almost 3 per cent. The government's socialist economic policy further worsened the situation. Agriculture, on which 80 to 90 percent of the population depended for its livelihood, was only contributing 40 per cent of the GDP. To improve the country's agricultural performance, the junta tried to revive some of the commercial farms. It also decided to mobilize farmers into agricultural cooperatives.⁵¹ Accordingly, in the early days of the program, roughly 1.2 per cent of peasant households were forcefully organized into cooperatives.

The government also planned to increase the number of cooperatives by incorporating over 50 percent of the farmers within ten years. By 1988, the state farms only produced 4 to 5 per cent of the total crop production of the country, and half of the land which was allotted for state farms was not cultivated. Besides, despite the channeling of 85 per cent of the agriculture credit and 75 per cent of improved seed to state farms, 95 per cent of production and 65 per cent of marketed agricultural goods come from the smallholder sector.⁵²

Amidst this, the military government, which blamed the 1974 famine on Haile Sellassie, was faced with one of the most severe famines the country had ever witnessed. As of March 1984,

⁵⁰ Africa Confidential, Vol. 30, No. 4, February 17, 1988. See also Anthony H Cordesman, The Military Balance and Arms Sales in Yemen and the Red Sea States: 1986-1992 Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Middle East Dynamic Net Assessment, (September 1993), 40, 46.

⁵¹ Africa Confidential, Vol. 30, No. 4, Feb.17, 1988; Marcus, A History, 212.

⁵² Africa Confidential, Vol. 30, No. 4, Feb.17, 1988.

it was believed that out of the 15 administrative regions 12 were affected with drought; the worst affected areas being the northern part of the country. From these regions, an estimated 6.4 million Ethiopians become drought victims of which 1.2 million were displaced.⁵³

To avert criticism from the international community, to implement its socialist agricultural policies, and as an ultimate solution for the famine, the *Derg* embarked on the grand but ill-fated resettlement campaign.⁵⁴ Accordingly, by 1984 about 46,000 households comprising 150,000 people were settled in 11 regions and 88 locations.⁵⁵ These sites were lowlands mainly found in southern and western parts of the country: Gambella, Assossa, and Metekel which the government believed to be very fertile and unoccupied.⁵⁶ They all were nearer to Sudan. The majority of the people, however, were highlanders from the northern part of the country: 64.1 per cent Amharas, 15.2 per cent Tigrayans, 7.25 per cent Oromos, 6.5 per cent Kembattas, 4.7 per cent Hadiya.⁵⁷

On arriving at the encampments, the settlers were dismayed: The area was lowland, to which they were not accustomed. The climate, besides inhibiting them from producing diverse crops, exposed them to various diseases. Then, the quota system, which forced them to sell their

⁵³ The 1984 drought had also another implication: Until this time, Ethiopians seemed to have accepted the *Derg's* propaganda against "US Imperialism." However, the drought and America's massive food aid, it contributed the largest food aid while Russia which supplied the junta with \$2.5b worth of arms by 1985 pledged one-tenth of what America offered, and the musical group's (USA for Africa) contribution, and the overall humanitarian effort had convinced Ethiopians to view America in a positive light. The food aid might have also portrayed America as a land of plenty and hence a possible destination of migration. For the amount of USA and USSR's food aid in 1984/85 and its impact on the Ethiopian public, see "Ethiopia's Drought," Africa Report, Vol. 30, No. 1, (Jan-Feb., 1985), 47-49; Africa Report, Vol. 30, No. 2 (March-April, 1985); Africa Report, Vol. 30, No. 6 (November-December, 1985), Africa Report, Vol. 30, No. 5 (September-October, 1985); Africa Confidential, Vol. 27, No. 8, 1986.

⁵⁴ Peter Niggli, Ethiopia: Deportations and Forced-Labor Comps, Switzerland on Behalf of the Berliner Missionswerk, 2. For opposing view on the resettlement see Hagos Gebreyesus, "North American Perceptions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa: A Discussion Paper, Consultations on the Horn of Africa 21-23 Nov. 1986." Horn of Africa Project Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 16.

The author claimed that the resettlement program was a well planned and organized and that it is only reactionaries who opposed it in the guise of human rights violation.

⁵⁵ Alula Pankhurst, "When the Center Relocates the Periphery: Resettlement During the *Derg*" in Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Katsuyoshi Fukui et al (Ed) in Two Volumes. Vol II, (Kyoto, Japan. 12-17, Dec 1997), 540. See also Africa Confidential, Vol. 26, No. 1, Jan. 2, 1985.

⁵⁶ Pankhurst, "When the Center Relocates the Periphery," 545. For the settler's life in Assossa see Niggli, Ethiopia: Deportations and Forced-Labor Comps, 28-38.

⁵⁷ Pankhurst, "When the Center Relocates the Periphery," 546, 540-541.

surplus at a fixed price to the government run Agricultural Marketing Board, was another source of discontent. Moreover, the point system used in the collective farms of the settlers tends to favor the literate and people with military background.⁵⁸

As it could be expected from the above, the Ethiopian people in general and those from the northern half of the country, including Addis Ababa in particular, had suffered tremendous injustices. To all the injustices, Ethiopians responded in three major ways: Some submitted to the whims of the *Derg* and the partisan movements while the majority of Ethiopians choose passive resistance. The remaining opted to leave Ethiopia for the neighboring countries, mainly Sudan.⁵⁹

Chapter II. 2: Why Ethiopians Preferred Sudan for Refuge?

Although Ethiopia has four neighbors, Sudan remained the main outlet for Ethiopian refugees. For instance, in 1991 out of the, 1, 066, 300 Ethiopian refugees in the neighboring countries, 66 per cent had left for Sudan, 33 per cent for Somalia, and the rest went to Kenya, and Djibouti.⁶⁰

There are a number of reasons why Ethiopians preferred Sudan as a point of initial refuge than other neighboring countries: The Ethio-Somali border was not safe for people to flee the country because of the border tension between the two countries. Both countries had deployed a considerable number of their armed forces on the common border until the Djibouti accord of April 1988, where both Ethiopia and Somalia agreed to pullout troops from the border.⁶¹

Thus, not only was the border tightly monitored but also dangerous for refugees and political dissidents, especially for non-Somali speakers, who might try to enter Somalia. It is also

⁵⁸ Pankhurst, "When the Center Relocates the Periphery," 546; see also Africa Report, Vol. 30. No 2 (March-April, 1985), 40.

⁵⁹ Tekle M. Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans" in Case Studies in Diversity: Refugees in America in the 1990s, David W. Haines (ed.) (Westport: Praeger, 1997), 269.

⁶⁰ Tekle, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 272; see also Jonathan Baker, Studies on Emergencies and Disaster Relief, Report No. 2, Refugee and Labor Movement in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nordiska Afrikainstitute, 1995), 8-10.

⁶¹ Lionel Cliffe, "Regional Dimensions of the Conflict in the Horn of Africa," in Third World Quarterly, Vol. 20, No 1, (1999), p. 91; Dawit, Red Tears, 309.

worth noting that the 'Red Terror' and the indiscriminate killings were conducted mainly in the urban centers. Except in Tigray and Eritrea, many of the residents of these urban centers were Amharas. In fact, almost all towns in southern Ethiopia were established as '*neftegna*' (settler/colonizer) camps in the nineteenth century.⁶² For Amharas and others, who usually reside in the highland plateau, the desert is unbearable. It is also difficult to camouflage oneself as a Somali. Besides, many Ethiopians who successfully made it to Somalia suffered under Somali hands.⁶³ Despite this, though their number was less compared to Sudan, there were hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian refugees in Northern Somalia. These were mainly people from Harar,⁶⁴ who may have also understood Somali, in addition to Amharic, and thus eluded the ordeals of being an Amhara.

Djibouti and Kenya, compared to Sudan, seemed less attractive to an Ethiopian refugee. The former, because of its strong economic ties with Ethiopia, did not seem to be willing to antagonize the *Derg* by being center for refugees who might also be opposed to the government. Accordingly, the *Derg* seemed to have a freehand in Djibouti. The current government in Ethiopia, too, is engaged in similar practices. In 1991, it grabbed and brought to justice some of the highly wanted *Derg* officials such as Major Melaku Tafera, the notorious butcher of Gondar, who had taken shelter in Djibouti.⁶⁵

⁶² See Akalu Wolde Mikael, "Urban Development in Ethiopia in Time and Space Perspective" University of California, 1997. Ph. D dissertation; see also "Some Thoughts on the Process of Urbanization in Pre-twentieth Century," *Ethiopian Geographical Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (1967); also Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University Press, 1994), 105.

⁶³ See Ali Hassan, "Yaetiyoopiya sidategnoch basomaliya wusit 'baetiyoopiawiyen' eji ymifasamibachew gif" [Ethiopian Refugees in Somalia: The Injustices they Suffered in 'Ethiopian' Hands] *Ethiopian Register*, Vol. I, No. IV, (May 1994), 89-92.

⁶⁴ Mekuria Bulcha, "Conquest and Forced Migration: An Assessment of the Oromo Experience" (ed.) Seyoum Y. Hameso, Trevor Trueman, Temesgen M. Erena in *Ethiopia: Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy* (London: TSC Publication, 1997), 43-44.

⁶⁵ Djibouti is country dominated by two major ethnic groups, the Afar and Issa, which in turn are subdivided into clans and sub clans. This ethnic fragmentation coupled with the absence of a democratic government in the country had made Djibouti a scene of ethnocentric conflict. The latter phenomena, in addition to weakening the central government, had created an opportunity for the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia, and since 1993,

Kenya, too, was not conducive for refugees at least until after 1991. Because of the common threat from Somalia, Kenya was always keen to work with Ethiopia. As the 1991 refugee situation might depict, many refugees including hundreds of Addis Ababa University Students, who fled to Kenya in the aftermath of EPRDF's victory, had been repatriated to Ethiopia, willingly! Kenya, thus, did not want any troubles from Ethiopia because of refugees; and thus preferred to "repatriate" them anytime at the behest of the *Derg* or the current government. Moreover, no international organization opposed this and similar refoulements by governments in the Horn of Africa.⁶⁶

Since the mid-1990s, however, the Ethiopian refugee route of flight has changed. Kenya is today becoming the main destination of Ethiopian refugees in the Horn of Africa. This shift is not accidental. In fact, it is a reflection of the changing politico-diplomatic realignment that is taking place among the East African countries. Sudan, which served as the springboard for almost all anti-Ethiopian elements and hence a haven for refugees, has ceased to provide the unconditional hospitality that it offered to Ethiopians since 1991. Its relationship with EPRDF has become very friendly for a number of reasons. One, its problems with Eritrea, which is also at loggerheads with Ethiopia, had compelled Sudan to seek friendly ties with Ethiopia. The latter, on its part, had refrained from supporting the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) to which the *Derg's* Ethiopia, for that matter Haile Sellassie's Ethiopia as well, were providing military training, weapons, and a safe heaven.⁶⁷ Second, unlike earlier times north and northwestern Ethiopia,

Eritrea to muddle in the internal affairs of Djibouti. See Peter. J. Schraeder, "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From 'Eye of the Hurricane' to 'Boiling Cauldron,'" African Affairs, Vol.92, No. 367 (April 1993), 203-221.

⁶⁶ Enocho O. Opondo, "Refugee Repatriation in the Horn of Africa: A Contextual Overview of Some Socio-Economic, Legal and Administrative Constraints," Tim Allen (ed.) In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa (New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1996), 25.

⁶⁷ See Spencer, Ethiopia at Bay, 306, 321. Besides, Haile Sellassie had also promised Sudan that he will curtail the Ethio-Israeli support given to the southern Sudanese liberation movement, Anyana. In return, Sudan had agreed to limit its support to ELF. See Robert G. Patman, The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87-88.

which used to be centers of political turmoil and hence major source of refugee flow to Sudan, are relatively calm. Meanwhile, south and southeastern Ethiopia, which was relatively calm in earlier times, isn't anymore. It is in these areas, including western Ethiopia, where one of the major opposition political party and national liberation movement, the OLF, is operating. As a consequence of this new political development in Ethiopia and due to the cultural ties that existed between some of the Oromo clans (Boren) in Ethiopia and Kenya, Ethiopians, mainly Oromo refugees are entering Kenya in large numbers. Third, the dissolution of Somalia as a state—a state that posed a common threat due to its irredentist claims against Ethiopia and Kenya—seemed to have lessened the desire for Kenya and Ethiopia to watch each others back; and hence Kenya's increased willingness to accept Ethiopian refugees, some of them members of Ethiopian opposition political groups with armed wings such as the OLF. Four, the statelessness in Somalia, a country which used to provide shelter to anti-Ethiopian parties, had resulted in constant political turmoil and hence no sane Ethiopian went to Somalia seeking refuge. The absence of Somalia as a viable state increased Kenya's desirability as potential refugee center. Therefore, because of the aforesaid developments, there is defiantly a shift in the ethnic origin and destination of Ethiopian refugees. However, for the 1980s refugees and immigrants in America, who constitute the majority of Ethiopians in the U.S.A., Kenya's role as a center from where Ethiopian refugees were resettled into the U.S.A. is very small or non-existent.

With Sudan, however, the scenario seemed different. Both Ethiopia and Sudan share the longest contiguous border in Africa—a border which has also lots of vents: There are many caravan trails and waterways that cut across the border. Some of these routes date from ancient

times and continued to serve even today.⁶⁸ This was so partly due to the North Central Massifs that made the caravan trails and some of the mountain passes unavoidable to traders.⁶⁹

Among such trade routes the Gondar, Matama, Basonda (in Sudan), and Gondar, Om Hagar (in present day Eritrea), then into Sudan are some. And these were a few of the main paths that connected the Ethiopian Empire for centuries and continued to do so even today.⁷⁰ Many of the trade routes had their roots in the southern part of Ethiopia. In addition to this, the many trading posts which were established by colonial powers between Ethiopia and Sudan: Gambella, (in Illubabor province of Ethiopia and on the Baro River), Kumoruk and Gizan (in Wallega Province) had further strengthened the relation between the two neighbors. Gambella, for instance, had accounted for 20 per cent of the Ethiopian export trade prior to the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935.⁷¹

Traders continued to use some of these routes, despite the introduction of modern infrastructure. These traders, often were contrabandists, who were encouraged by the scarcity of commodities especially during the reign of the *Derg*, whose command-economy principles had exacerbated such problems. Thus, notwithstanding the existence of stringent controls and the establishment of checkpoints, contraband trade between Ethiopia and Sudan flourished. Cattle from Ethiopia were exchanged for rifles, salt and other processed goods from Sudan.⁷² Despite the

⁶⁸ Yuri M. Kobishchanov, *Axum*, J. W. Michaels (ed.) and Lorraine J. Kapilano (trans.), (London: The Pennsylvania State University, 1979), 186.

⁶⁹ F. J. Simoons, *Northwest Ethiopia: People and Economy*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 205, Mesfin Wolde Mariam, *An Introductory Geography of Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa, 1972), 37-38, 40.

⁷⁰ See for the various trade routes that connected Ethiopia with Sudan and the other parts of the world C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford (trans. and eds.), *Some Records of Ethiopia 1593-1646*, (Nenden: Kraus Reprint Limited, 1967), 31, 39, 42, 191-192; James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773*, (Edinburgh: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1790), in five volumes. Volume III, 185, 490, 381; N. Pearce, *The Life and Adventure of Nationale Pearce*, J.J. Halls (ed.), (London: Heary Colburu and Richard Poentley, 1831), in two volumes Vol. II, 10; W. W. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country with an Account of Mission to Ras Ali* (London: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1972), 126-127; M. Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes: The Challenge of Islam and the Reunification of the Christian Empire 1769-1855* (London: Longmans, 1968), 45, 51.

⁷¹ Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969), 179; See also Eisei Kurimoto, "Trade Relations Between Western Ethiopia and the Nile Valley During the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, No 1, (1995), 53-63.

⁷² Shmuel Avraham and Arlene Kushner, *Treacherous Journey: My Escape From Ethiopia* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, Inc, 1986), 135-136.

war in Tigray, the TPLF, too, was involved in this illegal cross-boarder trade. It exported agricultural products to in exchange of items like salt, which it redistributed to the rest of Ethiopia.⁷³ However, most contraband traders were individuals drawn from the local peasants, farmer-trader, who reside adjoining the Ethio-Sudanese border (Matemma and Humara localities) and there were also some traders from the highlands of Gondar.

It was also these traders who were increasingly involved in smuggling out people across the border. In return for their daring service, they were paid handsomely, Eth\$ 600 and above per person. It appears that a person who wanted to travel to Sudan during the rainy season was expected to pay more.⁷⁴ One rational for the increase in guiding fee was the rivers that usually overflow during the rainy season and, therefore, made travel difficult. Besides, it was during this time of year that peasants were engaged in farming. Thus, they did not want to risk the source of their main livelihood, farming, for a dangerous job that would not cover their annual income.

Almost throughout their modern history, Ethiopians seemed to have always looked towards Sudan as an abode at times of distress: During the reign of Yohanness IV (1871-1889), because of his religious policy, and during the Great Famine of 1889, people had migrated to Sudan.⁷⁵ In the years of Italian occupation (1935-1941), too, many Ethiopians had left for Sudan. It was also in Sudan that Emperor Haile Silassie and Orde Wingate planned the campaign against the Italians.⁷⁶

Sudan had also other variables that bind it with Ethiopia and that makes it a favorite destination for Ethiopian refugees. One such factor is population movement within and outside of the politically delineated territories which is a common phenomena in the African continent. Such

⁷³ Alemseged Abbay, Identity Jilted or Remaking Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrayan Nationalist Struggles (New Jersey: Red Sea Press Inc, 1998), 120.

⁷⁴ Tadele Seyoum Teshale With the Assistance of Virginia Lee Barnes, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee (1984-1991): Sojourn in the Fourth World (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 47.

⁷⁵ Zewde Gebre-Sellassie, Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975), 97, 170, 179.

⁷⁶ Haile Sellassie I King of Kings of Ethiopia, My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, Vol. II, (ed.) Harold Marcus et al (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1994), 109-140.

movement could be triggered by natural calamities, population pressure or could be part of the survival mechanism of groups of people such as pastoralists. Accordingly, any cross border migration of Ethiopians into Sudan could also be the result of a combination of all or part of these factors. For instance, the Beni Amir and the Habab not only migrate to Sudan but also reside straddling the two countries.⁷⁷ For these two tribes and many others Port Sudan, the largest city next to Khartoum, is the center of attraction.

Kassala was one of the main destinations for Ethiopian migrants prior to the Ethiopian Revolution. It is only 40 kilometers away from the Eritrean town of Tessenei. So well-situated was the city the Italians planned to construct a railway line that connected the Sudanese town of Kassala, and the Ethiopian town of Tessenei, and thence to Humera and Gondar.⁷⁸

Besides its geographic proximity, Kassala was also important as the spiritual capital for the Khatmiya Islamic sect whose adherents reside on both sides of the of the Ethio-Sudanese border. The founder of the Khatmiya order, Al Sayed Al Hassan, was buried there. In addition, one of the founders of the Muslim League Party of Eritrea, Sayed Abu Baker al Mirghani, was a Khatmiya. As a result, not only Kassala became the spiritual center for the Eritrean Muslims, but also one of the very few places where the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (ELF) established branch offices in its early days.⁷⁹ Accordingly, it was natural for the first wave of Eritrean refugees to flee to Kassala in 1960s where they had no problem either identifying themselves as followers of the Khatmiya order or co-ethnics.

⁷⁷ Ahmed Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugee in Sudan," John R Rogge (ed), Refugees: A Third World Dilemma (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1987), 117; See also J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 155-158.

⁷⁸ E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Eritrea on the Eve: The Past and the Future of Italy's 'First-born 'Colony, Ethiopia's Ancient Sea Province (Essex: New Times and Ethiopian News Books, 1952), 16.

⁷⁹ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugee in Sudan," 119; The Khatmyya order is also known as Mirghaniyya; see Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia, 244-246.

Capitalist penetration, such as the development of commercial farms in eastern Sudan in the 1960s added another dimension on the nature and pattern of the cross border relation between Ethiopia and Sudan. The farming was capital intensive and mechanized. Yet, there was always a demand for farm labor, which now began to be supplied by Ethiopians, mainly from Eritrea. It was during this time that the secessionist struggle commenced in Eritrea; and thus people began to migrate to eastern Sudan. As a result, Tawawa, a small eastern Sudanese border town, evolved as one of the oldest refugee camps sheltering Ethiopians.⁸⁰

In developed countries, governments maintain insurance programs that protected workers and their families from the risk of deteriorating economic conditions, injury at work place, . . . etc. But in poor countries like Ethiopia, there is no insurance against crop failure, unemployment, and disability. Thus, one safety valve against such disaster is to migrate in search of jobs that could help augment the meager income.⁸¹ Accordingly, the development of commercial farms in Sudan began to further attract laborers mainly, but not exclusively from Tigray and Gondar. Among these laborers, some acquired their own farm while others evolved into tractor mechanics, drivers, and cross border traders. Some still continued to work on Sudanese farms during off farming season in Ethiopia. These Ethiopians were sojourners. After the harvest season, they always returned to their home, Ethiopia, (Gondar, Tigray, Wollo and even Gojjam).^{82*}

⁸⁰ Jerry L. Weaver, "Sojourners along the Nile: Ethiopian Refugees in Khartoum," Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1985, 147; see also Jason W. Clay and Bonnie K. Holcomb, Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 1984-1985 (Cambridge: Cultural Survival Inc., 1986), 51.

⁸¹ Douglas Massey et al, "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal," Population and Development Review, Vol. 19, No. 3, (1993), 437.

⁸² Weaver, "Sojourners along the Nile," 147; Clay and Holcomb, Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 51.

* Because of the proximity of Gojjam to Wallega, one of the major coffee producing areas in Ethiopia, many Gojjames migrate to Wallega during the coffee harvesting seasons (approximately between December and May). As a result of this, all daily laborers in Wallega are referred "Goje," meaning "a man from Gojjam." However, these seasonal labor migrants also include people from Gondar, especially a locality called Iste, in southern Gondar and from Wollo. Thus, seasonal labor migration to areas of cash crop from the northern half of the country is not unknown among Ethiopians, during pre and post-revolution days.

By the beginning of the 1970s, Ethiopia, too, had started commercial farms in the central and northwestern part of the country. The latter was in Gondar province, in the Matamma-Humera area, which adjoins the Sudanese border. With the help of the Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID) of the Ministry of Agriculture, the farmers were organized and established the Walqayt Satit-Humara Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd., in 1969. This enabled them to secure loans from the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB). Therefore, thousands of peasants from Gondar and Tigray moved to these farms. It is said that at the peak of the farming season the number of laborers in Matamma-Humara towns reached between 80,000 and 150,000 people.⁸³ In addition to the peasants, there were rural traders who were ferrying goods between these border towns and the nearby cites.⁸⁴

However, the rise of the military junta to power, the nationalization of the rural and urban land and the prohibition of the use of hired farm labor changed the whole situation in the border towns. It virtually killed the commercial farms. As a result, it is said that thousands of peasants, most of them from Tigray, lost a good source of income.⁸⁵

The destruction of the farm had other repercussions. The peasant-traders who used to trade between Humera-Matama and Gondar, and Humera-Matama and Tigray were negatively affected. Though, the *Derg* had revived the farms at a later date ⁸⁶ its control of trade and the many

⁸³ Solomon A Getahun, "A History of the City of Gondar (1936-1974)," MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University 1994, 284.

⁸⁴ See for the establishment and impact of commercial farming on the peasants in the central part of the country Bulcha, "Conquest and Forced Migration," 38-41; for earlier periods of agricultural development, labor migration to northwestern part of Ethiopia, and cross-boarder trade between Ethiopia (Humera), Sudan and Italian Eritrea see James C McCann, "A Dura Revolution and Frontier Agriculture in Northwest Ethiopia, 1898-1920" The Journal of African History, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1990), 121-134.

⁸⁵ Young, Peasant Revolution, 93-101.

⁸⁶ Addis Zemen, 38th year, No. 60, Friday Hidar 13; and No. 105, Wednesday, Ginbot 5, 1972 EC.

checkpoints were discouraging.⁸⁷ Therefore, these people often have no choice except leaving the country for Sudan or join one or the other guerilla movements operating in the region.

The political crisis in Ethiopia in general and the situation in Humera-Matama area in particular had resulted in an influx of refugees into Sudan. The latter, which always faced shortage of labor, seemed to have profited from the mayhem in Ethiopia. As Clay and Holcomb noted it:

Most of the early refugees who arrived in Sudan from Gondar and Tigray were forced by the Sudanese to settle in refugee camps that became notorious for supplying cheap labor to neighboring agricultural schemes in eastern Sudan. They have consequently been widely referred as labor camps. Refugees in these camps were expected to work for nearby Sudanese farmers, and it was projected that they would become 'self-sufficient' from the wages they earned there.⁸⁸

Thus, the temporary settlement sites in eastern Sudan, which initially have been designed as a labor pool for the country's commercial farm, were transformed into refugee camps, with of course the original purpose intact. Tawawa, thus, seemed to have remained as the most favored refugee camp by the Sudanese government to which refugees from other sites were transferred. For instance in 1979, some 20,000 refugees were forcefully brought to this camp from other sites.⁸⁹

The *Derg* tried to revive the commercial farms by changing them into state farms.⁹⁰ However, there was no labor force willing to work in these areas. Yet, to achieve success in the so-called Green Revolution, the *Derg* "began to capture and to forcefully transport vagrants and people considered undesirable from cities to work on these state farms."⁹¹ The working condition was so harsh, and the laborers unskilled in the techniques of farming since most of them were drawn from the cities, many fled to Sudan. It is worth remembering that the ghost of the Red Terror was still haunting people. Therefore, to be nearer to the Sudanese border was a blessing in disguise. By forcing the Ethiopians to work near the border, immediately following the Red Terror

⁸⁷ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 94; Clay & Holcomb, *Politics and the Ethiopian Famine*, 53.

⁸⁸ Clay & Holcomb, *Politics and the Ethiopian Famine*, 53.

⁸⁹ Clay & Holcomb, *Politics and the Ethiopian Famine*, 53.

⁹⁰ *Addis Zemen*, 38th year, No. 60, Friday Hidar 13; and No. 105, Wednesday, Ginbot 5, 1972 EC.

⁹¹ Clay & Holcomb, *Politics and the Ethiopian Famine*, 53.

and mass killings, the *Derg* "helped" many Ethiopians, who wanted to leave the country, from the danger of being caught on their way to Sudan.

The tit-for-tat policy of both Sudan and Ethiopia had enabled antigovernment forces to operate in their respective territories. As a result, Sudan became the home of almost all Ethiopian opposition forces. It allowed them to function in its territory. For instance, ELF had military training bases in Sudan.⁹² Besides, when ELF finally lost the momentum against EPLF, and the *Derg's* Red Star Campaign, it retreated to Sudan.⁹³ The latter disarmed some 3,000 ELF fighters who had entered the country to repose and regroup.⁹⁴ Thus, ELF was able to survive and continued to be a viable factor on the issue of Eritrea by operating from Sudan.

The same was true to the EPLF, which established its own aid organizations, the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA), in Sudan and which run many other branch organizations in Sudan. So much was the entrenchment of these fronts in Sudan, the EPLF leadership had openly threatened the Sudanese government if the latter tried to close the Ethio-Sudanese border in 1980. At that time, Col. Mengistu of Ethiopia and Gen. Numery of Sudan had reached an understanding to normalize their relationship, and stop harboring and helping each other's enemies.⁹⁵

The Sudanese government has also accorded the TPLF similar privileges and protection. It had its schools, health centers and aid organization, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) in Sudan.⁹⁶ Besides, at the height of the 1984 famine during which the EPLF refused to let in relief supplies via Kassala, Sudan, into Tigray while millions of Tigrayans starved to death, the TPLF opened a new route to Sudan. The trail starts from Tambain, crosses western Tigray, passes through Wolqait (in North Gondar), and enters Sudan. Using this, the TPLF not only brought relief

⁹² Cliffe, "Regional Dimensions," 92, 93, 107. The Ethiopian government, on its part, had allowed Sudanese People Liberation Army (SPLA), to use Gambella. See Dawit, Red Tears, 310.

⁹³ Pool, "The Eritrean Liberation Front," 27.

⁹⁴ Africa Confidential, Vol. 22, No. 25, December 9, 1981.

⁹⁵ Africa Confidential, Vol. 21, No. 8, April 9; No. 24, Nov. 26, 1980.

⁹⁶ Dawit, Red Tears, 325.

supplies from Sudan into Tigray, but also coordinated the migration of hundreds of thousands of peasant refugees from Tigray to the Wadi Hauli camp, near the Sudanese border.⁹⁷

Similarly, both the EPRP and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) had used Sudan for various purposes. While the EDU in fact had a radio station in Omdurman and some of its prominent leaders and organizers had lived in Khartoum, EPRP often sent its severely wounded combatants to Sudan for treatment and recuperation. What is more, both EPRP and EDU, after the TPLF and the *Derg* kicked them out of Ethiopia, had taken shelter in Sudan.⁹⁸

As a consequence of the aforementioned multiple yet interrelated factors, the number of Ethiopians in Sudan which was about 4000 in the early 1970s, reached hundreds of thousands by late 1970s and kept growing. By March 1981 cities like Khartoum had 33,000; Gedarif 30,000; and Port Sudan 55,000 refugees. Moreover, the drought of 1984/1985 also drove another hundreds of thousands of people into Sudan.⁹⁹ What is more, because of the secessionist movement in Eritrea, that province remained a steady and a major source of Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. It is said that as early as 1978, some 400,000 Eritrean refugees, who constitute 13 per cent of the Eritrean population, were in Sudan.¹⁰⁰

By the 1980s, the political polarization between the central government and the secessionists has intensified. Severe drought and famine also struck the country. This, coupled with the hastily initiated resettlement program, pushed out around two million Ethiopians to the

⁹⁷ Geday, "Tigray eyaya bey," 44-45.

⁹⁸ Young, "The Tigray People's Liberation Front," in Christopher Clapham (ed.), African Guerrillas (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 39-40; Africa Confidential. Vol. 19, No. 31, January 6, 1978; Vol. 21, No. 16, July 30, 1980; Vol. 24, No. 19, September 21, 1983.

⁹⁹ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugee in Sudan," 115, Tina Wallace, "Briefing: Refugee and hunger in Western Sudan," Review of African Political Economy. No 33, (August 1985), 64.

¹⁰⁰ Peter H. Koehn, Refugee from the Revolution: US Policy and Third-World Migration (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 83.

neighboring countries, mainly Sudan, while making Ethiopia one of the major refugee producing part of the world.¹⁰¹

Since the seizure of power by the *Derg*, diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Ethiopia, mainly, and with other Western powers, generally, had cooled off. Because of this and for ideological reasons, the *Derg* restricted permits to Ethiopians who were leaving the country for Western Europe and U.S. As a result, during the reign of the *Derg* many Ethiopians left the country in the pretext of business or visiting relatives residing abroad. The majority, however, took the arduous journey across the border illegally.¹⁰²

The *Derg* also denied access to overseas education for people who could afford to send their children. It also told academicians, who had successfully secured scholarships from the West, to pursue their education at home.¹⁰³ It was, therefore, only government officials and their relatives who could travel out of the country. Anyone who otherwise attempted was considered as a lackey of imperialism and thus reactionary. The way out was to go to Sudan or to some degree to Kenya. In fact, many well-off Ethiopians who had relatives in America and Europe, and those who had successfully resettled in the U.S. and other places, informed their families in Ethiopia to leave for Sudan. From there, it was relatively easy for Ethiopians residing in America to sponsor relatives from Ethiopia.¹⁰⁴ The presence of American and other refugee agencies such as the International Committee for Migration (ICM), the International Catholic Migration Committee (ICMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), to name the few, in Sudan, whose main function was to

¹⁰¹ Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 2.

¹⁰² Koehn, Refugees, 79.

¹⁰³ It seems that one of the intentions of the *Derg* in establishing the Graduate Program of the Addis Ababa University in 1979 was to deny the Western trained intellectuals of Ethiopia any chance of escape to the West. If there was anything that the country's university cannot do, students were sent to the Eastern Block countries from where escape is difficult if not impossible.

¹⁰⁴ Informant: Shakspeer. He is the son of one of the well to do families in Ethiopia. Because his family was unable to send him to USA, they sent him to Kenya, and told him to stay until he got a visa to America. During all these times, his family covered his expenses. Interview: Seattle, WA, May 27, 1997.

facilitate the resettlement of Ethiopians in the U.S. further intensified the attraction of Ethiopians towards Sudan.¹⁰⁵

Pan-Arabism also played a role in influencing Ethiopian refugee movements into the neighboring countries, mainly Sudan. From the start, many Arab countries were opposed to Eritrea's union with Ethiopia. They viewed Eritreans as Arabs. When the Eritrean secessionist struggle started in 1960s, Sudan and other Arab countries considered it as a struggle against Christian domination. Because of the Blue Nile River and its tributaries (Ethiopia is a source for 85 per cent of the Nile waters) on which Sudan's life depended, Sudan also has an interest in destabilizing Ethiopia. Hence, it provided material support and served as a safe heaven for Eritreans secessionists and Ethiopians opposed to the Ethiopian government. The Eritrean secessionist movements, on their part, had claimed an Arab identity.¹⁰⁶ Thus, they were most welcome in Sudan and the neighboring Arab countries.

Operation Moses, which smuggled thousands of Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel) pejoratively known as *Falasha*, out of Ethiopia, was also conducted in the early 1980s. The main center of operation was in Sudan. Thus, many Gondere (a person from Gondar) peasants and some from Tigray had trudged to Sudan, either independently or through organizational channels.¹⁰⁷ Such instances had also opened venues for other Ethiopians, mainly from Gondar, to migrate as Beta Israel to the U.S.: The Beta Israelis supplied the necessary information to their non-Beta Israel friends; and thus the latter were able to make it to Sudan, then to Israel or the United States.

¹⁰⁵ From Powel A. More, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations to the Honorable Clarence D. Long, Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Committee on Appropriations House of Representatives. May 12, 1982. See also Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 128.

¹⁰⁶ Alemseged Abbay, Identity Jilted or Remaking Identity? The Divergent Paths of the Eritrean and Tigrayan Nationalist Struggles (New Jersey: Red Sea Press Inc, 1998), 113; See also Ruth Iyob, The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 108-120.

¹⁰⁷ Ahmed Karadawi, "The Smuggling of the Ethiopian Falasha to Israel Through Sudan," African Affairs, Vol. 90, No. 358 (January 1991), 23-49; Newsweek, January 14, 1985; Dawit, Red Tears, 113-119.

Chapter II. 3: The Journey to Sudan

It is apparent that most Ethiopians had left their country for Sudan through Eritrea, Tigray, and Gondar. While the first two provinces were centers of ethno-nationalist movements serving specifically their own ethnic members, Gondar was the strong hold of the two multi-nationalist organizations such as EPRP and EDU. Accordingly, in addition to the traditional routes between the border towns of Gondar (Humera and Matamma), and Sudan, there were an EPRP and EDU clandestine networks throughout Ethiopia, which was also connected with Sudan.¹⁰⁸ It should be remembered that Sudan was the home of almost all anti-Ethiopian government forces.¹⁰⁹

The underground structures of EDU and EPRP were used, beside other things, to rescue their members and bring them to Gondar, their politico-military bases, or funnel them to Sudan.¹¹⁰ As a result, peoples of diverse ethnic origin, who were members of these organizations, had been saved from the security agents of the *Derg*. Most of them, at least those members of the EPRP, were educated Ethiopians.¹¹¹

Most often, the organizations recruited guides from the local population and usually they also armed the guides. Due to security considerations, the escapees undertook the journey at night. However, daytime travel was also possible in areas which the organizations controlled, or at places where the grip of the *Derg* was lax.

However, there was always the danger of being caught. The *Derg* had established many checkpoints at strategic junctions of roads and trails throughout the country. Peasant associations

¹⁰⁸ Shmuel Avraham and Arlene Kushner, Treacherous Journey: My Escape from Ethiopia (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, Inc, 1986), 130, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Lionel Cliffe, "Regional Dimensions of the Conflict in the Horn of Africa," Third World Quarterly, Vol. 20, No 1, (1999) 92, 93, 107; Young, Peasant Revolution, 129-130; Africa Confidential, Vol. 19, No.31, January 6, 1978; Vol. 21, No. 16, July 30, 1980; Vol. 22, No. 25, December 19, 1981.

¹¹⁰ About EPRP's structure in the different parts of Ethiopia and some of the manners of escape, see Kiflu, The Generation, 79, 328-342; for EDU's base of operations see Young, Peasant Revolution, 100-105.

¹¹¹ John Markakis and Nega Ayele, Class and Revolution in Ethiopia (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978), 163-168.

and local militias manned these thoroughfares. At times, depending on the security situation of a locality, the *Derg* would station regular army units. Thus, the government could capture escapees despite their use of clandestine channels and their effort to disguise themselves.¹¹²

The most likely victims to be caught by the *Derg* were individuals who were not members of certain organizations but who would try to escape to freedom. These people usually arranged their travel with relatives or traders who were peasants residing along the border. The latter were also increasingly involved in smuggling out people across the border. The fee for the guiding depends upon one's relation with the person. If the escapee were a relative of the guide, he/she might not pay. But, if he/she was not, it might cost the "traveler" 600 *birr* (roughly \$300 in those days).¹¹³

After such agreements, preparations regarding where, how and when to convene, and what things to take was decided. Most often, the convenient place to meet a peasant in an urban setting was the market place, where it is easier to mingle and remain undetected. Otherwise, the presence of a peasant in the neighborhood could raise suspicion from the local authorities. Once in the market, people from the city buy peasant clothes (a pair of shorts, a short sleeved shirt and sandals). This and other necessary things such as food, flashlights, quinine for malaria, etc. were loaded on donkey's of the guide in the market.¹¹⁴

The journey to Sudan could take several days or weeks depending from where the individual started his/her travel. It was usually done during the nighttime, which will expose travelers to wild beasts. Sometimes, escapees could also be afflicted with sickness, mainly from malaria,

¹¹² Tadele Seyoum Teshale with the Assistance of Virginia Lee Barnes, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee (1984-1991): Sojourn in the Fourth World (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991), 41, 42; Mekuria Bulcha, Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and Problems of Integration in the Sudan (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988), p. 105; Young, p. 94; Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 114-115, 141.

¹¹³ Tadele, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee, 47; Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 113-142.

¹¹⁴ Tadele, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee, 49; see also Kiflu, The Generation, 328-342.

which made travel more difficult.¹¹⁵ There was also the danger of being caught by anyone. It might be an ambitious peasant who might want to capitalize on the situation. The peasant would hand over the fugitives to local officials, especially when he found them without a peasant guide. Even if there was a peasant guide, as long as the escapees did not have passes, their captors or government authorities consider them as counterrevolutionaries.

In return for capturing "reactionaries," the government usually rewarded the peasant with a rifle, a favorite prize in northern Ethiopia. If there was a peasant guide with the fugitives, then the outcome could be different. The guide, most often being the native of the locality, would consider any hostile action as an affront against him and his family and thus the situation might end up in a blood feud between the opportunist peasant and the guide.

If "the captor" was a *shifita* (bandit), payment of some money might solve the problem. The *shifita* might also take some belongings of the travelers. The reason is obvious: he, too, was hunted by the government, and thus could not take his human booty to the authorities. Nevertheless, there were instances in which the government would promise to pardon *shiftas* if the latter caught and handed over a highly wanted "reactionary."¹¹⁶ At other times, the government simply circulated a rumor, which portrays the fugitive as a person who was running away with lots of money. This made the escapee a target for bounty hunters and *shiftas* and thus the runaway could be killed without much ado. One escapee, who almost fell prey to a *shifita* as a result of one such ploy of the *Derg*, stated that "even though we were far away from Gondar, in an area of the highland controlled by anti revolutionaries, there was a direct link from the *shifita* back to Major Melaku [nick named the butcher of Gondar] in Gondar."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Tadele, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee, 48; Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 127.

¹¹⁶ Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 121, 123, 126-127.

¹¹⁷ Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 123.

But there were times in which the *shifta* and the guide might also conspire before hand. Thus, the moment the *shifta* appeared, the guide flees as if he was scared for his life. Or, he could act as an intermediary between the *shifta* and the travelers. Then the *shifta* would exact whatever "price" he wanted.¹¹⁸

If there were women among the fugitives, the *shifta* often demand "sexual favors" with one of them, or take her for good. During these times, the travelers had to choose between her and their lives. If they were lucky, they could give the *shifta* whatever money and belongings they had, and continue the journey to safety. As a consequence, there are many young girls who had been "captured," raped or abused by the lowlanders, and whose whereabouts still unknown.¹¹⁹ Raping refugee women has become a common phenomenon either on their way to escape or upon arrival into a second country. In this circumstances, Bulcha Mekuria, noted

The humiliation of rape affects not only the women themselves, but often also the male refugee from whom they are separated ...and molested. When men are relatives or husbands, rape becomes even collective predicament. The powerlessness felt by men to protect their family members from such horrendous disgrace as rape leads to guilty feeling and loss of self-respect, which they may not overcome in their lives. The tragedy may not end with that, it could also cause family disintegration.¹²⁰

Aside from the trickle of individuals, members of certain organizations who made it to Sudan fleeing political persecution, there were also instances where hundreds of thousands of peasants of a certain region were moved or told to move to Sudan. A good instance of this was the

¹¹⁸ Avraham and Kushner, *Treacherous Journey*, 128-129.

¹¹⁹ Informant: Easter. She is a resident of Seattle who made it to the US from Sudan. She had escaped the Derg by traveling the arduous journey to Sudan via Gondar.

¹²⁰ Bulcha, "Conquest," 45; for refugee women experience in East Africa and parts of the world see Loveness H. Schafer, "True Survivors: East African Refugee Women," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 2002), 51-75; Roberta Cohen, "What's So Terrible about Rape? And Other Attitudes in the United Nations," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer-Fall 2002), 73-77; Judith Gardam and Hilary Charlesworth, "Protection of Women in Armed Conflict," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Feb. 2000), 148-166; Catherine N. Niarchos, "Women, War and Rape: Challenges Facing the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (November 1995), 649-690.

1984/85 TPLF organized exodus of Tigray peasants to Sudan.¹²¹ On their way, individual *shiftas* or government militias did not threaten them. But, some of them were too frail to make the journey.

Peasants of Tigray left for Sudan because of the confrontation between the TPLF and EPLF. Until 1984, many of the refugees from Tigray had left the province through Eritrea to Kassala. But because of the conflict with the EPLF, and because of the TPLF's success against EDU and EPRP in the Gondar region, the TPLF was able to chart a new route to Sudan via Humera. The other reason for their migration was that the TPLF misinformed them that if they left for the *Derg* controlled relief centers, they would be forcefully conscripted into the *Derg* army. Even if they were aware that the TPLF had advised them wrong, the peasants had no choice except following orders. They were fearful of TPLF's retribution.¹²² The refugees settled in the newly opened refugee camp, Wad Kauli. This camp was situated eleven km away from the Ethiopian border and 100 km from the Sudanese town of Gadarif. Here, the organization had brought about 200,000 famished people within a year.¹²³

The TPLF provided guides for many of the peasants from Tigray who left for Sudan. Upon arrival in Sudan, the peasants seemed to have expected that they would be given clothes, food, tools and seeds. Their intention was to go back home when the rainy season begun. But, because of the bombings of the *Derg*, the journey, and the malaria and typhoid epidemic, many died either on their way to Sudan or in one of the refugee camps. Nevertheless, many Tigrayans managed to go back,¹²⁴ and some have found their way to America.

¹²¹ Young, Peasant Revolution, 131.

¹²² Dawit, Red Tears, 314.

¹²³ Dawit, Red Tears, 133; Clay & Holcomb, Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 53, 65-57; Young, Peasant Revolution, 133; Alemseged, Identity Jilted, 129, 132.

¹²⁴ Clay & Holcomb, Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 70-71; Barbara Hendrie, "Assisting Refugees in the Context of Warfare," Tim Allen (ed.) in In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa (New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc, 1996), 35.

Apart from the TPLF-led peasant exodus, there were refugees, who fled resettlement sites from southwestern Ethiopia. These refugees made it to Sudan from Matakeli, Asosa, and Gambella areas. They began arriving in Sudan, the Blue Nile and Upper Nile Administrative regions sometime in 1985. Sudanese security officials and residents of the areas found some of the Ethiopians who were wandering in those regions without, however, being certain if they had crossed the Ethiopian border or not. They were picked up either by Sudanese security officials, people of the locality, or by one of the relief agencies such as RST, the Oromo Relief Association (ORA), and Sudanese Commission of Refugees (COR). Upon arrival, they were collected at a holding center at Demazin. Almost all of them wished to be sent home. In fact, many of them viewed their entry into Sudan as part of their journey back home, mainly Wallo Province of Ethiopia.¹²⁵

At times big power politics also seemed to have helped the cross-border movement of people from Ethiopia.¹²⁶ This was the case of the Beta Israel migration to Sudan and thence to Israel. Until 1974, because of Ethiopia's amicable relationships with the West, no *aliya* (return) had been attempted. In fact, until 1975 the Israeli law of return did not include Ethiopian Jews. What the Israelis did in those days was to help some of the Beta Israel in Gondar. But since the days of the Revolution, the plight of the Beta Israel who were under Marxist rule became an issue.¹²⁷ The Beta Israel trekked to Gadarif or Tewawa from Gondar, and entered the refugee camps like any other

¹²⁵ Clay & Holcomb, Politics and the Ethiopian Famine, 77-78, Young, Peasant Revolution, 133, Dawit, Red Tears, 325.

¹²⁶ Judith Bentley, Refugees: Search for a Heaven (New York: Julian Messner, 1986), 53.

¹²⁷ The current Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, who visited Ethiopia in the early 1970s, and who met some of the Beta Israel in Gondar, noted that the Beta Israel were surprised to find out that there were Israelis in other parts of the world. See Ariel Sharon with David Chanoff, Warrior: The Autobiography of Ariel Sharon (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 172-174, 419-420; Ian Blank and Benny Morris, Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 185-187, 427; Dawit, Red Tears, 244-250, and his view of Operation Moses, 317-320; See also Mitchell Bard and Howard Lenhoff, "The Humanitarian Side of the Reagan Administration, The Rescue of Ethiopian Jews: Who Would Believe that the CIA and the Reagan Administration had Worked Covertly in a Foreign country for a Humanitarian Goal?," The Humanist, Vol.47 (November/December, 1987), 25-26; Ahmed Karadawi, "The Smuggling of the Ethiopian Falasha to Israel Through Sudan," African Affairs, Vol. 90, No. 358 (January 1991), 23-49; Avraham and Kushner, Treacherous Journey, 47.

refugees. Once in Gadarif, they were transferred to Port Sudan or Khartoum, mostly on trucks but some times by plane. From there, they were shipped or flew to Israel, mostly after detouring at a European or North American country so as not to risk suspicion. Beginning from the early 1980s, Israel was able to transplant around 7000 Beta Israel to Israel this way.¹²⁸

The Beta Israel of Gondar also seemed to have benefited from the underground networks of EPRP and EDU, which the organizations charted between Gondar and Sudan. This happened either because some of the Beta Israel had been supporters and members of EPRP, or because of the proximity of some of the Beta Israel settlements to the city and the arterial roads, EPRP might have found it very important to include the Beta Israel in its urban and rural structures. In both cases, the Beta Israel were involved with EPRP and had benefited from its networks or the other way round.¹²⁹ Nevertheless the operation, code named "Moses," became an open secret. Consequently, the Sudanese government became suspicious of every Ethiopian refugee and began to stop, search, and even interrogate Ethiopians. For them, every Ethiopian was a Beta Israel.¹³⁰

Therefore, arriving in Sudan did not always insure safety. The *Derg* was noted for kidnapping refugees from Gadarif whom it considered a threat. The kidnapped refugees were killed on sight or taken back to Ethiopia for "questioning." Often, security officers of the military junta would enter Sudanese towns tracking fugitives or looking for information about their whereabouts.¹³¹ Because of this, many political refugees left for Khartoum to avoid *Derg's* security

¹²⁸ Tadele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 2; See also *Newsweek*, January 14, 1985; Dawit, 317-318; Also Ahmed Karadawi, "The Smuggling of the Ethiopian Falasha to Israel Through Sudan," *African Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 358 (Jan., 1991), 23-49. For a detailed account of the Beta Israel exodus, see Tudor Parfitt, *Operation Moses: The Untold Story of the Exodus of the Falasha Jew From Ethiopia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985).

¹²⁹ Avraham and Kushner, *Treacherous Journey*, 51, 52, 55, 57, 70, 82, 86.

¹³⁰ Tadele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 58-59. It is not uncommon to accuse Ethiopian refugees as "Black Jews" and agents of the US; and mistreat them in some Muslim/Arab countries. See "Libyans Tortured Us Say Ethiopians," UN Integrated Regional Information Network, June 6, 2001: On the web: <http://www.irinnews.org/>.

¹³¹ Avraham and Kushner, *Treacherous Journey*, 140, 141.

agents and the threat from them. The other option was to change their names and identity, which had also its own drawbacks.* Those refugees whom the *Derg* had specially targeted could ask the UNHCR for a special protection program in Khartoum. If the UNHCR representative believed in the case, the person was immediately given asylum in a third country.¹³²

Chapter II. 4. The Lives of Ethiopian Refugees in Sudan, 1970s-1990s: Some Features

The 1970s was a decade, which could be characterized as a time of political turmoil that emanated from drought and famine, war and revolutions, or economic dislocation resulting from variables including the rising oil prices.¹³³ One consequence of the crisis was the change of governments, which most often was accompanied with refugee "production." Afghanistan, Indochina, Southern and Central Africa, and Central America were some centers of the turmoil with massive refugee problems.¹³⁴ These predicaments were, of course, in addition to the already existing Palestinian refugee problem.

However, by 1980s the refugee situation in Africa was getting worse. It was becoming one of the places with the largest refugee population in the world. Though it is true that Africans have been very accommodating to refugees, their hospitality was also the result of their inability to stop the refugee inflow and other factors such as political concerns or advantages, traditional population settlement patterns, cultural ties, the prospect of foreign aid, etc. Thus, most often, their goodwill did not come from having a healthy economy. In the 1980s, refugees were concentrated in some of

¹³² Taddele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 57-58.

* Due to security considerations, many Ethiopian refugees in Sudan who were admitted into the US in the 1980 have taken a new identity, including taking an Arab name. Because of this, while they were able to ward off any potential incrimination that could be used against their families, they have also encountered problems. They were unable to communicate with their families. They could not use their educational credentials because of identity change. Thus, when they came to America most of these refugees who changed their identities has to start afresh while those who took Arab name had difficulty facing and convincing their parents and relatives in Ethiopia why they did and explaining what they did was just a name change.

¹³³ Bentley, *Refugees*, 47.

¹³⁴ Bentley, *Refugee*, 19-20.

the poorest countries of the developing world. Eight of the twelve countries with the highest ratios of refugees to local populations were in Africa; and yet their per capita GNP was less than \$500.¹³⁵ One of these poor refugee-receiving countries was Sudan. It had a vast empty space with overcrowded towns. And the settlement trend was not to fill this vast empty space but to further congest the urban centers, while depopulating the low-density places. This was the result of a lop-sided post-independence economic development. The construction of railways, highways, waterways, new industries, and irrigation schemes, educational, administrative and cultural centers were concentrated in the eastern region, Khartoum, and Gezira areas. In these areas, mainly Khartoum and Kassala, showed a high rate of urbanization (3 per cent), while in the northern and southern regions and the Kordofan area the rate of urban growth was 1.5 per cent per year. The population growth rate, too, was skewed. The urban centers that were found in the middle regions had 7.4 per cent per year while the national rate was 2.8 per cent.¹³⁶

In terms of amenities and services, Khartoum stands alone. It had 73 per cent of all the industries, 75 per cent of the workers engaged in manufacturing, 80 per cent of all banking, and all the higher educational institutions excepting the universities of Gezira and Juba. It also accounts for the highest rate of school enrollment of school age children. As a result, there is a high rate of rural-urban migration to Khartoum that was estimated at 70 per cent of the overall migration in the country. Yet, there was a deficit of more than 100,000 housing units in the city. Consequently, house rent, which consumes 40 per cent of the income of the city's population, continued to rise unabated. Inflation and devaluation furthered the already poor living conditions.¹³⁷ What is more, in the said period, drought further exacerbated the already deteriorating situation. 80 per cent of the

¹³⁵ Bentley, *Refugee*, 22-24, 106, 109, 115.

¹³⁶ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 116; Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 274.

¹³⁷ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 116.

harvest failed, which caused higher prices for grain from S30 pounds in 1984 to S140 pounds in January 1985.

In light of the aforementioned facts, the Sudanese did not appreciate the presence of refugees from Ethiopia and other neighbors. The poor rainfall had curtailed the possibility of Ethiopians being employed in Sudanese farms. Meanwhile, the long term planning of the UNHCR, to make the refugees self-sufficient, did not work. The agricultural land given to the refugees could not be cultivated. Some of the products of the refugees could not be sold as the result of the overall poverty of Eastern Sudan. As a consequence, many of the refugees, mainly women and children, remained dependent on aid.¹³⁸ Therefore, it was apparent that any economic hardship or political instability in Sudan had a negative repercussion on Ethiopian refugees in the country. They were not welcome.

Thus, arrival of a refugee to one of the Sudanese border towns such as Basonda, which was also a traditional caravan trade center, did not usually mean that the refugee's safety was guaranteed. The town, being nearer to Ethiopia, was vulnerable to Ethiopian military incursions. On the other hand, it being one of the first refugee destinations from Ethiopia, the Sudanese authorities were always watchful. They were suspicious of Ethiopian spies who might come to Sudan disguised as refugees. And since Operation Moses, the Sudanese began viewing every Ethiopian as a Beta Israel, which provided them with an additional excuse to abuse and mistreat Ethiopian refugees.

Consequently, even if Ethiopian refugees escaped the *Derg*, their ordeal was not yet over. They had to prove that they were not spies. Interrogation and abuse by Sudanese officials and

¹³⁸ Tina Wallace, "Briefing: Refugee and Hunger in Western Sudan," Review of African Political Economy. No 33, (August 1985), 65.

policemen was common. Sometimes, refugees could be sent to jail for days even weeks until their honesty was verified from either Khartoum or Gadarif.¹³⁹

If an Ethiopian could produce some kind of identity card, his tribulation was less. Some people who had planned their trip ahead could produce such IDs,¹⁴⁰ but many of the Ethiopians left their country in dire circumstances (some had escaped prison or capture by the militia and security forces in the middle of the night), and it was impossible to have ID. In fact, most travelers often destroyed any traces of their identity during their flight to Sudan. Upon arriving in Sudan, almost all Ethiopians took another name and identity. This was intended not to betray oneself upon capture by the peasant militias and *Derg* security forces. If a person can disguise himself/herself well, then he/she can successfully evade capture and also save their remaining families at home from the retribution of the junta. Even if he/she was caught, with the absence of any ID, there is still a chance to argue and convince his/her captor that he/she is not someone whom the militias were looking or he/she could claim that he/she is not from the city.

But, upon arrival in Sudan refugees badly needed identification cards. However, it was not easy to get one from the Sudanese authorities. They had to bribe the authorities to get one. At times of "cleansing," the Sudanese capital off its undesirable elements by the Sudanese police, these ID cards did not prevent an Ethiopian from either being sent to jail, threatened with deportation or from being relocated to one of the refugee camps. Therefore, to avoid capture and harassment, the Ethiopian often have to avoid main roads.¹⁴¹

Moreover, some of the border camps were feeding grounds. They were usually packed with famished people and less hygienic, which made them breeding grounds for various kinds of epidemics. Malnutrition and hunger are day-to-day phenomena: A person had to wait in line for

¹³⁹ Taddele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 50-51, 60.

¹⁴⁰ Taddele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 52-53.

¹⁴¹ Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 274.

hours to get food. The Sudanese climate was completely different from highland Ethiopia; and thus excruciating.¹⁴² Yet, the Sudanese authorities would not allow Ethiopians to enter towns where there was a relative safety and better chance of survival compared to refugee camps.

After proving their innocence, Ethiopian refugees were issued a temporary pass by the Sudanese officials at points of entry. Even so, such passes would not save an Ethiopian from harassment by the Sudanese authorities. A refugee had to go to Twawa, a small Sudanese town and a refugee center eight km away from Gadarif and the nearest Red Cross headquarters. There, the refugees could get medical attention, or would be issued an ID card (*bitaqa* in Sudanese Arabic) which recognizes the person as a refugee. Upon arrival, a refugee could also get fifteen Sudanese pounds for food. Asylum ID cards were available at the office of the UNHCR in Gadarif. But to get ID, one had to be interviewed by a Sudanese official first. If the official was not satisfied that the person qualified as a refugee, then deportation was imminent. It is apparent that it was at the official's discretion to decide a person was a refugee or not. Consequently, the issue of identity card becomes a crucial issue for the well being of a refugee while it also becomes a convenient pretext for Sudanese authorities to abuse Ethiopian refugees as they wish.

The problem of securing an identity card also seemed to have surfaced as the result of the conflict or lack of coordination between the Sudanese Council of Refugees (COR), which provided ID cards, work permits, licenses and travel documents, and the UNHCR.¹⁴³ The latter is responsible for providing material assistance to the refugees, but the UNHCR was overwhelmed by the refugee influx of the early 80s for which it was not prepared. Thus, refugees began to move to

¹⁴² Taddele, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee, 2; Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 150.

¹⁴³ For lack of coordination between refugee NGOs and the lack of humane treatment of refugees see Barbara E. Harrell-Bond, "Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees be Humane?" Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 1 (February 2002), 51-85; Alexander Cooley, "The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action," International Security, Volume 27, Number 1, (Summer 2002), 5-39; Tom J. Farer, "How the International System Copes with Involuntary Migration: Norms, Institutions and State Practice," Human Rights Quarterly Vol. 17, No. (February 1995) 72-100.

urban centers in search of jobs. Their attraction towards the urban core was further encouraged when the UNHCR moved one of its agencies, Refugee Counseling Service (RCS), to Khartoum. The increasing congregation of Ethiopians in towns further pressured the already distressed Sudanese economy, and brought in prompt government intervention. The police, the state security, and the municipal authorities took the task of COR. Not only this, between 1978 and 1982 Sudanese government bodies began to evict refugees from Khartoum. Soon other cities such as Kassala, Port Sudan and Gadarif followed suit. During all these times, the UNHCR had done very little or nothing to protect the refugees.¹⁴⁴

Lack of coordination was not confined to UNHCR and COR. Other agencies like the Sudan Council of Churches, which runs its own counseling program, the Red Cross which had its own tracing body, and the American resettlement program that operates through Joint Voluntary Service were operating without any cooperation between them. As a consequence, "the refugees who fall through the net of these special programs tend to be exploited by the fast growing network of passport forgers, cheap-labor employers, and greedy landlords."¹⁴⁵

One other consequence of the lack of coordination between the various refugee agencies was that many Ethiopians, who were residing in Khartoum, were living in abject poverty. Many of them had no proper documentation to reside in that city. Thus, their employers exploited them. They could not take their employer to court for mistreating them or for unfair practice. They could not join the labor unions for the latter deliberately exclude refugees from membership. Yet, they had to pay higher rents, and other services. A study conducted in the early 1980s on Ethiopians residing in Khartoum indicated that some two-third of the sample refugees secured very little daily income while 20 per cent of them were unemployed. In order to survive, they have to rely on

¹⁴⁴ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 123.

¹⁴⁵ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 123-124. For refugee bureaucracies, see Taddele, The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee, 1.

remittances from family members abroad, sharing resources together or by getting help from the relief organizations. Yet, they go to Khartoum because it gives them better access for networking, and life seemed to be a little better than in refugee camps. However, even in Khartoum, their situation was not much better. Sudanese banks were not willing to give credit while the country's law also prohibited refugees the right to own property. Yet, they were held responsible for whatever went wrong in Sudan, for rising house rents, scarcity of consumer goods, for causing pressure on public services . . . etc.¹⁴⁶

In addition to the aforesaid obstacles that the Ethiopians encountered from Sudanese authorities, lack of motivation is another factor that inhibited them from using their skills in Sudan. Highly educated Ethiopians simply subsisted working part-time or on the handouts of friends. This economic lethargy said one observer, ". . . may arise from the perception that labor is beneath the dignity of an 'aspiring bourgeois.'" Moreover, cultural differences between Islam and Christianity which the former might "openly reject most of their [Ethiopians] beliefs and life style,"¹⁴⁷ was another source of constraint.

Even if the Sudanese had wanted to accept their Ethiopian neighbors without reservation, they could not accommodate them. The Sudanese economy was experiencing a negative growth even before the arrival of Ethiopians. The economic growth was -2.7 percent in 1982-83. Inflation was at 35 per cent while the 1983-84 domestic budget deficit reached 864 million Sudanese pounds. Sudan's trade deficit was also estimated \$1,115,000 million and the balance of payment gap was more than \$600 million in 1982-83.¹⁴⁸

Thus, to lower the economic stress caused by refugee inflow into urban centers and to accommodate refugees of urban origin, two sub-urban settlement sites, the Um Gulja and Tewawa,

¹⁴⁶ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 153; Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 274.

¹⁴⁷ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 153.

¹⁴⁸ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 155.

'were established on the outskirts of Gadarif so that some of the urban refugees can have economic opportunities offered in the town without causing strain to the town's resource.¹⁴⁹ However, the Sudanese law forbids a refugee from establishing a business. As a result, former Ethiopian businessmen were barred from having their own trade. Credit was unavailable. Even if there was, Ethiopians were expected to pay as high as 20 per cent per week. Joint venture with a Sudanese was also unthinkable. "Few Sudanese will be willing to form partnership with Ethiopians, let alone with refugees, while local authorities refuse to issue them with business licenses."¹⁵⁰

The stance of the Sudanese government and the inability of refugee agencies to accommodate refugees of urban origin, at least initially, had prevented Ethiopian refugees' integration with Sudanese society. These urban refugees, on their part, never considered Sudan as their final destination. Therefore, they were looking for some form of external solution. Besides, they saw no opportunity in Sudan. As a result, they were not making any psychological preparation to that end, and hence they were unwilling materially to invest which might have been a necessary move for settlement.¹⁵¹ Yet, because of the illegality of their existence in Sudanese towns, they do not have jobs. Even if they did, they were paid cheap. Their situation became worse with the continued flow of refugees from Ethiopia which made labor abundant and cheap. Moreover eastern Sudan, where the two major refugee camps, Kassala (Wad Sherief and Tukul Baab) and Gagarin (Wad Kowli and Fau) were found struck by drought.¹⁵²

The misery of an Ethiopian refugee could also emanate from the interpretation and understanding of the term refugee. While the definition of refugee under the UN Convention and the Statue of the UNHCR of 1951 were similar, they vary in implementation. The former gave the

¹⁴⁹ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 118.

¹⁵⁰ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 153.

¹⁵¹ Waver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 148.

¹⁵² Wallace, "Briefing," 65-66.

right of defining a person as a refugee to the host country, while the Statue had relegated the final decision of determining a refugee to the UNHCR. The result was that "recognition as a refugee by the UNHCR will not by itself either secure the admission of a refugee to a country or confer a legal status, and determination of eligibility by one country does not necessarily confer a refugee status upon the individual in other countries."¹⁵³ This displays the limitation on the international agency to define and dispose its protection function. One good instance of this discrepancy was witnessed in 1971 concerning the 100 or so Ethiopian students who entered Sudan. While the Sudanese Commission of Refugees (COR) accepted them as refugees, the UNHCR refused to acknowledge them on the grounds that they were opportunity seekers.

Moreover, though the UN defined a refugee as a "person who, owing to a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality,"¹⁵⁴ the UNHCR appeared incapable and unwilling to give the necessary help to the refugees in Sudan. Moreover, despite the UNHCR's unequivocal rejection of refugee repatriation, ". . . no contracting party shall expel forcibly return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion,"¹⁵⁵ there were many instances in which Ethiopians had been threatened with deportation.

Often, Ethiopian refugees would complain to the UNHCR against the arbitrary deeds of the Sudanese government. But, the agency officials merely said "sorry." They themselves were scared of the Sudanese government officials. In this situation, some refugees preferred to leave Sudan for the neighboring Egypt and other countries such as Chad and Kenya. Some Ethiopians who tried to

¹⁵³ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugees," 120.

¹⁵⁴ Bentley, Refugee, 14.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Bentley, Refugee, 22.

go to these countries have "disappeared" in the desert. The quest for a third country of asylum could also be triggered by other factors such as climate.¹⁵⁶ Many Ethiopians, being from the highland plateau were not accustomed to the harsh weather of Sudan. The refugee bureaucracy coupled with rejection for resettlement in a third country would aggravate despair and could trigger another migration. In so doing, the Ethiopians swelled the number refugees within the African continent.

The degree of the suffering and survival of an Ethiopian refugee in Sudan varies depending upon his/her ethnic origin and the existence of a corresponding ethnic organization which stands for that particular ethnic group. In this regard, Sudan seemed to be better suited for Tigrayans, Oromos and people from Eritrea, who have their own ethnic organizations: TPLF, OLF, EPLF/ELF respectively than Amharas who do not have such organizations. All these organizations had their own political offices and relief and civic associations such as students, women, workers . . . etc. in Sudan.¹⁵⁷

Though the fronts do not have a final say concerning a refugee, and although they do not control all the refugee population, they have important role as middlemen between refugees and the agencies like the UNHCR, COR, RCS. At times, the ethnic based relief agencies such as RST, ERA and the Oromo Relief Association (ORA) provided alternative assistance to refugees. They were also involved in health and sanitation, and educational programs. In the latter instance, the ELF/EPLF was very much noted. Besides opening schools in Port Sudan, Gadarif, and Kasala, it had successfully secured employment and scholarship for its members in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya and the Gulf States.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Taddele, *The Life History of an Ethiopian Refugee*, 59-68.

¹⁵⁷ Bulcha, "Conquest," 59.

¹⁵⁸ Karadawi, "The Problem of Urban Refugee," 121-122; Pool, "The Eritrean Liberation Front," 32-33; Alemseged, *Identity Jilted*, 113, 222.

These organizations also seem to have enjoyed the support and cooperation of the Sudanese authorities.¹⁵⁹ Sometime in 1989, an Ethiopian, who used to teach in Assossa, left Ethiopia for Sudan via one of the border towns, Gizan. Unfortunately, the town was attacked by the Sudanese government, which suspected the presence of Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) activity in the area. Upon recapturing Gizan, the Sudanese authorities soon began registering all foreigners, mainly Ethiopians, who were in the town. After listing the Ethiopians and asking how they entered Sudan, they began categorizing the refugees as Oromo, Tigre, Amhara etc. Accordingly, the teacher who left Ethiopia via Wallega (an Oromo-dominated province in western Ethiopia), was automatically designated as an Oromo and was passed to a representative of the OLF. The OLF, upon finding that the person was an Amhara, decided to imprison him and his fellow Amharas while sending fellow Oromos either to refugee camps in eastern Sudan or to its military training base within Sudan.¹⁶⁰

Ethiopian refugees were also threatened from the ever-changing political climate between Ethiopia and Sudan. In 1980/81 the Ethio-Sudanese relation began to improve, and both sides agreed to close their borders against opposition forces and not to interfere in the internal affairs of each other. Refugee repatriation was also part of the concordat.¹⁶¹ Consequently, the Sudanese government began to roundup all Ethiopians who were living in the capital, Khartoum. Banishing Ethiopian refugees from the capital was also intended to avoid embarrassment to Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Ethiopian leader who was planning to visit to Sudan and thus who might encounter a

¹⁵⁹ Bulcha, "Conquest," 59.

¹⁶⁰ I met Mr. Light in 1987/88 while teaching in Nedjo, Wallega province, Ethiopia. He was transferred to Asossa from where he fled to Sudan, Gizen. There he was captured by the Sudanese government who retook the town from the SPLA. After controlling the town, the Sudanese government rounded all Ethiopians found in that town and redistributed them to the various guerrilla movements such as EDU, EPRP, OLF, TPLF, EPLF based on their provincial/ethnic origin. Mr. Light was given to the OLF. The latter jailed Mr. Light after it found out that he was not an Oromo. Mr. Light then escaped the OLF and surrendered to the Derg in Assosa.

¹⁶¹ Addis Zemen, 38th Year, No. 218, Thursday, May 21; No 241, Wednesday, Sane 18, 1972 EC; Africa Confidential, Vol. 21, No. 8, 1980.

strong opposition by the Ethiopians in exile. So, Sudan arranged a train to take all Ethiopians from Khartoum to Gadarif. However, the Ethiopians who knew what their fate would be decided to take their chances. They disconnected one of the sections from the train and it is said that by the time the train arrived at Gadarif, there were no Ethiopians on it.¹⁶² The incident, though appears exaggerated, indicates the disparate state of the refugees and their determination not to return to Ethiopia.

Similar misfortune had befallen upon Ethiopian refugees in Sudan since 1991. The TPLF/EPRDF, after overthrowing the military junta, took power in Ethiopia. Either as a token of acknowledgement to the Sudanese support in their days of insurgency or to prevent Sudan from extending the usual support to any anti Ethiopian element, the TPLF/EPRDF signed a friendship treaty with Sudan. In this rapprochement, both sides have agreed not to support their corresponding enemies. One consequence was a clampdown on refugees who were suspected of subversive activity against their respective governments; and thus refoolment.

Chapter II. 5. The Plight of Ethiopian Refugee Women in Sudan

In such state of affairs, the condition of Ethiopian refugee women was worse. The Sudanese viewed the Western-style attire and the relative independence of Ethiopian women as marks of prostitution. In Sudan, where most are Muslims, women dress in accordance with the Islamic law. More than often, unaccompanied Ethiopian women were targets of insult. At times stones and sticks were thrown at them. They were also victims of rape either by Sudanese officers or by their employees. Like their male counterparts, some of the women had no identification

¹⁶² Informant: Mr. Arrival is a former paratrooper who stayed in Sudan for sometime. He is one among the many who was resettled in Canada. Sept. 16, 1997.

cards. Thus, they have to work as domestics for low pay, which further exposed them to all sorts of abuse.¹⁶³

To avoid harassment on the road, and to some degree at workplace, the Ethiopian refugee women must have a male partner. He could be a boy friend, a husband, or a "guard" who would accompany them to any place. But such men were rare to find for they have to work in order to survive. As the result, the Ethiopian women have to "employ" a guard, who however, was presented as a husband to the Sudanese society and officials alike. These "guards" were sarcastically referred to and known among Ethiopian refugees in Sudan as *etna asher*. In Sudanese Arabic, it literary means "after twelve." However, its contextual meaning was a person who is a "husband" only after working hours. Otherwise, he has no right on his "wife" as any other husband does.¹⁶⁴

For economic and security reasons few Ethiopians lived alone. They lived in groups of five or so regardless of sex, which helped them share the burden of rent. A teacher or a middle-level servant earned around \$100 per month while a daily laborer got \$1.50 a day. Yet, both have to pay a minimum of \$50 rent per month if they wanted to have a decent housing. Yet, because of their refugee status, some of them without legal papers, Ethiopians paid the highest rents in Sudan. Thus, to live in a group was advantageous. It was also common to provide shelter to a couple of additional jobless Ethiopians. In addition to economic considerations, family and kinship ties or simply being an Ethiopian also contributed to the group residence. Hence, very few Ethiopians,

¹⁶³ Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 275.

¹⁶⁴ Informant Ephraim: during the days of the red terror, he escaped to Sudan via Gondar, and stayed in the refugee camps in Sudan including Khartoum until the early 1980s when the resettlement to USA began. He is now in the USA. He was not happy to recount the story. Interview: Seattle (WA) June 24, 1997. See also Patrick Matlou, "Upsetting the Cart: Forced Migration and Gender Issues, the African Experience" in Doreen Indra (ed.) Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 132-136. The author indicates the prevalence of another form of 'forced cohabitation.' At times of war, women were compelled to become wives of officials of partisan movements.

excluding the domestic servants, cohabit with Sudanese.¹⁶⁵ But, in the eyes of the Sudanese the Ethiopian group life, which often times included women, was disconcerting.

Despite the prevalence of group life among Ethiopians, a survey conducted in the 1980s revealed that 10 per cent of the heads of the Ethiopian households in Khartoum were women who had dependant children. These were women whose husbands abandoned or divorced them. They could also be war widows. Because of the presence of dependant children, many of them could not be employed as domestics. Thus, they had to support themselves and their dependants by sewing, preparing food, getting handouts from and friends.¹⁶⁶

Refugee women's predicament further intensified if they had children. Most often, it was mothers who took care of children. And the latter, like their parents, had to adjust to the new living condition in the camps. This "makes refugee children more vulnerable to life's vicissitudes.

...[They] start off with a twofold handicap, since they depend for life, nourishment and sustenance on parents [mainly on mothers] or other adults who themselves depend on the goodwill of others responsible for providing them with assistance and protection... the child fears for his future and gains little comfort from his parents since they themselves share the same fears."¹⁶⁷

Even those women without dependents had difficulty being employed. This was partly because of their lack of education and professional training. It is said that in 1984 among the Ethiopian refugees in Khartoum, there were three times more illiterate women than men, and eight times more men have received some post-secondary education than women.¹⁶⁸ Yet, many of the

¹⁶⁵ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 154.

¹⁶⁶ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 152; see for the increasing number of single mother headed families, and the rising number of women refugees Aster GM. Mengesha, "Gender and Democracy in Africa" Ethiopian Register (March 1999), 24; Kaila Morris Compton, "The Strength to Travel Together: Eritrean Experiences of Violence, Displacement, and Nationalism in a Global Network" Ph.D Dissertation, Harvard University, May 1998, 147

¹⁶⁷ See the Commissioner, Mr. Poul Hartling's, speech: UNHCR, No. 5, (December 1980).

¹⁶⁸ After almost two decades, Ethiopian women still lag behind their male counterparts in education. In 1999/2000, among the school age children, only 51 per cent were attending school. Of these, women constituted 41

single women, both the educated and uneducated, who had no dependants were simply working as domestics or paid less. Besides, even if they were qualified, they did not have credentials. Moreover, they did not know Arabic. Furthermore, Sudanese trade unions would not accept refugees. The Islamic culture, too, restricted the involvement of women in professional areas.¹⁶⁹

At times, getting the domestic servant position became difficult. For instance, in 1984 Sudanese authorities "began to enforce a law against 'attempted adultery,' and to arrest couples who could not produce a marriage license. Any married man found living with a woman, not his wife was subject to death. Typically, however, both parties 'merely' received 50-90 lashes with a horse whip, plus a fine and/or a prison sentence."¹⁷⁰ The situation had become even worse after the introduction of the *Sharia* Law in Sudan: Unaccompanied women could go nowhere.

Despite the existence of such compounded problems for mothers and dependent children, and despite the increasing number of refugee women, (the UN statistics indicated that there are more refugee women than refugee men), there was no special protection for women refugees. Besides gender-based discrimination, they were also forcefully conscripted into the guerrilla forces.¹⁷¹

per cent while males accounted for 61 per cent. See Jason Mosley, "Gender and Daily Life in Ethiopia," Contemporary Review, Vol. 285, Issue 1663 (August 2004), 97-101.

¹⁶⁹ For the role of Islam in Sudan and the introduction of the *Sharia* laws in the period under discussion, see Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 152-170.

¹⁷⁰ Weaver, "Sojourners Along the Nile," 152.

¹⁷¹ Aster, "Gender and Democracy," 24.

Finally, because most Ethiopian women were (and still are) illiterate or less educated,¹⁷² their chances of association with American institutions and thus resettlement to USA was very rare. This U.S. connection, according to the 1980 Immigration and Naturalization law, includes some form of professional or technical training in one of the American universities, or in universities run by United States. Working with U.S. organizations and the presence of a relative in U.S. is another criterion for admission.¹⁷³ Yet, the existence of such a link between the individual and the U.S. had remained one major criterion for resettlement in America. Thus, the resettlement program could be considered gender biased since it favored those educated Ethiopians, which by default means educated male-Ethiopians.

One consequence of this favoritism towards men was that many Ethiopian women had to get "married" to a person, who was approved for resettlement in the U.S., or with a person who had a good chance of being resettled. Here, one has to note that family reunion was another criteria of resettlement in the U.S. Therefore, Ethiopian women in Sudan may have been exposed to diverse forms of "exploitation" by the opposite sex, which includes fellow Ethiopians, refugees and Sudanese officials in order to come to U.S.

The abuse and harassment was less towards Muslim Ethiopians. If they could speak Arabic, there was little or no mistreatment. To identify who was a Muslim, the first question a Sudanese asks an Ethiopian was "what is your name?" If the name was a Muslim, then the Ethiopian was accepted as a brother instead of undesirable alien who might lead the Sudanese

¹⁷² In the late 1990s, some 84 % of the primary age girls were not attending school. The worldwide literacy rate for Ethiopian men and women is 43 and 26 % respectively. See Naomi Neft and Ann D. Levine, Where Women Stand: An International Report on the Status of Women in 140 Countries 1997-1998, (New York: Random House, 1997), 31, 38; See also Tsigie Haile, "Academic Performance of Female Students in Institutes of Higher Education, the Case of Addis Ababa University" in Zeinab El-Bakri and Ruth M Beshu (ed.) Women and Development in Eastern Africa: An Agenda for the Research (Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa, 1989), 106-107; Zenebework Bissrat, "Research Priorities on Women Education and Employment in Ethiopia" in Zeinab El-Bakri and Ruth M Beshu (ed.) Women and Development in Eastern Africa: An Agenda for the Research (Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa, 1989), 96-97

¹⁷³ "Refugee Admission Proposal" Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives. Ninety-seventh Congress, 1st Session, September 29, 1981.

society to cultural and moral decadence.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, because many Ethiopian Muslims do not have Arabic names, they suffered like their Christian brethren. In view of this, it was knowledge of Arabic language more so than being a Muslim that sometimes saved an Ethiopian from mistreatment.

In general, therefore, while women and children were becoming the majority among the refugee population, neither international aid institutions nor host governments were prepared to tackle the plight of refugee women. They were vulnerable to sexual violence when fleeing their village. While crossing the border, they were also victimized either by the security forces of their own government or the host society. In refugee camps, too, they could be targeted by the camp officials, or even by fellow refugees. Yet, the victim could not report the incident for fear of humiliation and ostracization associated with rape, or for fear of retribution by officials, or the victim simply could be unaware of the existence of a legal system that penalizes gender violence.¹⁷⁵ This tragedy is, of course, in addition to what a refugee woman can face as any other refugee person. Therefore, the Ethiopian refugee experiences in Sudan showed that escape from persecution does not always guarantee safety. Yet, either because of the *Derg's* highhanded rule or as the result of the bloody rivalry between the various political groups and guerrilla movements in the country, the number of Ethiopian refugee fleeing the country kept increasing. By early 1980s, an estimated 2 million Ethiopians had left their country for the neighboring countries, mainly Sudan.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," 274.

¹⁷⁵ "Refugees in East Africa" *America*, Vol. 183, No. 12, October 21, (2000), 19; Loveness H. Schafer, "True Survivors: East African Refugee Women," *Africa Today*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Summer (2002), 31-32.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch indicated the continued predicament of refugee women. According to this report, both the UNHCR and the Kenyan government are not fulfilling their obligation of protecting refugees despite the latter's report of incidents of rape, extra-judicial imprisonment and threats from the Ethiopian government security operating in Kenya. See Human Rights Watch, "Hidden In Plain View: Protection Problems for Refugees in Nairobi" at <http://www.hrw.org/report/2002/kenyugan/kenyugan1002%20ap%alter-08.htm>

¹⁷⁶ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 26, No. 20, October 1, 1985; Getachew and Mangnert, *The Ethiopian*, 2.

It was during this time that the United States government decided to admit large numbers of Ethiopian refugees. Consequently, between October 1, 1980 and September 1981, the Immigration and Naturalization Services approved 3,500 Ethiopians for resettlement in the U.S. In the same period the number of Africans, excluding Ethiopians, admitted into the U.S. was only 278.¹⁷⁷ Since then, though the number varies, the U.S. continued to accept Ethiopian refugees and immigrants.

Table 3: Number of Ethiopian & African Refugees Resettled in the USA (1980-2000) ¹⁷⁸

Year	From Ethiopia	From Africa
1980/81	3500	278
1983	2544	
1984	2517	
1985	1739	
1986	1265	
1987	1800	
1988	1447	
1989	1723	
1990	3114	
1991	4085	
1992	1927	
1993	2710	6969
1994	197	5861
1995	192	4779
1996	170	7502
1997	197	6069
1998	152	6665
1999	1873	13048
Total	31,182	51,171

As it can be seen from Table 3 between 1980 and 1999, an average of 1,500 refugees were admitted in to the U.S. annually. However, roughly speaking, for the first five years of each decade the number of Ethiopians resettled almost doubled. In the said years, some 2,500

¹⁷⁷ Getachew and Mangent, The Ethiopian, 5.

¹⁷⁸ Data compiled from Report to the Congress: FY 1996 Refugee Resettlement Program. US Department of Health and Human Services. Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugees Resettlement; and U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Year Book of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1999.

Ethiopian refugees were resettled in the U.S. annually. The higher number of Ethiopian refugees that left their country in the stated years more or less reflects the degree of political turmoil in Ethiopia. While the early 1980s' refugees mirror the immediate effects of the Red Terror and the military campaigns of the junta either against Somalia or the Eritrean secessionists, the early 1990s display the chaotic political atmosphere and the relative uncertainty associated with the downfall of the *Derg* in 1991; and the coming to power of EPRDF. The continuous decline of refugees admitted into the U.S. after 1993 is parallel to some of the American government's refugee admittance policies. Aside from Cold War politics, often the U.S. government does not accept refugees from countries which it regard as "friendly" states. The belief that peace and stability has prevailed in Ethiopia since EPRDF is also another reason for the declining number of Ethiopians admitted into the United States as refugees¹⁷⁹ which is an incorrect assessment on America's part that would compel us to look into the nature and rise of EPRDF to power.

II.6: The Rise of EPRDF to Power and the Continued Refugee Flow from Ethiopian, 1991-2000

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, as its leaders claim, is a democratic front that brought together organizations like Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and others. Of these, the TPLF is the most dominant organization.¹⁸⁰ In the eyes of its

¹⁷⁹ For general refugee admittance policies and the factors that affects them, see Karen Jacobson, "Factors Influencing the Policy Response of Host Governments to the Mass Refugee Influxes," *International Migration Review* Vol. 30, No. 3. (Autumn, 1996), 655-678; Peter I. Rose, "Tempest-Tost: Exile, Ethnicity and the Politics of Resque," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 8, No. 1. (Mar., 1993), 5-24; Rosemarie Rogers, "The Future of Refugee Flows and Policies," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 4. (Winter, 1992), 1112-1143.; Kelly M. Greenhill, "Engineered Migration and the Use of Refugees as Political Weapons: A Case Study of the 1994 Cuban Balseros Crisis," *International Migration*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2002), 39-74; Michael J. McBride, "Migrants and Asylum Seekers: Policy Responses in the United States to Immigrants and Refugees from Central America and the Caribbean," *International Migration* Vol. 37, No. 1 (1999), 290-317.

¹⁸⁰ Of the 500 or so seats in the Ethiopian parliament, *shengo*, the TPLF occupies 34 seats. However, almost all key government positions such as prime minister's, foreign affairs, internal affairs (security) and defense are in the hands of TPLF. In terms of budgetary allocation, Tigray's share is much larger in relation to its population. The country's businesses are also directly in the hands of the TPLF or under one of its affiliates. See, Siegfried

critics, EPRDF is no more than a façade used to cancel who the real rulers of Ethiopia are, the TPLF.¹⁸¹

The TPLF, as its name entails, is an ethno-nationalist liberation movement that was founded in 1975 in Tigray. When established, its objective was the independence of Tigray from what it believed was Ethiopian/Amhara domination. Because of its opposition to the unity of Ethiopia, the TPLF benefited tremendously from the support of similar secessionist movements in country, mainly the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. In fact, the latter provided training, weapons and its good offices to the TPLF especially in its early days.¹⁸² In its early days and until the late 1980s, the TPLF also got backing from Pan-Arab and Pan-Muslim governments in the Middle East and Africa who had a vested interest in the destabilization of Ethiopia. Until the late 1980s, the TPLF also followed a liberation ideology modeled after the ultra Marxist principles of Albanian socialism.¹⁸³

However, a series of events compelled the TPLF to shed its Marxist cloak and secessionist aspirations. By late 1980s, because of the Michael Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost and perestroika*, it became apparent that socialism/Marxism-Leninism was no more a viable ideological tool for a successful liberation struggle. The Soviet Union and its allies were no longer in a position to provide support to liberation movements in Africa and other parts of the world. On the other hand, the Cold War that divided the world into more or less two camps was no more in existence.

Pausewang, Kjetil Trovnmvoll and Lovise Aalen, "Democracy Unfulfilled?" in Siegfried Pausewang, Kjetil Trovnmvoll and Lovise Aalen (eds.), Ethiopia Since the Derg: A Decade of Democratic Pretensions and Performances (London: Zed Books, 2002), 230-244; Assefa, The Pillage of Ethiopia

¹⁸¹ Kidane Mengisteab, "Ethiopia's Ethnic Based Federalism: 10 Years After," African Issues, Vol. 29, No.1/2 (2001), 20-25; Arnault Serra-Horguelin, The Federal Experiment in Ethiopia: A Socio-Political Analysis (Bordeaux IV: Institut D'Etudes Politiques De Bordeaux, 1999); Assefa Negash, The Pillage of Ethiopia by Eritreans and their Tigrean Surrogates (Los Angeles: Adey Publishing Company, 1996); Aaron Tesfaye, Political Power and Ethnic Federalism: The Struggle for Democracy in Ethiopia (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002); Leenco Lata, The Ethiopian State at the Crossroads: Decolonization and Democratization or Disintegration (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, Inc, 1999); Theodore M. Vestal, Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State (Westport: Praeger, 1999)

¹⁸² Young, Peasant Revolution, 80-117

¹⁸³ Young, Peasant Revolution; 167-168; Vestal, Ethiopia, 183-192; Assefa, The Pillage of Ethiopia, 79-83

Hence, diehard Marxist organizations like the TPLF had to change if they wanted to survive. Thus, the TPLF embraced what was then known as mixed economy and the principles of free-market as opposed to socialist economic principles—command economy. TPLF's change of ideology, at least theoretically, attracted western governments who began viewing the TPLF in a better light compared to the *Derg* who refused to change. Pressure from the EPLF which feared that TPLF's aspirations of independence from Ethiopia because of ethnic domination, would delegitimise EPLF's quest for secession based on claims of Ethiopian colonial domination compelled TPLF to drop its secessionist agenda. Above all, events that occurred in Tigray on the aftermath of the battle of Shire-Endasillasse in 1989 in which the TPLF scored a resounding victory against the *Derg* and in which the latter was forced to pullback all its armed forces from Tigray, convinced the TPLF to change its secessionist agenda, at least for the time being.¹⁸⁴ After the battle of Shire-Endasillasse, Tigray was completely free from the central government in Addis Ababa and was left to its own devices. This seemed to have made the TPLF realize that an independent Tigray would not survive economically or politically without Ethiopia. The organization also seemed to have understood that unless the remaining part of Ethiopia was freed from the jaws of the military junta, TPLF's hard won defacto independence would not last long. The *Derg* could anytime reorganize and regroup its forces and launch a counter offensive. Besides, the constant bombardment of Tigray by the Ethiopian air force was another source of worry. In light of these situations, the TPLF came up with a plan. One was to create organizations that aspire freedom from the central government or support organizations that were fighting to topple the regime in Addis. Accordingly, the TPLF organized captive Oromo soldiers, who surrendered to the TPLF or EPLF at various battles, into what is now known as Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO). In the

¹⁸⁴ Article 39 of the Ethiopian constitution guarantees secession to any nationality in the country that feels oppressed. This article which legalized the 1993 secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, is there to be used by the TPLF one day.

meantime, a splinter group from the EPRP which had been operating in northern Gondar since 1980/1981 under the name Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), and who had been supported by the TPLF quite for sometime, agreed to change its name into Amhara National Democratic Movement.¹⁸⁵ The TPLF also organized captured officers of the *Derg* army into Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM).¹⁸⁶ Thus, EPRDF is an amalgamation of these and similar elements. In all instances, however, the leadership position in these pseudo-liberation fronts and organizations were held in the hands of puppets who have no legitimate base of support aside from the TPLF backing or Tigrayans (members of the TPLF) themselves and people with mixed ethnic origins.

Using these organizations as a front, the TPLF with EPLF invaded the rest of Ethiopia. In a series of campaigns dubbed *Zemetcha Tewodros* ("Campaign Tewodros" for the liberation of the Amhara provinces that encompassed Gondar and Gojjam) and *Belusuma welqituma* ("Freedom and Equality" for the campaigns conducted in Oromo lands), the EPRDF and EPLF ended the seventeen-year rule of the *Derg* in 1991 and established transitional government in Ethiopia. While the series of military campaigns conducted in late 1980s and early 1990s against the *Derg* produced hundreds of thousands of refugees that fled to the neighboring countries,¹⁸⁷ the ethnocentric nature of the EPRDF government and its stance on Eritrea (Eritrea was allowed to secede in 1993) produced political opponents which the government condemned as *Timkitegna* (chauvinist) and *Neftegna* (colonizer) and began persecuting them. This coupled with disillusionment as the result of unfulfilled promises such as independence to the Oromos, the

¹⁸⁵ Young, *Peasant Revolution*, 165-171; Aaron, *Political Power*, 100-109; Serra-Horguelin, *The Federal Experiment*, 29-31

¹⁸⁶ EODM was disbanded sometime in 1993. Some of its general officers died in dubious circumstances.

¹⁸⁷ The more than 100,000 soldiers of the Northern Command who were stationed in Eritrea left for the neighboring Sudan and Djibouti, the Ethiopian Navy took refuge in Yemen. Members of the 106 airborne paratroopers, university students who were sent to Bilate military training center, as part of the *Dergs* political gimmick, and some members of the Central Command left for Kenya.

single largest ethnic group in the country, the realization that EPRDF is a hoax to cover the dominance of a single and yet a minority ethnic group, the Tigrayans,¹⁸⁸ and the disbanding of the army (some 300,000) and its replacement with the TPLF's guerrillas force, further produced refugees, both economic and political, who continued to flee to Kenya in larger numbers and to Sudan, to some degree. The 1998-2000 Eritrean-Ethiopian war and the no peace no war scenario following the boundary conflict, deportations of Eritrean and Ethiopian nationals from their respective countries, the sporadic student protest against the ethno-centrism of the EPRDF regime, in addition to exposing TPLF/EPRDF's undemocratic nature also continued to produce refugees.

¹⁸⁸ Leenco, The Ethiopian State, 209-217; Serra-Horguelin, The Federal Experiment, 29-30.

CHAPTER III

ETHIOPIANS IN AMERICA: PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT, SURVIVAL AND ADJUSTMENT. AN EXPOSE OF ETHNIC, REGIONAL, CLASS DIFFERENCE AND GENERATION GAP WITHIN AND AMONG ETHIOPIANS IN AMERICA

The second group of Ethiopians, those who came to America after 1980, were political refugees. They fled their country because of the dictatorial rule of the *Derg* who conducted mass killings known as the Red Terror, and mass arrests. Some of them, at one time or another, may have been imprisoned or tortured by the military government. Overall, they were survivors of political violence directed against them either from the government, or from among one of the many guerrilla movements fighting against the government, and amongst themselves.

The refugees had diverse social, economic and education backgrounds. They included highly educated professionals, high school students and illiterate peasants. Yet, members of these groups were politically conscious. They were drawn from the various towns of the country that were hard hit by the Red Terror, such as Addis Ababa and Gondar, and provinces like Gondar and Tigray that were battle grounds between the government and the opposition.

The aforementioned provinces were also military bases of partisan movements such as EPRP/EPRA, EDU, EPDA, and TPLF. These political movements and guerrilla forces, in addition to fighting the government, were also fighting each other for political supremacy and resources.

The refugees left their country through one of the neighboring countries, mainly Sudan and thus had an added experience, hardship, as a refugee prior to their arrival into the U.S. They had dreadful memories of their country, war-torn, famine stricken and in the grip of a military dictator. They began to be resettled in the U.S. as early as 1981/82. By mid 1990s, they constituted the largest group among Ethiopians in America.

The majority of the refugees though some were highly educated professionals who were co-opted into the Imperial bureaucracy, were of lower class origin. They were composed of the

urban and the rural poor that joined one or the other anti-government political parties or guerrilla movement. Among them were also elementary and high school students whose class background and aspirations reflected the lower ranks of the petite bourgeoisie. Most of them were from provinces such as Gondar, Tigray, and urban centers like Addis Ababa and Gondar that had been hard hit by the Red Terror, war and famine. Consequently, Ethiopians in America are very diverse in terms of class, ethnic and regional origin, levels of education, political opinion, and context of arrival into the U.S.

Changing gender roles, the generation gap and the absence of traditional institutions such as the Ethiopian Orthodox church and community organizations are also other variables that confronted the Ethiopians in America. By highlighting the diversity of Ethiopians in America, this and the following chapters will attempt to trace the probable sources of political discord among Ethiopians which might be related to and influenced by the aforementioned variables. Endeavors will be made to mirror the impact on the community of the absence or the incapacitation of traditional institutions such as the community and the church, which used to be instrumental in conflict resolution. Furthermore, patterns of settlement, the evolution of new identities and the role played by the host society in either creating these new identities or in preserving the old ones is appraised.

Chapter III. 1. Patterns of Settlement: The Role of Resettlement Agencies

A number of factors determine the spatial distribution of immigrants and refugees in the U.S. Yet, not all factors equally affected immigrants and refugees who came to America. Hence, one of the most important factors of settlement for some of the late 19th and early 20th century immigrants in America was geographical convenience. For instance, while Italian immigrants settled in the mid-and north Atlantic seaboard areas (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and

Baltimore); Asians (the Chinese and Japanese) sought California and other Pacific States.

Mexicans, on their part, concentrated in the Southwest, mainly along the U.S.-Mexican border. In addition, financial consideration for inland travel, and the cost of return trip were also influential factors for such decisions. For the Mexicans, in addition to the said reasons, similarities in topography and climate of their new home with their place of origin was another reason that influenced their patterns of settlement.

Moreover, labor recruitment agencies either at the country of origin or in ports of entry in the USA, also influenced the nature of immigrant settlement in the said period. The concentration of East and Central European immigrants in the Midwest, which was the scene of heavy industrial development (steel and auto making) at the turn of the 20th century, reflects the role labor recruitment agencies and immigrant networks played in the pattern of immigrant settlement in these areas. Another good example that shows the role of labor recruitment agencies in determining immigrants patterns of settlement were the Chinese coolies and Mexicans who were employees of the Union and Central Pacific railway companies, and whose settlement pattern also followed the rail network, and hence depict the relationship between labor recruitment agencies and settlement pattern of immigrants in the U.S.

Yet, not all immigrants who came to the U.S. were wage laborers. Some of them, especially those who had come before the Civil War such as German immigrants, were lured by the prospect of cheap land in the West. These immigrants also moved to sparsely settled areas like Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and beyond. People from Scandinavian countries, who were independent farmers, dominated the demographic contour in the West north central region, especially in Minnesota and St. Paul-Minneapolis. Those Europeans who came later on followed the already

established ethnic networks which resulted in the evolution of ethnic enclaves such as Greek-town, Little Italy, Chinatown . . . etc in America.¹

However, the abovementioned variables that determined the pattern of settlement for immigrants did not apply to all. Unlike the late 19th and early 20th century immigrants, the settlement pattern of refugees and political asylees of the 1960s and 1970s was "often decided for them by government authorities and private resettlement agencies. In the past, the goal of official programs had been to disperse refugee groups away from their points of arrival to facilitate their cultural assimilation and attenuate the economic burden they are supposed to represent for receiving areas."² Thus, while this is the a major reason for the multiplicity of settlements of Cuban and Vietnamese refugees in America, it is also this official decision coupled with secondary migration, primarily driven by common culture and ethnic affinity, which resulted in the development and evolution of "Little Havana" and "Little Saigon" in Dade County (Florida) and Orange County (California), respectively.

In the same vein, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and other charity organizations such as the Catholic Charity, International Rescue Committee, Travelers & Immigrants Aid organizations among others not only sponsored Ethiopian political refugees from various parts of the world, mainly from Sudan, to the U.S.A but also decided which state these Ethiopians should resettle. Thus, Ethiopian immigrants in America, who were primarily drawn from political refugees of the 1980s and early 1990s, were dispersed throughout the United States. California took almost a quarter of the 27000 refugees (unofficial sources put the figure at 40,000),³ who were admitted

¹ Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, Immigrant America: A Portrait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 29-31.

² Portes and Rumbaut, Immigrant America, 34; see also Min Zhou and Carl L. Mankston III, Growing up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 45.

³ There is always controversy concerning the number of Ethiopians (refugees and immigrants) in the USA. While the official figure for Ethiopian political refugees who were admitted between 1983 and 1996 is 26530, the

into America between 1983 and 1996, Maryland, Washington, New York, Georgia, District of Columbia and Illinois combined accommodated a quarter of the refugees. The rest were resettled in the remaining parts of the USA except for Alaska, American Samoa, Guam, and Puerto Rico, which also implies that there were no Ethiopians in these states prior to the 1990s.⁴

Their dispersal, which ultimately created Ethiopian ethnic enclaves in the various American cities, was not accidental and random. As Anastasia Bilous, one of the representatives of the U.S. Catholic Charities that played a prominent role in the resettlement of Ethiopians in the U.S., stated:

As a voluntary agency there are many factors that make us address and plan accordingly for the resettlement of Ethiopian refugees. Because the majority of them were single and without family ties or a community in this country [emphasis added] in which we could base them, it made us create clusters of refugees to avoid the situation . . . in which a non-English speaking Ethiopian finds himself in an area where he could not communicate with anyone. [Emphasis added] We try not to place refugees in a vacuum. We either build the community around them or initiate a plan to resettle x number of refugees of a particular ethnic background in a given group. [emphasis added] or we staff our offices accordingly, so that we are able to meet them and put them into the system as it exists for one of the other groups.⁵

Therefore, gender, family ties and exposure to western culture were additional factors that influenced the decisions of the resettlement agencies and the patterns of Ethiopian immigrant settlement in America.

Despite their dispersal throughout the states, Ethiopians are found in greater numbers in certain cities such as Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York and Washington DC.⁶ Among these,

unofficial is almost double. For instance, the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, which is one of the earliest and strongest community association and which had been involved with refugee resettlement in the U.S. (both Ethiopian and other refugees from around the world) placed the number of Ethiopian political refugees resettled in the USA, for the same period, at 40,000. See Erku Yimar, "From Ethiopia to the USA: Issues in the Adjustment Process," Meeting the Challenge: Building a Community Together (Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, 1996), 30, 29-35.

⁴ Some of the states, however, were assigned less than ten Ethiopian refugees. These States were Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. See United States, Office of Refugee Resettlement. Refugee Resettlement Program: Report to Congress, FY 1994. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1995?

⁵ "Experiences in Resettling Ethiopian Refugees" in The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., & et al., Proceedings of the Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, September 15-16, 1983, Washington DC (Mimeographed), 66, 65-67.

⁶ Don L. Chadwick, "Ethiopians in Transition," Meeting the Challenge: Building a Community Together (Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, June 1996), 89, 86-91

the latter two are centers of major concentration of Ethiopians in America. While the Ethiopian population in Los Angeles is estimated at 65,000,⁷ those in Washington DC and the surrounding areas (Virginia and Maryland) are estimated at more than 40,000.⁸

Chapter III.1.2. Patterns of Settlement: The Role of Gender and the Availability of Jobs

Beside the role of the resettlement agencies, the concentration of Ethiopians in these major American cities is also the outcome of internal migration. Migration studies indicated that internal migration is a universal theme among immigrants, and one of the most common factors that initiate immigrant's internal migration is the availability of jobs.⁹ Both LA and Washington DC, being global cities, seem to offer better job opportunities especially in the service sector (janitorial, cab driving, cashier, security . . . etc)—a sector that American-born is less willing to work yet is a

⁷ Azeb Tadesse and Meron Ahadu, "Little Ethiopia-How it Happened," *Tadias*, May 18, 2003. The Magazine is an online publication: <http://www.Tadias.com> For earlier data on Ethiopian in Los Angeles, see Kathy M. Moran, "Ethiopian Refugees and Exiles in Los Angeles," *Women's Studies*, Vol. 17, (1989), 63-65. She claimed that in 1986, some 8,000 to 14,000 Ethiopians were living in Los Angeles.

* However, the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that there were 113,255 Africans who accounted for 1.3 per cent of the foreign-born population in the State of California. Of these, Ethiopians constitute 0.1 per cent or a total of 11,818. The total foreign-born population in California was 8,864,255. Meanwhile, in Virginia Ethiopians constitute 7,859 (1.4 per cent) of the 570,271 foreign-born populations. The figure for the total African population in that state in that same year was 42,509 or 7.5 per cent of the total foreign-population. See U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000*.

⁸ The Census Bureau data on Ethiopians for Washington DC and the surrounding areas is also much less than from the claims of unofficial sources. Accordingly, the number of Ethiopians residing in the District of Colombia in 2000 was 2,158 or 2.9 per cent of the total foreign-born population, which was 73,561. Of these, Africans account for 9,208 or 12.5 per cent of the total. Meanwhile, in Virginia Ethiopians constitute 7,859 (1.4 per cent) of the 570,271 foreign-born populations in that state. The figure for the total African population in that state in that same year was 42,509 or 7.5 per cent of the total foreign-population. In Maryland, too, the number of Ethiopians is much greater than that of Washington DC. According to the 2000 census, they numbered 6,295 or 1.2 per cent of the total foreign-born population in that state which is 518,315. Of these, Africans account for 12.1 per cent (62,688). See U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000*.

⁹ Alain Belanger and Andrei Rogers, "The Internal Migration and the Spatial Redistribution of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1965-70 and 1975-80," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter 1992), 1342-1369; Douglas T. Gurak and Mary M. Kritz, "The Internal Migration of U.S. Immigrants: Individual and Contextual Determinants," *Social Forces*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (March 2000), 1017-1039; Mary M. Kritz and June M. Nogle, "Nativity Concentration and Internal Migration among the Foreign-Born," *Demography*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (August 1994), 509-524; Frank Trovato, "The Interurban Mobility of the Foreign Born in Canada, 1976-81," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Autumn 1988), 59-86; Khalid Koser, "Social Networks and the Asylum Cycle: The Case of Iranians in the Netherlands," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Autumn 1997), 591-611.

boon for the new immigrant.¹⁰ Moreover, the fact that the Brookings Institution identified Los Angeles and Washington DC as "post-World War II [immigrant] gateways," and an "emerging gateways," respectively¹¹ further illustrates why Ethiopians among others were drawn to such cities. A look at the number of Ethiopians who entered into the U.S., for instance in 1999, reveals that more Ethiopians (3,847) had entered the U.S. through Washington DC than any other major port of entry.¹² In case of Washington DC, however, there could be additional reason. Since Washington DC, like Addis Ababa, is the seat of government, many Ethiopians might believe that opportunities are better in the capital city. In Ethiopia, it could also be true for most African countries, migration is towards the capital city where a relatively better infrastructure and job opportunities are available.¹³ Hence, the concentration of Ethiopians could be also ascribed to this historical/traditional belief among Ethiopians.

Marriage among Ethiopian immigrants might have also played a role in the internal migration of and thus the concentration of Ethiopians in the aforementioned places. This is especially true when one looks at the marital status of the asylees and political refugee population

¹⁰ Philip Kasinitz, *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 96-110; Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 2-3; Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, "The Making of a Multicultural Metropolis," in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed., Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 3-34; Paul Ong and Abel Valenzuela, Jr., "The Labor Market: Immigrant Effects and Racial Disparities," in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed., Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 165-191.

¹¹ Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways," *The Living Cities Census Series* (The Brookings Institution, (February 2004), 1-29.

¹² Next to Washington DC, larger number of Ethiopians also entered America through Newark (1559), New York (620), Los Angeles (225), Miami (115), and San Francisco (114). The role of Washington DC, Newark and New York as major ports of entry for Ethiopians could be also ascribed to the Ethiopian Airlines. While Washington and Newark were flight destinations and departure points of Ethiopian Airlines in America, New York's proximity to the two cities, especially to Newark, explains why it also became a major hub for Ethiopians. See U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Year Book of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 1999.

¹³ See for instance Derek Byerlee, "Rural-Urban Migration in Africa: Theory, Policy and Research Implications," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Winter 1974), 543-566; Samuel H. Preston, "Urban Growth in Developing Countries: A Demographic Reappraisal," *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1979), 195-215; Morag Bell, "Modern Sector Employment and Urban Social Change: A case Study from Gaborone, Botswana," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1981) 259-276; Joseph Uyanga, "African Mobility: A Source Paper," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 1981), 707-736.

of Ethiopians in the 1980s. Unlike the Vietnamese and Cuban refugees who had come as a family, the Ethiopian political refugee profile indicates the preponderance of bachelors. For instance, in 1980 the Washington DC Refugee Center noted that more than 50 per cent of the Ethiopians in the city were single male and in their early twenties. Hence, in the absence of traditional family-oriented infrastructure, they have to rely upon friendship networks and other forms of relationship.¹⁴ This male dominated profile of the Ethiopian immigrant community has not changed much through time. In 1986, the Department of Health and Human Services conducted a study of Ethiopians in three American cities: Dallas, Los Angeles and Washington DC. The survey, which included 1003 Ethiopians who came to the USA between 1983 and 1985, showed that 60 per cent of the Ethiopians were within the age range of 20-29; and 70 per cent of the group is male while 30 per cent constituted females.¹⁵ The preponderance of single-male Ethiopians in America continues to this day. The 1990 U.S. Census showed that there were 12,255 (45.5 of the total marriageable-age Ethiopian population in the U.S., which was 26,911) unmarried Ethiopians. This figure does not include the widowed (528 or 2 per cent) and the divorced (1,693 or 6.3 per cent) Ethiopians in America.¹⁶ The 2000 census, too, reflects the same trend. Of the 67,183 marriageable-age Ethiopians in America, 13,115 males and 11,115 females were never married. In addition, there were 1521 separated, 2470 divorced, and 225 widowed Ethiopian males; and 1813 separated, 3164 divorced, and 225 widowed female Ethiopians in America.¹⁷ Aside from the gap between those who were married and unmarried Ethiopians of the marriageable age, the higher ratio of single adults under the age of 40 and the numerical imbalance between unmarried male and

¹⁴ Jesse Bunch, Cathy Schrader and et al., "Needs Assessment and Recommendation" Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, 83-89.

¹⁵ Erku Yimar, "From Ethiopia to the USA: Issues in the Adjustment Process," Meeting the Challenge: Building a Community Together (Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, June 1996), 30; 29-35.

¹⁶ See U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990. Also on the web: <http://census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.text>

¹⁷ See U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Also on the web: <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/datanotes/expsf4.htm>

female Ethiopians—66 per cent of Ethiopians in America are male and 34 per cent female— was another factor that possibly triggered internal migration.¹⁸

The predominance of young and single Ethiopians in a locality also has a domino effect. In Ethiopia domestic chores are gendered. More than often men do not deal with anything that relates to domestics such as cooking, laundry, taking care of children . . . etc.¹⁹ Hence, these single Ethiopian men have neither the skill nor the cultural background to prepare their own food, which in fact is essential in new surroundings where they cannot find the food they were accustomed to. Meanwhile American food is less palatable to their taste. Such circumstance creates the following scenario: marriage appears attractive. On the other hand, the availability of singles in large numbers among the community encourages entrepreneurs to prepare *enjera* (a fluffy, pancake like bread made of *teff* widely used in Ethiopia) and sell or open Ethiopian store and restaurants. This in turn will attract more Ethiopians to a locality.

Chapter III. 1.3. Patterns of Settlement: The Role of Ethnicity/Regionalism and Religion among Ethiopians in America

Immigrant religious, ethnic and regional affiliation also plays a role in the attraction and concentration of immigrant groups to a certain American city or state. There appears to be a preponderance of Ethiopians from a particular region in cities like Seattle (Washington), Columbus (Ohio), St. Paul-Minneapolis and Los Angeles (California).

My interaction with Ethiopians indicated that there is a consensus that Gondares are over represented among Ethiopian immigrants in general and those in America in particular. Given the events that took place in the province following the overthrow of Haile Sellassie's government, this

¹⁸ Yewoubdar Beyene, "Potential HIV Risk Behaviors Among Ethiopians and Eritreans in the Diaspora: A Bird's-Eye View," Journal of Northeast African Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2 (New Series), 2000, 119-142.

¹⁹ Men's reluctance to engage in domestic or housework is a common theme that affects many societies, and one of the reasons for such stance is that men associate housework with women's work and hence a denigrating task to their masculinity. See Barbara A. Arrighi and David J. Maume, Jr., "Workplace Subordination and Men's Avoidance of Housework," Journal of Family Issues, Vol. 21, No. 4 (May 2000), 464-487.

has some validity. Studies that dealt with refugee outflows indicated that "the designation or evolution of one group or several groups as obstacles to the successful formation of a nation-state or the maintenance of power then frequently mark the onset of persecution along various lines such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or political belonging."²⁰ Accordingly, as explained in chapter two, the *Derg* condemned the populace of the province as *tsere-abyot* (counter-revolution) because of the presence of political parties like EDU, EPRP and TPLF. As a consequence, the *Derg* conducted a series of military campaigns that destabilized the whole province. Meanwhile, the rivalry between the various guerrilla movements such as EDU, EPRP/A, and TPLF that were operating in the province further worsened the already destabilized community. Moreover, the defeat of one or the other partisan movement in the province was accompanied by the flight to Sudan of members of the group, including its sympathizers. As Thomas Faist aptly summed it ". . . In these cases not only political activists flee but also categories of people singled out by the new rulers as undesirable."²¹ In our case, "the new rulers" include, in addition to the *Derg*, one or the other guerrilla movement that successfully defeated its opponents and ousted them from Gondar. Moreover, the province has also served as a thoroughfare for many Ethiopians who left their country for Sudan, which encouraged people of the province to follow the lead. Furthermore, Operation Moses and Solomon that airlifted thousands of Beta Israel, who were primarily from Gondar, had also further exposed the populace of the province to the idea of migration and encouraged them to follow their neighbors, Beta Israelis', example. Finally, the migration of Gondares to America that began through refugee resettlement, had now transformed itself into a chain migration, family reunion, and hence the preponderance of Gondares in America and elsewhere.

²⁰ Thomas Faist, The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 65.

²¹ Faist, The Volume and Dynamics, 66.

Ethiopians believe that Gondares are predominant in Seattle where, according to official sources, more than 4000 Ethiopians were found in 2000.²² The presence of Ethiopians in general and Gondares in particular in Seattle and the surrounding areas dates back to the 1960s. According to informants, in those days, there were a handful of Ethiopian students, a total of seven, who were attending colleges and universities throughout the State of Washington. The schools they attended were Walla Walla and Pulman Colleges and the University of Washington (Seattle). Aside from casual communication among them, these students had no formal channel or organization. Meanwhile, the 1974 Ethiopian famine convinced them to get together and do something about it. It was from such desire and the need to survive as asylees in America that prompted them to establish an organization, the Ethiopian Community Mutual Association (ECMA).²³

Either due to the existence of this community organization in Seattle or because of the availability of jobs, the ORR began resettling Ethiopian refugees in Seattle in the early 1980s. However, there is no data on these Ethiopians until the 1990 U.S. Census. In fact, there is no information for Africans in America until the 1990 Census. The INS, too, has no figure for Africans and Ethiopians in the pre-1990s period. Even after the 1990 Census, the official figure for Ethiopians was contested. For instance, while the ECMA claimed to have more than 10,000 Ethiopians under its umbrella in 1990 and more than 20,000 in 2000, the 1990 and 2000 Census figures showed a much smaller figure: less than 3,000 and a 4414 respectively. In fact, the latter figure accounted for the total number of Ethiopians in the state of Washington in 2000.

²² While the 1990 census indicated that there were about 3000 Ethiopians who mainly reside in King County, the 2000 Census showed that there were 4,414 or 0.4 per cent of the total foreign-born population (614,457) in the state. However, the former mayor of the city, Mr. Rice, while addressing the 2004 Ethiopian Soccer Tournament in Seattle, indicated that there are 20,000 Ethiopians in the city. For Census Bureau figures, see US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

²³ Informants: Benjamin, the King, and Belete.

Be that as it may, almost all Ethiopian businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores in Seattle are Gondare owned. Among the businesses in that city, the exceptions are an Abyssinia Store, Meskal and Lalibella restaurants. Moreover, the priests of St. Gabriel church, one of the biggest Ethiopian Orthodox churches in America, are all Gondares. Hence, the church also serves as the seat of the one of the archbishops and member of the Synod in exile. He, too, is a Gondare. The name of the city's soccer team, Dashen, which is the highest mountain in Ethiopia and found in Gondar province, also reflects the link between place of origin and settlement, and the predominance of Gondares in that city.

Gondares are also believed to be in greater numbers in California, especially in the Los Angeles and Bay areas. As in Seattle, the presence of Ethiopians in Los Angeles goes back to the pre-revolution days. Like Seattle, though definite figures are hard to come by, Los Angeles was, relatively speaking, one of the cities with a fairly sizable Ethiopian population in the pre-revolution days. The presence of Ethiopians in Los Angeles dates back to the 1950s when Ethiopians began moving to southern California as students, visitors and exchange scholars. The minuscule, yet cohesive community's morale was boosted when Emperor Haile Sellassie visited the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the 1960s. The chancellor of the university, Dr. Young, awarded Haile Sellassie a special medal.²⁴ In early 1980s, these Ethiopians tried to lobby U.S. Congressmen so that the latter would intercede on behalf of Ethiopians who were going to be deported. In those days, the Reagan Administration was going to deport Ethiopian students, businessmen and visitors who sought asylum in America because of the turn of events in their country.

²⁴ Azab Tadesse and Meron Ahadu, "Little Ethiopia—How it Happened," Tadias, May 18, 2003. Also available on line at <http://www.Tadias.com>; see also the Ethiopian-American Advocacy Group (EAAG) website: http://www.ethioadvocacy.org/little_Ethiopia.html

Nevertheless, it was not until after the 1974 revolution and the arrival of thousands of Ethiopian refugees to the state in the 1980s and 1990s that Ethiopian community associations began to emerge in parts of California such as Los Angeles. Between 1983 and 1996, the ORR resettled about 27,000 Ethiopians throughout the U.S. Of these, more than 11,000 Ethiopians refugees were resettled in California—unofficial sources put the number of refugees resettled in the U.S at 40,000.²⁵

It was also after the arrival of the refugees in Los Angeles that the city witnessed the establishment of its first Ethiopian Orthodox church. The St. Mary Ethiopian Orthodox church was established in 1988.²⁶ The arrival of the refugees besides boosting the number of Ethiopians in California has changed the regional as well as asylees/refugee composition of Ethiopians in that states. Since then, Ethiopian refugees mainly from Gondar dominated the state and hence cities like Los Angeles. So much so, a certain company, *Meridian Interactive Communications*, which seemed to have noticed the number of Gondares in that area, introduced a calling card, Selamta (Greetings) into the market. The calling card has the image of Fascillads Castle (the 17th century imperial palace in Gondar), flanked on the sides by the Ethiopian national flag and the Obelisk of Axium.

Like Seattle, Los Angeles is also the seat one of the archbishops of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and the head of the Holy Synod in America, who is also a Gondare. Moreover, Ethiopians in California refer to the Silicon Valley as Azazo, a suburb of the city of Gondar located

²⁵ There is always controversy concerning the number of Ethiopians (refugees and immigrants) in the USA: While the official figure for Ethiopian political refugees who were admitted between 1983 and 1996 is 26530, the unofficial is almost double. For instance, the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, which is one of the earliest and strongest community association and which had been involved with refugee resettlement in the U.S. (both Ethiopian and other refugees from around the world) placed the number of Ethiopian political refugees resettled in the USA, for the same period, at 40,000. See Erku Yimar, "From Ethiopia to the USA: Issues in the Adjustment Process," Meeting the Challenge: Building a Community Together (Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, 1996), 30, 29-35.

²⁶ Margaret Ramirez, "Ethiopian Church Finds Home of Its Own: After Years of Errant Services, Orthodox Christians View New Quarters As a Sign of Coming of Age," The Los Angeles Times, June 5, 2002, B1.

some 12 kms away from the city. Recently, realizing the growing number of the Ethiopian population in Los Angeles in particular and California in general, the Ethiopian government opened councilor office in Los Angeles. Incidentally, the appointee is a man from Gondar, which does not seem to be accidental especially given the Ethiopian government's ethnic/regional conscious policies. A further indication to the predominance of Gondares in Los Angeles and Seattle is the presence of strong Gondar Mutual Association which mobilizes and caters primarily for Gondares and whose membership criterion is being a Gondare /born from Gondar/.²⁷

In the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul the Oromos, especially those from Wallega (a province located in western Ethiopia), are believed to be in greater numbers. According to the Ethiopian Embassy estimates, there are 12,000 Oromos residing in Minnesota.²⁸ So much so, Ethiopians refer to the Twin Cities as the "Oromia capital in America." Here, however, in addition to ethnic/regional attachment that draws co-ethnics to the cities, religious affiliation, in this case the Lutheran church, seemed to have also contributed immensely. The relationship between the Lutheran church and Oromos of Wallega dates back to the late 19th century. Since then, as the result of the continuous American, German and Scandinavian evangelization work in Wallega, unlike the majority of the Oromos from Bale, Arusi and Harar, many Oromos from Wallega are Protestant Christians. However, until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, the followers of Protestant sects such as Lutherans, Baptists and Presbyterians did not have a common organization. But, the Italian attempt to bring these denominations under Catholicism seemed to have necessitated and

²⁷ Part Two, Article 6. A indicated that anyone who is from Gondar and eighteen years older and above; and who has accepted the principles of Gondar Limat Mahiber (Gondar Development Association) and committed to implementation of these principles can become a member, while Article 6.B also stated that those who believe in the principles and objective of the organization can be associate members. See the bylaws of Gondar Development Association in North America. Each association such as the Gondar Development Association in the San Francisco Bay Area and Gondar Mutual Association in Seattle had their own bylaws that are also in agreement with the umbrella organization.

²⁸ Andrea Purdekova, "An Odaa Tree Grows on Lake Street: Diasporan Nationalism in Oromo and Somali Communities of Minnesota," Honors Paper, Macalester College, (Spring 2003), 56; see also Mirjana Lausevic, "A World in Two Cities: Africans and African Music in the Twin Cities," (June 30, 2002) available online http://www.cla.umn.edu/twocities/rprojs/estafrica/ea_index.asp

encouraged Protestant evangelists to work closer, which finally came into a reality in December 1952 at a conference in, Nakamte, Wallega. The umbrella organization they created was a Lutheran church, which is known among Ethiopians as Mekane Yasus.²⁹ Thus, Wallega not only was one of the earliest and successful sites of Protestant missionaries in Ethiopia, but also the birthplace of the Ethiopian Lutheran church, Mekane Yasus. What is more, until very recently the Mekane Yasus institution was under the domains of Walleges (people from Wallega). Almost all of the national annual conferences of the Mekane Yasus church which were held between 1952 and 1970/71, them were hosted in the various parts of Wallega such as Nekemte, Dambe Dollo, Nedjo and Mande; and almost all the participants of the conference were people from Wallega. Although letters of invitations had been sent to their co-religions in other parts of the country, except for those from Addis Ababa and Gore (the capital of Illubabor, a southwestern province of Ethiopia), none sent their delegates to these conferences.

Wallega had also the largest Protestant congregation in the country. On the eve of the Revolution, it had about 4000 Catholics, 15000 Protestants and some 1500 Pentecostals. Hence, while Orthodox Christians and Muslems constitute 40 and 30 per cent of the total population of the province respectively, followers of Mekane Yasus (including the Catholics) and traditional believers

²⁹ For the history of Protestant missionary work in Ethiopia especially western Ethiopia, Wallega, see Johnny Bakke, Christian Ministry: Patterns and Functions Within the Ethiopian Evangelical church Mekane Yesus (Oslo: Solum Forlag A.S, 1987), 93-105, 137-141; Gustav Aren, Evangelical Pioners in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical church Mekane Yesus (Stockholm, 1978), 374-398, 412-420; Faqadu Gurmessa, "Yawangel Emnat Enqisiqasse Baetyopia: Yetyopia Wangelawet Beta Kirsteyan Mekane Eayshus Amasararatina Edigat Tarik" [Evangelical Activities in Ethiopia: The History of the Establishment and Development of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekaneyesus church] (Addis Ababa, 1999), 216-235, 261-263, 313-325, 337-343; Emmanuel Abraha, Reminiscences of My Life (Oslo: Lunde forlag, 1995), 279-282; Oyvind M. Eide, Revolution and Religion In Ethiopia: The Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus church, 1974-85 (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 56-58; Tibebe Eshete, "The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) in Ethiopia (1928-1970) Northeast African Studies, Vol. 6, No. 3 (New Series, 1999), 27-58, especially 30-32; Ibsaa Guutama, Prison of Conscience: Upper Compound Maa'kalaawii Ethiopian Terror Prison and Tradition (New York: Gubirans Publishing, 2003), 85-86.

accounted for 10.2 and 19.2 per cent. The national average for Protestants was less than 5 per cent.³⁰

While their different religion, Protestantism, had brought them to loggerheads with the Ethiopian Orthodox church, which had also a strong hold in Wallega, the preponderance of educated Walleges, Oromos, in the Mekane Yesus church made the Ethiopian government uncomfortable. The government suspected that the church could be a breeding ground for Oromo nationalism, which, to some degree, was true. As Oyvind Eide indicated ". . . the activities of the [Mekane Yesus] church at the center carried a deep ambivalence. Pursuing the national center's official policy, the church at the same time equipped the periphery with the tools necessary for comprehending structural aspects of opposition and so forming the basis for political opposition."³¹

Eide also noted how increasingly Mekane Yesus church is identified with Oromo nationalism:

The development of an Oromo elite, with a new identity [the new identity being Protestant religion] and an increased awareness of center politics, become a factor of importance, expressing itself in different ways. This elite became in part a qualified and visionary leadership of the EECMY [Ethiopian Evangelical church of Mekane Yesus], and in part an intellectual stimulus enabling others to choose more radical expressions of Oromo ethnicity . . . [Hence], in spite of its program of political neutrality, the church thus became part of the most decisive political process of the nation.³²

Emmanuel Abraham, who was the longest serving president of EECMY—he served the church in that capacity for more than two decades—and he was an Oromo from Wallega, who expressed his concern against the ethno-religious persecution of Oromos from that province. As he noted it ". . . it can be stated that, until the popular movement later called 'abiot' was started, there was no time when the Wallega Evangelical Christians had respite from ill-treatment by [Ethiopian government] officials."³³

³⁰ Oyvind M. Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church, 1974-85* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 45, 53.

³¹ Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 61.

³² Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 93

³³ Emmanuel, *Reminiscence*, 284.

Thus, the raising of ethnic consciousness among Protestant Oromos coupled with the strong ties of the Mekane Yesus church with the outside world finally brought the wrath of the *Derg*, the Marxist oriented military government of Ethiopia (1974-1991), against the Mekane Yesus. Consequently, people from Wallega were persecuted due to their faith, nationalist aspirations and their strong ties with the outside world which, in those days, the *Derg* viewed as imperialists.³⁴

While their connection with the Lutheran church made people from Wallega targets of religious/political persecution under both the Haile Sellasse's rule and that of the *Derg*,³⁵ it seemed to have also benefited them. For most of the Walleges/Oromos, it was easier to access the resources of the Lutheran church in finding refuge in America and other parts of the world, and thence resettlement in the Twin Cities, which incidentally, is also the primary settlement site of Scandinavians of the Lutheran denomination.³⁶ Finally, the existence of Oromo Community Association that caters only to Ethiopians of Oromo ethnicity in Minneapolis since 1995, and the fact that the Oromo Studies Journal is headquartered in the Twin Cities is additional testimony to the primacy of Ethiopians of Oromo origin in that city.³⁷

³⁴ The other most important incident that strengthened the Scandinavian Lutheran missionaries in Ethiopia was the political developments in China. Until 1948, the Norwegian Missionaries were proselytizing Christianity in China since the late 19th century. However, with the emergence of Communism in China, the Norwegians were forced to leave that country. It was at this time that the Swedish missionaries who have already laid their strong foundation in Ethiopia extended an invitation for the Norwegian Missionaries to join them in Ethiopia. The latter thus transferred their missionary work from China to Ethiopia which further strengthened the Lutheran church connection in Ethiopia. See Faqadu, "Yawangel Emnat Engisigasse Baetyopia," 308, 314-336, 351-355.

³⁵ Emmanuel Abraham reported that the Orthodox church leaders believed that the Mekane Yesus church was his organization ie. a Wallega organization while the then Prime Minister, Aklilu Habite, was against the church's relation with the outside world. Moreover, Ammanuel had also indicated that despite the Emperors goodwill towards the Mekane Yesus church, the officials were not. See Ammanuel, Reminiscences, 284, 257, 251.

³⁶ Oromos are also believed to be found in large numbers in Toronto (Canada), Germany and Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden. The two European countries were pioneers of missionary work in Ethiopia especially in Wallega, and their first mission station established in Nedjo (Wallega). Moreover, the two most important posts of EECMY, the office of president and secretary, seemed to have been reserved for Walleges. For instance, the two most prominent leaders of the EECMY, the longest serving president and secretary were Ammanuel Abraham and Gudina Tumsa respectively, who both of them were from Wallega.

³⁷ The Oromo Association is located at 1505 5th St., MN 5545. Beside other things, it is engaged in teaching Afaan Oromo (the Oromo language), culture and history. It also believes that Oromos are colonized people since 1890s. See the bylaws of Oromo Community of Minnesota (mimeographed).

Discussing Oromo immigrants in Minnesota solely in Christian terms is problematic. Not all Oromos in Ethiopia are Christians. The ratio between Muslim and Christian Oromos (including the followers of Orthodox Christianity) in Ethiopia is roughly equal, each account for more than 40 per cent. Thus, there is no doubt that there are some Muslims among the Oromos in Minneapolis. However, because the city is also the home of the largest Somali community in America—the State of Minnesota estimates the Somali population between 14,000 and 15,000. Somalis residents of the state put the figure around 80,000 and more ³⁸— Muslim Oromos could be also mistaken for Somalis.³⁹ Oromos from the Ethiopian provinces of Harar, Bale and Arusi, which are also regions that adjoin the Somali State, have shared cultural traits because of Islam and geographic proximity to each other. Following this trend, it is also plausible to assume that the Twin Cities in particular and Minnesota in general is also a major place where Ethiopian Somalis reside in large numbers. In fact, Katherine Fennelly and Nicole Palasz's study of *English Language Proficiency of Immigrants and Refugees in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area* indicated that of the 217 Somalis interviewed, 21 per cent of them speak Amharic, in addition to English and Somali, at home. The study also displayed that 16 per cent of the Somalis were born in Ethiopia. Thus while the study finding confirms the existence of a sizable Ethiopian Somali community in the Twin Cities, it also poses a problem. Hence, a detailed study of the origin, relationship and pattern of settlement among Somalis from Somalia and those from Ethiopia, and between Oromos and Somalis in general is needed. Despite this lacuna, it is apparent that religion, in this case, Islam, seems to

³⁸ Paula Woessner, "Size of Twin Cities Muslim Community Difficult to Determine," *Community Divided*, Issue No. 1 (2002) The Journal/magazine is a publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis that could also be accessed online: <http://www.minneapolisfed.org/pubs/cd/02-1/population.cfm>

³⁹ See Lourdes M Leslie, "Immigration: Africans Find they 'Have Everything Here,' Minnesota has Become a Migratory Hub for Some Groups, Figures Show, Including College-educated Professionals and African Immigrants," *The Star Tribune*, (June 4, 2002), 1B; Kimberly H. Taylor, "A Celebration After Struggle; Many of Ethiopia's Oromo People are Gathered in the Twin Cities for Fun and to Discuss the Events that Many Say Forced Them to Flee Africa," *The Star Tribune*, August 2, 2001, 1B.

have also played a role in attracting Ethiopian Somalis and Oromos to Minnesota. The latter is noted for being one of the states with a fastest growing Islamic population in the USA.⁴⁰

Oromos are also found in large numbers in Columbus, Ohio. Here, too, the Lutheran Missionary activity in Ethiopia that also encompassed northern Ethiopia, especially since the 1950s, might have contributed for this eventuality. The 1950s were important in the history of Lutheran missionary activity in Ethiopia in that it was during this time that American Lutheran missionaries began working in northern Ethiopia (Wallo, Gondar and Tigray). It was also during this time that Ethiopian Lutherans joined the World Lutheran Federation whose American branch, the National Lutheran Council, office was found in Ohayo.⁴¹

Yet, next to the Oromos, Tigrayans (people from Tigray or Tigragna speakers) are also found in large numbers in that city. Whether the Lutheran connection had a greater role than ethnic affiliation could not be ascertained. Moreover, since Tigrayans are found in Ethiopia in both Eritrea, and the Walqait and Talamit districts of Gondar, it is also not known to which province this Tigregna speaking Ethiopians of Ohio could be categorized. Hence, detailed study of the demographic origin of the Tigrayans in Ohio is essential. Despite this, it is apparent that language/ethnicity, beside other factors, had lured Ethiopians towards that city, and had contributed in determining the Ethiopian immigrant patterns of settlement in America.

Chapter III. 2. Adjustment Problems: The Exile-Refugee, Educated-Uneducated and Regional Cleavage among Ethiopians in America

As it could be seen from the above, some of the variables that played a role in the dispersal of Ethiopians may also play a role in the multifaceted problems that Ethiopians face upon arrival in the U.S. Aside from the aforementioned patterns of settlement that also entail inter-ethnic

⁴⁰ In the Twin Cities alone adherents of Islam, which includes people from the Middle East, Southeast Asia and East Africa, is estimated between 80,000 and 180,000. Of these, the Somalis probably constitute the majority. See Woessner, "Size of Twin Cities Muslim Community Difficult to Determine."

⁴¹ Faqadu, "Yawangel Emnat Engisqasse Baetyopia," 325-368; Ammanuel, Remembrance, 278, 288-292;

and regional polarization among Ethiopians, the absence of an Ethiopian community organization was another problem. Though there were some 25,000 to 35,000 Ethiopians in America in the 1970s, most of them students, almost all of them believed that they would return to Ethiopia upon completing their education.⁴² Hence, when the revolution broke out in 1974, the association they had was a student union, the Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA). It was primarily a political movement engaged in proselytizing Marxism-Leninism among Ethiopian students and mobilizing them against the ancien regime. It was, therefore, unprepared for such a task—rehabilitating Ethiopian refugees in America. Besides, by then ESUNA was almost non-existent because of the political differences and hence division that occurred within its ranks since 1971.⁴³ Even in areas where there were Ethiopian community associations (by 1983 there were thirteen of them),⁴⁴ the response to the refugee crisis was not positive. Most often, said Bilous, “we approached the Ethiopian community in the United States, not so much to sponsor someone, but to help us and share in resettlement effort. I am chagrined to say that there has been very little response or help forthcoming. [Emphasis added]”⁴⁵

Her revealing report would compel us to ask why were Ethiopian immigrants of the pre-1980s period reluctant to help their compatriots. One possible explanation is that some of them had a comfortable life in the U.S. There is little or no shared experience between them and the refugees which could have entreated the former to help their country's folks. A story of one of the

⁴² Getachew Metaferia and Maigenet Shifferaw, The Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the Exodus of Ethiopia's Trained Human Resources (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 63; Akalou Wolde Mikael, “Ethiopians and Afghans in the United States: A Comparative Perspective,” North East African Studies, Vol. II, No. 1 (1989), 55-74; Peter. H. Koehn, Refugees from Revolution: U.S. Policy and Third-World Migration (Boulder, Westview Press, 1991), 237; Wade Henderson and Carolyn Waller, “The Simpson-Mazzoli Bill and Its Impact on Ethiopian Refugees” in The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., & et al., Proceedings of the Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, Washington DC, September 15-16, 1983, (Mimeographed), 76, 71-81.

⁴³ Getachew and Maigenet, The Ethiopian, 63.

⁴⁴ Abdul Mohammed and et al., “Needs Assessment and Recommendation,” in The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., & et al., Proceedings of the Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, Washington DC, September 15-16, 1983, (Mimeographed), 88.

⁴⁵ Bilous, “Experiences in Resettling Ethiopian Refugees,” 66.

refugees, Zenebech, who was resettled in the U.S. in 1980, further explains such attitude. While in Sudan, a representative of the Catholic Charity had informed her that a sponsor, an Ethiopian, would be waiting for her at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Yet, what awaited her was different from what she had been told. The airplane arrived in the afternoon, by which time the branch office of the Catholic Charity in Los Angeles had closed. She went and informed the airport officials about her predicament. They were able to get hold of one of the employees. The latter informed them that the Ethiopian employee who was assigned for her had informed them that "Friday is the day that he passes his time with his Mom, and thus cannot go to the airport." His Mom was residing at Orange County. After getting the sad news, Zenebech notified the Airport authorities that she has no place to go. The officials informed her that they could accommodate her for 24 hours, which they did. The next day, hoping to find her sponsor, she came back to the airport, but to no avail. The Catholic Charity office was closed for the weekend. On Monday, while trying to make a phone call, which she did not know how to do, she noticed an Ethiopian taxi driver; and asked him if he was from Ethiopia. When he told her to the affirmative, she broke down and began sobbing. The startled cabby asked her why was she crying? She told him everything. The latter, then called the Catholic Charity office and lambasted them, and told them that he was bringing her to their office for which he would also charge them. Even then, the Ethiopian employee who was supposed to have come and helped her was reluctant. He said, ". . . the office is going to be closed soon, and thus I cannot help her." But the cab driver did what he intended to do. He took her to the office. Upon arriving there, the Catholic Charity employee took her to an Ethiopian home on that same day.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Informant Zenebech: She left Ethiopia for Sudan after the *Kabale* (urban) militias killed her only brother and laid him on the street. After staying in Sudan for about three months, she came to America through the Catholic Charity, which found her a sponsor in Los Angeles. As she found out later, her sponsors had other plans for her— to keep her as a servant. Interview/Survey July, 4, 2001

To further understand the reluctance of the pre-revolution Ethiopians in America to help their refugee compatriots, one is also compelled to delve into the profile of these Ethiopians and hence an appraisal of their ethnic, class and regional origin. It had already been noted that most Ethiopians who were in America prior to the 1974 Revolution were students who were sent for further education or simply to complete high school. However, not all ethnic groups and provinces had equal access and opportunity for education in Imperial Ethiopia. In pre-revolution Ethiopia schools were primarily concentrated in the urban centers which, more than often, were provincial capitals. Even then, most of the schools, both primary and secondary schools, were found concentrated in Shoa and Eritrea. For instance, in 1969 of the 46 state-run secondary schools in Ethiopia, 20 were found in Shoa (of these 13 were in Addis Ababa) and six were located in Eritrea where the second largest urban center, Asmara, was situated. Moreover, by early 1970s, the number of student enrollment in junior and secondary schools from these two provinces alone was much larger than the combined total enrolment of students in all grade levels from all other provinces in Ethiopia. In addition to regional inequality in terms of education, gender disparity was also a common theme in Ethiopia's education. In 1968 girls constituted 29.7 per cent at primary level, 26.7 per cent at junior; 18.3 per cent at secondary and 7.0 per cent at university level. By 1972, though there was an improvement in enrolment of girls at all grade levels (31.7 per cent at primary, 25.4 per cent secondary, and 7.4 per cent at tertiary levels), the gender gap was apparent.⁴⁷ Moreover, in addition to an easy access to modern education in these two provinces, especially in Shoa, kinship ties which, by and large determine recruitment and promotion in government offices, and scholarships had also favored people from Shoa. As John Markakis noted,

⁴⁷ John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 149-150; Gebeyehu Ejigu, "Educational Planning and Educational Development in Ethiopia: 1957-1973" PH.D Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1980), 210-233; for number of university students and dropouts by department and year see Teshome G. Wagaw, The Development of Higher Education and Social Change: An Ethiopian Experience (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1990), 98-106.

Within the traditional nobility, the Shoa families have enjoyed preferences by virtue of their affiliation with the ruling dynasty. The term 'Shoa rule,' as used by other groups, refers not only to the provincial origin of the dynasty, but also to the preponderance of officials in the central and provincial administration who came from this province . . . preference for fellow provincials . . . is a subordinate factor in recruitment at the center, partly because of the predominance of Shoa Amhara high officials, and partly because long service at the center has weakened the ties of other officials with their home provinces.⁴⁸

Teshome Wagaw, who extensively studied the development of modern education in Ethiopia, also concurs " . . . birth and family connections were traditionally determining factors for promotion and reward . . . educational opportunities were not open to all Ethiopians. Selection was based primarily on geographical location; a majority of the first graduates, many of whom were subsequently to hold key positions in government, were drawn from Addis Ababa, Shoa."⁴⁹

Consequently, throughout Haile Sellassie's rule, Shoa constituted more than two-thirds of the Ethiopian officials, both noble and educated. The remaining were primarily from Eritrea and Wallega: A scenario that also reflected in Ethiopia's diplomatic core, most of whom became exiles on the onset of the Revolution:

A large proportion of Ethiopia's diplomatic representatives abroad are also Eritreans. By contrast, the other Amhara provinces of Gojam and Begemdir have had only token senior representation at the center since liberation. Of the other ethnic groups, the Galla of Wallega—a group which has reached an advanced stage of integration with Shoa Amhara society, and whose *balabat* [nobility] families have affiliated the Shoa nobility and the imperial family—have enjoyed preference in recruitment and promotion at the center.⁵⁰

Therefore, the pre-revolution Ethiopians in America were distinct from the refugees of the 1980s in terms of regional origin, ethnicity and class background. Most of them were from Shoa and the sons and daughters of the well-to-do Ethiopians. Hence, they were members of the upper class while the majority of the refugees, though some highly educated professionals who were co-opted into the Imperial bureaucracy were also found among them, were of lower class origin and

⁴⁸ Markakis, Ethiopia, 232, 247; See also Teshome, The Development, 106

⁴⁹ Teshome, The Development, 106.

⁵⁰ Markakis, Ethiopia, 250-251; for knowing the history of Ethiopian education in Eritrea, see Adane Taye, A Historical Survey of State Education in Eritrea (Asmara: EMPDA, 1991), 73-137; Teshome G Wagaw, Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect (Ann arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 95-102.

from provinces such as Gondar, Tigray, Wollo. . . etc areas that had been hard hit by the Red Terror, war and famine. As a consequence, the pre-revolution Ethiopians in America often distance themselves from these refugees. As one of the Ethiopian refugees related “despite our education and urban appearance, they referred to us as ‘*ageda qorach*’ [maize cutter]—a reference to the some of the refugee's peasant origin and their life in Sudan as laborers in the Sudanese farms. In one such encounter, said Mr. Qarishe, one of the refugees had replied to the asylees, “I might be *ageda qorach*. But, you! Despite the opportunities given to you and the longevity of your stay here in the U.S., I found you as *gaz qagee* [employee of a gas station]”—an allusion to the squandered opportunity and the downward mobility of some of the members of the upper class Ethiopians in America.⁵¹ Since then, the term *agada qorach* and *balagar* (peasant) were, often interchangeably used to refer to the Ethiopian refugees in America. Also, it is not uncommon among Ethiopians in America to ask their fellow countrymen “how did you come to America?” The response to the question, the context of arrival, seemed to determine one's relation/ or social place among Ethiopian immigrants in America. Thus, Ethiopians in America are divided, in addition to their ethnic and regional origins, between “refugee” and “immigrants.” The latter also generally refers to Ethiopians who are passport holders, but became political asylees due to the 1974 revolution.⁵²

In addition to the difference in class and regional origin, there is also difference in terms of exposure and above all educational attainment between the exiles and refugees in America. One of the earliest educated Ethiopians observed “we young Abyssinians ... are in duty bound to our country. We are the bridge that the Emperor has thrown across to European culture [emphasis added].⁵³ Indeed, in those days and until the 1970s, they were. An American traveler, who came to

⁵¹ Mr. Qarishe is one of the resettled Ethiopian refugees from Sudan. Because of such negative attitude of the earlier immigrants towards them, he and his fellow refugees decided to stick together until these days. He finished high school and joined the Washington State University, Seattle, to become a successful business owner in that city.

⁵² Alesabet Gabayahu, “*Babalena Babole*,” *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (December 1993), 59-60.

⁵³ Ladislas Farago, *Abyssinia on the Eve*, (London: Fakenham and Reasing, 1935.), p. 52.

Ethiopia half a decade before the fateful revolution, had also underlined the role of modern education in climbing the social ladder and the position of the educated Ethiopians in those days. "Their craving for educational opportunities-preferably abroad-rarely signifies a love of knowledge; it usually means that education is seen to be the only possible route towards an improvement [emphasis added] in their material and social position."⁵⁴ She also indicated that the educated minority has been handed "the key to Europe's cultural treasure-chest." Thus pre-revolution Ethiopians, who were sent for education abroad were eager to go home as soon as they finished school in the U.S. As Bahru Zawde, in his book, *A History Modern Ethiopia*, indicated, "they do not even wait for their graduation ceremony,"⁵⁵ which could be further attested from the INS data.

Table 4: Number of Ethiopians who were Granted Asylum/Refugee Status in America between 1940 and 1990s.⁵⁶

Year	1946-50	1951-60	1961-70	1970-80	1981-90	1991	1992	1993
Ethiopians	0	61	2	1307	18,542	3,582	3268	3725
Africans	20	1768	5486	2991	22149	4731	4480	5944

According to the Homeland Security (INS), between 1946 and 1970, which spans more than three decades, there were only 63 Ethiopians who had been given either asylum or refugee status in the U.S. and their reasons for seeking asylum in those years could be attributed to the political fallout that followed Mengistu Neway's attempted military putsch in 1960. It could be also related to the beginning of the secessionist movement in Eritrea which might have produced asylum seekers. Thus, except for those two incidents, Haile Sellassie's Ethiopia was more or less stable, because most of the students were either personally selected by the Emperor, or he financed their education, they were very loyal and attached to the Emperor, personally.⁵⁷ What is more, there was also incentive which encouraged them to go home. A job and a secure life was

⁵⁴ Dervla Murphy, *In Ethiopia with a Mule*, (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1968), p. 147.

⁵⁵ Bahru, *A History*, 62.

⁵⁶ See Homeland Security: Office of Immigration Statistics, *2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (October 2003) Also on the web: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/Yearbook2002.pdf>

⁵⁷ Markakis, *Anatomy*, 145-146.

waiting for them. In those days, the Ethiopian bureaucratic structure, the main employer, was not yet filled. It just began to get saturated by the beginning of the 1970s. Until then, education was highly valued and considered a ladder to approach the upper echelon of society of Imperial Ethiopia. As a consequence, most of them, even today, think as if they are part of the royal family. But the generation that followed, especially those who received their education during the days of the *Derg*, do not have such attachment, nor do they have any incentive. The value and respect attached to modern education was lost when sergeants and corporals began running the country, and when a layman who was loyal to the party in power was bestowed with power of life or death. The value of education was gone when the educated were laid dead on the streets of Addis Ababa and provincial towns like Gondar. Yet, those who were in America, and hence who have not gone through that experience and who have not witnessed the attitude change, have little or no clue why these refugee Ethiopians, many of them high school students and some of them illiterate peasants, were so insolent towards the educated. Thus, if the pre-revolution Ethiopians in America looked down upon the uneducated refugee/immigrant Ethiopian, one might presume, it must have been because of the great value that they attached to modern education. There might be also other reasons. The educated Ethiopians came as students, and in those days, refugees/immigrants from Ethiopia were unknown. Thus, the arrival of thousands of Ethiopian refugee/immigrants to the U.S. was a shock.

Differences in priorities between the refugees and the pre-revolution Ethiopian immigrants, who were primarily asylum seekers, seemed to have further strengthened their reluctance to facilitate refugee resettlement. As stated in the previous chapters, Ethiopians of the pre-revolution period were composed of students, businessmen, diplomats and tourist, who become asylees because of the political turmoil in Ethiopia. Thus for them the most important thing was to get asylum status which they found it increasingly difficult because of the introduction of a new

immigration bill, the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill, which is also known as Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1982.⁵⁸ This Bill, beside other legislation, had important provisions that directly affected Ethiopian asylees in the USA. It contains what was known as "employee sanctions" that penalized employers who hired undocumented aliens. It also introduced H2 visa that requires U.S. employers to inform the INS every time they bring in a professional into the U.S. The Bill had also a proviso that legalized illegal aliens through what is known as amnesty provisions. Therefore, despite the existence of the 1980 Refugee Act that supposedly removed the ideologically motivated U.S. refugee admittance policy, many of the estimated 25,000 Ethiopian political asylees in the U.S. were endangered. When the 1974 Revolution commenced, many American policy makers and the public at large believed that the Revolution was something directed "against a small group that revolved around Emperor Haile Sellassie."⁵⁹ However, the Red Terror convinced the U.S. policy makers to grant all Ethiopians asylees an Extended Voluntary Departure (EVD) status in 1977. Though this had an advantage for the asylees in that they could be employed and seek the protection of the law, it had also drawbacks because the INS could track down where these Ethiopians are found and hence makes it easier for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to deport Ethiopians when their EVD status was revoked or expired, which is what happened in 1981. Although the *Derg* was noted for violating human rights and its undemocratic principles, the end of the Red Terror and the *Derg's* amnesty proclamation for all Ethiopians who fled their country or were fighting against it, caused the State Department to decide to revoke EVD

⁵⁸ See for instance, Winston Williams, "Ethiopians in U.S. Fear Deportation; With 2400 Ordered to Leave, Many are Defiant and Talk of Going Underground," The New York Times, January 27, 1982, A3; Jason Clay, "Don't Deport Ethiopians," The New York Times, April 20, 1982, A27; C. O'Neill Brown & Viviane Eisenberg, "What an Ethiopian Must Do to Prove Deserving of Asylum," The New York Times, February 15, 1982, A16; Anthony Lewis, "Hypocrisy Wins Again," New York Times, January 4, 1982, A23.

⁵⁹ Wade Henderson and Carolyn Waller, "The Simpson-Mazzoli Bill and Its Impact on Ethiopian Refugees" in "Experiences in Resettling Ethiopia Refugees" in The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., & et al., Proceedings of the Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, Washington DC, September 15-16, 1983, (Mimeographed), 76, 71-81.

status for Ethiopian asylees in the USA in 1981. Following this, organizations such as the Alien Rights Law Project, churches and other human rights advocates; and the Emergency Committee for African Refugees, which opposed the position of the government, was established in New York. These and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) jointly campaigned to block the deportation of Ethiopians. They described the government measure as racist and pointed out that no similar action would have been taken had the refugees been Europeans. Such protest and the evidence that the political situation in Ethiopia had actually worsened compelled the Department of State to reverse its decision thereby allowing the Ethiopians who had come to the U.S. before July 1, 1980 to stay in the U.S. and a case by case review was approved for those Ethiopian political asylees who had come after that date. Though this gave Ethiopians some measure of respite, it also left them with a sense of uncertainty about their future. As the result of that initiative, some 71.4 per cent of all Ethiopian political asylees were approved in 1980, but the rate of approval dramatically declined in the following years to 40 per cent in 1981 and 42 per cent in 1982.⁶⁰

It was during this time that the various charity organization and resettlement agencies sought to elicit the support of Ethiopian communities, which were predominantly composed of asylees, whose apparent concerns and priorities were totally different from the resettlement agencies and the resettled refugees. The asylees were themselves insecure let alone to provide help to the coming refugees.

Despite the existence of divergence of interest and in spite of differences in manner of entrance into the U.S. between the Ethiopian asylees and the refugees, the actions of the receiving

⁶⁰ Henderson and Carolyn Waller, "The Simpson-Mazzoli Bill," 79; Akakou Wolde Mikael, "Ethiopians and Afghans in the United States: A Comparative Perspective," *North East African Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1989), 55-74; Bentley, 116-117. For the history of African American lobbying concerning Africa see David A. Dickson, "American Society and the African American Foreign Policy Lobby Constraints and Opportunities," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (November 1996), 139-151.

country (U.S. Refugee Resettlement agencies) played a major role not only in "initiating, shaping and controlling" refugee movements ⁶¹ but also in creating an Ethiopian ethnic and communal identity in the America. Today either because of the said opportunity created for them or as a result of a secondary migration, which was often triggered by ethnic and regional affiliations, job opportunities or at times climate and topography, Ethiopians are found clustered in some U.S. cities in large numbers. While this helped ease the sense of alienation among Ethiopians, their adjustment problems were not yet over.

Chapter III. 3. Adjustment Problems: Sojourner Mentality, Changing Gender Roles and Downward Mobility among Ethiopians in America

Although African immigrants in the U.S. are grateful for the opportunities they had in the U.S., they also complained about "loneliness, sociocultural [sic] isolation, and alienation from mainstream American social customs. These conditions, which lead to a diminished sense of control over one's life, have had an impact on the subjective well-being of "of immigrants. ⁶² These general facts coupled with the Ethiopian immigrants' manner of entrance (most of the pre-1990s Ethiopians in the U.S. are either exiles or refugees) into the U.S. can have unsettling effects. It is said that "exiles [and refugees] from Ethiopia, in particular, are reported to experience psychological distress over separation from homeland needs; concern about the welfare of relatives left behind; loss of autonomy, power, and daily social reinforcements; and the impersonal and culturally insensitive treatment they encounter in the United States."⁶³ As a result, when asked, they almost all say they will go back. They seem to lack the desire to reside permanently and to make the necessary psychological adjustment to this end. This sojourner mentality could be further witnessed by the lack of interest to become American citizens, at least until the 1990s, despite the

⁶¹ Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, II .Ed (New York, The Guilford Press, 1993), 22.

⁶² Paul Stoller, "West Africans: Trading Places in New York," in New Immigrants in New York, Ed., Nancy Foner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 240.

⁶³ Koehan, Refugee, 315; See also Mekuria, Ethiopia, 47; Bentley, Refugee, 92, 96.

longevity of their stay in the U.S. For instance, between 1975 and 1987 only 2, 371 Ethiopians became citizens, and although the figure had increased to 4713 in 1990,⁶⁴ it still remained small given the not so promising socioeconomic and political situation in their country in those days. It appears that most of the Ethiopian political asylees and refugees in the U.S were temporarily. They "work with the goal to return home, tolerating the most abysmal working conditions to accumulate capital for their investments back home,"⁶⁵ In line with this, a 1986 *Research Management Corporation* study conducted in five major American cities such as Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Washington D.C/Virginia revealed that most Ethiopians "worked in the service sector, such as hotel housekeeping, dishwashing, and food preparation and distribution. In Los Angeles, more Ethiopians worked as security guards, gas station and parking lot attendants than in any other sector." The same report indicated that except for slight advances in pay, there was no improvement in their life. "The most common exception were those who were able to get 'prized' positions in city parking lots or as taxi drivers."⁶⁶

In addition to sending money, they also try and keep contact by making telephone calls. However, these calls, which were made once in a while, do not equal the satisfaction that parents might get from having their children around them. Neither the sending of money, though "it is an expression of a primordial duty and ...very important for the survival and comfort of its recipients, cannot compensate the social, emotional and psychological security that children provide to their parents in traditional societies."⁶⁷ Thus, as it could be seen, in addition to the desire to return that necessitated an investment/sending money back home, responsibility to one's family which in

⁶⁴ U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990. After the EPRDF takeover of power in Ethiopia in 1991, more and more Ethiopians are becoming American citizens. In fact, between 1991 and 2000 alone, more than 20,000 Ethiopians had become American citizens.

⁶⁵ Silvia Pedraza, "Women and Migration: The Social Consequence of Gender," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 17 (1991), 312.

⁶⁶ Elzbieta Gozdzia, *New Americans: The Economic Adaptation of East European, Afghan and Ethiopian Refugees* (Refugee Policy Group, Washington DC, 1989), 5, 7.

⁶⁷ Mekuria, *Ethiopia*, 52-53; Stoller, "West Africans," 240; Bentley, *Refugee*, 96.

African context includes extended family relations, further fueled money transfer and the sojourner mentality.

Family conflicts were also noted as one of the barriers of adjustment among asylees and refugees.⁶⁸ Accordingly, accumulating money and sending it home could become a source of friction between spouses. Either the husband or the wife might accuse the other of neglecting his/her family while helping his/hers. The money sent, of course, will be used to augment the meager income of relatives in Ethiopia or will be invested as a future source of income. It appears, though it can not be definitely stated, that people who are sending money to Ethiopia are the less educated and thus who work under any condition in U.S. like many other immigrants from the Third World.⁶⁹

One reason why the less educated Ethiopians are interested in sending money than the highly educated seemed to have stemmed from the former's realization that they have neither attained education nor have the professional skill in the U.S. that might help them in Ethiopia if they decided to return. For instance, janitors, nursing home assistants, taxi drivers, and domestic servants have little or no future in Ethiopia. As a matter of fact, many educated and highly skilled Ethiopians also might not get employed in Ethiopia because often the country does not have the capacity to absorb them. To this end, a very recent study on African migration to the U.S. confirmed, "African countries are, for the most part, facing the worst prospects for development of any region. With population growth rates averaging 3 per cent per year, it will be impossible for African economics to absorb the number of job seekers without huge infusion of new job-producing

⁶⁸ Susan Forbes Martin, Refugee Women (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1991), 83.

⁶⁹ Douglas Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal" in Population and Development Review, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1993, p 442; see Mary C. Waters and Karl Eschbach, "Immigration and the Ethnic and Racial Inequality in the United States," Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 21, 440; Steve Gold and Nazi Kibria, "Vietnamese Refugees and Blocked Mobility," Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1993), 27-56.

investment," which so far has not happened.⁷⁰ Despite this, the educated Ethiopians have a better chance compared to the less educated or the illiterate Ethiopians. Moreover, the highly educated Ethiopians who, most of them had come in the days of Haile Sellassie or at the beginning of the revolution, were usually from the well to do families. Therefore, it looks like there is little or no need to send money home, which lessens the chance of friction within the nuclear family. It could also be argued that those Ethiopians who had stayed longer seemed to have less family problems. Their longer stay in the U.S. seemed to have enabled them either to bring their relations to the U.S. or have made their relations self-sufficient. Longer stays in U.S. also seemed to erode kinship ties. Moreover, it also might suggest a higher degree of integration into the U.S. society, and thus better income than a recent immigrant;⁷¹ and probably less familial problems.

Familial problems among Ethiopian immigrants can also arise due to an attempt to maintain the status quo regarding gender roles. In Ethiopia the patriarchal system is dominant. The division of labor is gendered which thus confines women to domestics, rearing children, and taking care of their husbands. They are not involved in any major decision-making. An Ethiopian woman is "supposed to be counterpart to her husband or son, deriving satisfaction indirectly from their development; she is expected to reach her destiny by proxy."⁷² Yet, like many other immigrant families in America, "patriarchal roles in the household were transformed, the women's self-esteem was heightened, [and] their capacity to participate as equals in household decision-making was enhanced."⁷³ Ethiopian women might even secure more income than their husbands, which could

⁷⁰ April Gordon, "The New Diaspora: African Immigration to the United States," in Migration, Globalization, and Ethnic Relations, ed., Mohsen M. Mobasher and Mahmoud Sadri (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc, 2004), 60.

⁷¹ Gozdzia, New Americans, 9.

⁷² Gennet Zewdie, "Women in Primary and Secondary Education," in Gender Issues in Ethiopia, ed., Tsehai Berhane-Selassie (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991), 89; Tesfu Baraki, Culture, society and Women in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, 1991), 33-38.

⁷³ Pedraza, "Women and Migration," 322; see also Arpana Sircar, Work Roles, Gender Roles, and Asian Indian Immigrant Women in the United States (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 2000), 26-48; Donna R.

help them demand their equal role in the family. This surely destabilized the traditional husband-wife relationship. Meanwhile, the husband might try to re-impose traditional gender roles.⁷⁴ In Ethiopia, it was the husband who used to be the prime breadwinner. But, in America the situation changed. The wife might find a job more easily than the husband. This could threaten the patriarchy, thereby frustrating the husband and resulting in a sense of insecurity.

Even if there is no income difference, the achievement of the wife could also signal the erosion of another source of prestige: education. The latter, which is one of the major vehicles of empowerment and employment in Ethiopia, has remained predominantly male. For instance, no female students existed in Ethiopian schools until 1956 when 19,321 (17.0 per cent) girls were reported out of the total enrolment of 109,368 children.⁷⁵ By the time of the revolution, only one per cent of the school age population attended secondary schools and universities in Ethiopia.⁷⁶ Of these, the number of educated women was even fewer. Only 31 per cent of the school age girls were enrolled at elementary schools while those enrolled at secondary school were 27.9 per cent; and only 6.7 per cent (500) graduated from Addis Ababa University between 1964-1974. After more than a decade, though, the enrollment rate for girls exhibited an increase. The continued gender gap also indicates that more is desired to address the gender imbalance. In 1986 the overall female enrollment at elementary, junior and senior high schools grew to 38.6 per cent, 39.4 per cent and 38.7 per cent respectively. The tertiary level enrolment shows similar pattern. For instance, while 664 (18.3 per cent) girls were placed for a diploma (two year) program in all

Gabaccia, *From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Steven J. Gold, "Differential Adjustment among New Immigrant Family Members," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (January 1989), 408-434.

⁷⁴ Martin, *Refugee Women*, 85-86; Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, *Growing up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 171-180; For a similar pattern of gender roles among the late 19th and early 20th century European immigrant women in America see Harriet Bolch, "Changing Domestic Roles Among Polish Immigrant Women," *The Anthropological Quarterly*, No. 49 (January 1976), 3-10; Maxine S. Seller, "Beyond the Stereotype: A New Look at the Immigrant Women, 1880-1924," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 1975), 59-70;

⁷⁵ Tesfu, *Culture*, 40.

⁷⁶ Keohen, *Refugee*, 279.

institutions found in throughout the country and in all academic fields, those who were registered for a degree (four year) program were only 332 (10.9 per cent).⁷⁷

There are a number of reasons for such disparity. Ethiopian traditional values prefer and favor boys over girls. Accordingly, more boys were sent to school compared to girls. Of those girls, who were allowed to attend schools, quite a number of them were pulled out of school for marriage while the boys were permitted to continue their education.⁷⁸ Among the few female students who made it to high school and higher education, the success rate was very low compared to their male counterparts.⁷⁹ As the Minister of Ministry of Education, Gennet Zawdie, said "most of them do housework, cooking, taking care of their younger brothers or sisters, generally helping their overburdened mothers and training for their future role as wives and mothers. This leaves them very little time for their studies."⁸⁰ Moreover, in Ethiopian society girls tend to be attached more to their mothers, who were illiterate in most cases. Furthermore, like most African women, Ethiopian women have little or no access to cash. Thus, women remain dependant on their husbands throughout their life.⁸¹ Thus, it is apparent that men have the jobs, which also made them breadwinners for the family.

In America, however, because of reasons such as the absence of network ties necessary to gain access to certain resources and jobs, and because of barriers against professional or internal labor markets to people with foreign credentials, the skills of immigrants might not be

⁷⁷ See Seyoum Teferra, "The Participation of Girls in Higher Education in Ethiopia," in Gender Issues in Ethiopia, ed., Tsehai Berhane-Selassie (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991), 99-108.

⁷⁸ Aster G.M. Mengesha, "Gender and Democracy in Africa," Ethiopian Register, March 1999, 24; Jason Mosley, "Gender and Daily Life in Ethiopia," Contemporary Review, Vol. 285, Issue 1663 (August 2004), 97-101.

⁷⁹ Tsigie Haile, "Academic Performance of Female Students in Institutes of Higher Education, the Case of Addis Ababa University" in Women and Development in Eastern Africa: An Agenda for the Research, ed., Zeinab El-Bakri and Ruth M Beshu (Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa, 1989), 106-107; Teshome, The Development, 17-19.

⁸⁰ Gennet Zewdie, "Women in Primary and Secondary Education," in Gender Issues in Ethiopia, ed., Tsehai Berhane-Selassie (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991), 92, 89-98.

⁸¹ Zenebework Bissrat, "Research Priorities on Women Education and Employment in Ethiopia" in Women and Development in Eastern Africa: An Agenda for the Research, ed., Zeinab El-Bakri and Ruth M Beshu (Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa, 1989), 96-97.

suitable to the needs of the employers.⁸² Therefore, education does not seem to help secure better jobs vis-à-vis the uneducated or less educated Ethiopian men/women. A study conducted in Washington DC and Los Angeles areas among Ethiopian refugees revealed that almost half of the interviewed "never use[d] their highest education in their present job."⁸³ The scenario for the rest of Ethiopians might not be different. In short, both the educated and uneducated have similar jobs. The educated males were not happy about it for they had lost one important mark that used to provide them a tool to strengthen their position vis-à-vis their female counterparts. It is said that an angry wife who was tired of her educated husband's bragging about his education, had remarked, "what is the difference between you and me? We all are diaper changers!"⁸⁴ Both husband and wife were working in nursing homes at that time.

Ethiopian women like other immigrant women will become or try to become "Americanized more thoroughly and more enthusiastically"⁸⁵ than their male counterparts. This Americanization includes exercising their rights as an American women and spending "large amounts of money on expensive, durable goods such as home and home furnishings."⁸⁶ This might squander the meager income of the family and might lead to disagreement.

The challenge posed to patriarchy by the 'Americanization' of the Ethiopian women encouraged Ethiopian men to look for other solutions. One apparent response is divorce, to which Ethiopian refugees and asylees were not averse. While the 1990 census recorded 1,693 divorcees,

⁸² Mary C. Waters and Karl Eschbach, "Immigration and the Ethnic and Racial Inequality in the United States," *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 21, 437.

⁸³ Koehn, *Refugee*, 309, 311.

⁸⁴ Informant: Wasyihun. He is among the many Ethiopians who made it to U.S. from Sudan in the early 1980s. He has a college education. Since his arrival in U.S., he has worked at various jobs: Parking cashier, cab driving, and nursing home assistant. Interview: Seattle (WA) Oct 13, 1997.

⁸⁵ Pedraza, "Women and Migration, 327.

⁸⁶ Pedraza, "Women and Migration, 310; Jon D. Holtzman, *Nuer Journeys, Nuer Lives: Sudanese Refugees in Minnesota* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 87-88.

the 2000 censuses recorded a total of 5634 (2470 males and 3164 females). Both census figures do not include those Ethiopians who were "separated."⁸⁷

The other alternative is to go and live in Ethiopia where the traditional gender roles are more or less intact, or to bring a spouse who is not Americanized. Thus, many Ethiopian men have gone and brought a spouse from Ethiopia, especially since 1991. This spouse is expected to behave like the many million Ethiopian mothers who are submissive to the will of their husbands. The problem with this scheme, however, is that the husband has no way of stopping the American environment from influencing his new spouse. Thus, sooner or later, the new bride might be Americanized and force her husband to give in or get divorced.

Due to the aforementioned factors such marriages often failed at the same time making the adjustment process painful. The failure could be also traced to other reasons, one being the inability of the husband to change. But, sometimes the degree of acquaintance also matters a lot. Often, Ethiopian men will go to Ethiopia and get married within a short period of time. They do not have the time and the money to stay longer in Ethiopia. Therefore, they end up marrying a person whom they hardly know. Some of the women, because of the absence of any opportunity in Ethiopia, would take this marriage as a visa to the USA.⁸⁸ They seem to have no interest living in wedlock with a person whom they barely knew. The fallout could spring from fear of rejection. They do not tell the girls, for fear of being turned down, the true nature of life in America, and how they make a living. In the eyes of Ethiopians in Ethiopia security guard, janitorial . . . etc. jobs are considered menial. One Ethiopian mother, who was ashamed of her son's job, parking cashier, in America, is said to have remarked to her neighbor: "he (her son) herds cars as if they were

⁸⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000; also available on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.text>

⁸⁸ A recent report on the Ethiopian daily, Addis Zaman, indicated that parents and their daughters prefer Ethiopians from abroad for marriage; and even wait until such opportunity presents itself rather than marrying their daughter to the local men. See "Dollar Begondar," [Dollar in Gondar] Addis Zaman, Tiqmt 4, 1995 E.C.

cattle.”⁸⁹ Thus, when the young Ethiopian lady finds out what her husband does for a living, and that he had lied about it, and above all when her expectation and the reality failed to match, she will be disillusioned and might opt for divorce. The latter option will not be available for the imported spouse at least before the two years limit: According to the criteria of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, any immigrant who come to the U.S. married to an American, has to stay together with the spouse for two years before they could become eligible for a Green Card. This is, of course, in addition to other requirements. Many spouses have to endure abusive relationship in their troubled marriages in order to get alien registration card.⁹⁰

The disproportionate ratio between the sexes seemed to further enhance women’s position among Ethiopians in America. By 1984 of the officially admitted refugees to the U.S., two-thirds of them were males and young. More than half of the resettled household heads were less than 26 years of age. Only 13 per cent had reached the age of 36.⁹¹ In 1990, though the gap between female-males narrowed (there were 19,181 males and 14,687 females), the number of males was higher than females. In the same year, the median age of the Ethiopian immigrant population was 28.5. In 2000, too, of the 15 years old and above Ethiopians in America (67,183), males outnumbered females. Yet, this time the gender gap between the sexes is very narrow. It was only 463.⁹² Therefore, women are in high demand, and unlike in Ethiopia where the men choose their brides, it is the women who will be picking their preferences in America. On the other hand, the availability of choices might also encourage dating more than committed relationships, which in turn might led to the continuation of a bachelor’s life indefinitely.

⁸⁹ Informant: Wasyihun.

⁹⁰ See Aden Daniel, “*Yagrin kardu mazaz*,” [Problems of The Green Card], *Landafta*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1992), 24-27.

⁹¹ Khoehn, *Refugee*, 275.

⁹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census 1990*; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000*; Or on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.text>

Ethiopian husbands could become abusive and violent. As a matter of fact, Ethiopian men were reported to "experience a high degree of frustration and stress associated with diminished status in society, employment-related racial discrimination, and being either overqualified or underqualified [sic] for sought-after jobs."⁹³ The problem here is not the quarrel, but the manner it was solved and its consequence on the process of adjustment. Had it been in Ethiopia, either of their families or both might intervene, but most Ethiopians do not have their immediate relations in the U.S.⁹⁴ Sometimes friends and neighbors could do it, but in America, it is 911 that does the job. Upon such instances, the police take the husband away, after hand cuffing him. On one such incident, the son of the accused, who had witnessed the action of the police asked his Mom if his "Daddy [was a] thief... a bad guy?"⁹⁵ One consequence is the sense of betrayal and humiliation, which the husband might feel, and thence his reluctance to continue living with his wife. It is worth noting that the couple in the aforementioned instance were married in a refugee camp in Sudan and had seen the ups and downs of life as a refugee and immigrant together. Therefore, the spouse seemed to have expected his wife to be tolerant rather than giving him up to the police in *yasaw agar*, in some one's country, a strange land.

The fact that the court grants the custody of children to the mother, and the lack of interest from the police to find out the cause of the conflict while arresting the husband, emboldened women to use 911 as a weapon regardless of physical violence. Moreover, the American legal system, encouraged women to leave abusive husbands. The availability of public assistance for

⁹³ The Development Needs, 59.

⁹⁴ Khoehn, Refugee, 275.

⁹⁵ Informant: Addisu. Before his arrival in the U.S. in the early 1980s from Sudan, he was member of the Ethiopian Army. He currently works as a nursing assistant. Because of his age and experience, he is sought out as a 'councilor' by mainly of his co-ethnics. Interview: Seattle (WA), May 1997.

single women is another incentive to end abusive relationship.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, in some instances the husband and wife, after the court had passed a restraining order, will see each other.

Sometimes, they might live together "secretly." This is done not to lose the additional money that the government provided for the newly separated wife. If they lived together and failed to report it, they will be forced to pay. Thus, to avoid this, they will continue their "secret" life. One very saddened Ethiopian religious leader had informed me of such situation among Ethiopian families. The husband was so scared of compromising his relation with his "wife," whenever he needed his clothes washed, he left them in a garbage bag near the trashcan, and where his "wife" could find it.⁹⁷

It appears that the involvement of outside authorities in immigrant/refugee family matters seemed to exacerbate the problem rather than resolving it. Some families end up in divorce rather than resolving their differences through ethnic-networks or traditional institutions. Unlike the legal system, the latter consider cultural issues before passing a verdict. ⁹⁸

One of the traditional institutions, the Ethiopian Orthodox church, which could have played a role in curbing some of the social ills of the Ethiopians, was not available. For Ethiopian highlanders, the church was more than a religious institution. Throughout the centuries, it had become part of the culture, and medium of expression of once ecstatic feeling, protest, allegiance, and obedience. It was also an institution which had a say in marital affairs, both in divorce and marriage. The Ethiopian Orthodox church was a peacemaker between families and within families. Ethiopians cannot go to the American Catholic, Protestant, or any other denomination of the said

⁹⁶ Holtzman, Nuer Journeys, 91-96; concerning the debate on child custody battles, see Joan S. Meier, "Domestic Violence, Child Custody and Child Protection: Understanding Judicial Resistance and Imagining the Solutions," Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2003), 658-731.

⁹⁷ Informant: Qes Melake. He is one of the priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox church in Seattle. He made it to the U.S. from one of the refugee camps in Kenya in the early 1980s. As a religious man and father confessor to many of the Ethiopians in Seattle, he has invaluable information on the life of Ethiopians in that city. Interview: Seattle: June 17, 1997.

⁹⁸ Holtzman, Nuer Journeys, 90-94.

religions. The Russian, Greek and Armenian Orthodox churches, though Ethiopians attend them for seeking baptism for their newly born babies, could not provide Ethiopians the desired spiritual guidance. Language and cultural differences between Ethiopians and the aforementioned Orthodox churches prevent Ethiopians from using the services of these churches. As a result, Ethiopians with marital problem lack spiritual guidance.

One might ask, "How about counseling?" Refugee studies indicated that "in many refugee cultures . . . the Western concept of mental health therapy does not exist."⁹⁹ Accordingly, prior to their arrival into the U.S., most Ethiopians were unaware of such a thing. The most Ethiopians may have heard of psychiatric evaluations or help is in association with Emmanuel Hospital in Addis Ababa, the only psychiatric hospital in the country, which locally is viewed as asylum for lunatics. For Ethiopians, the best way to deal with such illness is to take the person to a church so that he/she can get *tebel* (holy water) or to a *qalicha* (traditional healer).¹⁰⁰ Even if Ethiopians are aware of counseling, cultural issues associated with marriage will inhibit them. Marriage among Ethiopians is sacred and you do not discuss marital issues with strangers. The other problem is language. The 1990 census showed that 36.7 per cent of the Ethiopian immigrant/refugee population in America did not speak English "very well." Though the situation has changed much since then, the 2000 census data also indicated that 7511 Ethiopians do not "speak English well" or "not at all."¹⁰¹ In this circumstance, they are compelled to use the service of interpreters and in the absence of such service, Ethiopians are compelled to employ their children. But, how can you tell

⁹⁹ Martin, Refugee Women, 89; see also Richard M. Hodes, "Cross-cultural Medicine and Diverse Health Beliefs: Ethiopians Abroad," The Western Journal Of Medicine, Vol. 166, No. 1 (January 1997), 29-37; Yewoubdar Beyene, "Medical Disclosure and Refugees: Telling Bad News to Ethiopian Patients," The Western Journal of Medicine, Vol. 157, No. 3 (September 1992), 328- 334.

¹⁰⁰ For traditional healing practices in Ethiopia, See Harald Aspen, Spirits, Mediums, and Human Worlds: The Amhara Peasants of the North Ethiopian Highlands and Their Traditions of Knowledge (Trondheim: University of Trondheim, 1994).

¹⁰¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000; Or on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.text>

your marital problems to your children? This is not only embarrassing but also against the norm. In spite of this, some Ethiopians who were accused of abusing their wives were sent to centers of anger management. An Ethiopian who had gone through it, related his experience in the following way:

When I came home from work one day, we began arguing. My stepdaughter who noticed this argument had called 911 and had reported the incident. She being a minor, I think the police wanted to talk to my wife by which time I realized that they are talking to the police. I told my wife to hang-up the phone, repeatedly. Meanwhile, the police had also heard my voice through the phone. Hence, they came and took me away. Although my wife, with whom I was married in a refugee camp and with whom I have shared the ups and downs of an immigrant life for more than a decade, was reluctant to testify against me, the authorities decided to send me for anger management for three months. The guys who are supposed to help me were adept in triggering anger by asking me question which I never expected; and some of the questions are totally inappropriate. They will ask me if I forced my wife to have sex with me. Or, if I have tried to sodomize her . . . etc. In these circumstance, I will be so mad, I will scream at them 'how dare you! They will then recommend that I need to stay in the facility for more treatment!¹⁰²

Chapter III. 4. Adjustment Problems: Differences of Attitude between Ethiopian Parents and their Children in America

Min Zhou and Carl Bankston III, in their study of adaptation of Vietnamese children in America, indicated that "one might be tempted to interpret our account as a story of conflict between parents' unchanging traditionalism and their children's attempts to abandon those traditions. The reality is a good deal more complex, however, both parents and children are struggling to adjust to the demands of their new environment."¹⁰³ In the same vein, the Ethiopian parent-child relation and their adjustment to life in America is complex—a complexity that arose from multitudes of variables that have also a bearing upon each other directly and indirectly. One such factor is income. It has been noted that the "negative qualities that people in industrialized countries attach to low-wage jobs"¹⁰⁴ had created a boon for immigrants like Ethiopians. It helped them secure jobs. But, because they were low pay and dead-end jobs, they had to work more

¹⁰² After he completed his treatment, he never went back to his wife. He ended his 12 years of marriage because of the humiliation he went through at the anger management center. He also felt betrayed by his wife. Interview by the author.

¹⁰³ Zhou and Bankston III, *Growing up American*, 171.

¹⁰⁴ Douglas Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal" in *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (1993), 444.

hours, double shifts, or both husband and wife had to work to become economically self-sufficient, like other refugees and immigrants who are engaged in low-paying jobs.¹⁰⁵ However, the temptation to increase ones' income had also its own drawback. Many have to leave their children either with their neighbors and friends, if they have any. Sometimes, however, they had to leave them unattended. In the latter instance, the TV usually becomes the babysitter. This presented an opportunity for the children to watch any channel. Ethiopian households, either as the result of curiosity or believing it as part of becoming American, had cable access. Children left alone are also more exposed to danger. Until, the arrival of their parents, they could watch anything, both at home and outside. Furthermore, there was no one to check their homework or explain something, which was not clear for them.

Some parents do not attend parent-teacher conferences and other school occasions that necessitate the presence of a parent/guardian. This had a tremendous impact on the psychology of the children. They cannot be proud of their parents like the other kids whose parents were coming and attending meetings, or partaking in trips and other activities. In addition to time, language is another barrier which inhibits some parents from attending meetings.

Yet, in some cases when an Ethiopian refugee/immigrant teenager sets foot in American schools, he/she will be assigned to a certain grade level. This is done not because the child is academically qualified to be in that grade level, but because he/she is of certain age, and thus they have to be in that level where American kids of their age belong. The latter were in that grade because they have successfully completed their education. An Ethiopian, who was born in one of the refugee camps or rural parts of Ethiopia, may never have attended school at all,¹⁰⁶ or might

¹⁰⁵ Martin, *Refugee Women*, 87; Steve Gold, "Vietnamese Refugees and Blocked Mobility," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1993), 27-56.

¹⁰⁶ Neither the UNHCR nor other refugee agencies were interested in providing education for the refugee in the refugee camps. See for educational situation in refugee camps in Sudan: Karadawi, 124; Tina Wallace, "Briefing: Refugee and hunger in Western Sudan," *Review of African Political Economy*, No 33, (August 1985), 66-67.

have passed that grade level, which is very rare. A recent study on Ethiopian education indicated that some 84 per cent of the primary age girls were not attending school. The worldwide literacy rate for Ethiopian men and women is 43 and 26 per cent respectively.¹⁰⁷

By the age of eighteen, an American is expected to finish high school or be in a college. However, the unlucky Ethiopian, who had no chance to attend school in Ethiopia and yet who came to America around that age, may have difficulty in learning something useful that could help him in the future. The maximum he/she can do is attending English as a Second Language (ESL) class, which is offered by one of the many community colleges. This is an education that can only help a person to develop 'survival skills' in the USA, skills that can help a person acquire rudimentary English so that he/she can pass in the society.

Even if Ethiopian children were placed in accordance with their academic level, there are other factors that inhibit their performance. In Ethiopia, the best behavior for an Ethiopian child is to be meek, humble, and not to talk unless asked. Such behavior, apparently, is understood and interpreted by American teachers or schools that the student has some problem—he/she could be retarded. One of the Ethiopian parents related his experience in this regard. One day, he got a letter from his daughter's teacher, which indicated that his daughter had some problem. Arriving at school, the parent was informed that his daughter is very passive in class and that she may be retarded and thus in order to send his daughter to special education class, his consent is needed. The surprised and angry parent asked the teacher what made her think that way. Has she even tried to ask the student what her problem was or has she ever considered if there was any cultural difference between the teacher and the student ... etc. After complaining to the principal, he sent

¹⁰⁷ See Naomi Neft and Ann D. Levine, Where Women Stand: An International Report on the Status of Women in 140 Countries 1997-1998, (New York: Random House, 1997), 31, 38.

his only daughter to one of the private schools.¹⁰⁸ The question is "what would have happened to this child if her parents were one of the many uneducated and uninformed Ethiopians, who could not understand the situation?"

In the interviews I conducted among Ethiopian children who were born in U.S., whenever they are asked if they have attended English as a Second Language (ESL) class, they vehemently reply in the negative. They do not want to be classified in the ESL student category. On the other hand, those who are in the ESL classes would answer humbly, while those who had passed through it would say "it took me very little time to master the language and pass from ESL to regular classes." Even if they are in a regular class, fellow students who never attended ESL classes look down upon these immigrant children condescendingly. Their American classmates view their good grades as highly inflated.¹⁰⁹ In fact, many of the uneducated Ethiopians do not want to admit that they are illiterates. "Their pride often prevents them from admitting that they are not literate. To do so would embarrass them personally and reflect negatively on Ethiopians in general. [Meanwhile] existing ESL programs will fail to attract or achieve little success with these people because such programs cannot properly address their needs."¹¹⁰

After completing these ESL classes, especially those Ethiopian youngsters who came at older ages, seemed to be left out in the cold. By the time they are eighteen, though they have officially completed high school, they are not ready to enter the society. They have neither developed the skill nor the education that would help them pursue a life worth living. They cannot

¹⁰⁸ Informant: Benjamin. He was the member of the Imperial Ethiopian Air born before coming to the USA. He had been to various parts of Europe and thus well informed. He is a technician. Interview: Seattle (WA) 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Informants: Dirshaye and Seblewongel. They are sisters who grew up in refugee camp in Sudan. By the time of the interview, they were high school students. Interview: Seattle, September 19, 1997; Informant Patience: when she came to the U.S. in 1994, she was 9th grade student; and at the time of the interview, she was attending Seattle Central Community College. Interview, Seattle, Sept. 16, 1997. Informant Sebele: She grew up with her grand parents in Ethiopia. When she came to the U.S, Washington D.C., she was a high school student. She moved to Seattle in the hope of finding a better school environment. Interview, Seattle, Sept. 19, 1997.

¹¹⁰ The Development Needs, 56.

join colleges or universities for there are not ESL colleges and universities which would accept ESL graduates. Their fate in America is, therefore, to join the blue-collar workers, mostly janitorial, security, nursing-home assistants, taxi drivers ...etc. A 1990 report of Ethiopian Community Development Councils concluded that some 50 per cent of Ethiopians are employed in "dead-end" jobs such as mentioned above.¹¹¹

These jobs, too, would not be sought by all ESL graduates of Ethiopian origin. It is only the "healthy" ones who would be willing to work in these areas. The rest would join the underclass of the society and swell the ranks of gangs. For them, the streets will become "schools" where there is no distinction between ESL and regular classes graduates; and the many parks of the cities will become their abode where they can exercise their freedom with no limit. Drugs will provide them solace in which they would forget the misfortune that had befallen them, and at times violence would become a manner of expression by which they would let out their grief and sense of failure. This might even be a cool thing to do.¹¹²

Ethiopian children are also often frustrated in their family life. Their parents, who were brought up in the Ethiopian way, usually do not change. They always are longing for home. Some Ethiopian parents' English is limited or non-existent and they do not care to learn it. Even parents, who have limited English skill, seem to lose it through time.¹¹³ This is very true for some Ethiopians who reside in areas where large number of fellow Ethiopians are found and where there are Ethiopian stores and restaurants such as Washington DC, Los Angeles, Seattle . . . etc. In these cities, Ethiopian parents do grocery shopping in their own language and thus have less need to use

¹¹¹ The Development Needs, 24-25.

¹¹² In some American cities, the number of homeless Ethiopians is in the rise. In cities like Seattle, the Ethiopian youth has formed its own group, the East African Gang, which encompassed Ethiopians, Somalis, Eritreans and other Africans. Moreover, between 1994 and 1996, some 53 Ethiopians were deported from the U.S. Of these Ethiopians, the majority (44) of them were criminals. See U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1999.

¹¹³ Barry R. Chiswick and Paul W. Miller, "Language Skill Definition: A Study of Legalized Aliens," International Migration Review, Vol. 32, No. 4, (Winter 1998), 898.

English as a medium. What is more, studies conducted on immigrants in Los Angeles revealed, "the prevalence of recent arrivals means that for many if not most of the . . . immigrants the process of assimilation has only begun . . . any continuing influx of large newcomer cohorts will certainly slow that process, and not just by maintaining an active link to the culture and language of the immigrants' home country. Growing numbers of immigrants will retard the process of diffusion out of established residential and occupational enclaves."¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, the children who are attending school will have friends at school, would learn the American way of life faster, and may even become American for all intents and purposes. While this could make them an invaluable assets for their families, it could also be source of worry and at times quarrels between parent and child. Their language mastery will virtually make children interpreters, shoppers, guides ... etc for their parents. This, in turn will give them certain degree of freedom. The latter instance, in the eyes of an Ethiopian parent, which is similar to most immigrants from conservative backgrounds, is unacceptable for it threatens the status quo.¹¹⁵

The refusal of parents to accept the increasingly independent attitude of their children also emanates from the fear of the unknown. What they watch on TV and hear from the media scares them. Thus, they increasingly become protective. They would not allow their children to date, have parties at home or go to parties. An Ethiopian, a father of two sons and who had come to America in the early 70s, had expressed his regret about his two sons as follows: "When I came to America,

¹¹⁴ See Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmher, "The Making of a Multicultural Metropolis," in Ethnic Los Angeles ed., Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmher (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 22-23; David E. Lopez, "Language: Diversity and Assimilation," in Ethnic Los Angeles, ed., Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmher (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 139-163.

¹¹⁵ See for instance, Steven J. Gold, "Differential Adjustment among New Immigrant Family Members," Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 17, No. 4 (January 1998), 408-434; Mehrdad Darvishpour, "Immigrant Women Challenge the Role of Men: How the Changing Power Relationship within Iranian Families in Sweden Intensifies Family Conflicts after Immigration," Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Vol. 33, No 2, (Spring 2002), 271-296; Dhara S. Gill, "Changes in the Breadwinner Role: Punjabi Families in Transition," Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Vol. 26 (Summer 1995), 255-263; Arpana Sircar, Work Roles, Gender Roles and Asian Indian Immigrant Women in the United States (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000); Gold, From Workers State, 36-38.

there were not many Ethiopians in Seattle and its environs. There was no Ethiopian church, no restaurant where the kids could have a chance to mingle with fellow Ethiopians. Because I was attending graduate school, I have not had the time and resource to help my sons mingle with Americans either. Besides, I never thought of myself living in U.S. for good. Thus, my children grew neither being Ethiopian nor American."¹¹⁶

Ethiopian household income and the size of their house have also a role in decision making against partying at home. According to the 1980 data of the U.S. Commerce Department, the median income of Ethiopians was \$11,093 ¹¹⁷ while the U.S. Census indicated that median household income of Ethiopians had grown from \$21, 553 in 1990 to \$32426 in 2000.¹¹⁸ In the latter instance, the median income at the national level was 41,994. What is more, the 2000 census has it that some 15,132 Ethiopians live below the poverty level. Thus, there are Ethiopians who live in low income housing which may not have enough space to host parties or in apartments and condos where it is also difficult to entertain such events. A study of post 1960s immigrants in America indicated that recent immigrant families have an average household size of 5.2. This implies fewer rooms and less resources. Economically speaking "the children of more recent arrivals are much more likely to be living in poverty. About one-third of all second-generation children whose parents arrived in the five years before the 1990 census were living in poverty."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Informant: Nigus. He came to U.S. in 1969 as a scholarship student. In those days, there were only five Ethiopians in Seattle. Though, he had completed his education long time ago, he could not go back to Ethiopia because of the political situation. He now runs his own business, and he is one of the successful Ethiopians in Seattle. Interview: Seattle (WA) May 27, 1997.

¹¹⁷ Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, Part I: Analysis. Prepared for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Family Support Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Arlington, Virginia, 1990), 20.

¹¹⁸ See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990; Census 2000. Also available on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.txt>

¹¹⁹ Leif Jensen and Yoshimi Chitose, "Today's Second Generation: Evidence from the 1990 Census in The New Second Generation, ed., Alejandro Portes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 89.

In the meantime, the peer pressure on the children mounts. They hear about parties and at times they partake in them. Yet, parties for children were unknown among the majority of Ethiopians.

Despite the common knowledge that culture determines family values and norms that also includes the rules for appropriate child rearing practice,¹²⁰ some Ethiopian families are scared of disciplining their children the way they understood in Ethiopia for fear of being at odds with the American law. Some of those who have attempted to do so had received calls from child protection services. The children, too, know very well about it. In fact, to dial 911 was one of the first things they learn at school and they do not hesitate to use it to their advantage. Besides, the difference in the way they were treated at school and at home as well as displaying the cultural crisis, also increases the mood for rebelliousness.¹²¹

At times parents might spoil their children. This could arise from the belief that 'let my child have what I have not had as a child.' Or, they allow their children have whatever they ask for believing that it is how an American child is raised. Or, it might spring from the belief that 'why would I suffer my child in an alien land by refusing his request.' There are also parents who do not have the resources to raise their children the 'American way.' They could not deny their children his/her 'favorite' toy, refuse to take them to the swimming pool, skating, a promised trip ...etc. simply because the parents themselves do not know about these things or lack the means. The maximum they could do is prevent them from watching TV, which is often impracticable. Either the parents are usually at work which presents the children with ample opportunity to watch TV or because of the very nature of their residence, a two bedroom apartment, where children have no where to go while parents watch television.

¹²⁰ Katherine McDade, "How We Parent: Race and Ethnic Difference" in American Families Issues in Race and Ethnicity, ed., Cardek K. Jacobson (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 283.

¹²¹ The Development Needs, 60.

Generally speaking, the Ethiopian parental belief is similar with that of other immigrant groups, who have values that reflect an emphasis on family, group identity rather than independence and individual autonomy. "Loyalty, humility, respect for elders, reticence, and avoidance of personal gain" ¹²² are also appreciated among Ethiopians. By way of disciplining of children punitive and power assertiveness are common among Ethiopians. Besides, Ethiopian children are expected to obey their parents without question. If there is any problem, it should be solved within the family. Outsiders are avoided in family matters as much as possible.

As a result, some Ethiopian parents do not come forward if they have problems with their children. They try to deal with it; and thus at times it might get out of hand. Even if they wanted to deal with it by consulting with the appropriate officials, they might be asked to attend parent education programs, which are "based on and reflect Anglo-American middle-class values;" ¹²³ and thus alien and less useful to an Ethiopian immigrant family. As a result, they usually avoid them. They also do not consult psychiatrists or family counselors. In the eyes of most Ethiopians, it is only those with mental illness who go to such places.

Chapter III. 5. Adjustment Problems: Ethiopian Immigrants and the American Race System

America is a "race" conscious society, in which "race" is predominantly defined in terms of black and white. Thus, a person is "challenged by social constraints that insist on a coherence between self-identification (a public presentation) and self-identity (how one conceptualizes oneself vis-à-vis others)".¹²⁴ In view of this, an Ethiopian like all other African refugees and immigrants in America, "face strong structural barriers to incorporation in the mainstream economy of the United

¹²² McDade, "How We Parent, 285; Gold, "Differential Adjustment," 422.

¹²³ McDade, "How We Parent, 286.

¹²⁴ Katya Gibel Azoulay, Black, Jewish and Interracial: It is not the Color of your Skin, but the Race of your Skin, and other Myths of Identity (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 2; See also Cornel West, Keeping the Faith: Philosophy and Race in America (New York: Routledge, 1993), xv

States," and this barrier, said Peter Koehn, is partly due to racial discrimination.¹²⁵ However, Ethiopian immigrants would probably suffer most due to racial discrimination compared to other non-white immigrants in the U.S. This is not because they are singled out or specifically targeted than others but it is because of cultural and historical reasons that are peculiar to Ethiopians which, inhibit them from understanding the manifestations and subtleties of racism in America, and thence adjustment to life in America. Culturally speaking, for instance, while American society is categorized into European/White/Caucasian, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino . . . etc. based on one's skin pigmentation and/or phenotype, such things do not exist in Ethiopia. The remotest possibility that might resemble such division and with which Ethiopians might be familiar with is the shades of 'color' that they use to explain/express a person's beauty such as *qay* (red or light skinned), *yaqy-dama* (light red), *tayim* (brown/chocolate), *tayim asa-massay* (brown as beautiful as the fish), *tiquir* (black) which have nothing to do with the individual's "race."¹²⁶

Historically, too, the absence of a colonial past where the "colonial state was . . . supervised by white officials deployed from a racial pinnacle at the center,"¹²⁷ is a historic experience that completely detaches Ethiopians from the rest of Africans in particular and all others who suffered under colonial occupation in general. This, coupled with Ethiopia's victory against Italian colonialism in 1896, seemed to have further shaped their view against foreigners. In fact, as the consequence of their history, Ethiopians seem to feel that they are better than anyone—a

¹²⁵ Koehn, *Refugee*, 307.

¹²⁶ Even this type of beauty classification does not apply for all Ethiopians because Ethiopia is a country of diverse ethnic groups, nationalities and cultures. For some like the Beni Amir and the Jabalaawe (they reside in northern and western parts of the country adjoining Sudan) beauty is associated with and measured by the tattoos on one's body while for others such as people living in southern Ethiopia (in Kaffa province) it is the stretching of the lower lip or one's ear lobe that qualifies; and still others, for instance the Agnawak (in Gmaballa, southwestern Ethiopia), relate beauty by the absence of two of the lower-middle teeth, incisors. Hence, the use of the shades of color is limited to the highlanders such as Amharas, some Oromos and Tigrayans.

¹²⁷ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 287; See also William A. Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans: Some Historical Notes, 1920-1970," *Phylon*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2nd Quarter, 1974), 142-155; F. Njubi Nesbitt, "African Intellectuals in the Belly of the Beast: Migration, Identity, and the Politics of Exile," *African Issues*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (2002), 70-74.

theme which had been persistently noted by American and European travelers who ventured into the country in the late 19th and 20th century. The British diplomat, James R. Rodd, who held talks with Emperor Menelik II on the immediate aftermath of the battle of Adwa in 1897, remarked that "merchants told us that since Adua [sic] the prestige of Europeans had greatly diminished. Before that time it had been a tradition with the Abyssinians to accord an European the honors due to one of their own generals. But now their heads were much swollen and they believed themselves to be the elect of nations."¹²⁸ [Emphasis added]

In the same vein, an American traveler who visited Ethiopia in early 1910s had stated, "The European who goes there imbued with the idea that tinted skin denotes an inferior race, and treats the native with the arrogance which frequently marks his attitude towards the Negro, the Hindu, and the Chinese, it is likely to have his career brought to an abrupt end by a spear or a rifle-bullet. Nor Abyssinians to be intimidated, like some other Eastern peoples . . . not so many years have passed since they annihilated a European army. . . In Addis Ababa, as I have remarked elsewhere, the Europeans and natives do not occupy separate quarters." ¹²⁹

Alexander Powell, who visited Ethiopia at the turn of the 20th century, and who had been accustomed to being treated differently because of his skin color in the various parts of the world, was disappointed in Ethiopia. He remarked that "on the soil of Abyssinia, a land where Justice, as it is known in the West, does not exist; where the black man is the top dog and the European the under one [emphasis added]." ¹³⁰

Ladislav Farago, who had traveled to Ethiopia in early 20th century, have witnessed the same low regard to Europeans in Ethiopia. She noted that "the Abyssinians are one of the most

¹²⁸ James Rennell Rodd, Social and Diplomatic Memories 1894-1901: Egypt and Abyssinia (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1923), 161-162.

¹²⁹ Dervla Murphy, In Ethiopia with a Mule, (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1968), 117-118.

¹³⁰ E. Alexander Powell, Beyond the Utmost Purple Rim: Abyssinia, Somaliland, Kenya Colony, Zanzibar, the Comoros, Madagascar (New York: The Century Co., 1920), 56.

polite peoples in the world, but their good manners are for the benefit of their compatriots, not of foreigners whom they look down on, even the lowest little black boy feels superior to white women [emphasis added] . . . the Abyssinian takes no notice of you in the street until you greet him first."¹³¹

Another traveler, Herman Norden, who came to Ethiopia, in more or less the same period as Farago, had characterized Ethiopians likewise: ". . . white-clad villagers from all the countryside . . . walked with that air of arrogance [emphasis added] and lack of interest in strangers which is characteristically Abyssinian."¹³²

George Lipsky, the sociologist who studied the 1960s Ethiopia, also noted the continued lack of understanding of white domination or racial discrimination even among the educated Ethiopians who increasingly find it difficult to identify themselves with the radical African liberation movements who based their protest on the evils of colonialism, racism. As he aptly summed it up ". . . their [the educated Ethiopians] anticolonialism is less strong, however, than that of the educated elite in some of the newly independent African countries; they are still grouping to reconcile their traditional dislike of the *ferenji* [foreigner] with their awareness that Ethiopia needs foreign aid to modernize."^{133*}

Cornel West, who was in Ethiopia in early 1990s, and who decided to reside in that country permanently, also pointed out the absence of race consciousness and bias among Ethiopians,

¹³¹ Ladislav Farago, Abyssinia on the Eve, (London: Fakenham and Reasing, 1935.), 52-53.

¹³² Herman Norden, Africa's last empire: Through Abyssinia to Lake Tana and the country of the Falasha, London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1930), 149.

¹³³ George Lipsky, Ethiopia: Its People, its Society, its culture (New Heaven: Hraf Press, 1962), 325.

* Education in both imperial and revolutionary Ethiopia, especially in the former, was deficient of histories of the African Diaspora. Even those that deal with Africa, especially during the imperial era, were mentioned in relation to British and French colonial endeavors and hence European adventurers and "explorers." Thus, it was European history that dominated the syllabi for the social sciences in Ethiopia. See Teshome G. Wagaw, Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 121.

"Ethiopians are the only African people in the world who take their humanity for granted, with no inferiority complexes or anxieties about their intellectual or moral capacities."¹³⁴

Yet, when an Ethiopian arrives in U.S., the first thing he encounters is the racial boundary, the form that asks him to which racial category he belongs; and thus fits him in a slot, African American/black. These official forms, besides their assumption of ethnic and racial homogeneity,¹³⁵ are completely confusing to a new comer to this country, especially for a person who had come from a country where racial classification does not exist. However, sooner or later the Ethiopian would be racialized, be conscious of his place in this society. As Pierre Bourdieu noted it "the institution of an identity... is to signify to some one what he is and how he should conduct himself as a consequence. . . To institute, to give a social definition, an identity, is also to impose boundaries."¹³⁶

The official categories, in addition to their political objective and their disregard of individual genealogies¹³⁷ forces an individual to be part of a group to which the person has no or little clue. By doing that, the country of settlement introduced the Ethiopian to race consciousness. What is more, since refugee resettlement officials dispersed Ethiopians, "randomly," throughout the country, and helped them find low income or subsidized housing which are also primarily segregated minority ethnic neighborhoods,¹³⁸ the receiving country had therefore played a major

¹³⁴ West, Keeping the Faith, xv.

¹³⁵ Azoulay, Black, Jewish and Interracial, 2.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Azoulay, Black, Jewish and Interracial, 7.

¹³⁷ Azoulay, Black, Jewish and Interracial, 98; Michael E. Tomlin, "Placing People in Boxes," American Demographics, Vol. 16, No. 1, (January 1994), 54.

¹³⁸ Report to the Congress: FY 1996 Refugee Resettlement Program. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Refugee Resettlement. For immigrant ethnic neighborhoods and segregation see Mary C. Waters, Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 97-101; Steven J. Gold, Refugee Communities: A Comparative Field Study (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992), 142-166; Philip Q. Young, Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches (New York: State University of New York, 2000), 157-159, 167-187; Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III, Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children adapt to Life in the United States (New Yourk: Russel Sage Foundation, 1998), 219.

role not only in "initiating, shaping and controlling" refugee movements ¹³⁹ but also in creating ethnic, racial and communal identities for Ethiopians. As Alejandro Portes noted it ". . . the concentration of immigrant households in cities-and, in particular, central cities...puts new arrivals in close contact with concentration of native born minorities...[It, above all], exposes second-generation children to the adversarial subculture developed by marginalized native youth."¹⁴⁰ Accordingly, a closer look at the settlement pattern of Ethiopians in some of the major American cities where they are found in large numbers confirms the aforesaid claim. For instance, the estimated 10,000 Ethiopians in Seattle, who most of whom were refugees, were settled, upon their arrival, in project houses found in the Central Area, Rainer Valley, ... etc. districts which were predominantly African American neighborhoods.¹⁴¹

In Washington DC, too, which is one of the most diverse cities of the USA, and one of the places where the largest number of Ethiopians, around 40, 000 ¹⁴² congregated, the pattern of settlement and business centers reflect that of Seattle. Eighteenth and Columbia, and Thirteenth and U are Ethiopian business centers, while Columbia-Pike Street (in Virginia) is predominantly residential area, which they share with other minority groups.¹⁴³

Similarly Los Angeles, which boasts of 65,000 Ethiopians, had treated its Ethiopian asylee/refugee population the same as the other cities did. Though it might not be predominantly

¹³⁹ Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, II .Ed (New York, The Guilford Press, 1993), 22.

¹⁴⁰ Alejandro Portes, "Segmented Assimilation among New Immigrant Youth: A Conceptual Framework," in California's Immigrant Children: theory, research and implications for educational policy, Rube'n G. Rumbaut and Wayne A. Cornelius (ed.), (San Diego: University of California, 1995), 73.

¹⁴¹ Ethiopian Development Council, Inc., The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States (Arlington, 1990), 96-97; See also "Martin Luther King Way is Growing Into Its Name," Seattle Times. Sunday, January 18, 1998; also "Chiefs Special: Slow Cooking' and Spice Fill Her Food With Flavor," Seattle Times. Wednesday, November 05, 1997; Linda Keene, "A Promising life, a tragic end," Seattle Times, March 28, 1997. See for gang related problems in Seattle, Seattle Times, Monday, April 8, 1996; Monday, September 21, 1998; Tuesday, December 25, 1998. According to these papers, drug and drug related problems including gangs was usually occurs in the Central, Rainer Valley districts areas like White Center.

¹⁴² Smithsonian Institution: Festival of American Folk Life, 1997, 36, 50.

¹⁴³ Ethiopian Development Council, Inc., The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States (Arlington, 1990), 97-99.

Black neighborhood, their businesses are located at the more diverse and the one time desolate but now vibrant part of Fairfax Avenue. There, with the blessing of the city government, they have carved out their own "Little Ethiopia," named after their country of origin.¹⁴⁴ Thus a new identity, African American, if not for the first generation, was tailored for the second generation Ethiopians. As one Ethiopian parent remarked, "our children are going to be African-Americans," though we might want them to remain Ethiopian or Amhara, Tigre, Oromo etc.¹⁴⁵

Chapter III. 6. Adjustment Problems: Relations between Ethiopian Immigrants and African Americans

Ethiopians are primarily found residing in either project-houses or government subsidized residential areas¹⁴⁶ which, by default, are minority neighborhoods and hence subjected to negative racial stereotyping.¹⁴⁷ The presence of fellow blacks in minority neighborhoods, one might assume, is supposed to cement racial solidarity between Ethiopians and African Americans and hence some measure of smooth adjustment for Ethiopians in America, however the reality is far from this. Accordingly, the relationship between African Americans and Ethiopians which is complex and varies through time requires providing a historical context. At least, since the battle of Adwa in 1896, Ethiopia had served as the symbol of freedom and source of pride for African Americans. As a result, when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1936, the whole black world especially African Americans were furious. They even attempted fundraising to help finance Ethiopia's war effort while others

¹⁴⁴ John L. Michael, "Look Homeward: Ethiopian Émigrés Search for Common bond in their new land, but ancient tensions resurface." The Los Angeles Times, Thursday June 25, 1992; Ethiopian Development Council, Inc., The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States (Arlington, 1990), 90-92.

¹⁴⁵ John L. Michael, "Look Homeward: Ethiopian Émigrés Search for Common bond in their new land, but ancient tensions resurface." The Los Angeles Times, Thursday June 25, 1992.

¹⁴⁶ A study conducted by the Ethiopian Development Council, Inc., in ten major American cities where Ethiopians are believed to be found in larger numbers indicated that most of them do not own their own houses, and hence reside in either project or government subsidized-houses. The exception is Washington DC where the majority of Ethiopians either rent while few own their own houses. See The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States (Arlington, 1990).

¹⁴⁷ See Joseph Takougang, "Contemporary African Immigrants to the United States," Inkerindo: A Journal of African Migration, Issue 2 (December 2003); Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, "The Antinomies of Globalization: Cause of Contemporary African Migration to the United States of America," Inkerindo: A Journal of African Migration, Issue 1 (September 2002). The journal is an online journal found at <http://www.africamigration.com>

volunteered to join the ragtag Ethiopian army, and some embarked on a media campaign against Italian occupation of Ethiopia. In the latter case, the evolution and development of the Ethiopian World Federation in 1937 with its publication of *Voice of Ethiopia* is one example.¹⁴⁸

This racial solidarity between Ethiopians and African Americans continued after the war. On the immediate aftermath of the war many African Americans came to Ethiopia, some of them for good, to help in post-war reconstruction effort. As an acknowledgement to the contribution of African Americans during the trying times, Haile Sellassie also allotted hundreds of acres of land for black colonists in Shashemene, central Ethiopia.

However, throughout these times it does not mean that the relationship between Ethiopians and African Americans was smooth. For one, Marcus Garvey had accused Emperor Haile Sellassie as racist when the Emperor declined to meet him. This coupled with "Musolini's propaganda and the white press [which] stated that the Ethiopians believed [that] they were white people who considered themselves superior to negroes,"¹⁴⁹ further confused African Americans and distorted Ethiopia's image among blacks—though Emperor Haile Sellassie had vehemently denied these allegations.

Nevertheless, despite such as allegations both parties were, as indicated above, helped each other at least until after the late 1950s. However, since the late 1950s new political developments that impacted both people seemed to have dulled the liking for one another. One

¹⁴⁸ Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1997), 15-17; James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 27-50; Teshale Tibebe, "Ethiopia: The 'Anomaly' and 'Paradox' of Africa," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (March 1996), 414-430; William R. Scott, "Black Nationalism and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict 1934-1936," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 1978), 118-134; William A. Shack, "Ethiopia and Afro-Americans: Some Historical Notes, 1920-1970," *Phylon*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1974), 142-155; Leon G. Halden, "The Diplomacy of the Ethiopian Crisis," *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 22, Issue 2 (April 1937), 163-199; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., "Ancient Africa and the Early Black American Historians, 1883-1915," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 36, Issue 5 (Winter 1984), 684-699.

¹⁴⁹ Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness*, 25. For similar portrayals of Ethiopia as white, see Harold G. Marcus, "The Black Men who Turned White," *Archiv Orientali*, 39 (1971), 155-166; Frank J. Manheim, "The United States and Ethiopia: A Study in American Imperialism," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 1932), 141, 141-155; Teshale, "Ethiopia: The 'Anomaly,'" 418-420.

such phenomenon was the mismatch between the expectation that African Americans had about Ethiopia and the reality that awaited them in Ethiopia. Those who came to work in Ethiopia were disappointed with what they found in Ethiopia: a poor and underdeveloped country. Thus, most of the African Americans who came to help Ethiopia, except for the very few, returned to America, disillusioned. Meanwhile, the late 1950s and the 1960s also witnessed the independence of African states with whom African Americans have more than a symbolic and sentimental attachment than Ethiopia. Moreover, the Civil Rights Movement which also provided more opportunities for African Americans at home and which also liberalized the racial-divide in America seemed to have enticed African Americans to look inwards rather than to Africa.¹⁵⁰ The lack of avowed interest on racial discourse among Ethiopians, both at home and abroad, might have also dismayed African Americans. For one thing, most Ethiopians in America have come after the Civil Rights Movement, and hence could not understand the African American obsession with racial issues. For another, even if Ethiopians were aware of the racial divide in America, they seem to have preferred to deal with it in class terms. In the eyes of Ethiopian students who were pursuing their education in the United States and who were Marxist oriented, America's racial problem could only be solved through class struggle than racial solidarity. One of the American educated Ethiopians and the architect of the 1960s putsch in Ethiopia, Girmame Niway, believed that the "Negro was a function of the American economic system and that talk merely of 'racial prejudice' was superficial."¹⁵¹ A political stance which was also entertained by ESUNA. The latter, though its members may have participated in the protest against racism in America with their African American brothers, have not taken an official stand on racism in America except once. Even this was in association with a

¹⁵⁰ See Fekru, "Bond Without Blood,"

¹⁵¹ Greenfield, *Ethiopia*, 341; for further information on the 1960 coup see Christopher Clapham, "The Ethiopian Coup d'Etat of December 1960," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 6. No. 4 (December 1968), 495-507.

statement of solidarity from its European counterpart, Ethiopian Students Union in Europe.¹⁵² Yet, on the other hand, African Americans often seemed to have misunderstood this lack of comprehension. For them, as Azoulay noted, "race, as an abstract, non scientific construct has become so embedded in social relations, political interaction, and economic structures that the idea of implicitly advocating racial ambiguity is politically charged,"¹⁵³ and hence unacceptable. Finally the presence of a large number of Ethiopian refugees and immigrants amidst them and the continued portrayal of Ethiopia as famished, war torn and underdeveloped country seemed to have dealt a severe blow to Ethiopia's positive image among African Americans,¹⁵⁴ and hence could lessen African American interest to be associated with Ethiopia and Ethiopians. Ethiopians, on their part, despite the misfortunes that have befallen upon them since the 1970s, continued to point out their glorious past which African Americans and others might find snobbish. Meanwhile, the American system that stereotypes African Americans "as lazy, criminal, drug dealers and welfare cheats,"¹⁵⁵ also scares Ethiopian immigrants and tries to convince them to distance themselves from African Americans. Moreover, the U.S. also "lures black immigrants by telling them . . . that they are different from African Americans, who refuse to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps.' But, no immigrant to the U.S. wants to become part of a racially oppressed group, so it takes a long

¹⁵² My communication with Leslie Rollins, a graduate student at Michigan State University, and who is also interested studying the relationship between Ethiopian students in America and African Americans revealed that many Ethiopian students had participated in various protests during the Civil Rights Movement. There were even some who joined the Black Panther Party. Yet ESUNA, whose guiding principle was Marxism-Leninism, though have written many things in relation to U.S. imperialism, had never aired anything in relation to the racial inequality in America. See also *Challenge*, Vol. 7 (August 1966), 21; Balsvik, *Haile Sellassie's Students*, 197-202.

¹⁵³ Azoulay, *Black, Jewish and Interracial*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ It appears that Ethiopia seemed to have no more served as source of inspiration to African Americans. Instead, it had become a source of disquiet and an example of impoverishment. To this end, even the Reverend Jesse Jackson used Ethiopia to explain the predicament of a small rural American town, Tunica, Miss. as the "America of Ethiopia." See James Popkin, "A Mixed Blessing for 'America's Ethiopia,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol. 116 (March 14, 1994), 52.

¹⁵⁵ Takougang, "Contemporary African Immigrants;" Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1999), 65.

personal experience with racism for even black immigrants to see that they are viewed as 'niggers.'¹⁵⁶

Therefore, being mistaken for African American by the mainstream society and yet suspected, at times even rejected, by fellow blacks in America,¹⁵⁷ Ethiopian immigrants and refugees in America sought a way out from this predicament. One of their options is to accept their lot as African Americans and work in tandem with their fellow blacks for the betterment of America. The other alternative, which Ethiopian immigrants and refugees seemed to have opted for, is to become Ethiopian-American, at least for the time being. In line with the latter choice, Ethiopians have created their own community organizations on ethnic, religious or professional bases. Yet, these Ethiopian-American associations, though expected to help cushion the Ethiopian immigrant and refugees' transition to American life, were also rife with multitudes of problems. Hence, the examination of these organizations is important in that besides revealing the process of identity formation, it also shows "more saliently the interaction between the internal and external factors which mold the immigrant population's reaction to the host society and shapes the pattern of its incorporation."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Okome, "The Antinomies of Globalization,"

¹⁵⁷ For similar patten of relationship between African Americans and other blacks either from the Caribbean or Africa see, Mary C. Waters, Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1999), 64-78; Philip Kasinitz, Caribbean New York, 218-237; Tekle Mariam Woldemikael, Becoming Black American: Haitians and American Institutions in Evanston, Illinois (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989), 37-46.

¹⁵⁸ David Bibas, Immigrants and the Formation of Community: A Case Study of Moroccan Jewish Immigration to America (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1998), 3.

CHAPTER IV

PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (THE CHURCH, SPORT CLUBS AND AN IMMIGRANT PRESS)

Chapter IV. 1: The Struggle to have one's Own Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Studies of immigrants in America, pre and post-1965, reveal that religion played a tremendous role in the process of adjustment, in the preservation of group identity and the immigrant's culture in America. What is more, religious organizations were one of the first immigrant institutions to be established in the new country. However, the process of transplanting religious institutions and practicing a religious life, the way they used to do it in the old country was a problem with which all immigrants have grappled with.¹

Although the Ethiopian immigrants' religious experience in America is analogous to the aforesaid phenomenon, Ethiopians appeared to have encountered a distinctive set of difficulties adjusting to religious life in America vis-à-vis other immigrants and refugees, especially compared with those immigrants and refugees who came in the post-1965 period. The immigrants and refugees from Latin America, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia, who are primarily followers of either the Roman Catholic Church or one of the Protestant denominations that have strongholds in America,² have less difficulty adjusting compared to Ethiopians who do not have the benefits of similar sister churches in the USA.

¹ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 105-128; Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, "The Immigrant in Gary, Indiana: Religious Adjustment and Cultural Defense," *Ethnicity*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March, 1981), 1-17; Kelly H. Chong, "What it Means to be Christian: The Role of Religion in the Construction of Ethnic Identity and Boundary Among Second-Generation Korean Americans," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (1998), 259-286; J. Gjerde, "Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in America," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 19, (1986), 681-697; T. L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 83 (December 1978), 1155-1185; Robert P. Swierenga, "Religion and Immigration Behavior," in Philip VanderMeer and Robert P. Swierenga (ed.), *Belief and Behavior: Essays in the New Religious History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 164-188; Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

² For the history of these churches in America, see Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*, 3rd edn. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981); R.

The majority of Ethiopians who came to America were followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.³ The Church is one of the oldest Christian sects in the world (since 332 A.D.) with the largest following, around 35 million, from among the various Oriental Orthodox Churches.^{4*}

In terms of ethnic composition, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is predominantly Amhara and Tigrayan, though it also has a sizable following among the Oromos. Roman Catholics and Protestants combined account for 2 per cent of the total population while Muslims constitute about 35 per cent. The rest are animists or traditional believers.⁵

Although there are Russian and Greek Orthodox churches that have strong roots in America,⁶ there are doctrinal differences that inhibit Ethiopians from attending these churches. What is more, in addition to the doctrinal difference between the Ethiopian and the aforementioned

Stephen Warner, "Approaching Religious Diversity Barriers, Byways, and Beginnings," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 59, Issue 3 (Fall 1998), 193-215.

³ Although it is a common belief that immigration to the US is random with respect to religion, in reality however, is contrary. For instance, while the Korean Christian population is a quarter of the total population of Korea, more than 50 per cent of those immigrated to the USA were Christians. Similarly, the majority of immigrants from Iran were disproportionately Christians, Baha'is, and Jews; and those from former Soviet Union were Jews while emigrants from India were predominantly Muslims. Hence, despite the more or less fifty-fifty Muslim-Christian ratio in Ethiopia, almost all Ethiopian immigrants and refugees admitted into the USA were Christians. In fact, one of the reasons for the US Refugee Resettlement Bureau for airlifting of Ethiopian refugees from Sudan in the early 1980s was religion. Though some Muslims were also admitted into the US, the majority of Ethiopians were Christians who were believed to have suffered under Islamic law. See United States Office of Refugee Resettlement, *Refugee Resettlement Program: Report to Congress, FY 1994* (Washington DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1995?); Warner, "Approaching Religious Diversity," 193-215.

⁴ Archbishop Yesehaq, *The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, An Integrally African Church* (New York: Vantage Press, 1989), xxi; Aram Keshishian, "The Oriental Orthodox Churches," *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 46, Issue 1 (January 1994), 103. For a detailed history of the Church and its relation with the Ethiopian state, see Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 20-30; Sergew Hable Selassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa: Union Printers, 1972); Sergew Hable Selassie, "the Establishment of the Ethiopian Church," in *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life* (Addis Ababa: 1997), 1-7; CIA -The World Fact Book -- Ethiopia: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/et.html>

*The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, along with the Antiochan Orthodox Church of Syria, the Malabar Orthodox Church of India, the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Armenia, and the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, is also often referred to as the non-Chalcedonian (the Council of Chalcedon was held in 451 A.D), anti-Chalcedonian, pre-Chalcedonian, Monophysite, Ancient Oriental, Lesser Eastern, and Oriental Orthodox Church. However, these days, the latter name is widely used. In terms of followers, the Egyptian Copts have some 9 million; Syrians 2 million; Armenians 8 million; and the Indian Malabar 3 million.

⁵ Getnet Tamene, "Features of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Clergy," *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, (1998), 89, 90, 100. Also see "History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Homepage" <http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/ethiochurch/> For a deferring view of the number of Protestants and other religious groups in Ethiopia, See Windy Murray Zoba, "Guardians of the Lost Ark," *Christianity Today*, Vol. 43, No. 7 (Je 14, 1999), 59

⁶ Hudson, *Religion in America*, 339-343; see also Theodore Sakouts, "The Greek Orthodox Church in the United States and Assimilation," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter 1973), 395-407.

Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Ethiopian Orthodox church is hugely influenced by Judaism and indigenous elements in its practice and dogma. This sets it apart from the rest of the Orthodox churches.^{7*} Other differences preclude Ethiopians from attending these churches: For Ethiopians, Orthodox Christianity is something that they inherited from their forefathers. As a result, it has become more than a religion. As Aram Keshishian observed "...The Christian faith was brought to the people of these early churches [ie. the Oriental Churches] through their own cultural traditions and national identity . . . Hence, these are not churches in Africa, the Middle East or India; they are . . . [Ethiopian], Coptic, Arab, Indian and Armenian churches."⁸ In the same vein, Abba Ayele Teklehaymanot, a Capuchin missionary and theologian, has described Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity as a religion with "a deep influence on the culture of the people [of Ethiopia] so that it became its basic constitutive element . . . [and] part of the national culture."⁹ Archbishop Yesehaq, too, has indicated that Ethiopians "have made the church the focal point of their lives."¹⁰ Besides, unlike the 19th century Catholic immigrants who could be united under Vatican, despite their diverse national origin,¹¹ the Orthodox Churches have no such advantage and hence, work independent of each other. Moreover, since immigrant religious establishments are "symbol[s] of nationality and . . . center[s] of political and cultural activities,"¹² the Orthodox Churches are also exclusionary.

⁷ Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, (ed), The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Addis Ababa: 1970), 1, 92-110, 123; Edward Ullendorff, Ethiopia and the Bible (London, 1968), 15, 87, 115, 135. For Christological/doctrinal difference between the Ethiopian Orthodox and other Christian Churches see Ayala Takla Haymanot, The Ethiopian Church and Its Christological Doctrine (Addis Ababa, 1982); Yesehaq, The Ethiopian, 101-150.

* Some of the Judaic elements observed in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are observance of the Sabbath, the notion of sexual uncleanness, the *tabot* (arc of the covenant), circumcision of boys eight days after birth, hospitality to strangers, the concept of clean and unclean meat, preference not to eat with a man who is not a Christian, the new year celebration in September, the many rites in memoriam of the deceased . . . etc.,.

⁸ Keshishian, "The Oriental," 104.

⁹ Ayele Teklehaymanot, Ethiopian Review of Cultures 2: Miscellanea Aethiopica (Addis Ababa, 2000), 248;

¹⁰ Archbishop Yesehaq, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, xxii.

¹¹ Jay P. Dolan, The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 161-162.

¹² Mohl and Betten, "The Immigrant Church," 12.

Language is another barrier. As the 19th century German immigrant cannot understand a sermon in English or as the Irish would be hard pressed to follow a French preacher, (despite the bond of having common religion, Catholicism),¹³ so too does the Ethiopian immigrant laity faces the same language issues vis-à-vis the other Orthodox churches. Each of the Orthodox Churches conduct their mass in their respective languages such as Russian, Armenian, Greek . . . etc., which is different from Geez and Amharic, the language of the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy and the Ethiopian official language respectively. Besides, even if these churches held their services in English, a sizable number of Ethiopians would still be left out: According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 36.7 per cent (11,418) of the 33,868 Ethiopians in America don't speak English "very well."¹⁴

Racially, too, Ethiopians are different. They are black while the clergy and the laity of the Russian, Armenian and Greek Orthodox followers are white. Hence, Ethiopians did not feel comfortable attending these churches. However, in the absence of any other choice, some Ethiopians, prior to the establishment of their own churches, sought Armenian, Russian Greek . . . etc. Orthodox Churches to attend at Christmas, Easter and other holidays.¹⁵ Their quest for an Orthodox Church seems to become even more intense for wedding ceremonies, christening of their newly born sons and daughters, and at times of death.

Ethiopians have, therefore, tried to overcome the sense of alienation and the need for spiritual fulfillment in other ways, such as renting a small house or leasing part of a church and establishing their own. It was in this way that one of the earliest Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in

¹³ Jay P. Dolan, The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 4-5.

¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.text>

¹⁵ Fore instance, Ethiopians in Seattle were attending St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox and St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Churches. See Lee Moriwaki, "Weekend Easter Celebrations For Eastern Orthodox Churches," The Seattle Times, April 25, 1992.

America, the Holy Trinity, was successfully established and held its mass at the St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City in 1959.¹⁶

Establishing a church is one thing but keeping up with the rent and salaries for the clergy is a daunting task that immigrants face in America.¹⁷ Though the first Ethiopian Orthodox Church was established in the U.S. in 1959, it took the congregation a decade to purchase its own building at 140-42 West 176th Street, Bronx, New York in 1969, and it remained the only Ethiopian owned church until the early 1990s. The history of the establishment other Ethiopian Orthodox churches in the various cities of the USA also reflect the same trend: difficulties in getting the necessary finances to rent or build a church.¹⁸

Even if Ethiopians were successful in overcoming financial constraints in cities where they exist in large numbers, there were other problems. Church authorities who subleased part of their building often complained about the awful smell that they had to tolerate after the Ethiopians left. The undesirable smell was the incense that the Ethiopian clergy burned during mass. When they were not complaining about the incense, the landlords accused Ethiopians of not cleaning the house properly after service. Because of such complaints, followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith

¹⁶ Abuna Theophilos, the then archbishop of Harar Province, was the founder of the church. Archbishop Yesehaq, *The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, 191-192*; also "Abuna Then Returns to Ethiopia: Sets Up Churches in the USA," New Pittsburgh Courier, December 26, 1959, 11. However, the establishment of the church was attributed to the earlier efforts of Dr. Melaku Beyene, who was the founder of the Ethiopian World Federation in America during Italian occupation of Ethiopia. Thus, the intention of the Ethiopian Orthodox officials in establishing the church was "to teach all African American people the history of Ethiopia, to establish ...[the African American] own origin and religion rooted in African tradition." See Denise Wilson-EI, "History of Black Contribution to Church is Well-Hidden Secret," The Miami Times, June 11, 1992, 1C.

¹⁷ Handlin, The Uprooted, 113-114.

¹⁸ For the history and establishment of some of the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in the USA, see the local and national newspapers: Leslie Koren, "Little Church, Big Dreams: Ethiopian Orthodox Facility Starts Small," The Washington Times, January 8, 1999, 9; Virginia Culver, "Ethiopians Plan Church in Aurora \$2 Million is Needed for New Facility," The Denver Post, March 14, 2002, B-02; Sue Lindsay, "Ousted Congregation Wins Its Battle in Court: Ethiopian Orthodox Group wrongly Ejected in 1994, Judge Rules," Rocky Mountain News, February 26, 1996, 54; Richard Vara, "Ancient Legacy; Ethiopian Believers Find Strength in Orthodox Church," The Houston Chronicle, February 15, 2003, 1; Andrew Demillo, "Ethiopian Community Celebrates Ceremony Marks Opening of New Orthodox Church in Seattle," The Seattle Times, July 22, 2002, A1; Jerry Markon, "Growth of Church Reflects Burgeoning Ethiopian Influence; Worshippers Pack Second Presbyterian Site," The Washington Post, June 19, 2003, T12; "Wedding/Celebrations; Amsale Ketema, Yonas Kebede," The New York Times, August 24, 2003, Section 9, Page 10.

in Seattle had to move their place of worship from one location to another (from downtown Seattle to Rainer Valley, and thence to Martin Luther King Street). During these times, services were interrupted.¹⁹

Besides problems with landlords, inadequate space was also another source of concern. Sometimes, an increase in the number of congregation could make the facility too small to accommodate all Ethiopians, and thus Ethiopians were compelled to look for bigger buildings. A good instance of such development is the story of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church in Los Angeles where an increase in the size of the congregation, along with other things, convinced them to build their own church rather than continue leasing a building.²⁰ At other times, a combination of factors such as an increase in the size of congregation and the presence of a larger community of Ethiopians within a city could also result in the relocation of a church to the vicinity where more Ethiopians are found. A case in point is the transfer of the Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Church from Bronx, New York, to upper Manhattan in 1989.²¹

The relocation of the church to a locality where more Ethiopians are found entails more than a change of place: The history of immigrant churches in America reveals that it was the church that became the center of locus rather than the population and hence, the process was that immigrants gravitated to their church's location more than the other way round.²² Moreover, it may also reflect the growing Ethiopianization of the church. When the church was established in 1959, it was primarily due to the demands of African Americans. There were not many Ethiopians in that city then. But, the increase in number of Ethiopian refugees and immigrants in the USA since the

¹⁹ Informant: Benjamin

²⁰ See their website at <http://www.ethiovirginmary.org/hstory.htm>

²¹ Ari L. Goldman, "Church seeks Bigger Home as Ethiopians Flock to Its Doors," The New York Times, January 15, 1989, 22.

²² Because of this phenomenon, some real estate developers were reported to have granted land to immigrant churches for the realtors were certain that once the churches grew, they can cash in on their investment by selling land to parishioners who desire to build their residence near the church. See Mohl and Bettan, "The Immigrant Church," 12.

early 1980s, and in New York since then, could have induced this change. It also depicts the total dependence of the church on the immigrant/refugee population: Like every immigrant religious group in America, the church is dependent on the financial contribution of the laity.²³

In states like Michigan where there are very few Ethiopians (according to the 1990 census, there were only 350) and even these are very much scattered, the scenario of having one's church in a city where one resides becomes difficult if not impossible. The East Lansing Ethiopians' quest to have their own church best illustrates such episodes. Since their number was small, they joined hands with another group of Ethiopians in Detroit. The latter, although they were interested in having their own church, were also few in number and hence unable to finance their own church. Thus, they welcomed the East Lansing initiative and established the St. Tekele Haymanot Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Detroit sometime in 1999. Now the church serves people from the Greater Lansing area, Windsor (Canada) and those in Detroit and the surrounding areas. Hence, although their number and pattern of settlement hindered Ethiopians in Michigan from marshalling enough financial resources to pay rent or sublease a building in a city where they reside, mobilizing resources, seeking one's own church and driving probably for more than an hour to a different city or even a state and country are some of the mechanisms that Ethiopians used to avoid spiritual dislocation in the USA. Driving for hours seeking one's own church is not unique to the Ethiopians in East Lansing. Ethiopians in Philadelphia used to drive to Washington DC to attend an Ethiopian Orthodox Church until they built their own, St. Ammanuel Ethiopian Orthodox Church, in Philadelphia.²⁴

²³ Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 114-115; Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, "Structural Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Summer 2000), 135-153; R Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Towards a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 5 (March 1993), 1066.

²⁴ See <http://ammanuel.Ethiopia.org/Tarik.htm>

In spite of the aforementioned problems, many Ethiopians seemed to have been reluctant to build or buy church until 1991. Since most Ethiopians were asylees and refugees, they believed that one day they would return to Ethiopia. As one Ethiopian New Yorker observed, " . . . until very recently Ethiopians did not give up the idea of going back home . . . They did not want to settle in any way. Next Year, next season, we'll be going home, they reasoned."²⁵ Because of this sojourner mentality, many Ethiopians seemed to have preferred to rent/lease than build/buy their own church.

In spite of the existence of an Ethiopian Orthodox Archdiocese for the Western Hemisphere that includes USA, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean in New York since 1959, there was no Ethiopian built and owned church, except in New York, prior to 1991.²⁶ The founding of the archdiocese and the church in New York was not, however, initiated because of the presence of Ethiopian immigrants in the USA. Rather, it began due to two major factors. It appeared that people had established churches in America in the name of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church without, however, having any contact with or authorization from the Church in Ethiopia. Hence, the latter seemed to have found it necessary to make matters clear before it got out of hand. As the founder of the Archdiocese, Archbishop *Abuna* Theophilos, indicated " . . . religious groups have used the name 'Ethiopian' or 'Coptic' without having received proper training and ordination in the ancient church." The Archbishop was also quoted saying " . . . I am convinced [that] the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has a great part to play in the life of this country [ie. the USA], particularly among the people of African descent . . . They have been and are being exploited by groups, individuals and sects in the name of religion."²⁷ Thus, the other motive was to satisfy the

²⁵ Quoted in Goldman, "Church Seeks"

²⁶ Archbishop Yesehaq indicated that other Ethiopian Orthodox Churches were also established in Los Angeles (St. Tekle Haymanot) and Saint Thomas (St. Gabriel) in Virgin Islands in 1973 and 1985 respectively. Both churches, however, were established as the result of the African American initiative, and both were conducting services on rented property. See Yesehaq, The Ethiopian, 193-194.

²⁷ Quoted in "Abuna Then Returns to Ethiopia: Sets Up Churches in the USA," New Pittsburgh Courier, December 26, 1959, 11.

demands of African Americans who identified themselves with the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Hence, the Diocese was established, primarily, to cater for African Americans.

Chapter IV. 2. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Since 1991: Crisis, Consolidation and Change

The 1990s saw the mushrooming of Ethiopian owned or built Orthodox churches in America. Beginning then, virtually in every major American city where Ethiopians were found in large numbers had more than one Ethiopian Orthodox church. For instance, in 2000 Washington DC alone had more than five Ethiopian Orthodox churches while Los Angeles and the Bay area there were more than seven churches. Atlanta (Georgia), had six churches.^{28*}

The growing number of Ethiopian Orthodox churches could be ascribed to many different contradictory yet interrelated factors. One such variable is time: By 1990s, despite their initial professed intention to return to Ethiopia, Ethiopians have stayed in America for more than two or so decades. Some of them were getting older and the thought that they might die and be buried in America without the proper burial rite was troubling. Studies of early 20th century Greek-American immigrants further illustrates this point: "the thought of never being able to return home to his ancestral origins and the fear of dying in a strange land [emphasis added] caused the Greek to embrace his religion in America with a fervor unknown even in Greece."²⁹

²⁸ Andrew DeMillo, "Ethiopian Community Celebrates Ceremony Marks Opening of New Orthodox Church in Seattle," The Seattle Times, July 22, 2002, A1; Leslie Koren, "Little Church, Big Dreams: Ethiopian Orthodox Facility Starts Small," The Washington Times, January 8, 1999, 8; See also <http://www.eotc.faithweb.com/dire.html> The website contains names, locations and addresses of the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in the USA and other parts of the world such as England and South Africa.

* According to an informant, who is also a deacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and who had served in Washington DC and other cities in the USA, the number of Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in Washington DC and adjoining areas such as Maryland and Virginia had reached more than a dozen. According to him, there are three St. Gabriel, two Madihane Alem (in DC and in Maryland), two Abun Aregawe (in DC and Virginia), St. Urael, St. Mariam, St. Kidane Mihirat (in Virginia), St. Geyorgis (in Virginia), Lidata (in Virginia). Of these, St. Gabriel and Madihane Alem have their own building while St. Mary has the largest congregation from among the surrounding churches. The six churches in Atlanta are two St. Gabriel, three St. Mariam and one St. Michael Church.

²⁹ Quoted in John Bodnar, The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 145.

Those Ethiopians who have come at a younger age had entered adulthood, and with their own children had the desire to cement and pass "cultural identities through religious institutions and ideals"³⁰ to their offspring. Therefore, the burgeoning of Ethiopian Orthodox churches in the 1990s was part of the natural development of the Ethiopian community and the desire to pass the heritage to the second generation Ethiopians in America.

The continually increasing number of Ethiopians immigrants to America also seems to have encouraged the construction of churches. One good example is the story behind the Virgin Mary Ethiopian Orthodox church of Los Angeles. Prior to the relocation of the Church to a purchased property, 4544 South Compton Avenue, the Ethiopians were renting space from other churches in the city. Due to the constant increase in the number of Ethiopians in that city, the board of directors of the church decided to buy the abovementioned property in 1992.³¹

The 1990s in general and 1991 in particular was also a critical period in Ethiopian history. The military junta that ruled the country for almost two decades was overthrown. In its place, an ethno-centric rebel movement, the Tigrayan dominated EPRDF, came to power. For many Ethiopians in the diaspora, EPRDF's ethnic policies and its willingness to accept the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia was unforgivable. Therefore, they regarded the EPRDF government as anti-Ethiopian and undemocratic.³² Hence, for many Ethiopians the hope and desire of going back to Ethiopia died with the coming to power of EPRDF. They were faced with the stark reality thus,

³⁰ R. Stephen Warner, "Religion, Boundaries and Bridges," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 58, No. 3, (Fall 1997), 217-239.

³¹ One of the reasons that forced Ethiopians to have their own church building in Los Angeles, the Virgin Mary Ethiopian Orthodox Church, was the incompatibility of space and size of the congregation. See their website at <http://www.ethiovirginmary.org/hstory.htm>

³² For ethno-centric policies of the EPRDF/TPLF government and the fragmentation of Ethiopia into ethnic based territories; and the dangers associated with it see Christopher Clapham, "Controlling Space in Ethiopia," in Wendy James, Donald L. Donham, et al. (eds.), *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After* (Oxford, 2002), 9-32; Alessandro Triulzi, "Battling with the Past: New Frameworks for Ethiopian Historiography," in Wendy James, Donald L. Donham, et al. (eds.), *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After* (Oxford, 2002), 276-288.

ending the sojourner mentality for them. This could be best witnessed from the dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians who become naturalized American citizens since the 1990s.

Table 5: Number of Naturalized Ethiopians in America.³³

Pre-1990	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
4,713	1,370	1,453	1,505	1,858	2,359	2,558	2,563	1,813	1,727	2,411

As it can be seen from the table above, there were less than 5000 Ethiopians who became citizens prior to 1990, though there were Ethiopians who had been in the U.S. for more than two decades. Very few desired to become American despite the bleak political situation in Ethiopia between the 1974 and 1991, but once their hope for returning to Ethiopia was dashed out with the coming of EPRDF to power in 1991, many opted to become Americans. Hence, the establishment and consolidation of Ethiopian Orthodox churches in America could be partly ascribed to this change in attitude among Ethiopians.

Events that were taking place in Ethiopia in the 1990s also prompted a heightened sense of defiant nationalism among Ethiopians both at home and abroad.³⁴ In the latter instance, Ethiopians in America, besides opposing the EPRDF regime and establishing various political organizations, journals, newspapers, and radio stations, also established their own Ethiopian Orthodox churches. The latter were often identified with Ethiopian nationalism.³⁵ In this regard, the mushrooming of Ethiopian Orthodox churches in America in the 1990s could further be considered as a sign of defiance against the EPRDF regime that belittled the national flag as a "piece of cloth,"

³³ U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990. Also on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.txt>

³⁴ The establishment of magazines such as Ethiopian Review in 1991 (<http://www.ethiopianreview.homestead.com/index.html>) and Ethiopian Register in 1994 in America, and some of the online discussion forums such as Ethiopia First (Ben's page) and the Ethiopian Email Distribution Network (EEDN), also established in 1991, are some indicators of the sense of insecurity; and the rise of rabid nationalism among Ethiopians. The magazines and online forums are primarily engaged in exposing and condemning the ethno-centric policies of the current regime in Addis Ababa.

³⁵ For the relationship between immigrant religion and nationalism, see Fenggang Yang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Religion and Ethnicity Among New Immigrants: The Impact of Majority/Minority Status in Home and Host Countries," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 40, No. 3 (S 2001), 367-378.

and agreed to the independence of Eritrea. This action, incidentally, also resulted in the emergence of a separate Eritrean Orthodox Church.³⁶ Furthermore, the growing number of Ethiopian Orthodox churches in America appeared to be, in part, an attempt by the Ethiopian-American community to prove the EPRDF government wrong. Despite the EPRDF's introduction and imposition of ethnic based political configuration on Ethiopia,³⁷ some Ethiopian in the diaspora seemed to believe that Ethiopians could not be divided on ethnic lines. Thus, they began worshiping in a single church, the Ethiopian Orthodox church, which had served as a unifying factor throughout the centuries and had been associated with the Ethiopian state.

Often immigrants were confronted with "crisis due to a sense of loss, rootlessness, and social degradation." During such instances, "religious faith offered stability and helped resolve tensions."³⁸ Hence, for Ethiopians of the 1990s, the yearning for one's own church might have been a response to the perceived threat to Ethiopia's image and survival as a nation-state in the post Cold War period. Here it is worth remembering that because of the recurring famine the country had become a poster-child of destitution in the world. The separatist war and the many political upheavals in the previous decades had also made Ethiopia a country on the verge of collapse. Hence, in the eyes of some Ethiopians in America and those in the diaspora, to have their own church echoed the very human desire to find solace in religion at such turbulent time.

³⁶ Anonymous, "First Eritrean Patriarch Consecrated," New African, Issue 365 (July/August 1998), 29.

³⁷ See for instance Negussay Ayele, "Reflections on Ethiopia and Ethiopianity," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 7, No. 6, (December 31, 1997), 30-; "International Protest by Ethiopians Against the TPLF Apartheid Regime," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 7, No. 3 (June 6, 1997), 30-; Timothy Kalyegira, "The Wall of Stubbornness: Facination About Mysterious Ethiopia," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 11, No. 2 (October 31, 2001), 33.

³⁸ Swierenga, "Religion and Immigration Behavior," 164-165.

Chapter IV. 3. Crisis in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: The Ethnicization of the Church

It is not uncommon to see friction and division within an immigrant church due to political differences in America.³⁹ The causes of friction can also be "theological controversies carried from the Old country as part of their cultural baggage."⁴⁰

Like the Greek experience, the burgeoning of Ethiopian Orthodox churches in America reflects more than growth and maturation of the community. It is the transplanting of one's own religious institution and Ethiopian nationalism into America. To some degree, the duplication of Ethiopian Orthodox churches also mirrors the crisis within the church and the intensification of ethnic nationalism among Ethiopians since 1991. As John Bodnar aptly summed it ". . . in the minds of most immigrants, the church was not an abstract entity but a localized one based on region, family, neighborhood, and even social class. It was this social basis of religious organization which explained the proliferation of the immigrant church as much as notions about ethnic separatism or competing elites."⁴¹ After taking power in 1991, one of the measures that the EPRDF government took was deposing the then Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, His Holiness *Abune* Merkorios, from the patriarchate, and replacing him with His Holiness *Abune* Paulos.⁴² The circumstances of *Abune* Merkorios dethronement were unclear. The government's explanation was that Patriarch Merkorios had been affiliated with the communist regime and hence regime change also necessitates a change in the Patriarchate. Others, however, alleged that Patriarch Merkorios was removed from his post because of his ethnic background. He is an

³⁹ In the early 1920s, because of political differences (royalists vis-à-vis republicans) within among the Greek Community in Gary, Indiana, the Greek Orthodox Churches was divided into two; and hence, in addition to the existing parishes, St. Constantine and Helen, another rival church, the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, was established. See Raymond A. Mohl, "The Immigrant Church in Gary, Indiana: Religious Adjustment and Cultural Defense," *Ethnicity*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 1981), 6; See also Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 144.

⁴⁰ Swierenga, "Religion and Immigration Behavior," 165.

⁴¹ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 148.

⁴² See "History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Homepage:"
<http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/ethiochurch/>

Amhara from Gondar while Paulos is a Tigrayan from Adwa.⁴³ Hence, the appointment of Abba Paulos, a Tigrayan from Adwa, while His Holiness Abba Merkorios was still alive was viewed as part of the TPLF/EPRDF ploy to impose itself upon the rest of Ethiopia. As the *New York Voice* newspaper put it "since Paulos and the new government shared the same tribal ethnicity, Tegli, government leaders thought that Paulos would be the best person to work with. The Ethiopian government may have also thought that he would pose less of a threat when compared to the old patriarch that was elected during the communist regime."⁴⁴

The actions of the EPRDF government initiated a series of unprecedented crisis in the Ethiopian Orthodox church. It divided the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. However, before delving into the division of the Holy Synod and its impact on the church, both at home and abroad, a brief historical background about the patriarchate of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and its place in the Holy Synod is imperative. Since the introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia in the 4th century and until 1959, the heads of the Ethiopian Orthodox church had been Egyptian patriarchies whose authority "is derived in the first place from the Apostles and goes behind them to Christ."⁴⁵ In 1959, however, for the first time in the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, the Egyptians agreed to consecrate an Ethiopian, *Abune Baslios*, as the patriarch of Ethiopia invested with all the powers to nominate and appoint bishops and archbishops. Since then, in addition to the 14 dioceses that correspond with the 14 provinces of Ethiopia (an archbishop, *liqa papas*, headed each province), the church established the Episcopal See of Jerusalem, Trinidad, and in 1963 an Ethiopian Orthodox Mission for the United States. All these were, however, accountable to the Holy

⁴³ "Protest Disrupt Patriarch's Visit," *The Christian Century*, Vol. 110, Issue 30, (October 27, 1993), 1043.

⁴⁴ Henry Wong, "Ethiopian Orthodox Church Under Siege," *New York Voice, Inc. Harlem USA*, August 12, 1998, 3.

⁴⁵ Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam H.S.I Printing Press, 1970), 105.

Synod in Addis Ababa. It is this Synod that oversees the appointment of archbishops and bishops to these missions and dioceses.⁴⁶

Though the church was dependent on Alexandria for its legitimacy and spiritual guidance throughout the centuries, Ethiopian emperors had always been the head of the church for all practical purposes. One of the reasons for such unity between church and state in imperial Ethiopia was that "the rulers of Ethiopia are held to be the descendants of the royal and sacred line of David, and that, on ascending the throne, they are anointed and consecrated in accordance with ancient Hebraic customs . . . Because of this, they have always been considered as sacred beings, representatives and vicegerents of God, not only in view of the peace and security of their people, but in religious things as well."⁴⁷ The position of the emperor vis-à-vis the church was further strengthened because of the country's isolation from the outside world for centuries; the regular absence of Egyptian Patriarchies in Ethiopia; and the continuous challenge of Islam to Ethiopian Christendom. As a consequence, it was the Ethiopian emperor who approved or disapproved the decisions of the Holy Synod including the appointment of bishops and patriarchies. This had been the custom until the 1974 Revolution that ended monarchical rule in Ethiopia. The revolution also tried to separate church and state. Nevertheless, despite its professed acceptance of the separation of church and state in Ethiopia, the *Derg* had continually interfered in the matters of religion. It deposed the then Patriarch, *Abuna* Tewoflios in February 1976; and appointed *Abuna* Takla Haymanot. Prior to his appointment as a Patriarch, *Abba* Melaku Walda Mikael was the superior of Debra Mankrerat Takla Haymanot Monastery in Soddo, Sidamo province, southern Ethiopia. The Holy See of Alexandria protested the *Derg*'s action on the grounds that a new

⁴⁶ Abba Ayala Takla Hymanot, The Ethiopian Church and Its Christological Doctrine (Addis Ababa: Graphic Printers, 1982), 48-50.

⁴⁷ Abba Ayala Takla Hymanot, The Ethiopian Church, 37-38; Aymro and Motovu, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 112-114.

patriarch while the other lived.⁴⁸ The deposed patriarch died, or rather was executed in July 1979; and hence saved the *Derg* and the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox church from Canonical controversy.

For EPRDF, however, there was no revolution that presented an opportunity for the execution of the deposed Patriarch, His Holiness Abba Merkorios. Hence, its action divided the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox church between supporters and opponents of Patriarch Paulos. The latter group argued that since almost all members of the Synod in Addis Ababa were working with the *Derg*, removing Patriarch Merkorios alone was unfair. What is more, even if the Patriarch had cooperated with the *Derg*, Cannon Law does not allow the enthronement of a new Patriarch while the other lives. They contended that the Paulos led Synod acted illegally. Many church leaders who supported Patriarch Merkorios left the country for the USA. Patriarch Merkorios, too, after staying as a refugee in Kenya, joined his supporters in the USA and proclaimed a parallel Synod in exile.⁴⁹

The Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox church in the Western Hemisphere, His Holiness *Abba* Yishaq, who opposed the government's measure, and welcomed the exiled bishops and the Patriarch. His actions, however, infuriated *Abba* Paulos who retaliated by denying *Abba* Yesehaq funding from Addis Ababa. *Abba* Yishaq's Archdiocese, the Western Hemisphere, was divided into three: USA and Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. Not only this, a certain *Abuna* Matthias was appointed as the new Archbishop of the United States and Canada, which

⁴⁸ Giulia Bonacci, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the State, 1974-1991: Analysis of an Ambiguous Religious Policy (NP: Center of Ethiopian Studies, 2000), 28-39.

⁴⁹ Ari L. Goldman, "U.S. Branch Leaves Ethiopian Orthodox Church," The New York Times (Late Edition (East Coast)) September 22, 1992, B5; For the laws and regulations of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church see Aymro and Motovu, The Ethiopian, especially pages 105,125-127.

literally ousted *Abba Yesehaq* from office.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the EPRDF-appointed Patriarch also ordered *Abba Yesehaq* to hand over the headquarters of the Archdiocese of the Ethiopian Orthodox church in the United States, the Holy Trinity Church in Bronx, New York. What is more, *Abuna Matthias* filed a lawsuit against *Abba Yesehaq* to handover funds in the bank and all other property.

The measures of His Holiness Paulos, while further accentuating the division within the Ethiopian Orthodox church, also incensed the laity both in Ethiopia and throughout the world. While *Abba Paulos* was able to overcome, often with the help of the police, the protest against him in Ethiopia,⁵¹ his endeavor to bring into submission the recalcitrant churches and laity in Europe and the Americas failed, especially in America, where *Abba Paulos* established a separate church for Tigrayans in New York on the eve of EPRDF's ascent to power (1989),⁵² the protest against *Abba Paulos* was forceful. Wherever he went, his trip was greeted with relentless and at times violent protest.⁵³

Nevertheless, *Abba Paulos* had also his own supporters (mostly Tigrayans, Eritreans and other Ethiopians who supported policies of the TPLF) who battled the protesters on the streets of European and American cities. The clash between supporters and opponents of *Abba Paulos* became even more intense where there was an Ethiopian Orthodox church, for it involved issues

⁵⁰ Archbishop Yesehaq, *Behagere Sibikatu Lafafatanw Chigir Yarmitohe Tire* [A Call for Solution for the Crisis Within the Diocese] (New York, 1993 EC); See also the website for Catholic Near East Welfare Association: <http://www.cnewa.org/ecc-ethiopia-orthod.htm>

Also see History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Homepage <http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/ethiochurch/>

⁵¹ "Patriarch's Bodyguard Killed a Hermit Inside a Church," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (February 28, 1997), 8.

⁵² Ari L. Goldman, "Church Seeks Bigger Home as Ethiopians Flock to Its Doors," *The New York Times*, January 15, 1989: 22.

⁵³ "Protesters Disrupt Patriarch's Visit," *The Christian Century*, Vol. 110, Issue 30 (October 27, 1993), 1043; Abdul Montaqim, "Demonstrators Try to stop Orthodox Leader," *The Weekly Journal*, No. 78 (October 28, 1993), 3; "Ethiopians in Norway Protest Against Abune Paulos," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (December 31, 1998), 6; Laurie Goodstine, "D.C. Protest Target Ethiopian Church Leader," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1993, A4; Jane Perlez, "From Academe, A Shepherd For a withered Flock," *The New York Times*, August 6, 1992, A4.

related to property ownership and allegiance of that particular church. For instance, *Abba Paulos'* decision that the Holy Trinity church of New York City, which was the seat of the Archdioceses for the Ethiopian Orthodox church in the Western Hemisphere since the 1960s, must be placed under Addis Ababa's domain, divided the church into supporters of *Abba Paulos* and those who did not acknowledge his spiritual authority. It should be noted here that the church was one of the earliest churches established in America; and one of the earliest churches that Ethiopians owned and operated in America. Either because of its primacy or convenience, the Holy Synod in Addis Ababa selected the Holy Trinity Church as the seat of the archdioceses. Its head was *Abba Yesehaq* until 1991. Despite this, *Abba Mathis*, the appointee of *Abba Paulos*, not only desired to oust *Abba Yesehaq* but also claimed the church, which had been owned and operated by donations from the congregation since its establishment. Because *Abba Paulos'* group now claimed the church as its own, a series of court battles and street violence erupted between the two groups.⁵⁴

The crisis in the Ethiopian Orthodox church was not confined to New York City. It spilled over to other American cities and states where there was a large yet diverse group of Ethiopians. One such victim of division was the St. Mary Ethiopian Orthodox church in Denver, Colorado. As reported in the *Rocky Mountain News* "a split in the congregation of the Ethiopian Orthodox church arose in the Summer of 1994 after a new archbishop named to head the church in Ethiopia . . . One faction of the church wanted to adhere to the archbishop's orders. The other faction contended that the church, like many others established by Ethiopian refugees in the 1980s, was

⁵⁴ See Matthew J. Rosenberg, "A Dispute Over Dogma Spills Into Court and the Streets," *The New York Times*, (Late Edition (east Coast)), August 16, 1998, 14; Zangba J. Browne, "Worship Turns to Chaos in Bronx," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 13, 1998, 4; Henry Wong, "Ethiopian Orthodox Church Under Siege," *New York Voice, Inc. Harlem USA*, August 12, 1998, 3;

an independent, non-profit corporation controlled by its members here, not church leaders in Ethiopia."⁵⁵

The case was brought to the Denver District Court sometime in 1994. After two years litigation, the St. Mary group that supported *Abba Merkorios* (the leader of the Synod in exile) won. The District Court awarded the group \$3,500 in a bank account, the coffee pot and a vacuum cleaner. Following this, the St. Mary group left the former church located at 574 Pennsylvania St. for a new location: East 17th Avenue and Emerson Street. As a consequence, Denver had two Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

The Los Angeles St. Mary Ethiopian Orthodox church was another casualty of the crisis. A group of Ethiopians who were followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith established the church in 1988. However, after some two years the Ethiopian congregation divided into supporters and opponents of *Abba Paulos*. The matter was brought to the local court which legalized the split. As a consequence, while one of the groups retained the name, St. Mary, the court ordered the other group to have a different name and another church. Accordingly, they established the Virgin Marry Apostolic Church and moved out to South-Central Los Angeles.⁵⁶

The churches in Washington D.C., too, suffered. Until December 1993, the Medhane Alem Ethiopian Orthodox church, located on East Capitol Street, was a place where Ethiopians, regardless of ethnicity and regional origin, came to worship their God. However, during one of the Sunday services, *Abba Matthias*, who was the appointee of Patriarch Paulos as the Archbishop of the USA and Canada, took the opportunity to solicit politico-religious support for his benefactors, *Abba Paulos* and EPRDF. As in other churches, the congregation split between supporters and

⁵⁵ Sue Lindsay, "Ousted Congregation wins Its Battle in Court: Ethiopian Orthodox Group wrongly Ejected in 1994, Judge Rules," *Rocky Mountain News*, February 26, 1996, 5A.

⁵⁶ Margaret Ramirez, "Ethiopian Church Finds Home of its Own: After Years of Errant Services, Orthodox Christians View New Quarters As a Sign of Coming of Age," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 2002, B1.

opponents of *Abba Paulos*; and Washington D.C. ended up having two Medhane Alem Churches. The split was not peaceful. It was preceded by disruption of religious services, closure of the church and litigation in the Montgomery County Court, so much so, the Lutheran Church, which had been leasing its space to the Ethiopian parishioners for almost a decade, asked them to find another place. African Americans and West Indians, who were worshipping with Ethiopians in that church, decided to leave the church for good while others opted to stay away until the matter was solved.⁵⁷

In 1992 like their fellow Ethiopian-Americans, the St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Church of Boston, Massachusetts, which came into existence in 1989, was also divided on the legitimacy of *Abba Paulos*. At one time, so intense was the antipathy between opponents and supporters of *Abba Paulos*, they had to worship under the watchful eyes of the Cambridge Police. Finally, unable to reconcile their differences, the St. Michael congregation was split into St. Michael and St. Mary. While the former retained its rented location at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cambridge, the latter moved to South End. While the court's decision gave the Ethiopian community of Boston (which primarily resides in areas like Allston-Brighton, Roxbury, Cambridge, Lynn and Chelsea; and which is roughly estimated at 10,000 people) temporary respite, the division surfaced in another form. In 1997 a group of Ethiopians accused the chairman of the Ethiopian Community Mutual Association, a certain Tamene, who also run the community's radio station, being partial and undemocratic. The plaintiffs claimed that since the establishment of the community in the 1980s, no election had been held and throughout these times Tamene had always hand picked members of board of directors of the community association. They demanded an election. The St.

⁵⁷ Similarly, the congregation of St. Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox Church, located at 16th Street NW, in Washington DC, had been provoked by the supporters of *Abba Paulos*. See Len Cooper, "Split in Ethiopian Church Mars Sprit of Holy Season: Election of Leader Sparked Division in Congregation," Washington Post, April 17, 1993, G10.

Michael church leaders and congregation stood beside the accusers. Though an election was held and Tamene lost, the latter rejected it as illegal; and the division of the community that began with controversy surrounding the appointment of *Abba Paulos* continues to this day.⁵⁸

A similar fate befell the Ethiopian Orthodox Church congregations in Seattle. When the church was established in the 1980s, it was known as St. Amanuel Ethiopian Orthodox Church. However, when the TPLF/EPRDF's rose to power, its congregation was torn apart and each established its own church, St. Gabriel and Medhane Alem. The former was also the seat of Archbishop Zena Marqos, who was one of the leading members of the Synod in exile in America, the latter was in the domain of *Abba Paulos*.⁵⁹ Though the circumstance surrounding *Abba Paulo's* legitimacy further accentuated the division among Ethiopians in Seattle, the roots of the rancor could be traced back to the immigrant/refugee cleavage within the community. Seattle is one of the places where Ethiopians came for further education and their number was less than ten in the 1970s.⁶⁰ As the result of the 1974 Revolution and subsequent developments, more Ethiopians, mainly refugees, came to the city. And, the number of Ethiopians grew to the thousands, which necessitated the establishment of a church, the St. Amanuel Ethiopian Orthodox church sometime in 1987. By 1990, the Ethiopian population of the city had reached some 3000. This was when differences between refugee and immigrant (these are the asylees who are also referred as passport holders)⁶¹ began to surface. While the priest and the majority of the clergy were refugees,

⁵⁸ The earliest site where the 200 or so St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Church congregation attended its mass was in the Roxbury Lutheran Church. See Francie Latour, "In New Land, Ethiopians Struggle For Unity," The Boston Globe, April 12, 1999, A1, A12.

⁵⁹ Stephen Clutter, "Mother's Day All Year Long For Ethiopian Family," The Seattle Times, May 13, 1999; Francie Latour, "In New Land, Ethiopians Struggle for Unity," Boston Globe, April 12, 1999, A1, A12; Matthew Craft, "Ethiopian Christian Celebrations Begin Central Area Church Provides 'Little Bit of Home' For Members," The Seattle Times, January 5, 2003, B5; also informants: Benjamin and Zenebech.

⁶⁰ Sally Macdonald, "New Church in New World—Ethiopian Congregation Follows a Dream," The Seattle Times, December 25, 1998.

⁶¹ Holding a passport, in those days, implied that the individual came to the U.S. prior to the days of the revolution which means that the person was either sent for education, came as a visitor . . . etc. This, once again, entails that he/she was in a better socio-economic position (vis-à-vis the refugees who were airlifted from refugee

immigrants/passport holders ran the administrative tasks of the church and hence controlled the board. As a consequence, tension within the laity increased; and the church was troubled. It was during these circumstances that EPRDF took power and deposed Abba Merkorios, which realigned the Ethiopian community in Seattle, and reoriented the issue from refugee/immigrant confrontation into politico-religious squabble between supporters and opponents of Abba Paulos/TPLF.⁶²

The spell of dissension seems to have spared no one. Even one of the youngest Ethiopian Orthodox churches, the St. Tekle Haymanot, which was established as the result of the cooperation between Ethiopians in the Greater Lansing area and those in Detroit and the surrounding areas, has succumbed to this misfortune. Here however, the crisis has its own twists and turns. The immediate cause for the discord was the demand of the laity for an election that angered the "old" board members who took it as an affront. Consequently, the laity was divided into two, and each established its own church, one in Pontiac Michigan and the other in Detroit. They also fought in court each claiming to be the legitimate church to own the *tabot* (the ark of the covenant), the money in the bank and the religious books and crosses. The case is awaiting the verdict of the Southfield District Court, which might not be final, for each group has vowed to continue the fight.⁶³

camps from Sudan) to afford travel to or education in the United States. Indeed, in the days of Haile Sellassie, no so many could afford it. Hence, coming to the U.S. or going abroad in general was a mark of distinction between the rich and the poor, or the upper class and the plebeian.

⁶² Today, the Seattle Ethiopian community leaders and some of the city officials believe that the city has 20,000 Ethiopians while the 2000 US Census record showed 5296 Ethiopians. See John Iwasaki, "Ethiopian Churches Meet Spiritual, Practical Needs," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 7, 2003; Andrew De Millo, "Ethiopian Community Celebrates Ceremony Makes Opening of New Orthodox Church in Seattle," July 22, 2000, A1. Informants: Benjamin and Zenebech.

⁶³ I, being one of the members of the church, was summoned to appear in court to testify. See the attached subpoena.

Chapter IV. 4. Rancor within the Synod in America: Regionalism on the Rise

The misfortunes of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in America did not end with the split between supporters and opponents of His Holiness *Abba Paulos*. As time went on, rancor within the Synod in exile also began to surface. This time, however, the root causes of the problem were related to a power rivalry: Although *Abba Yesehaq* acknowledged His Holiness *Abba Merkorios* as the legitimate Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, and although he had welcomed the other bishops into his domain, he seems to have felt that his power was threatened by the Synod in exile and its members. According to his booklet, *A Call for Solution to the Crisis within the Diocese*,⁶⁴ *Abba Yesehaq* indicated that the Synod in exile acted without his knowledge and consent when it appointed bishops and priests for the various states in America. His Holiness also pointed out that these bishops couldn't operate as bishops for they had left their diocese and hence had no 'territory' of their own. Consequently, though these bishops were welcome to remain as his guests in America, they could not do anything by themselves. In short, they had forfeited their clerical authority the moment they left their respective domains in Ethiopia.

Abba Yesehaq's woes vis-à-vis members of the Synod in exile seemed to have been further exacerbated due to the very nature of immigrant churches in America. The history of late 19th and early 20th century immigrant churches in America reveals that immigrant "religious congregations, one of the first institutions immigrants established, were organized by the immigrants themselves, not by clerics from the old country or by those already in the United States."⁶⁵ Accordingly, since it is the Ethiopian immigrant/refugee community which had the

⁶⁴ Archbishop Yesehaq, *bahagare sibikatu latafatarw chigir yamfiohe tire* [A Call for Solution for the Crisis Within the Diocese] (New York, 1993 EC), 3-7

⁶⁵ Mohl, "The Immigrant Church in Gary," 12; for the role of the congregation vis-à-vis the clergy, see Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, "Structural Adaptations in Immigrant Congregation," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 2000), 135-153.

authority to hire or fire priests, and since it is this community that sponsors/co-sponsored clergymen to come to the United states, members of the Synod in exile and *Abba Yesehaq* had little or no say in the decision-making process. Moreover, while they themselves are very dependant on the goodwill and contributions of the Ethiopian immigrant/refugee congregation in America, clerical aspirations could, however, result in disunity. As Bodnar, who studied 19th century European immigrants in the USA noted, "while it may be too strong to assert that the multiplication of ethnic parishes was attributable solely to 'clerical careerism,' ambitions of leaders or those who aspire to be leaders played a strong role in stimulating factionalism."⁶⁶

Abba Yesehaq also accused some members of the exiled Synod as "*gotegna*," (parochial), who are bent upon fomenting regionalism among Ethiopians in order to serve their personal ambitions. He warned that unless they are stopped, their actions would result in permanent schism of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The initial division of the clergy and laity between those who supported the EPRDF appointee patriarch and those who stood against him, was slowly taking a different turn. Among the five members of the Ethiopian Orthodox church Synod in exile, four of them were Gondares, (men from Gondar). What is more, the deposed Patriarch, too, was from Gondar. Accordingly, in addition to *Abba Yesehaq*, some individuals among the Ethiopians in America (mainly those from Shoa) have condemned the Synod in exile as a Gondare maneuver to dominate the Ethiopian Orthodox church in the diaspora.⁶⁷

* In fact, one of the reasons for the continued division within members of same church is because of the powerlessness of the clergymen over the laity. Unlike in Ethiopia, where the church is powerful and very much entrenched and where the clergy has additional means of survival besides the money that his parishioners contribute, the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy in America is totally dependant on the salary that the congregation of a church payd him. The clergyman, in short, is no more solely a spiritual leader but also an employee who could be dismissed if he disagreed with the church board members.

⁶⁶ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 156.

⁶⁷ *Yesehaq, Bahagere*, 15-19; See also History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Homepage <http://www.angelfire.com/ny3/ethiochurch/>

In pamphlets entitled "*Zobe*" (it is the name of King Fasciladas' horse) and "*In the Name of Justice*," another group, presumably supporters of the Synod in exile and people of Gondar origin, countered Abba Yesehaq's allegation. They pointed out that encouraged by power thirsty individuals and groups, (a reference to some of the Shoans who were high ranking government officials both during the Imperial era and the reign of the *Derg*), who were noted for their opportunism, Abba Yesehaq was again being hoodwinked in to proclaiming himself as a third patriarch and siding with Abba Paulos thereby betraying his Christian duty, fighting the illegitimate Synod in Addis Ababa.

These same pamphleteers also indicated that the dominant position of the Gondares in the Synod in America is a personal achievement gained through decades of theological excellence rather than an outcome of conspiracy. Hence, their Gondareness should not be an issue unless those who were accusing members of the Synod were themselves "*gotegnoch*," (parochial). Or they are simply jealous of the achievements of members of the Synod in exile.

Furthermore, this same group also pointed out that the important concern of Abba Yesehaq and his cliques should have been the fight against the unlawful Synod in Addis Ababa, the future of Ethiopia and the welfare of its people rather than the preeminence of Gondare clergymen in America and the Diaspora.⁶⁸

Chapter IV. 5. Prospect: The Fate of the Church in America

It is clear that the Ethiopian Orthodox church is in deep crisis—a crisis which is further exacerbated by the increasing challenge from the rise of Islamic fundamentalism,⁶⁹ aggressive

⁶⁸ "*Zoble: Mangad Salatagn Bila Gabyawun Alfa Hedach*" [You do not pass the market because you can walk fast]. An eleven-page pamphlet written in Amharic. N.D. See also "*Bahig Amlak Abba Yesehaq: Bhaymanot Shifan Kwayneawe Tagibariwo Yitaqabu*" [Abba Yesehaq, Please stop! Refrain From Using Religion as a Cover for Your Divisive Action]. This pamphlet, too, was written in Amharic. It does not have place and date of publication.

⁶⁹ See the challenges that the Ethiopian Orthodox faces from Whabism <http://www.ethiopiafirst.com> Also, for general information on Islamic Fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa, see Medhane Tadesse, *AL-Itihad: Political Islam and Black Economy in Somalia* (Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Press, 2002).

evangelization from some Protestant sects,⁷⁰ and the church's financial predicament since the end of monarchical rule.⁷¹ In addition, although the church had greatly suffered under the military junta and although some of its clergy aired their opinions against the regime (for which they were jailed, tortured, exiled or executed), the church, as a religious institution, has failed to condemn the "Red Terror" and other measures of the government. This made the church look like an accomplice in the eyes of the faithful, especially among the educated intelligentsia that suffered most.⁷²

Yet, it is also this same intelligentsia that emigrated to foreign lands in large numbers; and it is also this same group that constituted the core of the boards that ran the churches in America and the diaspora. This, coupled with the congregational structural organization of immigrant churches in America that empowered the laity more than the clergy,⁷³ and the rise of ethnic nationalism and regionalism among Ethiopians, further incapacitated the church both at home and abroad.

In light of the abovementioned scenario, the question here is not how religion serves as a basis of identity. Rather, how would religion, in this case Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, translate into and interact with shifting ethnic and regional identities among Ethiopians. Will the church in America continue as an Ethiopian or will transform itself into Tigray, Amhara, Oromo. . . etc Orthodox churches each probably with its own archbishop and a diocese ? Or will it become an Ethiopian-American church independent from the authorities in Addis Ababa?

⁷⁰ Andrea Useem, "Evangelicals Alter Ethiopia's Traditions," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 8, 2000, 17

⁷¹ Bonacci, *The Ethiopian*. The book also indicates a series of measures that the Marxist regime took to weaken the Church, in addition to confiscating its properties. Also J A Loubser, "Two Revolutions Behind: Is the Ethiopian Orthodox Church an Obstacle or Catalyst for Social Development?" *Scriptura: Tydskrif vir Bybelskultuur*, No. 82 (2002), 378-390.

⁷² Some estimates has it that during the reign of the *Derg* some 200,000 Middle class Ethiopians lost their lives while equal amount or more left the country. See Loubser, "Is the Ethiopian," 380; Babile, *To Kill a Generation*, 160-164.

⁷³ Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 114-115; Warner, "Work in Progress," 1064-1068; Ebaugh and Chafetz, "Structural Adaptations," 135-153.

Could the church also continue to exist being an Ethiopian Orthodox Church but in a different context such as an independent church from the Patriarchate in Ethiopia for which we have some evidence—The establishment of an Ethiopian Orthodox Church Synod in exile. Yet, could this synod transform itself into an autonomous entity for good regardless of government change in Ethiopia?

To respond to the aforementioned questions one is compelled to look at the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in comparative perspective. The experience of 19th and early 20th century immigrant Catholics in America indicates that despite diverse cultural and national origin, and despite the existence of conflict on issues that range from "control of church property, the appointment of pastors, and national religious tradition, ... severe schism did not occur . . . [because] the disagreements were seldom centered on the theological foundations of the catholic religion. . . . [What is more], as an institution the [Catholic] church possessed a degree of elasticity and was able to tolerate such disagreement [emphasis added]."⁷⁴ The Ethiopian Orthodox church seemed to lack such elasticity despite its inclusion of diverse nationalities and nations within Ethiopia. Its history revealed that it had never ordained a bishop from among the Oromos, the single largest ethnic group in the country accounting for almost half of the total population of Ethiopia.

It is also this lack of elasticity that prevented the church from incorporating larger numbers of African Americans, despite its forty years or so existence in America, and despite the greater role that African Americans had played in initiating and establishing the church in America.⁷⁵ There

⁷⁴ Dolan, *The Immigrant Church*, 88.

⁷⁵ People of Caribbean origin seemed to constitute the majority from among its African American followers in the U.S.A. Yet, the church at one time informed them to cut their dreadlocks if they want to continue to be part of the congregation, which apparently offended some of them and hence seceded from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to form their own. See Randal L. Hepner, "The House That Rasta Built: Church-Building and Fundamentalism Among New York Rasatafarians," in *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, eds., R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 197-234, 204.

are no African American priests, and its liturgical language still remained Geez, an ancient language that many Ethiopians do not even understand, an equally, if not more, difficult language for African Americans to comprehend. Additionally, the majority of its clergy is illiterate in their own language and hence incapable of providing sermons in English.⁷⁶ Therefore, in order to survive as a cultural and national icon among Ethiopians in the diaspora and to continue providing the necessary spiritual guidance to the faithful, both at home and abroad, the Ethiopian Orthodox church must undergo structural alteration and spiritual renewal.

Chapter IV. 6. Soccer and the Shaping of Ethiopian Immigrant Community/Identity: The Ethiopian Sport Federation in North America (ESFNA)

Like immigrants in America, Ethiopians felt alienated, and one of the areas that they felt so was in the domains of recreation and sport. While the most popular American pastimes are baseball, football and basketball, Ethiopians only have knowledge of basketball. In fact not only do they have difficulty in understanding these games, they often confuse American football for soccer; and get disappointed when they discover that football is not really football the way they know it back home. To overcome this sense of isolation and thereby carve their own social and cultural space within American society, Ethiopians established the Ethiopian Sports Federation in North America (ESFNA) sometime in 1984. When begun, the Federation had only four clubs from Houston, Dallas, Atlanta and Washington DC; and the attendance was no more than a couple of

⁷⁶ In the late 1990s, the church claimed to have some 400,000 priests and 30,000 parochial schools throughout Ethiopia. Yet, though its clergy can recite the books and chant the liturgy, most of them do not understand the ancient language, Geez. Realizing this and in the face of challenges from its rivals, it appears the Orthodox Church had reopened its only theological seminary in the country. The Ethiopian Orthodox Theological College, located in Addis Ababa, like all other academic institutions in the country, is noted for lack of resources and qualified teachers. Its books, that numbered 3600, were from the 1970s; and in 1999, the total number of computers the college had was one! See Loubser, "Is the Ethiopian," 383, 387.

hundred people.⁷⁷ By establishing their own federation, Ethiopians were able to use sport, like every other immigrant in America, as "a point of solidarity . . . in an alien environment."⁷⁸

The other purpose for the establishment of the Federation, according to its bylaws, Article 3.1 and Article 3.7, is "to promote Ethiopian culture in North America . . . [and] to establish close relationship with Ethiopian community and other organizations of similar objectives and interest."⁷⁹ Inline with these principles, the Federation choose the July 4 weekend to host the soccer match in one of the American cities every year.

The choice of the July 4th weekend seemed to entail more than convenience. By honoring July 4th, it appears, Ethiopians were expressing appreciation to the opportunity accorded to them by the host society. It can be also a statement indicating that Ethiopians in America, most of whom are political refugees and exiles, also cherish freedom and value the sacrifices made to attain and protect this freedom. Moreover, it might also mean that by hosting their event on that day, Ethiopians are expressing their enthusiasm and willingness to be part of America yet retaining something of their own, soccer, which is barely an American sport.⁸⁰ Hence, Ethiopians have used

⁷⁷ Wondimu Elias, "Interview: ESFNA President Shemelis Assefa," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 6, No. 6 (June 1996), 20.

⁷⁸ Elliott J. Gordon, "Sports Through the Nineteenth Century," in The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives, Ed. S. W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 47, 33-57.

⁷⁹ See Article 3.1 and 3.7 of the Bylaws of the Ethiopian Sports Federation in North America, January 1993 and January 2000 Revision. (Mimeographed).

⁸⁰ Soccer, compared to baseball, football and basketball, is the less favored game in America. In fact, until the 1990s, one can safely say that it had never been an American sport. For the history and significance of baseball and football in America, see Elliott J. Gordon, "Sports Through the Nineteenth Century," in The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives, Ed. S. W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 33-57; Melvin L. Adelman, "The Early Years of Baseball, 1845-1860," in The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives, Ed. S. W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 58-87; Michael Oriard, "In the Beginning Was the Rule," in The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives, Ed. S. W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 87-120; Mark Dyreson, "Regulating the Body and the Body Politic: American Sport, Bourgeoisie Culture, and the Language of Progress, 1880-1920," in The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives, Ed. S. W. Pope (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 121-144.

sport as "a vehicle, in many different ways, for the construction of individual, group and national identities"⁸¹ in America.

The event has become an annual occasion in which Ethiopians display and share their rich cultural tradition with Americans, and pass it on to the second generation Ethiopians, the Ethiopian-Americans. Besides, the tournament also maintains the bond between the Ethiopian community in America and the country of origin. Since its inception, it has brought guests of honor from Ethiopia as keynote speakers at the event. The guests of honor have included well known Ethiopians such as former players of the Ethiopian National Soccer team, famous Ethiopian long distance runners, playwrights, performers ... etc. Bringing prominent Ethiopians as keynote speakers in the tournament was also intended, besides maintaining the bridge between Ethiopia and America, as a way to provide role models for the young generation Ethiopian-Americans so that the latter could emulate; and be proud of their Ethiopian heritage.⁸²

It became a ritual among Ethiopians to attend the soccer tournament every year during the July 4th weekend in one of the American cities.⁸³ During this time, although soccer dominated the events, other games and cultural festivals were also held, often depending upon the

⁸¹ Mike Cronin and David Mayall, "Sport and Ethnicity: Some Introductory Remarks," in Sporting Nationalism: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation, Ed. Mike Cronin and David Mayall (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1998), 1-2.

⁸² So far, ESFNA had brought the following prominent Ethiopians as keynote speakers: Dr Aklilu Habte (1985), Mengistu Worku (1986), Tesfaye Seyoum (1987), Yidnekachew Tessema (represented by his son, Taddale Yidnekachew) (1988), Mamo Wolde (1989), Adamu Alemu (1990), Getachew Abebe (Dulla) (1991), Luciano Vassalo and Italo Vassalo (1992), Derartu Tulku/ Kebede Metaferia (1993), Awad Mohammed/Lauret Tsegaye Gebre Medhin (1994), Getachew Wolde/Kagnaw Kitachew (1995), Taddesse G/Medhin (1996), Miruts Yifter (1997), Fekade Mulieta (1998), Prof. Asrat Woldeyes/represented by his family (1999), Negusse Gebre (2000), Germaw Zergaw/Zewde Samuel (2001), Warni Biratu/Asrat Haile (2002), Engdawork Tariku (Sebeta) and Teka Gebratsadik (2003) See Dagnachew Bezabeh, "The 1994 Ethiopian Soccer Tournament," Ethiopian Review (March 1994), 59; see also ESFNA website <http://www.esfna.org/history/gustofohonor/>

⁸³ So far, the following cities had hosted the soccer tournament: Huston (1984), Washington DC (1985), Atlanta (1986), Los Angeles (1987), Washington DC (1988), Dallas (1989), Boston (1990), Seattle (1991), Toronto-Canada (1992), Oakland-CA (1993), Tyson's Corner-VA (1994), San Diego (1995), Largo-MD (1996), Los Angeles (1997), Atlanta (1998), Dallas (1999), San Francisco/San Jose (2000), Toronto-Canada (2001), Hyattsville-MD (2002), Houston (2003), Seattle (2004). See Wondimu, "Interview," 20; ESFNA's website: <http://www.esfna.org/history/tournamentvenues/index.htm>

resourcefulness of the host city Ethiopians. For instance, the 1993 host of the game, Walia, the San Francisco team, for the first time included children's short distance run, women's 800 meter race and a 15000 meter contest for men. Not only this, it also introduced a "Miss Ethiopia Beauty Contest" and a theatre, "*Yechagula Shirshir*" and other plays. Moreover, the organizers also allotted time for ex-members of the American Peace Corps Volunteers, who were also having their annual meeting in the city, to participate at the closing ceremony—a gesture of appreciation to the Peace Corps Volunteers for their contribution in Ethiopia, and an attempt to bring Ethiopians and Americans closer. ESFNA also pledged to financially help the dismissed Addis Ababa University professors and orphans in Ethiopia.⁸⁴

The annual soccer tournament therefore, has transformed itself to become more than a mere event in which Ethiopian soccer teams compete against each other. It has become a scene of competing cultures where hotdogs vie against Ethiopian Kitfo or complement each other. It is also here that one observes the process of transformation in business transactions among Ethiopian immigrants in America. Price bargaining, the traditional Ethiopian ways, and fixed prices, the American style, are witnessed. The tournament is a place where Ethiopian identity is recreated and modified.⁸⁵

The items sold, in addition to food and beverages (both Ethiopian and American), include video and audio tapes and CDs, t-shirts, books, magazines, souvenirs . . . etc. The whole vista reflects the oriental bazaar combined with the American mall, which generates more than \$3 million in a single week—an indication of the potential buying power of Ethiopians in America. Of this sum,

⁸⁴ Fikre Tolossa, "Ethiopian Soccer Games in North America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3. No. 6, (June 1993), 15, 18, 21.

⁸⁵ For the role of sport in either maintaining ethnic and national identity or accelerating assimilation see Roy Hay, "Croatia: Community, Conflict and Culture: The Role of Soccer Clubs in Migrant Identity," in *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, Ed. Mike Cronin and David Mayall (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1998), 49-66; Joseph M. Bradley, "Sport and the Contestation of Cultural and Ethnic Identities in Scottish Society," in *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*, Ed. Mike Cronin and David Mayall (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1998), 127-150.

the federation is believed to have pocketed a profit of more than \$150,000 from ticket sales and music concerts alone.^{86*}

Aside from being an annual bazaar, the soccer tournament also provides an opportunity for the younger generation to look for an Ethiopian partner or just a date—a phenomenon that is increasingly attracting more of the young generation and bachelor Ethiopians to the tournaments. The problem, according to an Ethiopian observer, is that while the “Fafa” Generation (late teens and early twenties) has no problem in picking their dates, the older Ethiopians were impeded due to cultural reasons such as “extreme shyness on the part of ladies, pride, fear of rejection and stage fright on the part of men”⁸⁷ which seemed to have driven the latter to congregate around the beverage stand. In this circumstance, “*siksta*” (traditional Ethiopian dance that evolves shaking shoulders and neck), would provide the opportunity for striking conversation between the sexes.

It is also at the soccer tournament were friends who may have parted company years ago, find each other. This is especially true to the Ethiopian political refugees who left their homes abruptly. Moreover, side by side with the soccer tournament and partying, many political parties and prominent Ethiopians also organize forums and fundraisers and invite Ethiopians to attend. In all these, the Federation was not directly involved. It tries to keep distance from entanglement with political parties and prominent personalities. As the president of EFFNA indicated

The Federation's bylaws clearly states that the organization is neither political nor religious. We . . . tried to keep the organization independent of any covert or overt political or religious influences so far . . . Political and religious leaders often challenge our position. Our response has been, and will continue to be, that the Federation is instrumental in bringing a large number of Ethiopians in one location every year and it is up to the various organizational entities to take

⁸⁶ Fikre Tolossa, “Behind the Soccer Scene,” *Ethiopian Review*, (August 1993), 49, 51-52.

* The figure should be taken with caution: Despite a repeated demand and criticism against ESFNA due to its lack of transparency, it did not make its financial dealings public until 2002. Hence, although it does not show the income from all the transactions, it had posted a net profit of \$352,348.14 for 2001; \$265,541.96 for 2002; \$262,930.12 for Jan. 1 through April 3, 2003. See its website: <http://www.esfna.org/aboutus/financialstatement/>

⁸⁷ Tesfaye Ketsela, “Away From the Soccer Field,” *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3. No. 8 (August 1993), 48; for the difficulty surrounding finding an Ethiopian soul mate see Helen Hailu, “The Dating Game,” *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4, No. 11 (November 1994), 38

advantage of this opportunity without having to jostle with us in the stadium.⁸⁸

By taking such a stance, ESFNA not only kept its integrity and survival as a nonpartisan organization, but also succeeded, unlike the rest of the Ethiopian community and political organizations in America, in bringing Ethiopians together. As a result, the July 4th event has become a showpiece of Ethiopian nationalism at its best. The event has evolved to become one of the single most important transactions that brought Ethiopians from all walks of life, age and background. As a consequence, the few hundred spectators of the early 1980s; and the three to five day event grew to become a ten-day event with more than 20,000 spectators, an average of 2000 persons a day. In barely a decade, the participating sport clubs grew from 4 clubs to 26 teams while more clubs are waiting to be accepted.⁸⁹ Since 1998, due to the large number of participating clubs, the Federation has divided the teams, based upon their performances, into two divisions, Division I and II. While Division I has four groups each with four teams, Division II had nine clubs divided into three groups. Inclusion into 1st Division or 2nd Division is not permanent. After every year's tournament, the teams that performed poorly would slide to the 2nd Division while those teams that proved worthy will be promoted to 1st Division.⁹⁰

Encouraged with its success in the 20 or so years of its existence, the Federation has plans to include other sports events and diversify its participants in the annual event. It plans to host regional tournaments and make the July 4th weekend a play-off weekend between regional winners. In addition to the soccer tournament, which so far is the main event, the Federation also intends to include track and field, volleyball for women, cultural activities for children and a bicycle race.⁹¹ Moreover, to encourage participation in the soccer game and appreciate the players,

⁸⁸ Sophia Bekele, "Interview With Berahnu Woldemariam, President of the EFFNA," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 3 No. 9 (September 1993), 44.

⁸⁹ Tesfaye, "Away From," 47-48.

⁹⁰ Telephone interview with the current Public Relations Officer of ESFNA, May 12, 2004.

⁹¹ Wondimu, "Interview," 20.

ESFNA has also allocated a college scholarship fund, \$2500 for the soccer players. The requirement to receive the ESFNA college scholarship fund is that the applicant "must be a good standing player/member of a current ESFNA team . . . must have a 3.2 or above GPA . . . must complete and submit an essay online on how the applicant intends to be part of Ethiopia's development efforts."⁹² Once selected, the check will be mailed to the college where the successful applicant is attending. Furthermore, ESFNA has also allotted a large sum of money to be used as a matching scholarship fund for deserving young Ethiopian Americans.

IV.6.1: Some Problems that Threaten ESFNA

So far, ESFNA has proven to be one of the longest surviving Ethiopian community organizations in America. However, its history, like that of the the rest of the Ethiopian community organizations, is fraught with problems year after year. Some of the major problems have stemmed from ESFNA's lack of transparency. Its accusers blame the Federation for not having a clear guideline for choosing a host city/ club for the annual event. They contend that teams who are loyal to ESFNA are favored to host the annual soccer tournament. In addition, its critics also indicate that the Federation has no certified accountant and no one knows about its finances, and hence they suspect that there is misuse of funds. Moreover, there is no term limit for its officers nor a criterion for vendors at the sports event. Furthermore, ESFNA is also accused of being more profit oriented than considerate of the welfare and safety of the attendees of the event. One example of its greed, they say, is the huge distance between hotels reserved for the attendees and players, and the location of the stadium. This is because ESFNA does not want to spend money on a stadium located nearer or adjacent to one of the international hotels where the Federation usually reserves hotels for players and spectators. What is more, ESFNA is also blamed for selling event

⁹² Both the criterion and the application forms are available at the ESFNA website: <http://www.esfna.org>

tickets beyond the seating limit and advertising musicians and bands that do not show up. Despite such circumstances, ESFNA does not return the money it collected.⁹³

The Federation, however, dismisses such allegations. One of the board members and internal auditor of ESFNA, Akalou Walda Mikael, indicated that the choice of host city/team is done based on the criterion set in its bylaws and the seniority of a team. Yet, the Federation also acknowledged that the presence of a larger number of Ethiopians, restaurants, the proximity of the stadium to hotels, the availability of discount rates, and the optimum participation of local Ethiopians and Americans in the event are also other important considerations that influence the decision-making of the Federation. Since every team has a representative on the board (each team has two representatives as members of the board from which executive committee members are elected), any club has the opportunity to raise its concerns prior to the decision. The Federation also sends a three-man team to check the would-be hosts for the event prior to the decision. It is only after such measures that the Federation makes the decision and chooses a city.

Akalou also pointed out that vendors are selected if they applied for a vending slot at the stadium. The application costs a nonrefundable \$10, and the process of selecting a vendor and designating a slot for him/her is done randomly but in the presence of witnesses and the applicants themselves. More than often, the majority of applicants who are residents of the city that hosts the event will attend and witness the selection criterion and the process of the designation of a space for each seller. These constitute 75 per cent of the vendors. The remaining are out of state vendors who often do not attend the process. It is the host club that does the designation not the Federation. True, the Federation is involved with the vendors but not in the selection process. It

⁹³ Pena Tsafe, "It's Worth Fixing Before It's Too Late," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4 No. 8 (August 1994), 44; See also Adugnaw Worku, "Sport as a Metaphor," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol.3, No. 8 (August 1993), 46; Tesfaye Ketsela, "Away From the Soccer Field," *Ethiopian Review* (August 1993), 47-48; Fikre Tolossa, "Behind the Soccer Scene," *Ethiopian Review* Vol. 3. No. 8 (August 1993), 49-52.

decides the fee for a vending slot in the stadium. For instance, while food vendors pay \$450, snack and merchandise retailers are charged \$250 and \$200 respectively for the whole week. Moreover, in order to prevent price hikes at the tournament, the Federation provides guidelines concerning food and beverage prices such as a meal will cost \$7, a drink (a soda) will fetch \$1. Furthermore, the federation also decides the admission fees, which are \$4 dollars for weekdays and \$5 on weekends; and the tickets for Sunday evening costs \$20 until 1994 at which time it grew to \$25. Until 1990 the proceeds of the tournament directly went to the coffers of the host club. Hence, neither the Federation nor the member clubs got any financial benefit out of the event. However, since 1990, the Federation began to keep a share of the profits. In that year, it acquired 20 per cent (\$6000) of the proceeds. It was only after the Toronto tournament in 1992 at which the Federation received \$14000, that they decided to run the whole show. Akalu counters that there was no way by which the Federation could have mismanaged funds. What is more, the allegations that the executive committee members have undisclosed amount of salaries and a plethora of benefits, is also wrong. Until 1989, the executive committee has never received anything from the tournament proceeds, then after the board recommended, the Federation began issuing a free round trip tickets and a complementary hotel accommodation for its executive committee members who attended the event. Until that time, the committee members organized and successfully hosted the event voluntarily, using their own finances.

The ESFNA auditor did not deny the existence of problems surrounding financial issues. Some individual members had been found guilty of misappropriation of funds at a certain event. During such circumstances, "legal action could and should have been taken. This was not done because of the 'buddy system' of operation, from which the Federation suffers. There is also an

element of culture. Normally, Ethiopians do not like to wash their dirty linen in public. The result is an immobilized management system that lets things slide to the point of disaster."⁹⁴

Aside from accusation of lack of transparency and impropriety that often put the Federation on the spot, the Federation was/is not immune from the state of affairs that affects the Ethiopian community in America. One such instance, which endangered both clubs and the Federation, was the Eritrean independence in 1993. Prior to the official secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, many Ethiopian-born Eritreans or Eritreans were members of one or the other Ethiopian soccer clubs in America. But, after the independence of Eritrea in which most of the Ethiopian-born soccer players were noted for voting for Eritrea's independence, some clubs decided to purge the former Ethiopians, now Eritrean nationals out of their teams while other clubs preferred to disregard this new development, the independence of Eritrea, and continue in the old way. Nevertheless, member clubs began increasingly to accuse other teams who had Eritrean players for enlisting foreign nationals while teams who took action against their Eritrean teammates were sued by the latter. This divided the Ethiopian community that financed the teams between accepting and rejecting the Eritreans. What further exacerbated the situation was that while Ethiopians were willing to forgo what they considered Eritrean betrayal and kept on accepting Eritrean players on their teams, the Eritrean teams and their federation, Eritrean Sports Federation in North America,* were not willing to reciprocate. Unable to resolve the problem, the Ethiopian clubs brought the

⁹⁴ W.M. Akalou, "The Ethiopian Sport Federation: A Rejoinder," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4 No. 8 (August 1994), 48, 47-49; Sophia Bekele, "Interview With Berhnau Woldemariam, President of the ESFNA," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 9, (September 1993), 45-46.

* The Eritrean Sports Federation in North America (ESFNA), ironically with the same acronym with its Ethiopian counterpart, was established in 1986 in Atlanta, two years after the Ethiopian establishment. It seems that until 1993 Ethiopians were willing to accept Eritrean soccer players in their teams while Eritrean soccer players in Ethiopian clubs, it also seems, were also not overtly Eritrean. Thus, as in other aspects of Ethiopian immigrant life in America, political developments in Ethiopia had impacted the sport's arena as well. For the history and establishment of Eritrean Sports Federation in America See their website: <http://www.eresport.org/history.htm>

subject to ESFNA. The latter, after seriously debating the problem, took the following stance. As the then ESFNA President, Berhanu Woldemariam, stated

It is clear that most Ethiopians (including many of our members) feel betrayed by what Eritreans have done in choosing to separate from Ethiopia. While they recognize that this is Eritrean prerogative, they feel that independence entails responsibility and as such Eritreans cannot [sic] relinquish their Ethiopian nationality and still insist on taking advantage of abrogated rights while denying Ethiopians similar license . . . Given the complexity of the issue . . . it was agreed that individual clubs may take any such action as they see fit or necessary."⁹⁵

By empowering clubs to decide on their own, the Federation successfully disentangled itself from political involvement. The Federation's decision also provided the opportunity for teams to decide for themselves, which was also important in that there were Ethiopian soccer clubs that had Eritrean players among them. Had the Federation's decision been to the contrary, it could have offended those Eritreans, (both players and members of the Ethiopian community), who were also proud Ethiopians.

At times, disagreement within committee members of the host club impeded the smooth transaction of the annual event and spilled over until the Federation was dragged into the mess. For instance the San Diego club, which hosted the 1995 tournament, faced such problems. Among the 33 member coordinating committee of the event, five of the members began a campaign without consulting fellow committee members and the Federation. Their intent was to take the event to another city, San Francisco. When the rest of the committee members found out what their colleagues were trying to do, they attempted to solve the problem by eliciting the support of the Ethiopian community, the St. Gabriel Church and elders of the city, but to no avail. As a consequence, the five members who wanted the tournament moved to another city, resigned from their post and the remaining twenty-eight, who were the majority members and the Federation

⁹⁵ Sophia, "Interview," Ethiopian Review, Vol. 3, No. 9, (September 1993), 46.

continued to get ready for the event and successfully hosted the event.⁹⁶ Yet, ill feelings, accusations and counter accusations among members of the organizing committee continued to mar the occasion and persisted to do so even after the completion of the event.

Sometimes, the Federation's attempt to strictly follow its bylaws, bylaws that were enacted some 20 years ago when the number of soccer clubs and Ethiopian spectators in America was very small, also resulted in discord between teams and the Federation. A case in point is the 2002 tournament. At this occasion that was held in Hyattsville, MD, a phenomenon that almost divided the Ethiopian community and threatened the very existence of the Federation occurred. A group of Ethiopian soccer players formed separate clubs and their own Federation, and held their own tournament at the Howard University sports stadium in Washington DC. The leaders of this group were two soccer clubs, Barro of Seattle and St. Michael of Washington DC, and one of the reasons for their dissension was ESFNA's refusal to acknowledge them as clubs and accommodate them. The Federation's refusal to accommodate these teams was based on its bylaw, Article 4.2 that limits one club for each state except for California, Washington DC and Texas. Besides, Article 4.1 also states that "membership in the Federation shall be conferred on [emphasis added]. . . teams and Associations properly constituted [emphasis added], registered and in compliance with all rules, regulations and policies as effected . . . by the Federation."⁹⁷ These two articles limited the possibility of the emergence and development of other teams. In addition, the bylaws also made it appear that membership is something that is bestowed upon from above and based on less clear criterion such as "properly constituted."

Baro and St. Michael almost succeed in breaking the Federation due to other factors as well. As it was noted earlier, the Federation is reputed for reserving stadiums and hotels far apart,

⁹⁶ "Tewodros Sport Club Responds: Problems Aside, It Says, It is Fired Up," Ethiopian Tribune, April 16, 1995: 11.

⁹⁷ See ESFNA bylaws, 2000 (Mimeographed)

which also happened at the 2002 soccer tournament. While the event was held at Hyattsville, MD, the hotel, Hyatt Regency, was reserved in Virginia. Thus, almost all players and attendees had to commute between Virginia and Maryland for about two hours depending on Washington DC's traffic. The renegade group, however, held its tournament at a much more convenient place, at Howard University, which also helped the organizers attract a sizable number of Ethiopians away from the major event at Hyattsville and ESFNA.

The ESFNA, which realized the dangers that Barro and St. Michael posed, and the potential implications for the Ethiopian community at large were compelled to accommodate the renegades, especially the leading soccer clubs. Baro and St. Michael. However, before accepting them, it had to modify its bylaws. As a result, Baro and St. Michael were co-opted into the league for the 2004 match to be held in Seattle.⁹⁸

The woes of the Federation did not end, however. It appears that individual teams are increasingly challenging the Federation. At the 2003 Houston, TX, tournament one of qualifying matches was held between Atlanta and Dallol (San Jose). What the two teams needed to qualify from sliding into the 2nd Division was simply to end the game without a goal. This eliminated Seattle (Dashen) and sent it down from the 1st into the 2nd Division. Dallol and Atlanta did as planned which brought the wrath of the spectators who were disappointed by the apparent underperformance of the two clubs. Meanwhile, Seattle brought the issue to the attention of the Federation, who fined Dallol \$ 2,500 and disqualified the match. This sent Dallol to the 2nd Division while maintaining Seattle's place at the 1st Division. Dallol then appealed to the Federation to reconsider. The Federation not only upheld its verdict but also raised the fine from \$2,500 to \$5,000. The actions of the Federation, as expected, angered Dallol which tried to persuade the Federation to reassess its

⁹⁸ Zecharias Getachew, Telephone Interview, May 12, 2004. Mr. Zecharias is the current public relations officer of ESFNA. He is a resident of Los Angeles and a business owner.

decision once again. Unable to do so, Dallol took a different course of action, suing the Federation in a court of law. Meanwhile, Ethiopian community associations, club members and individuals were trying to end the matter peacefully, by bringing the two (Dallol and the Federation) together and convincing them to sort out their differences amicably rather than take it to a court which would be damaging for both protagonists and Ethiopians in America.⁹⁹

Despite such challenges and difficulties, the plan to host the 2004 annual Ethiopian soccer tournament at the Seattle Sea Hawks Stadium was already underway. The entrance fee was fixed at \$10 for the opening day, \$8 for the following days; and \$12 for the closing day, which is also known as Ethiopia Day. Some 31 slots for food vendors and 46 posts for dry merchandise retailers had been reserved; and \$350,000 had been allotted for stadium rent and other expenses such as fees for music bands, transport, lodging and insurance payment for players . . . etc.

All in all, The 2004 Seattle tournament was, more or less, a success. Some 30,000 to 40,000 Ethiopians attended the event. State and city government officials were present during the opening and closing ceremonies—an indication of the growing influence of Ethiopians in Seattle in particular, and the State of Washington in general. The fact that the tournament was held in an international football stadium for the first time in its twenty or so years history was a sign of its success and an indication that the federation is probably moving in the right direction. The only complaint I heard was from some the vendors. They indicated that the vending fee, \$1000, was too much yet there was not much business at the stadium that would cover their expenses let alone make a profit.

The questions are will the Federation continue to survive fractious politics prevalent among Ethiopians in America, or the challenge of clubs to its authority, and its seeming negligence in

⁹⁹ See Zecharias Getachew, "ESFNA Press Release," E-mail to EEDN@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM, April 21, 2004; Fassil Abebe, "Dallol Sport Club Press Release," E-mail to EEDN@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM, April 22, 2004

listening to the complaints of the attendants of the event? As usual, in the 2004 tournament, the location of the stadium and the hotel were far apart. While the stadium was in Downtown Seattle the Hotel, Double Tree International, was located near the SeaTac International Airport in Tacoma. Will it transform itself into something different than what was originally intended and created? Time will tell. But so far, one thing has been clear. In spite of some of its shortcomings, the Federation had succeeded in bringing all Ethiopians together than any other Ethiopian community, civic or political organization in the United States.

Chapter IV. 7. The Changing Contours of the Ethiopian Immigrant Press in America: From Being Outlets of Long Distance Nationalism to Becoming an Ethnic Press in America

An Ethiopian student turned diplomat and political activist, Malaku Bayen, started the first Ethiopian immigrant newspaper in America. He was the founder of the Ethiopian World Federation, an umbrella organization whose membership was drawn from black nationalist organizations in America that were very sympathetic to Ethiopia's cause against the Italian invasion. It was established in 1937 with its own newspaper, *The Voice of Ethiopia*. In addition to mobilizing African American support for Ethiopia and eliciting sympathy from the larger American community towards Ethiopia, the newspaper served as the only voice against Italian fascist propaganda in the USA.¹⁰⁰

With the end of the Second World War and the coming of a new breed of Ethiopians whose aspirations and visions were different from their predecessors like Malaku, and the changing political atmosphere in the post-war period, such as the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideas and the corresponding rise in liberation movements throughout the world, the paper and the organization seemed to be no longer needed. Another paper, *Challenge: Journal of the Ethiopian Students Association in North America (JESANA)*, which was completely different in both content

¹⁰⁰ According to Alberto Sbacchi, the Italians not only supported Italian endeavor in Ethiopia, but also embarked on a propaganda campaign that was intended to deny African American support to Ethiopia: they disseminated that idea that Ethiopians do not consider themselves as black. See Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrencville: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1997), 16-17, 25-26; Negussay, *Ethiopia and the United States*, 144-150; Bahru, *Pioneers*, 89-95; Scott, "Afro-American," 249-281.

and purpose from the publications of the Ethiopian World Federation was born. Although *Challenge* is known to have been an organ of the Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA) and although it had been in circulation among Ethiopian students in America as early as 1965, Richard Greenfield mentioned the existence of another student newspaper, *Ethiopian Student News*, in America in the 1950s. Yet, little is known about *Challenge*. Was it the continuation and a radicalized version of *Ethiopian Student News*,¹⁰¹ or simply a discontinued publication of the New York chapter of ESUNA?

The initiation of *Challenge* in 1965 does not seem accidental. By this time, the student body, both at home and abroad, had increased in numbers.¹⁰² This not only provided student unions with numeric strength, but also financial ground for such papers to evolve both at home and abroad. By this time, many African countries had achieved independence and the rest were in the process. Some students from the newly independent African countries were granted scholarships in Ethiopia and thus were attending school there. This close contact between Ethiopians and African students in Ethiopia coupled with the sending of Ethiopians to foreign countries for further education had exposed Ethiopian students to the ideas of democracy and socialism. It also made Ethiopian students realize how much their country was backward. Above all, the 1960 attempted coup d'état against the ancien regime had further convinced Ethiopian students that the monarchy could be challenged.¹⁰³ Hence, the coup seemed to have encouraged the birth of a student body

¹⁰¹ Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 339.

¹⁰² For instance, the total number of high school students in Ethiopia grew from 5671 in 1960, to 13, 122 in 1965. These students were also the politically active. Meanwhile, the total number of Ethiopian students abroad had also increased from 1072 in 1960 to 1565 in 1965. Similarly, the number of Ethiopian students in America had grown from 171 in 1961 to almost 300 in 1966. See John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 148, 155; Teshome G. Wagaw, *Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 130-138; Teshome G. Wagaw, *The Development of Higher Education and social Change: An Ethiopian Experience* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1990), 96-106, 167; for the number of Ethiopian students in the USA see *Institute of International Education, 1961 and 1966*.

¹⁰³ Greenfield, *Ethiopia*, 341-370, 404-406; Teshome, *The Development*, 108-110, 203-220; Ibsaa Guutama, *Prison of Conscience* (New York: Gubirmans Publishing, 2003), 91-98; See also Haile Sillasse's *Students*,

with its own paper that disseminated Marxist-Leninist ideas among fellow students; that critically examined the theocratic rule of Haile Sellassie, the socioeconomic conditions of the country and called for a revolutionary transformation of the society. Therefore, almost all issues that *Challenge* entertained were political in nature and solely focused on what was going on in Ethiopia than what was happening to Ethiopian students in America^{104*}—a theme greatly influenced by their sojourner mentality. Almost all Ethiopian students, in those days, believed they would and indeed returned to Ethiopia after finishing their school.¹⁰⁵

After a lull of sometime, the publication of politically opinionated magazines, newspapers and journals reappeared in America in 1990s with much greater intensity and diversity. The interruption, it appears, was primarily related to political developments in Ethiopia such as the overthrow of Emperor Haile Sellassie and the coming of the *Derg* to power in 1974. These developments roughly divided the student movement, which had spearheaded the struggle against the imperial rule, between supporters and opponents of the *Derg*. From among the latter, some returned to Ethiopia to join their compatriots in the revolutionary struggle while others continued the campaign against the regime from afar. But this time, the student activism evolved into many political parties. Of these, the dominant were EPRP and AESM, which also have their own political organs such as *Democracia* (Democracy) and *Yasafew Hizb Dims* (Voice of the Broad Masses), respectively. In light of the aforementioned pamphlets, other semi-legal, and legal publications in

¹⁰⁴ See for instance, *Challenge: Journal of the Ethiopian Students Association in North America*, Vol. V, No. 2 (August 1965); Vol. V, No. 1 (March 1965); Vol. VII, No. 1 (August 1967); Vol. IX, No. 1 (December 1968); Vol. IX, No. 2 (August 1969); Vol. X, No. 1 (February 1970); Vol. X, No. 2 (July 1970); Vol. XI, No.1 (January 1971); Vol. XI, No. 2 (July 1971).

* Some of the editors and associate editors of the series were a certain Melesse Ayalew, Alem Habtu, Dessalegn Rahmato while the advisory board included men like Hagos Gabre Yesus and Andreas Eshete.

¹⁰⁵ See Table 4.

Ethiopia, the role of *Challenge* and similar student publications in Europe and Ethiopia became redundant.¹⁰⁶

The other probable factors that might have brought this intermission in the Ethiopian immigrant press in America between the mid-1970s and early 1980s were the issues surrounding the very survival of Ethiopian students in America. Due to the Revolution in Ethiopia, the students in America became exiles overnight, which in turn had a wider implications. Some of them had to find means of survival. Their parents who were financing their education were without a means to do so for the *Derg* had nationalized all private property. Moreover, the students could not work and support themselves because the type of visa they had would not allow them to do so. In fact, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) attempted to deport them.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile return to Ethiopia was unthinkable because of the chaotic political situation. In these circumstances, their priorities seemed to have been redirected to other concerns. The students' precarious situation coupled with the political fragmentation within the student movement, seemed to have precluded the continuation of *Challenge* and similar student papers in America.

As the 1960s and 1970s political developments in Ethiopia had greatly impacted Ethiopian student papers in America, the events of the 1990s, such as the coming of EPRDF, an ethnocentric government to power, and the secession of Eritrea and the Ethio-Eritrean war shaped

¹⁰⁶ While Ethiopian students in America produced *Challenge*, their colleagues in the University College of Addis Ababa published *Struggle*, and those in Europe had *Tateck* and *Tiglachin*.

In the early days of the Revolution, there was freedom of expression which allowed former student activists, now party members and founders, to air their ideas on *Addis Zaman*, the Ethiopian Amharic daily newspaper. The state run radio station had also apportioned its Sunday morning program for a political debate, *Abyotawe Medrek* (Revolutionary Forum), between supporters and opponents of the regime. Moreover, magazines such as *Goh* and *Tseday*, which served as legal outlets of EPRP and AEPSM respectively, also stayed in circulation for sometime. However, by the beginning of 1978, the *Derg* banned initially *Goh* and then *Tseday*. Anyone found reading or having these magazines was considered counter-revolutionary. Both parties published these magazines in addition to the many revolutionary books and translations.

¹⁰⁷ Winston Williams, "Ethiopians in U.S. Fear Deportation; With 2,400 Ordered to Leave, Many are Defiant and Talking Going Underground," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1982, A3; Jason Clay, "Don't Deport Ethiopians," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1982, A27; Viviane Eisenberg, "What an Ethiopian Must do to Prove Deserving of Asylum," *The New York Times*, February 15, 1982, A16; Anthony Lewis, "Hypocrisy Wins again," *The New York Times*, January 4, 1982, A23.

the nature and content of Ethiopian immigrant journals, newspapers, magazines and web-based forums and electronic chat rooms in America. The paradox about the 1990s Ethiopians and their immigrant press in America was that even after the 1974 Revolution, which changed their status in America from student into political exile, and even after the resettlement of large numbers of Ethiopians political refugees in the United States, the focus of the immigrant media remained political, primarily targeting the regime in Ethiopia. For instance, one of the newer publications, *Imbylta*, which appeared for the first time in the Summer of 1990 and which was based in Philadelphia, had no articles that dealt with Ethiopian immigrant life in America. The only exception was an Amharic poem, by a certain Gemoraw, which was a quarter of a page. The poem abhorred refugee/exile life; and blamed it on the lack of democracy in Ethiopia.^{108*}

The profile of the contributors and editors of *Imbylta* revealed the unrelenting dominance of student activists such as Andreas Eshete, Dessalegn Rahmato, Berhanu Nega, Berhanu Abegaz, Henok Kifle, Mesfin Araya . . . etc, which may also explain the preponderance of Ethiopian politics as the main theme of *Imbylta*. What is more, it also reflected the reluctance of Ethiopians to accept their immigrant status in America.

The magazine publishers sponsored a panel discussion in April 1992 at Georgetown University, Washington DC. As usual, while the focus was Ethiopia—to discuss problems that Ethiopia faced at that time—the panelists were Bereket Habte Sellassie, Andreas Eshete and Assefa Chabo.^{109*}

¹⁰⁸ *Imbylta: An Ethiopian Quarterly Political Opinion*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (Fall 1990), 33.

* The writer of this poem is also the author of a satirical poem, *Baraketa Marigam* (Blessing Curse), which galvanized students of the then Haile Sellassie I University against the ancien regime and its supporters.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance, *Imbylta: An Ethiopian Quarterly Political Opinion*, Vol. 1, NO.1 (Summer 1990); Vol. 1, No. 2, (Fall 1990); Vol.2, No. 3&4.

*Some of these individuals such as Andreas Eshete, one of the prominent leaders of ESUNA, is now the president of Addis Ababa University while men like Berhanu Nega, an economist by training, is a co-founder of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and a consultant. Henok Kifle, the son of Kifle Wodajo, the one time prime

Another magazine, *Ethiopian Times*, which was published in Bellflower, California, appeared in 1992. Like its predecessors, both the editorial board and some its contributors were student activists in the USA and Ethiopia. Their focus was politics in Ethiopia, ethnicity, the Ethiopian constitution, the benefits of dialogue among political parties, the Ethiopian intelligentsia, news from Ethiopia . . . etc. Unlike the earlier Ethiopian magazines, *Ethiopian Times* had articles in Tigrinya, probably a reflection of the Tigryan political preeminence in Ethiopia after 1991, their numerical growth and hence significance as audience in America, and the ethnic origin of the chief editor and the board members, who were either Tigrayans from Ethiopia or Tigrayans from Eritrea.¹¹⁰

Ethiopian Times had an exceptional element. For the first time, it began addressing issues that were dear to the Ethiopian community abroad. The magazine published the trial of a certain Kelbessa Negewo, whom a group of Ethiopian women in Atlanta accused of torture and rape during the infamous period of the Red Terror. The accused had been chairman of the Higher 9 (*Keftegna 9*) in Addis Ababa during the reign of the *Derg*.¹¹¹

One article that indicated the beginning of the shift of focus from political issues on Ethiopia to immigrant life in America dealt with the dilemma of Ethiopian refugee and exile community in deciding to stay in America or to return to Ethiopia.¹¹² In a cover article entitled "*In Search of A Clinton Doctrine... on the Funeral of Pres. Nixon,*" and on issues of refugee

minister and foreign minister of Ethiopia and Mesfin Araya, are leaders of the one of the opposition political parties in Ethiopia. The rest are still living in exile in Europe and America.

¹¹⁰ One of the editorial board members Tariku Debretsion was an Eritrean by birth. He was also the vice chairman of the Haile Sellassie I University (HSIU) Students Union in the early 1970s while the chief editor, Eskinder Negash, another Eritrean from Gondar, was also a student activist. Both were former EPRP combatants who were resettled in the US from Sudanese refugee camps in the early 1980s.

¹¹¹ See "Court Papers on 'the Kelbessa Trial,' *Ethiopian Times*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (November 1993), 8-13; Jorga, "Torture After Midnight," *Ethiopian Times* Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 1994), 23-24

¹¹² Megdelawit Kidane, "To Go Or ... to Stay, What A Dilemma," *Ethiopian Times*, Vol.1, No. 10 (December 1993), 26-27; Daniel Gizaw, "Return to Ethiopia," *Ethiopian Times*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 1994), 17-19;

repatriation,¹¹³ *Ethiopian Times* further showed the emergence of an inward looking Ethiopian immigrant press in America.

Another Ethiopian immigrant paper, *Ethiopian Tribune*, a biweekly newspaper based in Hollywood, California, also came to the fore in September 1994. Like its forerunners, this paper, too, was mainly concerned with events in Ethiopia. However, the publishers referred to themselves as *EthAm* [meaning Ethiopian-American] *Enterprise Incorporated*, a clear indication that they were a new-breed of individuals who were neither Ethiopian nor American but Ethiopian-Americans, pointed out their intent "to address all aspects of Ethiopian life, both at home and abroad . . . [such as] news, arts, culture, entertainment, sports, family affairs, and other social issues."¹¹⁴ Accordingly, the paper carried Ethiopian community events like Easter celebration in Los Angeles, sporting events in North America, birthday parties, obituaries, and advertisements of Ethiopian businesses in America.

For the first time, more than any other Ethiopian immigrant community newspaper or magazine in America, the *Ethiopian Tribune* also wrote about the existence of tension within the community. The crisis in one of the sport clubs of California, the Tewodros Sport Club of San Diego, where five of the executive board members resigned, was reported. Nevertheless, neither the cause of the problem nor the effect of the resignations of the board members on the community was explained.¹¹⁵ On another issue, the paper also aired the problems that troubled the Los Angeles Ethiopian Community Association. According to an eyewitness, the cause of the wrangle among the community officers was that some of them were accused of embezzlement while others

¹¹³ Daniel Gizaw and Beyene Negewo, "In Search of a Clinton Doctrine," *Ethiopian Times*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (may 1994), 8-15; Julie C. Barber, "Refugee Repatriation," *Ethiopian Times*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (may 1994), 18-25; Asfaw Yohannes, "Commentary: Thoughts on the Funeral of President Nixon," *Ethiopian Times*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (June 1994), 31-32.

¹¹⁴ See for instance, "Editorial: The Ethiopian Tribune will Remain an Independent Voice," *Ethiopian Tribune* (July 1, 1995), 2.

¹¹⁵ "Tewodros Sport Club Responds," *Ethiopian Tribune* (April 16, 1995), 11.

were blamed for using the community office for personal use. That incident ended in the resignation of all officials of the community association.¹¹⁶

The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of journals such as *Ethiopian Review* and *Ethiopian Register* in 1991 and 1994 respectively. Though they were American based (Los Angeles) and although they had a wider Ethiopian audience within the USA, and although these were journals which were supposed to entertain a variety of issues including the Ethiopian immigrant life in America, they primarily remained engaged in political developments in Ethiopia. The themes that dominated these magazines were criticisms against the ethno-centric policies of the Ethiopian government, Ethiopia's territorial integrity, Ethiopia's right to access the sea, political history of Ethiopia and histories of prominent Ethiopians, usually political figures opposed to the EPRDF/TPLF regime in Ethiopia.¹¹⁷

Despite this overwhelming preponderance of Ethiopian politics in both magazines, *Ethiopian Review* allotted part of its columns to the Ethiopian immigrant experience in America. As a result, it was able to entertain diverse issues that were directly related to the life of the immigrant community in America. The topics brought forth could be roughly divided into two major categories. One is associated with the American way of life such as American elections, America as an assimilationist society, American attitude towards immigrants, the paradox of American life (the good and the bad about America), and some of the cultural shocks that Ethiopians experience in America . . . etc.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Yohannes Tekle, "Throw the Hoodlums Out!," *Ethiopian Tribune* (October 1, 1995), 7, 11.

¹¹⁷ For a detailed assessment of anti EPRDF/TPLF and EPLF articles in *Ethiopian Review*, see Atsuko Matsuka and John Sorenson, *Ghosts and Shadows: Construction of Identity and Community in an African Diaspora* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 147-168.

¹¹⁸ See for instance Abiye Solomon, "Woizero Worqneshe in America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1993), 49; Faisal Roble, "Ethiopian Political Debate in Los Angeles," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. No. (May 1993), 37-38; Adugnaw Worku, "Where Are You From?," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol.33, No. 5 (May 1993), 41-42; Fesseha Atlaw, "Ethiopian World- Wide Computer Network," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3. No. 5 (May 1993), 45; Fikre Tolossa, "Ethiopian Soccer Games in North America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3. No. 9, (June 1993), 15, 18, 21; Girma Abebe,

The second category dealt directly with Ethiopian immigrants themselves: the story of a certain Ethiopian business in a certain American city, a report on the annual soccer tournament among Ethiopians in North America, the crisis within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the discord between Ethiopian immigrants and refugees, and stories about the establishment of this or that Ethiopian political or civic organization in America. In addition, the paper also carried advertisements of Ethiopian business, birthday celebrations, obituaries . . . etc. *Ethiopian Register* also did that.¹¹⁹

The growing interest in Ethiopian immigrant life in America seemed to co-relate with the relative change in the composition of the editorial board, advisors and major contributors to both magazines. While student activists primarily dominated both the editorial board and contributors in earlier Ethiopian immigrant periodicals, *Ethiopian Register* and *Ethiopian Review* included former government officials like Getachew Mekasha, Bulcha Demeksa, Aklilu Habte and Hirut Imiru; and former professors of the Addis Ababa University such as Shumet Sishagne, Getachew Haile, Hailu Fulas, . . . etc.

"Babetakirsteyan Wust Ytnassa Gulih Bitibit," [The Main Problem That Arisen in the Church], *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (June 1993), 59; Dagnachew Bezabeh, "The 1994 Ethiopian Soccer Tournament," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4 No. 3 (March 1994), 58-59; Adugnaw Worku, "Sport as a Metaphor," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (August 1993), 46-47; Tesfaye Ketsela, "Away from the Soccer Field," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (August 1993), 47, 51-52; Sophia Bekele, "Interview with Berhanu Woldemariam: President of the EFFNA," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (September 1993), 45-46; Tesfaye Ketsela, "Teff in America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12, (December 1993), 33-34; "Barbara Blake Hannah, "Ethiopians Sorely in Need of New Spiritual Leadership," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (December 1993), 52; Alisabet Gabyahu, "Bebalena Bebole," [The Refugee and the Immigrant], *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (December 1993), 59; Ephrem Aklilu, "Own a Business, Be Your Own Boss," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1992), 16-18; "Yehaymanot Abatoch Yasiltan Shikuchana Yegosa Poletica," [Power Rivalry and Ethnic Politics Among Religious Leaders], *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 2, Number 6, (June 1992), 38; "Bewashington Yaetyopiyawiyan Yabahil Zigit," [Ethiopian Cultural Show in Washington DC], *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6, (June 1992), 42-43; Fikre Tolossa, "Event of the Year: Ethiopian Soccer Games and Cultural Festivities in North America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4, No. 7 (July 1994), 15-16; W.M Akalou, "The Ethiopian Sport Federation: A Rejoinder," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4, No. 8 (August 1994), 47-49; Helen Hailu, "The Dating Game," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4, No. 11 (November 1994), 38.

¹¹⁹ See for instance Abiye Solomon, "Wishing You Were There," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (February 1993), 50; Missale Ayele, "Anti-Immigrant Hysteria," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (May 1994), 33-34; Abiye Solomon, "Politics in America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (November 1992), 37; Abiye Solomon, "Ethiopians in the American Melting Pot," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 2 No. 12 (December 1992), 45.

Despite including former government officials and despite the moderate change in focus, which now included issues related to immigrant life in America, the pre-revolution generation of Ethiopians remained at the helm of the immigrant press and continued to be decidedly influential in picking which topics on Ethiopia and Ethiopians would be aired and debated in America. Either because of this or due to the disillusionment on political developments in Ethiopia among Ethiopians in America, most of the aforementioned publications, except for *Ethiopian Review* and to some degree *Ethiopian Register*, did not last long. While *Ethiopian Register* ceased to exist after 2000, *Ethiopian Observer* continued, erratically until 2001.

The short lifespan of Ethiopian immigrant papers can also be explained in terms of their inability to maintain impartiality. For instance while *Imbilta* was accused of being pro-EPRDF, the *Ethiopian Times* was accused of being a Trojan horse for Eritrea. Others, like *Ethiopian Tribune*, which strictly tried to remain on neutral ground, also complained of similar accusations that may have been one of the reasons for its demise. The publishers of *Ethiopian Tribune* complained about the lack of advertisements in their newspaper, which harmed them financially. As the editors of *Ethiopian Tribune* noted:

During one year of service we have also noticed the strong and weak aspects of the Ethiopian business community. Few among Ethiopian owned business operate along strict business lines. Some are so much used to taking the general Ethiopian public for granted one wonders if they even know that they are operating in the 'first world' environment. Their ignorance of the value of basic business promotion method is manifested in their business dealings. They fail to understand that advertisements are as important as keeping a balanced book to compete and stay in business. The benefit of is mutual. Newspapers make or break business.¹²⁰

Ethiopians in America have taken advantage of the World Wide Web. They have established sites like *Ethiopia First* (Ben's page) and *Geocities (Dagmawi)*, both of which could be considered as online versions of *Ethiopian Register* and *Ethiopian Review*, both in terms of content and format. Thus, in this regard, they are no different from the Ethiopian immigrant print media,

¹²⁰ "The Ethiopian Tribune Will Remain an Independent Voice," *Ethiopian Tribune*, (July 1 1995), 2.

which more than often dwells upon Ethiopia. The slight difference between them and the print media is that while the latter was partly the outcome of political developments in Ethiopia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which ushered in a new political paradigm in Ethiopian political history, the former is the consequence of the never-expected Ethio-Eritrean War of 1998-2000. Hence, *Geocites* and *Ethiopia First* were more tuned to Ethio-Eritrean issues and the dangers of ethno-centric policies of EPRDF/TPLF towards the survival of Ethiopia as a nation-state. They were able to provide an alternative forum and source of news for Ethiopians, both at home and abroad, who were more interested in learning the cause, processes and the outcome of the war than the politically entangled print media. To this end, these sites attached every available online news network to their web pages. Anyone who was not interested in political analysis could simply click and access the news about the war from one of the many news networks that were reporting from either the battlefield or the capitals of the protagonists, Addis Ababa and Asmara.¹²¹

Both online sites, especially *Dagmawi*, had another unique element. The latter considered itself as a media watchdog. In fact, part of *Dagmawi's* full website address has an Amharic word, "zebenya," which means, "guard." Hence, it monitors and exposes the actions of the EPRDF/TPLF government against the fledgling Ethiopian free press at home. *Dagmawi* also updates its visitors on human rights developments in Ethiopia, and posts views and assessments of Ethiopia by international agencies such as Amnesty International.

The Ethiopians quest for unbiased news about their country seemed to have prompted the emergence of another cyberspace based Ethiopian news site, *Ethioindex*, in 1999 which focused on news about Ethiopia and Ethiopians throughout the world. In addition to its news links, *Ethioindex* sometimes organized and played the role of an online moderator for discussions between Ethiopians on various matters such as HIV-AIDS and the activities of Ethiopian

¹²¹ See their web page: <http://www.ethiopiafirst.com>; and <http://www.geocites.com/~dagmawi/zebenya.html>

community associations in America. Moreover, it also had archives of press releases on Ethiopia by any Ethiopian organization, both at home and abroad, including the Ethiopian government. The archive also includes press statements by foreign nationals/governments on Ethiopia.¹²²

The *Ethiopian Email Distribution Network (EEDN)*, another online service, was a brainchild of visionary Ethiopians from around the world, mainly the USA, with its center in California—A forum that has outlasted almost all other Ethiopian immigrant media. When established in 1991, it was dubbed “*Ethiopian Electronic-mail Group*,” which was also nicknamed “*Cleo*.” Its initial membership was no more than 150 individuals including non-Ethiopians. Both the technical and administrative tasks of EEDN were handled and still are being carried out by volunteers. Membership to EEDN is also free of charge, voluntary and all-inclusive.¹²³ However, although EEDN's Charter, Article 2.1, indicated that “the primary mission of EEDN is to provide a minimally restricted and yet unmoderated forum for constructive exchanges of views and information concerning the social, political and economic challenges facing Ethiopia,” Article 2.4 also indicated “government agents, parties or individuals who systematically agitate in favor of the division of Ethiopia and the Ethiopians across demographic lines are not welcome in EEDN,”¹²⁴ which is contradictory, to say the least. As a consequence, though the topics entertained at EEDN are diverse (it includes history of Ethiopia, political commentary, petition to the US Congress or to a Congressman/women on behalf of Ethiopian refugees in one of the corners of the world, or for the release of journalists and political prisoners held in Ethiopia . . . etc), they all have one common denominator: Ethiopian nationalism.

¹²² See <http://www.ethioindex.com>

¹²³ Fesseha Allaw, “Ethiopian World-Wide Computer Network,” *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (May 1993), 45.

¹²⁴ See <http://www.eedn.org/Charter.html> Charter and Bylaws of the Ethiopian Email Distribution Network (EEDN).

In addition to being a forum, EEDN also collected money and technical books that were sent to Addis Ababa University. Moreover, its technical committee was also involved in the development of Geez/Ethiopic software,¹²⁵ which was used for both e-mail communication and to post news in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. As the result of their efforts, these days there is a cyberspace for English illiterate Ethiopians. They can read Ethiopian news in Amharic at *Ethiopian News Headlines*. What is more, computer makers like Dell are now selling computers to their Ethiopian customers in Ethiopia with a Geez software bundled as one of the office tools. Very recently, Microsoft Corp. indicated that its 2004 Windows Operating System will have Amharic/Geez programs embedded in it.¹²⁶

As the 20th century came to its close and politics in Ethiopia continued to be divisive and unpredictable, other web sites that are completely different, both in content and form, came into existence. One of the reasons for launching "*Seleda*" in 1999 by a group of young professional Ethiopians, as their bylaws, "introduction," indicated was to find a "comfortable medium between these two worlds"—A world in which they found "themselves bouncing wildly between staunch loyalty to . . . Ethiopian-ness and guilt for absorbing some "*ferenje*" [generally it means foreign but in this case American] temperaments."¹²⁷

The founders of *Seleda* also made it clear which age group of Ethiopian professionals they were catering to or whose opinion and concern they were interested in. Again, as their bylaws stated, ". . . we've decided to launch SELEDA, a web page for young Ethiopian professionals . . .

¹²⁵ Fesseha, "Ethiopian World-wide," 45. Some of the individuals who were instrumental for this achievement are a certain Teshager Tesfaye, an employee of Sun Micro Systems in California; Teshay Demeke, a member at the Renesselar Polytechnic Institute in New York, Dr. Samuel Kinde, Research Associate, Virginia Tech (VPI&SU); and Fesseha Allaw, Senior Development Engineer with Hewlett-Packard Company, and the founder and president of Dahen Engineering Company in Silicon Valley, California.

¹²⁶ Gray Phombeah, "Microsoft to Launch in Kiswahili," BBC online, June 17, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3816717.stm> see also "Microsoft Works on Native Tongues," BBC online, March 18, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3522026.stm>

¹²⁷ See their bylaws at <http://www.seleda.com/apr99/Page1Introduction.html>

those of us in our mid-twenties to late-thirties, who, on the verge of making major professional and personal commitments." Moreover, they have also unequivocally declared that they are not interested in politics: "if our long-term plans include staying sane, we steer clear from overt discussions of politics . . . We realize this eschewing of subjects political hinges on the unheard of Ethiopian circles, and may be even a tad controversial . . . But, trust us, you would be better off getting your political fixes at more weighty forums, and not from nimrods like us."¹²⁸ From the above excerpts, one can surmise that these are Ethiopians of the younger generation who most likely have not witnessed the Red Terror or never have been embroiled in the politics that caused it. Hence, they have very little to say in the political discourse that the generation before them is deeply and sentimentally attached to. In short, there is no common political ground between *Seleda*, and the generation before them. Also, it appears that these are young Ethiopians who must have come to America at younger age, probably with their parents, and consequently are less nostalgic in their assessment of Ethiopia and Ethiopians. They could also be Ethiopians who were tired of the futile political battles among Ethiopians in the diaspora, and thus disillusioned with everything and anything political. Therefore, they prefer to engage solely in non-political discourse. So far, they have succeeded in staying clear from political entanglements. The articles posted on *Seleda* which include but are not limited to life stories, literature, love, humor, stories of Ethiopian communities and encounters in American cities are clear testimonies to their success in avoiding politics. It also displays the beginning of the transformation of the Ethiopian immigrant press, at least in the realm of the cyberspace, from being the mouthpiece of the politically minded and long distance nationalist Ethiopians to the more pragmatic young generations Ethiopian-Americans whose priorities lie here in the USA than in Ethiopia.

¹²⁸ See their bylaws at <http://www.seleda.com/apr99/Page1Introduction.html>

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF ETHIOPIAN-AMERICANS ON ETHIOPIA

Studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century European immigrants to the U.S.A indicated that these immigrants were helping their kin back home in many different ways. Not only this but the European immigrants also commuted between the host country and the country of origin, and thus remained in close touch with their kinfolk.¹

This transnational trend continued among the immigrants of today. In fact, unlike earlier times, the physical and psychological distance is becoming less significant because of the availability of faster and easier modes of communications. In addition, the end of the Cold War and related developments that increasingly questioned the legitimacy of the nation-state, boundary and the meaning of citizenship,² made it possible for people to reside and work in two or more worlds, at times simultaneously. What is more, citizenship, which used to express one's loyalty and allegiance to a country, is now also sought for other purposes, in our case, facilitating travel.³

Consequently, immigrants of today not only keep in touch with their kin at home, but also have an impact on their country of origin in many different ways. One of the areas that these immigrants contribute to their country of origin is economically, by way of remittance: A recent

¹ For a good and synthesized account of the transnational nature of European immigrants, see Mark Wyman, Round-Trip to America: The Immigrant Return to Europe, 1880-1930 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), especially pages 3-14; David A. Gerber, "Forming a Transnational Narrative: New Perspectives on European Migrations to the United States," The History Teacher, Vol. 35, No. 1 (November 2001), 61-77.

² Tim Nieguth, "Beyond Dichotomy: Concepts of the Nation and the Distribution of Membership" Nations and Nationalism, Vol. 5, No.2, (April 1999), 154.

³ Saskia Sassen, Globalization and its Discontents (New York: The New Press, 1998), xx, xxxii; Nancy Foner, Ruben G Rumbaut and Steven J. Gold, (ed.), Immigration Research for a New Century: Multidisciplinary Perspectives (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 13.

In addition to the aforementioned factor, there are a multiple reasons and circumstances for a person to become a naturalized citizen of a certain country: It could be an expression of an enthusiasm to their new home; change in their life such as marriage or the birth of a child; sense of insecurity and hence a measure taken to avert a perceived danger to their wellbeing either from the host society or the country of origin; and or as a result of their sense of incorporation into the country and society. See Adrian D. Pantoja, Ricardo Ramirez, Gary M. Segura, "Citizens by Choice, Voters by Necessity: Patterns in Political Mobilization by Naturalized Latinos," Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4, (Dec. 2001) 729-750.

study on remittance, "*Remittance and Other Financial Flows to Developing Countries*,"⁴ pointed out that from around the world some \$100 billion is remitted annually to countries of origin; and that 60 per cent of this goes to developing countries with India and Pakistan getting the lion's share of the \$100 billion.⁵

Though not comparable to other immigrant groups in the world in the total amount remitted, Ethiopians, too, are trying to help their relatives back home. However, their impact, at least the ripple effect, is generally felt throughout the country, for reasons listed below. I took two major Ethiopian cities, Addis Ababa and Gondar, as samples to show the direct impact of Ethiopian-Americans on Ethiopia: One of the cities, Addis Ababa, is the capital of Ethiopia; and to some degree, it is also a global city.⁶ It is the seat of the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa and many international aid agencies that came some three decades ago to help alleviate the drought-famine situation in Ethiopia, but now seemed to have settled in for good. The number of these aid agencies is in the hundreds. The government of Ethiopia indicated that, aside from the officially recognized aid agencies operating in the country, there are more than one hundred aid agencies operating in the country without the consent of the government.⁷ These agencies have thousands of employees if not hundreds of thousands.

⁴ Peter Gammeltoft, "Remittances and Other Financial Flows to Developing Countries," *International Migration* Vol. 40, No. 5, (2002), 181-183.

⁵ Celia W. Dugger, "Web Moguls' Return Passage to India," *The New York Times*, February 29, 2000; For the amount of remittance that Indian immigrants from America sent home, see Ben Barber, "Indian-Americans Use Cash to Aid 'Motherland,'" *The Washington Times*, February 25, 2000.

So much is the power of remittance, some immigrant groups like the Somalis were able to finance war in Somalia and topple the military regime of General Siyad Barre. See Joakim Gundel, "The Migration-Development Nexus: Somalia Case Study" *International Migration* Vol. 40, No. 5, (2002), 269.

⁶ I used the phrase for lack of a better term in describing the role and position that Addis Ababa plays as the national and regional capital of Ethiopia and Africa respectively. Hence, the term global city, in Addis Ababa's context, should not be taken literally for Addis Ababa has neither the industrial basis which is at par with New York, London and Tokyo nor the commanding role these cities play internationally as center of finance and production. It, however, has a service industry that caters to the upper echelon of the Ethiopian society and the international community that anchored itself there. For the development, nature, and the role of a global city see Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷ "Ethiopia Threatens Action Against Aid Agencies" *BBC Online*: Thursday, March 19, 1998.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/67471.stm>

Moreover, the Bole International Airport, so far the only international airport worthy of the name in the country, is also located in Addis Ababa. This airport not only is a vital link between the mountainous country and the outside world, but also serves as a major hub for many of the international airlines across Africa and from beyond.⁸

Furthermore, Addis Ababa also hosts more than half of the country's industries and its modern infrastructure. In addition, Addis Ababa is also the residence for the various embassies and of more than a quarter of the government employees of the country. Therefore, either because of the aforementioned reasons, or due to the apparent penetration of capital, the people of Addis Ababa are pretty much exposed to the outside world and have developed modern amenities and a taste for them. An Ethiopian from abroad cannot escape Addis Ababa for he/she has to disembark at the only international airport in the country. Thus, the presence of the Ethiopian diaspora community is very much visible in the capital.

Gondar, on the other hand, with its 16th century castles and early 20th century Italian buildings, is a relic from the past. The city's modern infrastructure is a leftover from the Italian times with almost no further development since then. The Gondar area is the home of the majority of the Beta Israel who migrated to Israel in the past two or so decades, and for those who are still waiting to immigrate. The city of Gondar, in particular and the region in general, was one of the hardest hit during the Red Terror (*qay shebir*) and the indiscriminate killings (*nesa irmija*) that took place between 1977 and 1978.

The province had been a battleground between the military junta and the various partisan movements in the country such as EPRP, TPLF, EDU and ELF/PLF. The region had also suffered because of the conflict within and among the aforementioned guerrilla movements that vied for territorial control, manpower and other resources in the province. So much was the devastation

⁸ See the Ethiopian Airline website: <http://www.flyethiopian.com/>

that peasants and urban dwellers, who sided with one or the other organization, fled their hamlets for neighboring Sudan when the organization with which they were affiliated lost the upper hand either fighting the *Derg* or one of the opposing organizations.

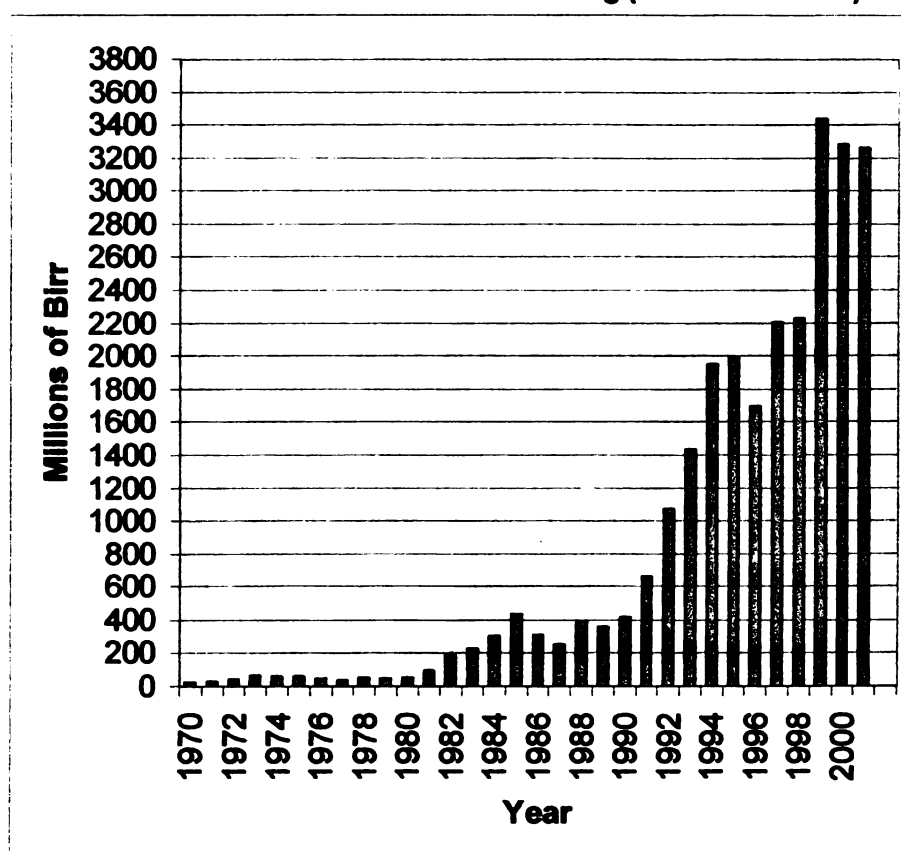
Therefore, though undeveloped even by Ethiopian standards, Gondar became one of the main origins of Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S.A, Israel and other countries; and hence has become one of the places to which the immigrants return. It is in cities like Gondar and Addis Ababa that the impact of Ethiopian-Americans, in particular and those from the Diaspora in general, is more visibly felt in many different ways such as economic, cultural, and political.

Chapter 5.1. The Economic Impact

According to the 2003 report of the Expatriate Affairs Office of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which oversees Ethiopian immigrant issues, from an estimated 1.5 million Ethiopians living abroad, Ethiopia gets around \$400 million annually.⁹ The data from the National Bank of Ethiopia, which monitors all foreign exchange earnings of the country, corroborates the claims of the Expatriate Affairs Office.

⁹ *"Bawich Kaminoru Etyopiyawuyan Bayaamatu 400 Milyon Dolar Yahil Ywuch Minizare Endamegagn Yigamata"* (From the Ethiopians Living Abroad, Some \$400 Million Dollars of Foreign Exchange is Obtained Annually), Addis Zaman, Tiqimit 2, 1996 EC (October 9, 2003).

Table 6: Private Transfer/Remittance Earning (In Millions of Birr)¹⁰



The above table indicates that between 1970 and 1981, the amount of private transfer was less than 100 million birr. But, after 1982 it shows a steady rise reaching more than 3.2 billion birr since 2000. While the relatively small amount of remittance between 1970s and early 1980s corresponds to the relatively few Ethiopian residents abroad, the dramatic increase in money transfer since 1982 mirrors an increase in migration of Ethiopians to foreign lands; and hence more remittance thereafter. The remarkable increase in remittance happened after 1991 (662.6 million birr), which is almost twice that of 1989 (359.4 million birr) and has continued to climb. This depicts, the constant ascent of Ethiopian immigrant population abroad, change of government in Ethiopia in 1991, and the relative liberalization of economic and immigration policies of the government since then. Prior to 1991, the *Derg's* socialist economic policy did not allow foreign investment,

¹⁰ Data obtained from the National Bank of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 2003.

ownership of private property; and did not permit Ethiopians, who left their country for one reason or another, to come home. It considered them as counter-revolutionaries and traitors who deserted their country. Since most Ethiopian became refugees and immigrants because of the brutal actions of the *Derg*, they, too, did not want to return to Ethiopia. As a consequence, there was less flow of remittance during the era of the *Derg* (1974-1991) compared to the rise of EPRDF's government to power since 1991. Moreover, the drought and famine situation that hit the country more frequently in the 1990s; and the larger number of Ethiopians who were affected, as high as 17 million, could also play a role convincing Ethiopian immigrants to send more money. The increase in remittance might also indicates the presence of an increasingly remittance-dependant population in Ethiopia without such help might not survive—the average daily income of Ethiopians is estimated at less than \$0.50.

Presently, remittance is surpassing Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings from coffee, which is the country's major export item: From the table below one can surmise that since 1998/99 total private transfer had surpassed Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings from coffee export. Also, the total private transfer is more than half of the total export earnings of the country. Given the drought situation in Ethiopia, which now recurs almost every year, and the intense competition from other coffee producers worldwide, the share of coffee as a major foreign exchange earning item vis-à-vis remittance will likely continue declining. Given the growing number of Ethiopian immigrants abroad;¹¹ and the increasing willingness of the Ethiopian government to accommodate and work with the Ethiopian diaspora, remittance alone could constitute the single largest source of hard currency for the country.

¹¹ According to the data obtained from the Consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, an average of 2000 Ethiopians leave for the United States annually as the result of Diversity Visa Lottery (DVL). However, the available data also indicates compared to the number of DVL applicants to the USA for each year, the success rate is insignificant.

Table 7: Remittance vis-à-vis Export Earning (In Millions of U.S. Dollars)¹²

Year	Coffee Export	Total Export	Total Private Transfer
1996/97	354.9	598.6	261.2
1997/98	419.9	601.8	320
1998/99	281.3	484.3	296.9
1999/00	262	486.1	422
2000/01	174.5	441.9	393.9
2001/02	157.6	409.4	377.73

The above assessment of remittance and its impact on the Ethiopian economy does not include the sum of dollars that enters the country through unofficial channels, i.e. illegally. For various reasons, immigrants often prefer unofficial (illegal) channels other than Western Union or Moneygram to transfer money back home. Some of these immigrants could be illegal residents of a particular country, and thus have no bank account or proper documents such as driver's license, to use the legal channels. Others, might simply do not want to utilize Western Union and similar channels in order to avoid the transaction fee, which sometimes reaches 25 per cent of the total sum of money sent to their relatives.¹³ Although these international money-wiring services claim to have offices worldwide, that is not always the case; and even if they have, their branches might not reach every part a certain country. For instance, neither Western Union nor Moneygram had offices in Ethiopia until after 1991. Even after 1991, where we witness the mushrooming of Western Union branches in Addis Ababa and provincial towns like Gondar,¹⁴ there are places in Ethiopia where banking services do not exist and hence there is no Western Union. It also does not necessarily mean that all towns that have banking services also have one of the international money wiring agencies. In this case, people found it necessary to devise their own means to send money back

¹² Data obtained from the National Bank of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 2003.

¹³ "The Longest Journey: A Survey of Migration," *The Economist*, November 2, 2002, 11.

¹⁴ Today Western Union alone has more than 200 brunches throughout Ethiopia. In Gondar city proper alone, it has three (3). See its web site for Ethiopia: <http://www.westernunion.com/info/ShowAgents.asp>

home. They chose to send money through trusted individuals and friends who are going home for one reason or another.

Occasionally, using friends as carriers is preferred to Western Union because of the differences in the official and unofficial exchange rates. In case of Ethiopians, for instance, while banks exchange \$1.00 for 8.55/57birr, the unofficial exchange rate is usually more than what the banks and the international money transferring agencies offer: \$1.00 could be exchanged as high as 9.00birr depending upon various circumstances. One variable that could affect exchange rate in the black-market is the size of currency denominations: the black-marketers usually prefer \$100 or \$50 bills. For those denominations, the exchange could be more than what the bank offers but, if you have lesser denominations, there might not be much difference between the legal and the illegal exchange rate.

The black-market exchange rate could also reflect the availability and flow of the dollar. Most Ethiopians visit Ethiopia during the Ethiopian New Year (September), Ethiopian Christmas and Epiphany (December-January), and the Ethiopian Easter (April-May). Thus, during these times, there are so many dollars coming into the country that the exchange rate in the black market is almost equivalent to the official exchange rate. The difference could range between five cents and a penny per dollar. However, outside of those months, the black market could offer a difference of more than ten cents on the dollar.¹⁵

As a consequence, more Ethiopians might have sent money unofficially than through international money transferring agencies. In fact, studies conducted on immigrant remittances indicated that more money is sent through unofficial channels than banks and international money transferring agencies. Realizing this, some American banks such as Wells Fargo have devised a

¹⁵ Informant: Handsome. A graduate of Addis Ababa University who now is engaged in money laundering in Mercato, Addis Ababa. Interview conducted on October 21, 2002, Addis Ababa.

means by which Mexican immigrants in the U.S. can transfer money without additional charge to a Mexican bank, Bancomer, from where relatives back home can withdraw money. What is more, Wells Fargo provides services to undocumented Mexican immigrants without requiring an American passport or driver's license. The Bank offers its services as long as the client has his/her Mexican identity card.¹⁶

Although it is difficult to indicate exactly how much money Ethiopian-Americans remit to Ethiopia annually, based on the following indications, it could be argued that Ethiopian-Americans contribute the lion's share of the remittance. Compared to Ethiopians in other parts of the world, the Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. are one of the earliest and the largest. In addition, they constitute one of the most educated Ethiopians. According to the 2000 U.S. census, there are more than 86,000 Ethiopians in the U.S.A. Of these, more than 50 per cent of them have high school diplomas and more.¹⁷ This fact alone will provide them an edge over the rest of the Ethiopian immigrant groups around the world. For instance, Ethiopians in Israel, the nation with the second largest Ethiopian immigrant group, are mostly illiterate peasants. Those from the rest of the Middle East, most of them are illegal aliens and hence subject of abuse. As to Ethiopians in Europe, their total number cannot even be equal to that of half of the Ethiopians in America;¹⁸ and hence their remittance couldn't match those from the U.S.A.

There are also other factors that indicate Ethiopian-Americans are dominant in terms of economic contribution to the country of origin. The table below reveals that of the 605 Ethiopian born foreign investors, 165 of them were Ethiopian-Americans, who thus accounted for more than 27 per cent of the total investors. Hence, their number constitutes the single largest group followed

¹⁶ "The Longest Journey: A Survey of Migration," *The Economist*, November 2, 2002, 11

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau 2000: See <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf> (7.0 MB)

¹⁸ Donald N. Levine, "Reconfiguring the Ethiopian Nation in a Global Era," a paper presented at the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg University, July 23, 2003. (Mimeographed)

by 98 Ethiopian-Canadians and 91 Ethiopian-Italians, who make up 16.1 and 15 per cent of the total Ethiopian Diaspora investors respectively.

Table 8: Ethiopian Born Investors by Country of Citizenship, 1991-2003¹⁹

Citizenship	Frequency	Percent	Citizenship	Frequency	Percent
American	165	27.2	German	33	5.4
Australian	3	0.4	Greek	10	1.6
British	13	2.1	Indian	22	3.6
Canadian	98	16.1	Israeli	5	0.8
Danish	2	0.3	Italian	91	15
Djiboutian	2	0.3	Saudi	1	0.1
Dutch	35	5.7	Somali	2	0.3
Eritrean	2	0.3	Sudanese	1	0.1
Ethiopian	8	1.3	Swedish	66	10.9
Finnish	1	0.1	Swiss	2	0.3
French	1	0.1	Yemeni	42	6.9
			Total	605	100

Much of the investment of Ethiopian born foreign investors was made in Addis Ababa, otherwise known as Region 14: Of the 605 investors, 515 of them (85.1 per cent), invested in Addis Ababa. Oromia, which is also known as Region 4, and which also includes urban area near the capital such as Dabra Zait and Nazret, got 8.4 per cent of the total investment while Tigray, Region 1, and Harari, Region 13, took shares of 1.7 per cent of the total investment each.

Such a lopsided pattern of investment has very little to do with the origin of the Ethiopian returnees. It, more or less, reflects the continuation of investment tradition that always focused on the capital since its inception as the imperial capital in late 19th century. It also, partly, explains the uneven development of infrastructure. In this case, Addis Ababa is far better endowed than any city in the country.

¹⁹ Data obtained from the Ethiopian Investment Bureau, Addis Ababa, 2003. More than 95 per cent of the Ethiopian born foreign investors, as the statistics department refers to them, came to Ethiopia after 1991, the downfall of the military junta. For various reasons such as security concerns, better infrastructural development and less hassle from the entrenched bureaucracy, almost all investments were in Addis Ababa.

The concentration of investment in Addis Ababa may also be due to security considerations. Until recently, eastern, south and southwestern parts of Ethiopia were unsafe because of the terrorist activities of the Al-Itihad al-Islami or the Oromo Liberation Front.²⁰ Finally, the ethnocentric policy of the current government has further exacerbated ethnic tension among Ethiopians; and hence many non-Oromo investors might have been discouraged from investing in Oromia, though the region is endowed with natural resources and is one of the major coffee producing parts of the country.

In addition to their involvement in Ethiopia's economic development, Ethiopian-Americans are also engaged in building residential houses both in the capital and in provincial towns like Gondar. The high demand for residential houses, from within and abroad, coupled with the liberalization of economic policies by the current government, has encouraged the evolution of real estate agencies (so far only two agencies are currently working in Addis Ababa) in Ethiopia.

One of these real estate agencies is Ayat, which was established in 1996;²¹ and caters for Ethiopians at home and abroad. According to Ayat, by June 2003, it had served 1200 Ethiopians from abroad. However, country specific data is not available. Hence, it is difficult to tell how many of these Ethiopians were of American origin.

The size of land on which the houses were built range from 120m² to 1500m², costing 49,500 to 2 million birr (\$1=8.56birr). Outside of Addis Ababa, real estate services or agencies do not exist in Ethiopia. The whole task of building a house such as acquiring land from the

²⁰ For Al-Itihad its role in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia, see Medhane Tadesse, Al-Itihad: Political Islam and Black Economy in Somalia (Addis Ababa, 2002).

²¹ Information obtained from Ayat Real Estate, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 2003. The Ayt website seems to mirror that its primary customers are Ethiopians living abroad. In fact, the page that deals with housing development practically attempts to entice Ethiopians from the Diaspora: "... Almost every Ethiopian who live overseas dreams of going back home someday. That is because the fabric of our being is made of the threads of the traditions, the beauty, and the love of our country that we can not forget no matter how well we adopt to life in another country." See the Ayat website: <http://www.ayathomes.com/>

municipality, dealing with architects for design, negotiating with building contractors . . . etc., is handled by relatives.

So significant is their contribution to the local economy, the Gondar municipality has devised a means to attract these Ethiopians: It automatically grants 250m² of land, free of charge, for an Ethiopian immigrant of Gondar origin—an offer that does not exist in other parts of the country. The inconveniences that may have disheartening effect due to the absence of realtor in that city seems to have been compensated by the offer of free land.

One major consequence, in addition to the economic benefit that Gondar is getting, is the evolution an additional residential quarter, "*American Mandar*" (American village), in the southern part of Gondar, in the Samuna Ber locality. Here one finds well-planned villas and ground plus one apartments.²² Government officials, university instructors and business owners also have residences in this same locality, which added a class dimension to the neighborhood.

Here, too, as in the case of investment, the statistics from Gondar Municipality show that Ethiopians from America represent the majority constructing residential houses: Of the 603 Ethiopians from the diaspora who took land from the Municipality, Ethiopian-Americans constitute more than ninety per cent of the total.

Table 9: Number of Ethiopians from the Diaspora who Took Land from Gondar Municipality, between 1995 and 2003.²³

America	Arab countries	Israel	France	Germany	England	Australia	Total
543	48	2	3	2	2	3	603

²² Although it is clear that Ethiopians from the Diaspora are also building new houses in Addis Ababa, especially in Kotebe and beyond, the involvement of the real estate agencies in the construction of these residential areas seemed to have precluded knowing who the owners of these houses were; and hence there is no attachment to a certain group of Ethiopians from abroad as in the case of Gondar.

²³ Data obtained from the Planning Office of the Gondar Municipality, Gondar.

Similar developments also appear in one of the districts of Gondar province, the capital of Chilga *Awraja* (district), Aykel *Ketema* (town). There, Ethiopians from America had built ground plus one apartments and villas; and more Ethiopians are doing the same. As a consequence, part of the town had been baptized as American *mander* (village).

In addition to their names, what makes these American *mander* unique is that unlike other localities where houses were built with mud, wood and mostly their roofs thatched with grass, the houses in American village are all made of stone, bricks and cement; and corrugated iron roofs.

In tourism, too, while U.S.A. became the leading tourist generating country for Ethiopia, Ethiopian-Americans also made up the majority of Ethiopians from the diaspora who came to visit their country. For instance, of the 11,916 American tourists who visited Ethiopia, 2518 were Ethiopian-Americans; and the number of Ethiopian-Americans who visit Ethiopia has kept growing: From 4113 in 1999 to 4522 in 2000 accounting for 30 and 26 per cent of the total tourist arrivals from America in the said years. Here, one has to note that the data for arrivals does not include the category of arrivals who indicated their reason for coming to Ethiopia as "vacation," believing that most likely, they may mainly constitute foreigners, not of Ethiopian origin. If the latter group included in the tabulation, the figure for Ethiopian-Americans will increase even more.

Table 10: Major Tourist Generating Countries for Ethiopia and the Share of the Ethiopian Diaspora, 1998-2000.²⁴

	1998			1999			2000		
Country	Total	Visiting Relatives	VR%	Total	Visiting Relatives	VR%	Total	Visiting Relatives	VR%
U.S.A	11916	2518	21	13679	4113	30	17099	4522	26
Canada	2990	766	26	2289	850	37	2676	945	35
France	3159	393	12	2592	327	13	2772	344	12
Germany	4418	717	16	3887	660	17	4192	753	18
Israel	2607	492	19	3147	731	23	3204	833	26
Italy	4815	590	12	4024	493	12	4723	464	10
Kenya	4588	565	12	5010	355	7	4810	330	7
Saudi	7929	1181	15	7922	1381	17	8920	1191	13
UK	4793	615	13	4321	540	12	5512	766	14
Incoming Tourists	90847	13273	15	91859	13031	14	108954	14589	13

So much is the volume of travelers between America and Ethiopia, and so much seems the economic benefit that Ethiopia is getting, Ethiopian Airlines which reestablished its trans-Atlantic flight to Washington DC (Dulles International Airport) once in a week in early 1990s, has now four flights and one more destination, (Newark, New Jersey), in America.²⁵

Travel to Ethiopia on one of these Ethiopian Airlines transatlantic flights reveals that the majority of its passengers are Ethiopians; and their demand for Ethiopian airlines flights to Ethiopia increases as the Ethiopian holyday seasons (August-September, December-January and April-March) approaches. During such times, the Ethiopian national carrier is noted for making additional flights between U.S.A and Ethiopia to accommodate these demands.²⁶

²⁴ Compiled from Ethiopian Tourism Commission Planning and Development Department, Tourism Statistics Bulletin NO. 5, 1990-2000, (Addis Ababa: 2002), 18-20. (Mimeographed)

For postmodernist interpretation of tourism and the foreign exchange earnings from tourism for such countries like Egypt, Kenya and Morocco see Malcolm Waters, *Globalization*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2001), 206-208.

²⁵ See the airlines website: <http://www.flyethiopian.com/newsite/default.aspx>

²⁶ For instance, between the 11th and 25th of December 2001, EAL had transported 1600 Ethiopian-Americans to Ethiopia. See "Nationals Here on Holyday, Working Visit Invited to Discussion Forum," Walta Information Center, December 28, 2001: <http://www.waltainfo.com/Archive/archive.htm>

Moreover, political developments in relation to the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean War further display the significance of Ethiopian-Americans and their use of the Ethiopian national carrier: So apparent was the benefit that Ethiopia was getting from the Ethiopian Airlines Trans-Atlantic flight, the Clinton Administration contemplated restricting flights of Ethiopian Airlines to the U.S.A unless Ethiopia agreed to end the war peacefully.²⁷

Thus, it appears that had it not been for the presence of Ethiopians in America and their preference to Ethiopian Airlines, the state run company might not have maintained four days in a week of flights to America in this highly competitive international business.²⁸ Ethiopian-Americans, by remaining a loyal customers to the airline, had indirectly boosted the Ethiopian economy.

Although it is difficult to quantify the exact amount that Ethiopian-Americans import from Ethiopia, they surely contribute to Ethiopia's economy as consumers which could be witnessed from the increase in Ethiopian stores in America. These stores, which are found in most American cities, are vending all sorts of Ethiopian goods, such as Ethiopian audio and video tapes and CDs, cultural cloths, cultural adomments (necklace, bracelets, and earrings), cultural household goods (coffee pots and cups, straw plates, rugs and mats made of wool, stools ... etc), traditional paintings, Ethiopian prepared food items like *shiro* (a finely ground and spiced pea), *berbare* (a spiced red pepper powder), *besso* (barley powder), *qibe* (spiced butter), *qolo* (roasted barley or wheat mixed with roasted chick-pea), *teff* . . . etc.

Of these items, the availability and commercialization *teff enjera* in America merits a brief historical background as to how the grain, *teff*, became so available in the U.S. Sometime in 1973,

²⁷ For Eritrea, however, the Clinton Administration planned to prevent the Eritrean government from collecting remittance from its subjects in America. See Jane Perlez, "U.S. Did Little to Deter Buildup as Ethiopia and Eritrea Prepared for War," The New York Times, May 22, 2000, A-9; The Indian Ocean Newsletter, No. 905, May 27, 2000.

²⁸ Ethiopian Airlines is one of the only four African airlines that had direct flights to the USA. The remaining three are South African, Moroccan, and Egyptian airways. Accidentally, these countries are also among African countries (save Nigeria) with the largest immigrant population in the USA.

the University of California and the then Haile Sellassie I University (now Addis Ababa University) sponsored a certain Wayne Carlson to work on public health projects in Ethiopia. While working in Ethiopia, Mr. Carlson not only grew accustomed to eating *teff enjera* but also was intrigued by the many varieties of the grain, its small size and yet its high nutritional content. After finishing his project in Ethiopia, Mr. Carlson returned to U.S, Idaho, in the late 1970s. While in Idaho, encouraged by some of the topographic similarity of southern Idaho, he started experimenting with three varieties of *teff* in very small amounts. While his experiment with *teff* yielded good results, the presence of Ethiopians in significant numbers in the U.S, encouraged Mr. Carlson to produce *teff* in large quantities. So much so, by early 1990s, he harvested and distributed more than 200,000 lbs of *teff* from approximately 300 acres of land. His primary customers were Ethiopian restaurants and individuals throughout the U.S. In fact, because of *teff*'s high nutritional value, it is increasingly being sought by the health and nutrition conscious Americans. Mr. Carlson is now experimenting how to make *teff* pasta;²⁹ and hence, like many immigrant foods that become Americanized, the process of the Americanization of *teff* had also began.

The economic contribution of Ethiopians from abroad does not always bring positive results: One major negative consequence is the increasing dependency of Ethiopians on remittance, especially in areas like Gondar. So much is the flow of the dollar to Gondar and so glaring is the dependence on remittance in Gondar, the Ethiopian Amharic daily, *Addis Zaman*,³⁰ reported that in that city there are people who get married without having a means of support, save

²⁹ *Teff* contains 15 milligrams of iron per cup, 8oz, compared with 4.5 milligrams in barely, 2 milligrams in soybeans and lentils. *Teff* is also very rich in calcium. It has 9 times more calcium found in barely, wheat, oats, millet; and 7 times more than that of brown rice. Except for soybean, none of the above cereals match the potassium content of *teff*. In general, in 2 oz serving of brown *teff*, one could get 200 calories, 7grams of protein, 1 gram of fat, 41 grams of carbohydrates; and it also contains 13.5 per cent dietary fiber by weight. See Tesfaye Ketsela, "Teff in America," *Ethiopian Review*, Vol. 3, No., 12 (December 1993), 33-34. For the increasing popularity of immigrant cuisine in America; and the Americanization of ethnic foods, see Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

³⁰ "Dollar Begondar", *Addis Zaman*, Tiqmit 4, 1995 ["Dollar in Gondar," *Addis Zaman*, October 12, 2002]

the remittance. The townsfolk, both the young and the old, attire themselves in very expensive clothes and shoes, mostly sent from relatives in America and Israel or bought with the money sent from abroad. Moreover, chewing *Chat* (a mildly addictive narcotic leaf), alcoholism and active nightlife had become the fashion of the day in that city. Therefore, conspicuous consumption which further intensifies dependency in that city, for that matter in all parts of Ethiopia where money is remitted from abroad, is very apparent: the more Gondares/Ethiopians are exposed to foreign goods, the more their taste grows; and hence the vicious circle continues: "remittances are often substantial and even essential to the economic survival of sending zones and countries but that those left behind are rarely able to transform remittances into productive activities to stimulate economic growth."³¹

The false sense of prosperity has even attracted local banks to that city: Gondar which had only two banks until the mid 1990s has now more than five.³² Yet, though the increase in the number of banks in a city could be taken as a sign for sound economy, in case of Gondar, it does not seem that way. There is no meaningful industrial and commercial activity that necessitated the opening of these new banks in Gondar. Hence, I argue that what seemed to have attracted them to that city is the high volume of remittance from abroad which in turn required the expansion of the foreign currency exchange service in Gondar.

But how long this excess will continue in Gondar in particular and in Ethiopia in general is not clearly known. Studies of immigrant communities and remittance reveal that it does not seem to

³¹ Lucie Gallistel Colvin, "Introduction and Regional Historical Background" in Lucie Gallistel Colvin et al., The Uprooted of the Western Sahel: Migrants' Quest for Cash in the Senegambia (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 10.

³² Until 1996, there were only two banks, both of them branches of the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia: One is located in Chewa Safar while the other is situated in Arada, the commercial center of the city. The new additions are Hibrat, Nib, Dashen and Wugagan. The first three are found in Piazza (the downtown of Gondar) while the last one in Arada.

last long:³³ As the first generation immigrants get older and die, the amount of money sent back declines. Their offspring, who have neither the physical nor the emotional attachment to the country of origin as their parents did, often care less. Yet, the sense of financial security which their parents provided to their relatives back home will persist. Meanwhile, unable to satisfy their newly acquired taste, those Gondares who depended on remittance and other Ethiopians like them, might be tempted to seek emigration as one option. Hence, triggering additional migration, to say the least.

Chapter 5. 2. The Cultural Impact

One cultural area where the influence of Ethiopian-Americans in particular and the Ethiopian Diaspora in general exhibited is on the diet of Ethiopians, especially in Addis Ababa. Prior to the return of large numbers of Ethiopian immigrants from abroad in the 1990s, American beverages such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi were known throughout the country. Many international hotels like Hilton were providing American and other dishes including breakfasts: cereals for the international community, if not to the Ethiopian public at large. Nevertheless, foods such as cheeseburger and hamburgers were unknown among Ethiopians.

These days, however, not only these foods are known but are also available in almost every part of Addis Ababa. One such outlet is the Spot Bar, which is located at Amist Killo and whose menu includes Hamburger and Cheeseburgers with French fries. [See appendix] It is also not uncommon to find pizza in many of the pastries in the city. In addition, one also notices names like "King Burger," "LA Burger," in one of the affluent parts of Addis Ababa, the Bole Road.

³³ Jeffrey H. Cohen, "Transnational Migration in Rural Oaxaca, Mexico: Dependency, Development and the Household," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 103, No. 4, (December 2001), 954-967.

It could also be said the 'McDonaldization'³⁴ of Ethiopia, seems to have begun. These days, unlike earlier times, restaurants are providing "to go" services. There is even a restaurant by that name: "In & Out," which is located on the way to Piazza from Arit Killo, just before reaching the Ras Mekonnen Bridge. The restaurant has a branch at the newly built Dembel City Center, the only shopping mall in Ethiopia. In that same locality, in front of the Mega Building, there is Rand Fast Food that serves burgers and pizza. On Asmara Road, another blooming part of the city, there is Big Burger which caters fast food for the neighborhood.

The ramifications of the development of fast food seems to go beyond the introduction and popularization of American cuisine: In a country and society where passage of time seemed inconsequential and in a culture where socialization is the hallmark of a good individual, the introduction of "to go" is an indication of a shift in attitude towards socialization and the concept of time: while time becomes no more constant, socialization also seems to have ceased serving as the standard for good character. Moreover, where traditional food is consumed at home/indoors mostly from a common plate with as many as three or more people and accompanied by lots of chatting, the "to go" culture threatens the socialization associated with traditional Ethiopian dining.³⁵ Thus, the "fast-food restaurants are bringing to [Ethiopia] . . . not only big Macs and French fries, but more importantly the American style of eating on the run [emphasis added]. The fast-food restaurant brings with it the idea (and the structure to implement it) that eating is something to be completed as quickly and effortlessly as possible."³⁶

³⁴ See George Ritzer, "McDonaldization: Basics, Studies, Applications, and Extensions," in George Ritzer (ed.), McDonaldization: The Reader (London: Sage Publication Ltd., 2002), 13.

An interesting twist about the introduction of the fast food culture in Ethiopia is that it began in the big city rather than the "suburbs and medium-sized towns," which was the case in the USA. Hence, the process in Ethiopia is the reverse.

³⁵ George Ritzer, The McDonaldization of Society: An Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1996), 130-136.

³⁶ George Ritzer, The McDonaldization Thesis: Explorations and Extensions (London: Sage Publication Ltd, 1998), 84.

Furthermore, the popularization of hamburger and cheeseburgers in Ethiopia, a country where Christianity with a very strong dose of Judaism dominates; and where adherents of Islam account for more than a quarter of the total population, seems to mark a departure from the centuries old tradition. According to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which believes in both the Old and the New Testament, all meat sources are classified as "clean" and "unclean." Hence, pork/ham is unclean. Not only this, even those which are categorized as "clean" could only be considered and consumed as "clean" if and only if the cattle is killed by an ordained priest or a deacon. The same applies to the religion of Islam. Therefore, the centuries old taboo is also being challenged. With the McDonaldization of the food culture, Ethiopians are also exposed to eating meat/food without knowing who killed/blessed it.

Yet, one might inquire whether the owners of these businesses have been to the United States? And could such business be viewed solely as outcomes of exposure to the American culture?" While the answer to the latter question is affirmative—since one could be exposed to American culture directly or indirectly, through intermediaries, such as movies and videos ³⁷— the response to the first query, however, is yes and no: My conversation with the owner of Spot Bar revealed that he had never been to the United States but as a shrewd entrepreneur, he realized the increasing popularity of burgers especially among the new generation Ethiopians; and thus employed a professional chef and that the "spot" where his café/bar situated is a very convenient place to sell a combination of both Ethiopian as well as foreign dishes. The bar's location is a place where one finds customers whose taste and exposure is diverse, ranging from high school and Ethiopian university students to Ethiopian and foreign scholars who are members of the Addis Ababa University or its affiliates.

³⁷ Malcolm Waters indicated that "modernization in particular generates media [emphasis added] that can permeate and dissolve boundaries between localities and between political entities and thus allow cultural transmission to take place at an increasingly rapid pace." See Globalization, 170.

The impact of Ethiopian-Americans or those from the diaspora seems also to be noticeable on the nature of diet and the life style of Ethiopians: Not long ago being chubby was associated with being rich and well-fed; and hence meat eating remained customary among the well-to-do while it remained the aspirations of the poor. However, getting fat does not seem to be the norm anymore, at least in Addis Ababa, and especially among the educated, the foreign exposed and among some of the young generation and well-to-do Ethiopians. They prefer vegetarian dishes and exercise. Consequently, fitness centers and health clubs are also mushrooming in Addis Ababa. These centers provide weight lifting and aerobic exercises for both female and male members. Some of them, in fact, had their programs, aerobic exercise, aired on the national television. This is a marvel, a thing that never existed some decades ago save for the YMCA ³⁸ and Girma Cheru's fitness program that was broadcast on both radio and television.

Here, it is worth remembering that the defunct Marxist military regime had banned the YMCA & YWCA and branded them tools of imperialism. And Girma Charu's program was male oriented and male dominated, though women could do the exercises at home. Therefore, the existence of fitness centers for both male and female customers; and the availability of a female aerobic exercise instructor whose program is televised throughout the nation, indicates the impact of Ethiopian-Americans or the Ethiopian diaspora. The liberal government policy and other factors such as an increase in informed urban population which can also afford the luxury of membership at a fitness center and probably a personal trainer could also explain the growth of fitness centers.

The mushrooming of cyber cafés both in Addis Ababa and provincial towns like Gondar, in the past five or so years, could also be partly attributed to the Ethiopian Diaspora in general and

³⁸ When it opened on March 23, 1949, Emperor Haile Sellassie was the patron while Lieut. Col. Tamrit Yigazu, the then Director General of the Ministry of Justice, served as president. See for the opening of the YMCA in Ethiopia, Religious News Service, "Ethiopian YMCA Opened," New York Times, March 24, 1949, 18.

the Ethiopian-Americans in particular.³⁹ The cyber cafés provide alternative access to information in a country where there is only one television and radio station, both run by the government. They also offer Internet services thus bringing families together that are residing either at home or abroad.

The cyber cafés charge 0.75 birr (\$1=8.56 birr) per minute. Though this is an insignificant sum for tourists and the Ethiopian expatriate community, it is a luxury for the majority of Ethiopians: Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries on earth with a per capita income of \$110.⁴⁰ The scenario becomes even worse with the recurrent drought and famine that currently engulfs about 17 million Ethiopians. According to the Chinese News Agency, Xinhuanet, which quoted the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the daily income of an Ethiopian is \$0.47 and half of the Ethiopian people pass the day without having sufficient food, literally starving.⁴¹ Therefore, it is apparent that only Ethiopian-American returnees and others from the diaspora; and those who have relatives abroad, and hence who have additional source of income by way of remittance, who can afford to use these Internet cafés. By the same token, it could be said that the number and availability of cyber cafés in a city reflects the existence of a sizable number of Ethiopians from the diaspora and or foreigners in that city.⁴²

The same could be said of cellular phones. Like the Internet, they provide a handy means of communication. Yet they, too, are hard to get and very expensive. One of the main reasons for

³⁹ As of 2000, the continent of Africa has about 4 million Internet subscribers. Of these, Ethiopian Internet subscribers accounted for 7000 while Kenya has 100,000 subscribers

See Fortune newspaper online at <http://www.ethioguide.com/aa-ethioguide/ethioguide/eg-news.htm> and BBC online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_1931000/1931120.stm

⁴⁰The World Bank, Africa Region Human Development Series: Education and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa. A Review of Sector-Wide Approach (Washington, D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2001), 95.

⁴¹ See the site: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2002-03/30/content_337410.htm

⁴² While I was in Ethiopia, one of the areas that I visited was Nekemte and Debra Marqos. Incidentally, both cities do not have Internet services, though people whom I chatted with informed me that soon they will have one. Incidentally, too, these cities are one of the least affected areas during the Red Terror. They are also places with little or no attraction for Tourists.

their preciousness is government control: It is the Ethiopian Telecommunications Board that runs and provides telephone services throughout the country. Despite the apparent demand for mobile phone service in the country, the Board was unable to satisfy these demands. In fact, mobile phone service does not exist outside of the capital.⁴³ To have a mobile phone, as the locals call it, is becoming a status symbol in Ethiopia. If you have these phones, you are a *fereng* (foreigner), a merchant (*nagade*), a middleman (*dellala*), a rich person (*habtam*), or one of those Ethiopians from abroad.

In fact, not only mobile phone but regular telephone service is also less available, despite the demand for such services: The government owned telecommunication system is incapable of meeting the local demand. After being enrolled to get a telephone line, one has to wait for years until his/her turn comes. Yet, a couple of informants told me that if you indicate to the telecommunication officials that you have a relative/relatives abroad, the waiting time is shortened; and you will get a line faster than the rest of the population. A shrewd decision on part of the telecommunication officials: if a person makes a call, say to the U.S. from Ethiopia, he/she will pay 17.00 *birr* per minute. This is in addition to service charge, some 20.00*birr* per telephone line, and the newly introduced 15 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT), which is expensive for a person with a limited income. As a consequence, Ethiopians who have telephone lines do not use the service for out-going calls. Meanwhile, the existence of a population that has relatives abroad and hence are willing to use telephones for domestic as well as international calls, and for in-coming and out-going calls, seems to entice telecommunication officials to give priority to Ethiopians who have relatives abroad.

⁴³ One of the local newspapers reported that in Addis Ababa alone there are 70,000 people who have been registered and waiting for mobile phone service. "Yatelen Yamobayil Masifafeya Charata Manegimantu Bayisimamami Bordu Lachayinaw Zte Sata [The Auction, for the Expansion of Telecommunication's Mobile Services, was Given to the Chinese ZET though the Management Disagrees]," *Reporter*, Magabet 1, 1995 EC (March 8, 2003), 1.

The Ethiopian-Americans, beside other factors, also encourage outward migration: many Ethiopians at home are often impressed by the carefree manners of Ethiopian-Americans whenever they are. Ethiopians also see and hear about things such as clothes and shoes that Ethiopian-Americans bring, monies they give, the nice places they frequent, the business they open . . . etc. The media, especially Hollywood, is also another source of information that entices Ethiopians.⁴⁴ Thus, as more Ethiopians come from abroad, more Ethiopians want to leave their country so that they, too, can accomplish what these Ethiopian-Americans and others from the diaspora are doing.

The temptation to emigrate becomes even more so for lack of adequate information as to the living conditions of some of the returnees. For one thing, their appearance deceives the locals. For another, some returnees deliberately falsify their life abroad: instead of telling what they really do for a living, they tell otherwise. For instance, some Ethiopians who work as nursing home assistants in America would claim to be nurses. Others will brag about their business while in reality they have no business. They could be cab drivers, janitors and security officers. The deceit becomes worse if the Ethiopian-American or others from the diaspora are intending to bring a spouse. They have to paint a rosy picture about their immigrant life in the U.S. otherwise the future bride or bridegroom will be reluctant.

Yet, despite the increasing awareness about the hurdles of immigrant life, Ethiopians are more than willing to emigrate to America. In fact, these days the saying among Ethiopians towards coming to the United States is "*Americana mot endahon andiqan ayqrim*", which literally means, "death and going to America is inevitable." This is a great departure from the negative attitude that

⁴⁴ M. Mehdi Semati and Patty J. Sotirin, "Hollywood's Transnational Appeal: Hegemony and Democratic Potential?" *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (Winter 1999), 176-188; See also BBC online, 02/23/04: "Exporting the American Dream" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/americas/3512897.stm>

Ethiopians had towards migration. In this regard, an Ethiopian resident of Boston stated, "in the Ethiopia I knew, moving from one city to another was a big deal, not to mention mass exodus."⁴⁵

Consequently, these days migration has become part of the psychological makeup of Ethiopians. A look at some of the folk songs in Ethiopia clearly reveals this change. In his 1990 album, the famous singer Yirga Dubale equated *sidat* (migration) with slavery:

One who left his country, until he returns
Is loaded like a truck, and galloped like a horse.⁴⁶

Another Ethiopian singer, Settegn Atenaw, in his 2001 album, also articulated the grime perception and fear that Ethiopians have had towards migration. Yet, his rhymes also displayed the shift in attitude towards migration among his countrymen; and a surprise at the fiesta that the would be emigrant and his/her relatives host for getting the opportunity to emigrate:

Guys! I am wondering, and longing to hear yours
As it is said and we heard, in the olden days
Leaving one's country means, the death of all deaths
Moving away from country, from relatives, to emigrate
It was a sorrow, anxiety and heavy on one's mind
To day, these all is gone and a new trend had come
When one gets an exit visa, there is a party
For migration is happiness, music and dance . . .
These days, migration is celebrated like a wedding.⁴⁷

Moreover, the increasing number of Ethiopians who apply for Diversity Visa Lottery each year is another testimony for the change of attitude towards migration in Ethiopia. So much is their numbers, especially in the months of September and October, it is reported that the country's postal service has difficulty handling its customers: As noted in *The Monitor* ". . . it's exactly 10 years since this program [ie. DV lottery] started; but the post office is making little progress in terms

⁴⁵ Quoted in Francie Latour, "In New Land, Ethiopians Struggle for Unity," *The Boston Globe*, April 12, 1999, A1, A12.

⁴⁶ The singer is a traditional vocalist/a minstrel-man (*azimaree*) who, like the rest of the Ethiopian singers, now lives straddling the two worlds, USA and Ethiopia.

⁴⁷ Settegn Atenaw, too, is one of the many transnational Ethiopian musicians. His album was produced in Washington DC; and the distributor, too, is the American based Ethiopian music company, Ethiosound, located at 2409 18th Street NW. Washington DC 2009.

of improving its efficiency to match the great surge in demand for its services during the annual DV lottery registration period."⁴⁸

Furthermore, the socio-economic background of the applicants also reflects this change. While it is understandable for the poor to seek migration to better their lives, the migration of the middleclass further depicts the changing attitude towards migration among Ethiopians. *The Monitor*, which observed this trend, lamented that "even, the well-to-do are often seen filling U.S.-DV forms."⁴⁹

Ethiopian-American impact on their country of origin is not always positive: one also encounters some gloomy practices such as strip-clubs in Addis Ababa.⁵⁰ As its name might suggest, Beverly Hills LA, is an American derivative. It is a phenomenon that occurred in the past decade in Ethiopia, a country where HIV-AIDS is becoming an epidemic (9.3 per 100 adults in Ethiopia are HIV positive), such business and its continued growth, at least in Addis Ababa (Bole Road), is worrisome, to say the least.⁵¹ It may have been this threat that convinced the EPRDF government to take action against many of the clubs in the capital recently.⁵²

On the other hand, the introduction of nude dancing is an interesting development from both historical and sociological aspects: it is being practiced in a society where sex and sex related

⁴⁸ Sami, "Unimproving Efficiency," *The Monitor*, October 25, 1999.

⁴⁹ "Ethiopian Industries Unable to Compete," *The Monitor*, January 17, 2001. Annually, between four to five thousand Ethiopians win DV lottery while the total number of applicants is unknown. However, it is reported that for the 2001 DV Lottery, the State Department had received some 13 million applicants while the available quota for DV is only 50,000. See Mae M. Cheng, Few winners, many applicants in visa lottery, *Newsday*, May 26, 2001, A13; Mae M. Cheng, Green Cards are lottery's prize: Feds take applications for 50,000 visas, *Newsday*, October 3, 2000, A30; "5000 Ethiopians win US Diversity Lottery," *Addis Tribune*, May 18, 2001.

⁵⁰ One of the local newspapers reported that there are also people who came from America to recruit Ethiopian girls for the sex market in the States. See "Ethiopia: wryyan Setoch Lawasib Gabaya Wada America Yamoliku Dalaloch Tsamartawal [There are Middlemen who are Engaged in Sending Ethiopian Women for the Sex Market in America], *EthioPost*, Tir 8, 1995 EC, [January 15, 2003], 1-2.

⁵¹ The World Bank, *African Development Indicators, 1998/99* (Washington DC: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1998), 330, 335-337.

⁵² While I was in Addis Ababa in June 2003, the city police were taking action against what it termed "illegal" dance clubs. Many people, both Ethiopian and foreign nationals, were taken to custody as the result of this roundup; and some of the clubs were closed for good. See also BBC News "Ethiopia Strip Clubs Raided," July 17, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/3075411.stm>

matters are taboo. Consequently, sex is a “thing” that is not discussed between even married couples. What is more, it is improper to talk about such matters either in private or in public. An attempt to do otherwise is considered *balege*, improper and plebeian.

Ethiopian Americans are accused of sex trafficking: They come to Ethiopia and entice girls in the guise of marriage. At other times, they will approach as willing sponsors for those Diversity Visa lottery winners who do not have a sponsor. The latter, unless they have one, cannot get a visa to the U.S.A. Incidentally, some of the female sponsors are themselves a one time or active employees of strip clubs, or owners of one.⁵³

CHAPTER 5. 3. The Political Impact: Relationship between the Ethiopian Diaspora and the Ethiopian Government

Many of the aforementioned developments are episodes that occurred in the post-*Derg* era. These developments could be attributed to the change of government and the liberal tendencies that followed: Since the majority of Ethiopians residing in the U.S. are political refugees and asylees who were opposed to the military régime, they felt that they could not return to Ethiopia as long as the *Derg* was in power. Even if they were allowed, they could not establish business due to the junta's socialist principles. Sending money back home was not that enticing because of the government regulated and enforced exchange rate (\$1=2.15birr). What is more, the junta could also view the whole transaction differently—people could be accused of having a relationship with imperialism. Furthermore, there was no money-wiring agency like the Western Union operating in the country. Also, some of the present trends such as strip clubs would have been viewed as part of the cultural invasion and domination of imperialism.

⁵³ “*Etyopiyawuyan Setoch Lawasib Gabya Wada America Yameliku Dalaloch Tasamartawal*,” *Etyopost*, Tir 8, 1995 [There are Middlemen Who Are Engaged in Sending Ethiopian Women to America for Sex Market, *Ethiopost*, January 16, 2003.]

But after 1991, the change of government was followed by policy change towards the Ethiopian Diaspora: To this effect the government issued a policy document, *"A Policy Directive Intended to Reach a National Consensus With the Ethiopian Diaspora,"*⁵⁴ which allowed all Ethiopian nationals who left their country for one reason or another to return to Ethiopia regardless of their political affiliation and citizenship they subsequently acquired. These Ethiopians were also encouraged to invest in their country. In addition, they were also accorded certain benefits such as bringing vehicles and other items tax-free. Moreover, though convinced that almost all Ethiopian community organizations in the U.S.A and elsewhere are either facades of antigovernment forces or are being used as convenient outlets for anti-government activities, the policy document also pointed out the government's willingness to work with such community associations and political parties as long as they followed peaceful co-existence and dialogue to the benefit of the country. Furthermore, the document also encouraged Ethiopian embassies throughout the world to try and work with any Ethiopian community organizations in their respective countries.

Moreover, in a foreign policy document, *"yaetyopia yawuch gudayna yadahininat policy estrateji"* (*Ethiopian Foreign Policy and Security Strategy*), the government not only acknowledged the importance of the Ethiopian community in America in enhancing and strengthening Ethiopian and American relations, but also its role in building Ethiopia, and called for a close cooperation between the government and the diaspora.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Yawuch Guday Minister, *"Bawuch Agar Naware Etiyopiyawiyen Zand Biherawe Yagara Yihnnita (National Consensus) Indifatar Yamayasihchilu Biherawe Gudayochin Asmalikito Yawata Mare Iqid,"* Hamile 1992, Addis Ababa. [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "A Policy Directive Intended to Reach a National Consensus with the Ethiopian Diaspora," July 2000, Addis Ababa] Mimeographed. (Hereafter Policy Document)

⁵⁵ The foreign policy document was distributed to various government agencies and the ruling party affiliates for evaluation. It discusses Ethiopia's relation with almost all countries with whom it had diplomatic relation and strategic interest. It clearly states the country's interest and outlines what should be done in accordance with the policy document. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *"Yaetyopia Yawuch Gudayna Yadahininat Policy Estrateji,"* Hidar 1995 EC [Ethiopian Foreign Policy and Security Strategy, November 2003] (Mimeographed).

In line with such conviction, the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington DC had began sending e-mail newsletters to all Ethiopians on whom it had information. These e-mail newsletters, in addition to updating information on events in Ethiopia, also solicited help from the Ethiopians in America to sign petitions to the U.S. Congress imploring that they not take measures that might damage Ethiopian's interest and wellbeing. Sometimes, the petition could also be a protest against groups or institutions that the Embassy believed disseminated information that tarnished Ethiopia's image.⁵⁶

Though its success is unknown, during the Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998-2000, the government had sent its emissaries to the U.S.A looking for Ethiopian engineers and other specialists to help it revive the arms manufacturing industry which had been shut since the downfall of the military regime in 1991.⁵⁷

One evident result of the government's effort to work with the Ethiopian Diaspora, especially those in the U.S., was that Ethiopians, in addition to contributing money for the war effort and supporting the government in various ways, began going to Ethiopia in larger numbers.⁵⁸

Meanwhile to further entice Ethiopians from abroad, the government promulgated a law, Proclamation No. 270/2002,⁵⁹ which granted almost dual citizenship to Ethiopians who acquired citizenship of other countries. Part Two, Article 5 of the Law stipulates that an Ethiopian national of foreign citizenship can come and go without visa requirement; and can stay in Ethiopia as long as he/she pleases. Besides, any such Ethiopian can invest in Ethiopia like all other Ethiopian citizens.

⁵⁶ Sometimes, the petition could also a protest to a certain group or establishment in the USA. One instance of this was the Hollywood production of the film that showed the 1984 famine in Ethiopia. At other times, it could be directed against FOX and CNN for airing a film that also displayed the despicable conditions of the country. See Appendix

⁵⁷ Indian Ocean Newsletter, No. 929, December 9, 2000.

⁵⁸ See the figures on tourism: It shows a continuous increase in the number of Ethiopians visiting the country.

⁵⁹ See Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa 8th Year, No. 17, (5th February, 2002)

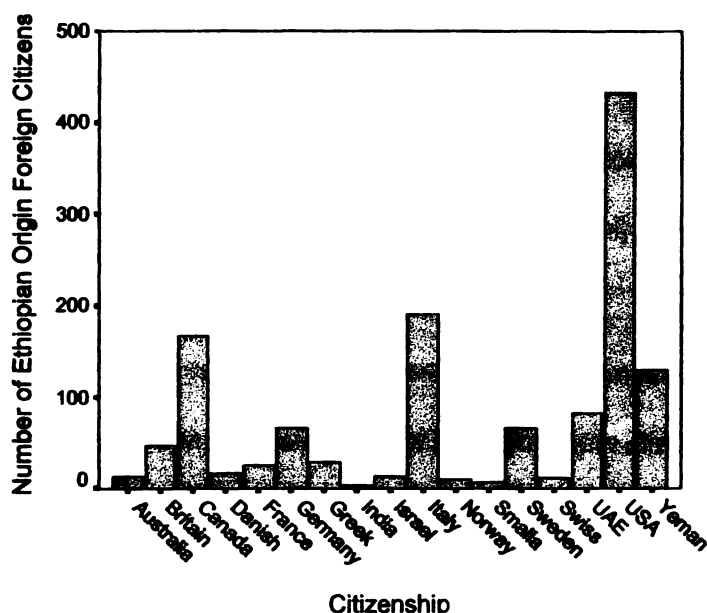
The Act also insures that foreign citizens of Ethiopian origin can be employed and have their retirement benefits.

To facilitate the implementation of the law, the Ethiopian Government established a new department, Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The sole task of the Directorate is to help to solve any difficulties or complaints from members of the Ethiopian diaspora while they were in Ethiopia.⁶⁰

As a result of the enactment of the Law, some 1264 Ethiopians from thirty-two (32) different countries had been registered and issued the Ethiopian "Green Card." Of these Ethiopians, the Ethiopian-Americans, as usual, accounted for the largest group, more than a third (433) of the total number of Ethiopians while Ethiopian-Italians (190), Ethiopian-Canadians (167) and Ethiopian-Yemenis (129) followed in that order.

⁶⁰ The Directorate was established sometime in April 2002. Though young and understaffed, the current head of the Directorate, Counsellor Teferi Melesse and his assistant, Ambassador Wubishet Demissie, informed me that they were trying their best to help Ethiopians from the diaspora. One of their achievements, in this respect, was that when the Black Lion Hospital refused to accept the kidney dialysis machines which was collected and donated by a group of Ethiopians and their American colleagues, the Directorate leaked the situation to the media; and put the hospital officials on the spot. Interview: September 13 and 16, 2002, Addis Ababa. See also the "Hospital Rejects Donation Worth Over 3 Million Birr," Ethiopian Herald (Saturday September 28, 2002), 2.

Table 11: Graph Showing Number of Ethiopians and their Country of Citizenship who Received "ID Card."⁶¹



However, Part Two (6), placed the following restrictions " . . . notwithstanding Article 5 of this Proclamation, the holder of the Identification Card of foreign national of Ethiopian origin . . . Shall have no right to vote [emphasis added] or be elected to any office at any level of Government . . . Shall have no right to be employed on a regular basis in the National Defense, Security, Foreign Affairs and other similar political establishments."⁶² Furthermore, although the Decree does not state how much is the fee to get the Identification Card, Ethiopians who obtained one indicated that they have paid \$500; and that they have to renew the card every five years.

In the eyes of some Ethiopians the aforementioned stance of the EPRDF government was motivated more by politics than by a desire to bring good for the country. The government, however, responded to the allegation differently. In its policy directive, it stated that these Ethiopians who are accusing of EPRDF of ulterior motives are individuals who themselves are

⁶¹ Data obtained from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Immigration Office, July 2003, Addis Ababa. Note that countries who have less than 5 people are not listed in the graph.

⁶² Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa 8th Year, No. 17, (5th February, 2002).

scared of losing support from among the diaspora. They feared that since Ethiopians are allowed to come and leave their country at will, a measure which is very progressive especially compared to the era of the *Derg* where they were denied such rights to their country, they will have fewer reasons to oppose the EPRDF regime in Ethiopia and hence less support to the cause of the opposition. The government also believes that its opponents are mainly supporters of the defunct *Derg* regime and national chauvinists.⁶³

The government's assessment of its opponents had an element of truth, to some degree. If Ethiopians from the Diaspora can come and invest or have property in Ethiopia, then these Ethiopians and others residing abroad would prefer to invest or have assets at home than contribute money to an opposition group in America and elsewhere which often fails to deliver its promises and very much fragmented. In addition, these Ethiopians, in order to fulfill their desire to have some property at home and continue supporting their families, must work more hours in the U.S. than attending political rallies and meetings. Hence, they will be less inclined to partake in any political event in the U.S.A.

On the other hand, one cannot reject outright the allegations and assumptions of these Ethiopians who are opposed to the EPRDF Government in Addis Ababa. Despite the government's initiative to issue "Green Card" to any Ethiopian who acquired foreign citizenship and despite its claim that it is only relics of the former regime and some national chauvinists (*timikitegnoch*) who question the government, the response from the Diaspora does not seem to be enthusiastic, which could be evidenced from the abovementioned graph—so far the number of people who acquired the "green card" are less than two thousand.

Opponents of the government have also a legitimate reason when one considers the restrictions of voting rights in light of Mexican and other immigrant experience in the U.S.. The

⁶³ Policy Document.

Mexican government had allowed Mexican Americans, who acquired American citizenship and yet opted to have "dual citizenship," the right to vote. These days, in addition to Mexico there are some ninety-three (93) countries in the world that accept dual citizenship.⁶⁴

While the actions of Mexican and other governments shows the degree of confidence in their democratic practices and institutions in their country, the deeds of the Ethiopian government seemed to indicate otherwise. The Ethiopian government seemed to have liked the money/remittance from its immigrant nationals while it abhorred and feared their political participation in the fate of their country: The Ethiopian immigrants who had been enjoying American democracy can indeed cause more headache if not trouble for a government that supports collective rights rather than individual freedom, practices ethno-centric policy, endorses the right to secede in a country that has more than seventy-five ethnic groups and nationalities, and yet dominated by a single ethnic group, the Tigrayan, who mainly constitute the ruling EPRDF party.

Furthermore, to condemn its political opponents as national chauvinists (*timkitegna*) and or lackeys of the former military regime simply because they entertained a political opinion different from its own is callous and counterproductive. Such accusations and counter accusations, coupled with the lack of a democratic tradition and the absence of a vibrant civil society in Ethiopia, further complicated the situation for both the opposition in the diaspora and the government at home.

⁶⁴ Countries like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, France, Great Britain, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Panama, and Switzerland are among the recent countries that allowed their subjects to have dual citizenship. See Shelia L. Croucher, Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2004), 71-72; Luin Goldring, "Disaggregating Transnational Social Spaces: Gender, Place and Citizenship in Mexico-US Transnational Spaces," in Ludger Pries (ed), New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century (London: Routledge, 2001), 59-60; David A. Martin and T. Alexander Aleinikoff, "Double Ties: Why Nations Should Learn to Love Dual Nationality," Foreign Policy, No. 133, (November/December, 2002), 80-81.

CONCLUSION

There has been little study of Ethiopian or African immigrants in the United States who came in the post-1965 period. This dissertation explores the gap in the study of new African immigrants while contributing to the wider African diaspora studies. It also establishes a foundation on which others will hopefully build exploring patterns of migration and settlement, community formation and trans-nationalities; and the problems associated with it.

Studying Ethiopian/African immigrants in the United States was full of surprises and revelations. Yet, it was also a challenging endeavor for two reasons. One, there always existed a disparity in figures between what Ethiopian community organizations claim and what the U.S Census Bureau recorded about Ethiopians in America. The absence of complete and accurate data either from the Immigration and Naturalization Services (now Homeland Security) or Census Bureau on Ethiopians, or for that matter Africans immigrants as a whole, prior to the 1990 census complicated the problem. Two, despite the existence of religious and ethnic diversity among Ethiopian immigrants and refugees in America and despite the tremendous significance of this difference in understanding their manner of entrance, patterns of settlement and community formation and the tensions within and among them, there are no figures for the various Ethiopian ethnic and religious groups in the U.S.A.

Despite such difficulties in this dissertation, I have succeeded showing the various causes that initiated refugee and immigrant flows from Ethiopia into the U.S. in the twentieth century, and particularly since the 1950s. The presence of Ethiopians in America today is the result of two major developments. One of the reasons was the commencement and development of bilateral relationships between Ethiopia and America in 1903 and after, especially America's evolution as a super power in the world since 1945. The second was the civil war in Ethiopia, especially the Red

Terror of the late 1970s. Accordingly, the profile of Ethiopians in America reflects these two developments. While the political asylees (chiefly composed of students, tourists, businessmen and former diplomats) who came to the U.S. before the 1974 Revolution reflected the nature of Ethiopian-American relationships, the refugees who were primarily victims of the Red Terror and who were resettled in the U.S. in the 1980s, mirror Cold War realities. The U.S. viewed the refugees as people who voted against communism by their feet. Of these two sets of Ethiopians, the refugees account for the single largest group among Ethiopians in America. The manner of entry into the U.S. interlaced with ethnic/regional differences remains a mark of identity within and among Ethiopians in America and will continue being a divisive theme for years to come.

While the aforementioned realities indicated the role of diplomatic relationships in initiating, and at times determining, migratory patterns, my dissertation points out that the centuries old Ethiopian and American relations was based on mutual interest. America viewed assisting Ethiopia, the only independent African country and towards whom African Americans had sentimental attachment and regard—at least until the 1960s—as an assurance to its black population in its commitment to the black “race” during Second World War and after. America also seemed to have regarded Ethiopia as one of the few gateways into Africa in the pre-1960s period and on the immediate aftermath of the independence era in Africa. The continent was under colonial domination in the pre-1960s period when Europe’s grip on Africa was strong and hence there was very little room for America. Even after the 1960s, though much of Africa was independent, the newly independent anti-imperialist African states were, by and large, suspicious of America. In light of such circumstances, Ethiopia had a special attraction for the newly independent African countries. Its American established universities, colleges, and military training facilities presented an alternative to institutions of the former colonial masters. Haile Sillassie gave scholarships to citizens of the newly independent African nations. This in turn, I believe, provided

an easy way in for America to access African students and military officers being trained in Ethiopia. Ethiopia also trained members of partisan movements like the African National Congress (ANC).¹ Therefore, the visits of American foreign secretaries and vice-presidents to the then University College of Addis Ababa (later on Haile Sillassie I University) in the 1960s could be also considered an instance of America's desire to access African students in Ethiopia.² This coupled with America's desire to combat communism and Ethiopia's strategic position on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, heightened America' interest on Ethiopia.

On Ethiopia's part, throughout the twentieth century, its rulers such as Menelik, Zawditu, Haile Sillassie and Meles firmly believed in America. At one time or another Ethiopian leaders sought out America's help to counter European encroachment upon their sovereignty, to stave off foreign aggression from neighboring countries, or to neutralize communist and pan-Islam and pan-Arab threats. In the latter instance, although Ethiopia is a black African country found on the African continent, due to historic and cultural reasons, it has strong ties with the Middle East. It was also from this situation that one of the greatest threats to its survival as an independent nation came.³ Yet, although Ethiopian leaders, especially Haile Sellassie, were aware of the threat and

¹ One of the founders of the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the former South African president, Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were trained in Ethiopia. During Mengistu's reign, Ethiopia trained thousands of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) members and provided scholarship to both members of the ANC, Namibian (SWAPO) and Zimbabwe's freedom fighters. It is unfortunate that there is no work that deals with Ethiopia's role and involvement in Africa's liberation struggle against colonialism or its involvement in the internal affairs of some of its neighbors such as Sudan and Somalia. On Mandela's training in Ethiopia, see Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), 255-57, 260, 265-267.

² After the 1960s, no American high official had visited Ethiopia. The only exception was the current US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld's post-911 hour or so stay in Addis Ababa. On Ethiopian students and U.S official's visit to Haile Sellassie Ist University, See Randi Ronning Balsvik, Haile Sellassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1985)

³ See Sven Rubinson, The Survival of Ethiopian Independence (London: Heinemann, 1976); Hagai Erlich, Ethiopia and the Middle East (Boulder, L. Rienner Publishers, 1994); The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt and the Nile (Boulder, L. Rienner Publishers, 2002); Ethiopia and the Challenge of Independence (Boulder, L. Rienner Publishers, 1986). For understanding Nile water politics, see Dale Whittington, John Waterbury and Elizabeth McClelland, "Toward a New Nile Waters Agreement" in Ariel Dinar and Edna T Loehman (ed.), Water Quality/Quantity Management and Conflict Resolution (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 167-179; John Bulloch and Adel Darwish, Water Wars: Coming Conflicts in the Middle East (London: Gollancz, 1993).

although he and his ministers incessantly implored America to increase its economic and military aid to counter this challenge, America was unmoved—a thorny issue that often marred Ethiopian and American relations during Haile Sellassie's time. U.S. State Department files were rife with complaints from Ethiopian officials regarding this matter.⁴ Despite this, Ethiopian and American relations remained warm except for the brief interlude during the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Ethiopia remained the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in Africa, south of the Sahara until the mid 1970s. During this period, in addition to the weapons it supplied on grant basis, America provided some \$300 million worth of military aid to Ethiopia which included training some 4000 Ethiopian officers from the various branches of the Imperial Ethiopian Armed Forces. This number remained the single largest figure for American trained African officers in sub-Saharan even today. Meanwhile, American military advisors were found at virtually every level of the armed forces. The question here is "was America aware of the impending danger, the 1974 Revolution, against Haile Sellassie's regime?" If yes, why did not America not do something about it? The reason probably rests in the following explanations. Since the revolution began as a protest from among the lower ranks of the military officers and NCOs who demanded pay rises and certain benefits, America might have thought that the renegade officers could be easily reined in. Even if the protest evolved into a full-fledged revolution that encompassed high ranking military officers and civilians, America's experience with such "revolutions" in Africa might have convinced it not to

⁴ One of the reasons why America was reluctant to satisfy the ever increasing demands of Ethiopia for more and sophisticated weapons was that both MAG and State Department officials believed that there was no serious threat against Ethiopia and that the army was good enough to maintain internal security; and hence the weapons it had is sufficed for such purposes. On the other hand, until after the 1960s, there was no Africa desk that dealt with African issues under the State Department. Thus, Ethiopia's issue was reviewed under the Middle East/Nearest Affairs which was dominated by Arab/Middle East experts in whose eyes Ethiopia contributed very little to U.S. interests compared to the Arab countries. Egypt's position in the Arab world and its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea and Arab oil had adversely affected Ethiopia's position in the eyes of America's foreign policy experts. It was only the poor performance of the Imperial Ethiopian Army against Somalia in 1963 and the massive Soviet arms supply to Somalia and the increasing presence of the Soviets in the Horn of Africa that convinced the America to increase its military and economic aid to Ethiopia. However, this was not satisfactory for Haile Sellasse. He was constantly looking for other sources of military as well as economic aid from countries like Yugoslavia and others. See Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1983)

act. Often, such "revolutions" in Africa end up being no more than a putsch whose leaders were American trained and loyal to American interest. Such leaders have no power base of their own and source of legitimacy except for the army and cliental relationship with the United States or with their former colonial masters. America also might have thought that even if the low ranking officers got the support of the Ethiopian masses, American trained high ranking military officers, who dominate the officer corps of the Ethiopian armed forces, would easily quell any socialist oriented revolution. Or, they could change the direction of the revolution slowly but surely. The massacre of sixty high ranking military officers, including the chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), Gen. Aman Andom, and members of the royal family in the early days of the revolution, and a series of purges and executions of western trained senior military officers by the *Derg* until its demise, might have been a response to such endeavors on America's part.^{5*} America

⁵ For a comprehensive understanding of the military and Ethiopian and American relations, see Marcus, Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States, 1941-1974; Lefever, Spear and Scepter: Army, Politics and Police in Tropical Africa; Hagos, The Strained U.S.-Ethiopian Relations; Lefebvre, Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia, 1953-1991; Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy and a Traditional Polity; Negussay, Ethiopia and the United States, Volume I: The Season of Courtship; Wuyi Omitoogun, Military Expenditure Data in Africa: A Survey of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34-37.

*To offset Western influence on the Ethiopian armed forces, Mengistu also sent thousands of Ethiopian officers, from among the new recruits, to socialist countries mainly the USSR, Cuba, and East Germany. Some Western trained officers were also sent to Socialist countries either for re-indoctrination or further education. These measures of the *Derg* were taken in addition to the killings, purging and at times demoting Western trained military officers in the armed forces. Those officers who survived the killings of Mengistu and death at the many battlefronts are now found in America and other parts of the Western world such as England. Very few Western trained high-ranking military officers reside in Ethiopia. Even among those, most of them have become transnationals. In America they have their own association with its own website: <http://www.hararacademy.org> However, attempts of the *Derg* to create the "peoples army" brought further division between "western" and "socialist" trained officers in the officer corps of the military. This was in addition to the already divided officer corps between graduates of "Holeta" and "Harar" military academies. The latter were considered the elite by virtue of their higher levels of education. They were also better paid than their fellow officers who were trained in Holeta. The army was also besieged with other problems. In the days of Haile Sellassie, the 1st Division Army, the Imperial Bodyguard, was the elite in every sense of the word. It was also the favorite of the king. The Imperial Bodyguard was directly accountable to the emperor than the country's minister of defense. During the era of the *Derg*, the 3rd Division Army, from whom Mengistu emerged, was often more favored than other divisions. In addition to this, Mengistu has established his own "Imperial Bodyguard," which was known as *Yebetemengist Liyu Tibeqa Brigade*, "Palace Special Guard Brigade." It was this force, which was trained by the Israelis, North Koreans and Ethiopians that was often used to take action against anyone who was suspected of harboring ill feelings towards Mengistu. The retaliatory measure, of course, was taken in the name of the "revolution" and the "motherland." Those who were killed were dubbed "puppets of imperialism," "counter-revolutionaries" or "anti-unity elements." It is unfortunate that a country like Ethiopia whose history is, more or less, a history of warfare has no systematically organized history of its armed forces of either the past or the modern era. Since 2000, however, we are witnessing efforts by former high-ranking military officers in the diaspora at writing their memoirs which is an

might have been totally unawares of the breadth and depth of the impending danger in Ethiopia, or simply Ethiopia has lost its usefulness for America in the face of the development of satellite communication system and the Camp David Peace Accord that brought Egypt— compared to Ethiopia, a much more valuable ally both strategically and politically—into the American camp. Because of the Vietnam debacle, which happened not so long ago, America might have decided not to involve itself in another quagmire in one of the remote parts of the world and hence might have preferred to let go of Ethiopia.⁶ One of the consequences of such miscalculation was the destabilization of the Horn of Africa that produced, aside from other things, massive refugees and asylum seekers who, some of whom found their way into the U.S.

The dissertation also traced the footsteps that Ethiopians followed entering America. The migration of Ethiopians to the U.S. that began with a handful of students in 1920s dramatically changed in the past three or so decades. It included political asylees and refugees; and in the past ten years or so, it increasingly shifted from asylees and refugees, who were reluctant sojourners in America, to network immigrants (through marriage and family re-union). Consequently, either through family reunion or as Diversity Visa (DV) lottery winners, an average of 5,000 Ethiopians have come to the U.S. annually since 1991.⁷ While the political asylees (students, tourists, government functionaries etc.) and the D.V lottery winners came to America directly from Ethiopia,

encouraging sign and an invaluable contribution to anyone who is interested in studying the history of Ethiopian armed forces in the 20th century. Some of these memoirs are Getachew Yerom, *Firej Ethiopia: Kewurteegna Yetarek Sanad* [Ethiopia be the Judge: From a Truthful Documents] (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 2003); Husén 'Ahmad, *Masiwaetnatna Sinat* [Sacrifice and Standing Firm] (Addis Ababa, Star Printing Press, 2005); Nega Tegen, *Yeitiopia Yerejim Zemenat Tigiina Yezemenawi Serawit Ameseraret, 1955-1974* [Ethiopia's Centuries Struggle and the Establishment of Modern Army, 1955-1974], (Addis Ababa: 2000 (?)); Tamirat Tessema, *Yasalefkut Zemen: Yeqil Mastawasha* [My Life I Had: A Personal Recollection] (Addis Ababa: Chamber Printing Press, 2003); Tasfayé Habta Maryam, *Yetor Meda Wulo* [On the Battle Front] (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 2005). For lack of professionalism among African military forces, see Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001)

⁶ For America's assessment of the Ethiopian revolution and its reluctance to intervene, see Donald Jordan, *Changing American Assessments of the Soviet Threat in Sub-Saharan Africa: 1975-1985* (New York: University Press of America, 1987), 53-61.

⁷ See US Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2002*, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., October 2003)

the refugees were airlifted from the neighboring countries, mainly from Sudan. The latter, for historic and political reasons, served as sanctuary for the majority of Ethiopian refugees until recently.

Aside from historic ties and political interests between Ethiopia and Sudan that ended with the latter being the main destination for Ethiopian refugees and a source of resettlement, geographic and ethnic factors were other variables that played a tremendous role in attracting Ethiopians towards Sudan, which this dissertation amply highlighted. The Amhara who are the second largest ethnic group in the country and who primarily reside in the provinces of Gondar, Gojjam, Wallo and Shoa are also found in virtually every southern *ketmas* (towns) which initially were military garrisons. It is worth noting that in the early days of the revolution, it was in the urban centers (*ketemas*) that the bloodiest battles between the *Derg* and its opponents were held. Thus, Amharas who were in the forefront against the ancien regime and the *Derg*, when persecuted, sought refuge either in the rural areas of the provinces or in the neighboring countries. However, while some of the Oromo elite and others considered the Amhara in Oromo lands (Wallega, Keffa, Bale, Arsi, Illubabor, and parts of Hara and Sedamo) as *neftegna* (colonizer/settler) neighboring states like Somalia associated the Ethiopian state with Amharas and detested the latter. Some highlanders who sought refugee in Somalia were, therefore, treated harshly. In light of this, many Ethiopians left for areas like Gondar. The province is an Amhara land with a well-trodden route that connected the province with Sudan. Gondar's rugged topography and the recalcitrant tradition among its people also attracted many who desired to resist central authority and a safe haven. Because of such circumstances, political persecution by the *Derg*, and the presence of many guerrilla movements in the province, many Gondares left for Sudan and thence resettled in America

My dissertation also showed a disproportionate presence of Ethiopians from Gondar (northwestern part of Ethiopia) and Shoa (central province) in America. While the presence of Gondares in America was the result of political persecution and an event that happened since the 1980s, those from Shoa come to the U.S because of two major reasons. One, until the mid 1970s, people from Addis Ababa in particular, and Shoa province in general, were from the most favored province which happened to be the power base of the ruling elite in Ethiopia. Hence, they had the advantage in getting scholarships, higher education and foreign travel over the rest of the provinces. Second, since the mid 1970s, Addis Ababa, being one of the centers of opposition against the *Derg*, had also suffered. Many of its inhabitants either used the already existing connection with the outside world to leave the country or joined one or other opposition political parties such as EPRP which had a base in Gondar province. When the latter was defeated, the Shoans, like the rest of Ethiopians, left for Sudan from where they were resettled in the U.S. In terms of religion, too, followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church were overly represented while the ratio of Muslim and Christian Ethiopians in Ethiopia was one to one. As a consequence, despite the general belief that Ethiopians are homogenous and in spite of the common factor (in this case political persecution) that forced them to flee their country, they are divided in terms religion, regional origin (Shoa, Gondar etc.), ethnicity (Amhara, Tigre, Oromo etc.), class, political affiliation, and context of arrival (asylees/immigrants and refugees).

Such divisions also have bearing on the various institutions, both civic as well as political, that Ethiopians established, or desired to establish in America. My dissertation reveals that so far the Ethiopian political asylees/immigrants in America have provided the leadership to the many Ethiopian political parties, and civic institutions (churches and community organizations), and in lobbying the American government either on behalf of Ethiopia or against the regime in power. This is so because of their higher levels of education and familiarity with the American system due to

their longer stay in the U.S. However, their position is increasingly challenged by the new arrivals, such as the refugees. The latter are demanding a fair share of the leadership role either because of their numerical superiority or higher level of education (most refugees came at younger age and some of them attained graduate and post graduate diplomas since their arrival in the U.S.). My dissertation divulges that beneath this refugee/immigrant dichotomy, there is the Shoa/Gondar undercurrent which is witnessed in the leadership contest concerning the Ethiopian Orthodox church in America. Especially after 1991, the rivalry also appears to have other dimensions such as ethnic affiliation, Tigre vis-à-vis Amhara or Oromo Vs. non-Oromo. At times, however, political allegiances prior to arrival into the U.S. also affect the survival of the individual as a leader in an Ethiopian organization in America. Because of one of these reasons or as a result of the combined effects of these differences, Ethiopians in America are extremely divided and this division is mirrored in the number of churches, radio stations and print media they have and in the number of institutions and publications that withered away.

Although studies on migration revealed that since the 1960s women represented more than half of the legal immigrants entered into the U.S.,⁸ the Ethiopian case is different. Ethiopian males are disproportionately represented (within among the refugees and asylees/immigrants) in America. The gender bias towards Ethiopian women is partly the result of lack of access to modern education. The latest data on literacy rate in Ethiopia, for the population between 15 years and older, was 42.7 per cent. Of these, the male-female literacy ratio was 50.3 and 35.1 per cent respectively. Yet, America's immigration policy often favors males over females. One of the criteria for winning a DV lottery is that the individual must, at least, complete high school

⁸ Saskia Sassen, Globalization and its Discontents (New York: the new press, 1998), 35; see also Donna Gabaccia, "Women of the Mass Migrations: From Minority to Majority, 1820-1930" in Dirk Hoerder and Leslie P. Moch, Global and Local: European Migrants Perspectives (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 90-91; Gregory A. Kelson and Debra L. DeLaet, (ed.) Gender and Migration (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 4-5.

education. America's refugee admittance policy, beside other criterions, requires that a refugee must have prior association with American institution, either at home or abroad. This criterion effectively bars Ethiopian refugee women or otherwise from immigrating to U.S. The option, for the majority of Ethiopian women, is to associate themselves (either through real or fixed marriages) with their counterpart. The dissertation reflects that Ethiopian migration to the U.S. is mostly male dominated and thus contends most female Ethiopian immigrants in America came through family reunion programs or as a family-with their husbands.

By tracing Western travelers account of Ethiopians in the nineteenth and twentieth century and emphasizing the absence of a meaningful encounter between Ethiopians and European colonialism, this dissertation examined the absence of "race" consciousness among Ethiopians in America. While this "color blindness" helped Ethiopians to remain optimistic and oblivious against racial prejudice prevalent in America, it also denied them the benefits of "race" solidarity which they might have secured from fellow blacks, African Americans, and which could have helped them in the process of adjustment. While the view of prominent African Americans regarding Ethiopians in America is mixed (for instance Jessie Jackson used Ethiopia to explain the depth of poverty in one of the American cities, Bill Cosby employed Ethiopian immigrant success in America as model that African Americans should follow), the rank and file African American, however, considered Ethiopian immigrants as people who came to steal their jobs—a view they upheld against other African immigrants as well. Meanwhile the larger community kept viewing Ethiopians as African Americans. Yet, Ethiopian immigrants, at least the first generation, remained in a state of "either or" while the American racial equation clearly defines an individual in "Black" and "White."

My dissertation also shows that despite such predicaments, Ethiopians have begun establishing their own institutions, for instance churches, community organizations and media (print as well as online), which indicate the degree of their adjustment as well as their struggle of survival.

The establishment of Ethiopian institutions in America also reflects a change from reluctant sojourners to permanent settlers. This change could be also noticed from the increasing number of Ethiopians who are becoming American citizens. While the total number of Ethiopian-American before 1990 was about 5,000, since then an average of 2,000 Ethiopians are becoming U.S. citizens annually.⁹

Like every other immigrant in America, Ethiopians are very much involved with the country of origin. So much so, their remittance (sending money to relatives and through direct investment) is becoming the single largest source of foreign exchange earning in Ethiopia. Lately, it is estimated that Ethiopia gets some \$400 million from its diaspora community, mainly from Ethiopian-Americans.

Their way of life is also impacting life in Ethiopia. They are becoming (in addition to Hollywood) agents of Americanization. Conspicuous consumption, burgers, fitness centers, and strip-clubs are blooming in some parts of the country, especially in the capital. However, Ethiopians in America failed to bring a meaningful change in the political discourse of their country or America's foreign policy towards their country of origin. The Ethiopian government does not acknowledge dual citizenship and hence Ethiopian-Americans have no direct say in Ethiopian politics. So far, the undercurrent of ethnocentrism (which is a baggage they carried from Ethiopia) and other squabbles among Ethiopians in America prevents them from creating a pan-Ethiopian political or civic organization and successfully lobbying the American government on behalf of Ethiopia. Since 2000, however, certain trends are emerging. An Ethiopian-American constituency is in the making.

⁹ U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990. Also on the web: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/ancestry/Ethiopian.txt>

Finally, migration which was unknown among Ethiopians prior to the 1970s, and which does not have an Amharic equivalent, now has become part of the Ethiopian culture. Today, Ethiopians are found virtually in every part of the world.¹⁰ What is more, since migration becomes network driven after the initial impulse, the number of Ethiopians in the various parts of the world will keep on increasing. These days, Ethiopians who are entering the U.S. through various manners such as family reunion, DV lottery winners, refugees and asylees number about 5,000 a year. They are becoming the second largest African immigrant community in the U.S. Similarly the number of other Africans in America is also increasing. A recent U.S. Census Bureau projections support this conclusion. The bureau estimates that between 1993 and 2050 some 7 per cent of all the immigrants to the U.S are going to be black.¹¹ In previous years, the number of Africans in America was insignificant.

Meanwhile, those Ethiopians who came to America because of political persecution and who were aspiring to return when things improved back home will not repatriate even if things improve the way they want. For one thing, their immigrant and refugee experience has changed them. Through time, they have integrated into the new society. They are accustomed to the American way of life, American democracy and individualism. For another, the homes they left some three or so decades ago no longer exist. People who they knew have aged and some of them do not even exist. The society and norms they left also have transformed. Imperial Ethiopia, which most remember, has passed through the grueling experience of socialism and as of late, has

¹⁰ Donald N. Levine, "Reconfiguring the Ethiopian Nation in a Global Era," a paper presented at the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg University, July 23, 2003. (Mimeographed)

¹¹ April Gordon, "The New Diaspora: African Immigration to the United States," in Mohsen M. Mobasher and Mahmoud Sadri, ed., Migration, Globalization, and Ethnic Relations, ed., (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc, 2004), 60.

embarked on ethnic federalism. In short, Ethiopian-Americans will become aliens to a country and society to which they desire to return.¹²

Their American-born children are other reasons for Ethiopian asylees and refugees not to return. As parents, they are obliged to be around until their children are of age. Besides, America has more to offer to their children than Ethiopia. Yet the first generation Ethiopians also desire that their children, though American-born, remain Ethiopian. In this regard, the establishment of Ethiopian community centers, churches and annual festivals such as soccer tournaments were attempts to instill a sense of Ethiopiansness in the minds of the second-generation Ethiopians. Studies conducted on immigrant children in America attest to the continuity of ethnic affinity as Chinese-American, Korean-American, Cuban-American.¹³ Yet, for all intents and purposes the second generation Ethiopian-Americans are Americans. Compared to their parents, they have little attachments with the country of origin. In fact, the second generation Ethiopians often expressed their frustration during the endless political debate, which at times was confrontational, among their parents.¹⁴ Their travels to Ethiopia, have contradictory results, though made proud of their cultural heritage, it also confirmed that Ethiopia is as alien to them as any place can be. They are, in short, Americans though they may have relatives in Ethiopia who could help them soothe their sense of

¹² Tekle M. Woldemikael, "Ethiopians and Eritreans," in David W. Haines, ed., Case Studies in Diversity: Refugees in America in the 1990s (Praeger Publishers, 1997), p. 284.

¹³ Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, Immigrant America: A Portrait (Berkeley: university of California press, 1990), 94-142; Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation (Berkeley: university of California press, 2001), 147-191; for linguistic, cultural, school ... etc adaptation of immigrant children, see Alejandro Portes, ed., The New Second Generation (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996).

The second-generation's affiliation to their parent's country is, more than often, dependent upon the way they are treated in America. If they are treated badly, as in the case of Mexicans in California where the state introduced Proposition 187 that barred immigrant children from all benefits including going to school, then the second-generation will react negatively. They will identify with the country of their parents.

¹⁴ An E-mail exchange with Jared, August 16, 2001. He was the president of Ethiopian Students Association in America. The association is aimed at bringing the second generation Ethiopians under one umbrella. The association does not want association with Ethiopian political parties or organization operating in America. So much so, the association has to forgo the financial assistance that the Ethiopian embassy offered to help them successfully organize and host their meeting at Virginia in 2001. They did not want to be viewed as extensions of the EPRDF government in Ethiopia.

national and cultural estrangement. On the other hand, unlike their parents, the second-generation has little cultural or familial obligation to their kin in Ethiopia. In light of this, and because of the ongoing fractious politics, especially ethnocentrism among Ethiopians, that in turn prevents them from having uncontested Ethiopian identity and strong Ethiopian constituency in America, the second-generation's desire to remain Ethiopian appears uncertain—at least, for the time being.

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