

## EDUCATION IN ERITREA, 1941-1962

Teshome G. Wagow

### The Political Background

Eritrea had been an Italian colony from 1890 to 1941, when it was under British Military Administration until the Peace Treaty. The former Italian colonies were disposed by the United Nations. On 2 December 1950, the UN General Assembly voted for the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia, as an autonomous territory under the Ethiopian Crown. An Eritrean constitution was drawn up under the direction of a UN Commission, in consultation with the people of the territory. The draft constitution was adopted by the UN, the Eritrean Assembly and His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Ethiopia. As Paul and Clapham have noted:

The steps involved in the federation were complicate and difficult; the preparation and ratification by popular assembly of an internal constitution for Eritrea, the distribution of powers between the 'federal' (Ethiopian) Government and the Eritrean Government, the ratification by the Emperor of both the Eritrean Constitution and the 'Federal Act' creating the federation, and promulgation by him of federal legislation creating a 'Federal Government' in Eritrea...to carry out federal responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

During the long consummation of federation, "Ethiopia necessarily played a significant role because of historical ties, geographical proximity, ethnic relationship, and economic interdependence."<sup>2</sup>

The legal basis of federation was the UN Resolution of December 1950 later adopted in its entirety by both Ethiopia and Eritrea as the "Federal Act."<sup>3</sup>

1. J. C. Paul and C. Clapham, *Ethiopian Constitutional Development* (Addis Ababa, Faculty of Law, Haile Sellassie I University, 1967), p. 367.
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The Federal Act provided that Eritrea should constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the Ethiopian Crown, that the Eritrean Government should have legislative, executive and judicial power over its domestic affairs, that the jurisdiction of the Federal Government should cover defence, foreign affairs, currency and finance, foreign and interstate commerce, and external and interstate communications including ports, and that the Federal Government should have the power to maintain the integrity of the Federation.<sup>4</sup> Both the Federal and Eritrean Governments should ensure residents of Eritrea, of whatever nationality, race, sex, language or religion, the "enjoyment of human rights and fundamental liberties" including equality before the law, life, liberty and security of the person, property rights, freedom of opinion, of speech, and of religion and of education, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, privacy of correspondence and domicile, and the right to practice a profession subject to the law. Nobody should be arrested or detained, except by order of a competent authority, unless they were in flagrant violation of the law by force. The right to a fair trial and to petition the Emperor and to appeal to him for the commutation of death sentences was recognised.<sup>5</sup>

The Eritrean Constitution incorporated many of the ideas of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights recognised by the UN. Some of its articles read:

**Article 10:** There shall be a representative of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Ethiopia, Sovereign of the Federation.

**Article 23:** All persons are born free and are equal before the law without distinction of nationality, race, sex or religion and, as such, shall enjoy civil rights and shall be subject to the duties and obligations.

**Article 26:** The right to freedom of conscience and religion shall include the right of everyone, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 32:** Everyone resident in Eritrea shall have the right to express his opinion through any medium whatever (press, speech, etc.) and to learn the opinions of others.

4. Paul and Clapham, *Ethiopian Constitutional Development*, p. 374.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 379-80.

**Article 32:** Everyone in Eritrea shall have the right to form associations or companies for lawful purposes.<sup>6</sup>

### **The End of the Federation**

When the second elections to the Eritrean Assembly took place in 1956, there were no political parties. In December 1958 the Eritrean Assembly voted unanimously to abolish the Eritrean flag and to use the Ethiopian flag. In September 1959 the Eritrean Assembly voted unanimously to accept the Penal Code of Ethiopia in place of existing Eritrean legislation. In May 1960 they voted unanimously to change the name "Eritrean Government" to "Eritrean Administration", to accept the insignia of the Imperial Lion for administrative purposes and to change the Eritrean seal to read "Eritrean Administration under Haile Sellassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia." On 14 November 1962 the Assembly voted unanimously for the abolition of the Federation, and on 15 November 1962 the end of the federation was ratified by Imperial Order.<sup>7</sup>

Eritrea was now part and parcel of Ethiopia, as the 13th of the provinces that constitute the Empire.

### **What the British Found in Eritrea**

The British Commander of the Northwestern front took over Eritrea from the Italians in 1941.

For some time the administration of Eritrea under British rule remained as it was before the Italians left. There were of course, problems of finance, and there was no long-range planning by the British, who were only providing a caretaker government, and many problems were put aside for future solution.<sup>8</sup> The major problems for the British Military Administration were the undeveloped nature of the territory, the absence of trained and experienced Eritreans, the many Italian soldiers and civilians still living in the territory, and the

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6. *The Constitution of Eritrea as adopted by the Representative Assembly of Eritrea* 10 July, 1952.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 384; Ministry of Pen, *Negarit Gazeta*, Order No. 27 of 1962 (22nd Year No. 3.)

8. J. S. Trimmingham, *The Christian Church and Mission in Ethiopia* London: World Dominion Press, 1950), p. 16.

racist laws and practices entrenched there by Fascism. These problems had to be quickly dealt with by the new occupying power.

The British found the region barren, treeless, waterless, teeming with 45,000 Italians and 100,000 Eritreans. The policy of the Italian government there had been not to encourage industry but to use Eritrea as a market for finished goods made in Italy. Captured documents revealed that "... it was contrary to the policy of the Italian Government to encourage industries in Eritrea."<sup>9</sup>

Policies of this type were common to all European colonialists, and Italy was no exception. However, while the outlook of other Europeans became more liberal, especially after World War I, Italy, "under Fascist influence became more reactionary."

Trevaskis documented as Follows:

In Eritrea the Italian citizen was a principal; the Eritrean an auxiliary. The Eritrean was required to produce inexpensive raw materials for Italian industry, to work for Italian enterprises as a cheap labourer, and to serve in Italy's colonial army as a low-paid mercenary. He remained subject to discriminatory legislation; he had no voice in his country's government; he was not associated with the Italian Administration except in subordinate posts; and what he derived from social and public services was markedly less than his reasonable entitlement. And yet there was no Eritrean discontent. It was averted by a calculated policy of bread and circuses. Food and consumer goods were always cheap and plentiful; taxation was at a token rate; and largesse was poured out in a rich shower of presents, doles, gratuities, honours, and sinecures. Throughout the Italian regime the Eritrean remained content, docile, and obedient to his rulers."<sup>10</sup>

"The Italian policy had demanded no more than an exclusive instrument which would effectively translate government orders into action and, for this purpose, had preferred

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9. Sylvia Pankhurst and Richard Pankhurst, *Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Last Place of the Re-Union Struggle, 1941-1952*. (Woodford Green: Lalibella House, 1953), pp. 26, 27.

10. G. K. N. Trevaskis, *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition, 1941-52* (London: Oxford University, 1960), p. 29.

obedient government agents to chiefs or councils likely to reflect an unpredictable and perhaps inconvenient public opinion."<sup>11</sup>

The Italian role for the Eritreans was as unquestioning, uncomplaining instruments of the "grandeur of Rome." This policy, and racial segregation, underpinned all their other activities.<sup>12</sup> Regarding education, the Italian Government had ordered during the occupation that educational activity be kept to a minimum. In 1941, when the British Military Administration took over, there were only 24 four-grade primary schools. "The standard of teaching had been low; its scope designedly narrow."<sup>13</sup> To keep the Eritreans as ill trained and ill-informed as possible, the Italians systematically developed and strengthened the colour bar. "... Natives were reminded, specifically and everywhere, of their inferiority in their own country. The municipalities excluded them from all participation. In the central government hierarchy they had no part and were, after fifty years, no nearer to acquiring any; they could at best hope to be low-paid clerks or orderlies. Of advancement or training towards participation in government or of an administrative scheme which could lead to it, there was at no time a trace. There were to be, in perpetuity, rulers and the passive ruled. Meanwhile, native schools were few and poor."<sup>14</sup>

The Italians, of course, maintained segregated schools; one system for Italian children, another for Eritreans; one superior, the other inferior. "... In Eritrea," wrote Sylvia and Richard Pankhurst, "there was one school for every 820 Italians as against one for every 50,294 Eritreans. The schools for Eritreans numbered only 20: they were all primary. In the field of public health there were twenty-five times as many hospital beds for Italians as for Eritreans."<sup>15</sup>

The only schools which aspired to teach the inherent equality of man, or which attempted to provide normal

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11. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

15. E. S. and Richard Pankhurst, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, pp. 229-30; Stephen H. Longrigg, *A short History of Eritrea* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), p. 137.

standards of instruction were those run by the Swedish Evangelical Mission, and by a few similar organizations. These were closed by order of the Italian government in 1932.<sup>16</sup>

### The British Attempt to Reconstruct

When the British took over the administration of Eritrea in 1941, they were still fighting Hitler in Europe. Ideological factors were involved, and so they tried to undermine racist laws and to institute concepts of equality and responsibility in self-government. They felt justified in immediately abolishing the whole body of offensive law designed to uphold white supremacy. At the same time they had to be cautious lest they offend the Italians who were helping them to administer the country.<sup>17</sup> Gradually they succeeded in creating conditions that permitted the annulment of racist laws.

The Italian neglect of education for over fifty years left the British with a formidable task. There were no trained teachers or suitable textbooks, and only a few school buildings. The financial resources for education available to the Administration were severely limited. Each problem was tackled in time and a modest educational edifice was erected. A few schools were opened with a small number of trained teachers recruited from the Sudan, and from the few Eritreans with advanced training; as pupils and teachers became available more schools were opened, and eventually, after a system of teacher training was introduced in 1943, a steady flow of trained teachers poured into the schools. Arabic textbooks were brought from Egypt and the Sudan, and Tigrigna textbooks were prepared and printed by the Administration. Where there were no suitable buildings, funds were raised by voluntary subscription and schools were built.<sup>18</sup> By 1946 it was reported that there were 42 schools in Eritrea, 27 operating in Tigrigna and 15 in Arabic. Enrolment was about, 3,360, with 100 teachers. There were no secondary or technical schools. The little available education beyond the primary grades was provided by the Ethiopian Government.<sup>19</sup> By 1950, two years prior to the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia one middle school and fifty-nine primary schools had been set up.

16. G. K. N. Trevasakis, *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition*, pp. 134-35.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

19. E. S. and Richard Pankhurst, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, p. 304.

During the occupation instruction was in Italian, and a number of Eritreans had a fair knowledge of colloquial Italian. The British needed English-speaking personnel, and young Eritreans therefore demanded tuition in English; Italian was abandoned. In the last year of primary school children were taught English, and at middle school level English was the language of instruction. The choice of a language of instruction in primary school was left to local educational committees, which invariably favoured Tigrigna in Christian areas and Arabic in Moslem ones.

This limited experiment in education aroused enthusiasm among a large number of Eritreans to the surprise of the British. Parents were ready to make "substantial sacrifices" to send their children to school. "In the towns the young and even the middle-aged clamoured to be given the opportunities denied them during the Italian regime." To meet the demand for adult education, English Institutes were established in Asmara and other towns. Courses included: "typing, shorthand, and discussions, lecture concerts, gramophone recitals, and film shows were arranged." The British Council and Administration cooperated in making books and periodicals available. Weekly newspapers were published in Tigrigna and Arabic.<sup>20</sup> No annual breakdowns of statistical information on the ten-year period of British administration are available, but the scanty information that we do have is given in Table I.

**Table I**

**Expenditure by the British on Eritrean Education**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Expenditure on Italian Education (£ Sterling)</b>	<b>Expenditure on Eritrean Education (£ Sterling)</b>
1943-44	11,648	2,081
1944-45	25,809	16,511
1945-46	28,041	22,282

Source: G. K. N. Trevaskis, *Eritrea: A Colony Transition*, p. 40.

20. G. K. N. Trevaskis, *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition*, pp. 34-40



The expenditure was modest, but the enthusiasm aroused in the people of Eritrea for more education, so that they were ready to make almost any sacrifice, was of great importance.

About 1944, Sylvia Pankhurst, a British citizen but a staunch friend of Ethiopia, made a tour of Eritrea. She was confronted with the "stubborn" assertion that "Ethiopia could not accomplish in education, or any other field, what Britain could and would achieve for the Ethiopian people in both sides of the Italian-created border."<sup>21</sup> However, she noted that British officials deplored the shortage of school facilities and materials in the primary schools they themselves had sponsored. In one girls schools, she saw classes conducted in a warehouse which the British director had converted, the girls sitting on the floor for lack of seats. The wool used for knitting was in such short supply that each student had to undo her work as soon as she had completed it so that the wool might be used by other students.

The principal school for boys was housed in what had formerly been a Roman Catholic orphanage for half-castes. It was grievously deficient in equipment. The text-books were a few sheets—half a dozen at most—of paper stenciled each with a few phrases and stitched together in the centre. In lieu of exercise books the boys wrote on old Italian forms which had been printed for use by the customs, immigration, military and other authorities, it was wholly elementary, barely reaching beyond the Tigrinya alphabet.<sup>22</sup>

When Sylvia Pankhurst remarked to a British officer that she was favourably impressed by the Swedish Mission school, he remarked that unlike the Catholic Mission Schools, "they are inclined to make the Eritrean conceited."<sup>23</sup> The missionaries were now re-establishing themselves and had begun to contribute to the development of education in Eritrea. Both the Administration and the Mission organizations had started the long-neglected job of educating Eritreans, but only at primary level. "Secondary education had not been introduced anywhere when the British withdrew from Eritrea in 1952."<sup>24</sup> The development of a complete system of education up to university level was to wait until the territory was reunited with the rest of Ethiopia.

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21. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

22. E. S. and R. Pankhurst, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, pp. 98-99.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

24. *Ethiopian Observer*, Vol. III, No. 9 (1959), p. 279.

### Education Under Federation (1952-1962)

Under the terms of the Federation in 1952, education in the territory was under the jurisdiction of the Eritrean Government. Article 31 of the Constitution, *Right to education and freedom to teach* provided that:

1. Everyone resident in Eritrea shall have the right to education. The Government shall make every effort to establish schools and to train teachers.
2. The Government shall encourage private persons and private associations and institutions, regardless of race, nationality, religion, sex or language, to open schools, provided that they can give proof of the required standards of morality and competence.
3. The instruction in the schools shall conform to the spirit of the Constitution. Article 38, *Languages* declared:
  1. Tigrinya and Arabic shall be the official languages of Eritrea.
  2. In accordance with established practice in Eritrea, the languages spoken and written by the various population groups shall be permitted to be used in dealing with the public authorities, as well as for religious or educational purposes and for all forms of expression of ideas.<sup>25</sup>

Under the terms of the Constitution and the Federal Act educational development was primarily the responsibility of the Eritrean Government. However, these provisions did not exclude assistance from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education; and much assistance was in fact given.

Educational conditions in Eritrea were different from those in Ethiopia. For one thing, the languages of instruction were different. However, from the beginning, the Ethiopian Government tried to coordinate the Eritrean and the Ethiopian systems. A liaison officer and an education expert from the Ministry of Education established offices in Asmara. Amharic teachers were provided by the Ministry and arrangements were made for students in Eritrea to take the national examination, and to proceed to secondary schools and colleges throughout the Empire. A secondary school and a trade school were established, primarily with \$ 578,000 provided by the Ethiopian treasury at the Emperor's order.<sup>26</sup> The Naval

25. E. S. and R. K. Pankhurst, *Ethiopia and Eritrea*, pp. 33-35.

26. Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, *Education in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa; 1961), p. 36. *Year Book*, 1951-53, p. 121.

School was located in Massawa. As time passed, more and more assistance was provided for the development of education in Eritrea.

The Government education system in Eritrea was divided into two, operated by the Federal Government and by the Eritrean Government. Schools run by the Federal Government were few in number, and instruction in the lower grades was primarily in Amharic. Eritrean Government Schools made up the bulk of the system.

Non-government schools included those run by resident Italians, for Italian and non-Italian children, and the Mission schools Protestant and Catholic, which admitted students from all segments of the community.<sup>27</sup>

The Federal Government provided some schools with library books and Amharic textbooks and in some instances with money. The main burden of educational progress from 1941 to 1952, was however, borne by the Eritreans themselves.

### **Development of the Education System**

There is little available data showing the complete picture of educational development during the decade of federation. What is available, mainly from 1955 onward, shows steady progress in student enrollment, physical plant expansion and teacher recruitment, with only occasional upsets.

### **School Teachers**

Most Government teachers were recruited locally from graduates of teacher training schools set up during the British Administration and afterwards. There is no information on teacher qualifications or certification requirements for work in primary and middle schools. For some schools, established in cooperation with the Federal Government, teachers, especially of Amharic, were sent from Addis Ababa. Other Eritrean Government schools wanted Amharic teachers who were provided.

Table II shows the number of Government school teachers over a period of six years. Between 1955-56 and 1960-61 the teaching force, most of whom were, nationals, grew over 68%. Its quality was maintained at the same level, and such a growth rate would be considered phenomenal over such a short period.

27. Information for this part was provided by Ato Alemu Begashaw, formerly Education Expert in Eritrea, during part of the Federation period.

**Table II**  
**Government School Teachers in Eritrea, 1955-56 to 1960-61**

Period	Nationals			Foreigners			Grand Total	% of Nationals
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
1955-56	390	80	470	5	1	6	476	98.73
1956-57	497	101	598	6	2	8	604	99.00
1957-58	525	98	623	1	3	4	627	99.36
1958-59	592	125	717	15	14	29	746	96.11
1959-60	629	118	747	28	6	34	781	95.64
1960-61	676	91	767	18	13	31	798	96.11

Sources: 1. For 1955-56 to 1959-60, *Government Schools Enrollment, 1959-60*, p. 21.  
2. For 1960-61, *School Census, 1960-61*, p. 11. *Government Schools*.

Table III sets out the number of schools in operation, mostly by the Eritrean Government, over a five-year period. The decrease in the number of schools in 1957-58 remains unexplained, but in the same year the Federal Government set up the Haile Sellassie I Secondary School and the Eritrean Government added a ninth grade to the Prince Makonnen School in Asmara, for the first time two secondary-level schools were operating in Eritrea.

**Table III**  
**Government Schools in Eritrea, 1955-56 to 1959-60**

Period	Elementary 1-8	% of Increase	Academic Secondary 9-12	% of Increase	Special I-IV	% of Increase	Total
1955-56	128	-	-	-	-	-	128
1956-57	141	10.15	-	-	-	-	141
1957-58	122	15.57	2	0.0	2	0.0	126
1958-59	148	21.31	2	0.0	3	50.0	153
1959-60	154	4.05	3	50.0	3	0.0	168

Source: *Government Schools Enrolment, 1959-60*, p. 3.

### Student Enrolment

Table IV shows student enrolments in primary, secondary and special schools for seven years. Two interesting facts stand out: firstly, the annual rate of increase in enrolment at both levels is large, and secondly, the number of female students in primary and special schools is relatively high compared to the rest of Ethiopia.

The average proportion of female students for the seven-year period was 24%.

Table IV

Students Enrolled in Government Schools in Eritrea by Grade and Sex, 1955/56-1961/62

Period	Primary Grades 1-8			Academic Secondary 9-12			Special Secondary Sch. I-IV			Grand Total		
	Total	Female	% of Female	Total	Female	% of Female	Total	Female	% of Female	Total	Female	% of Female
1955-56	17,727	3,655	20.61	263	—	—	160	32	20.0	18,150	3,687	20.31
1956-57	22,524	4,368	19.39	334	—	—	226	51	22.56	23,084	4,419	19.14
1957-58	21,918	5,051	23.04	618	29	4.69	214	72	33.64	22,750	5,152	22.64
1958-59	25,283	6,599	26.10	607	23	3.78	300	54	18.00	26,190	6,676	25.49
1959-60	31,382	8,220	26.19	608	29	4.76	297	49	16.49	32,287	8,298	25.70
1960-61	33,059	8,381	25.35	642	24	3.73	304	25	8.22	34,005	8,430	24.70
1961-62	36,606	9,568	26.13	848	53	6.25	524	67	12.78	37,978	9,688	25.50

Source: *Statistical Abstract* 1964, p. 145.

Table V

**Percentage Growth Rate of the Government School System  
in Eritrea for a Period of Four Years**

	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60
Enrolment	27.16	1.45	15.12	23.13
Teachers	27.31	3.46	18.97	4.69
Schools	10.15	-10.63	21.42	4.57
Classroom Units	10.15	- 0.70	19.00	6.24

Source: *Government Schools Enrolment, 1959-60*, p. 5.

Comparative figures for students and the teachers are shown in Table V. This up-ward trend continued for the rest of the federation period and beyond: more students were enrolled and there was a relative shortage of classrooms and teachers. Eritrean youth seemed to be able to excel in national and other examinations, showing their need to reassert their identity among the communities of the nation.

The development of education in Eritrea during the federation period was greatly assisted by non-government, church, and missionary, organizations. Table VI shows the number of schools, teachers and students in the Government, Private and Church sectors of education for the two-year period (1960-62). It should be noted that the growth rate was not similar in all sectors.

Table VI

Distribution of Schools, Teachers and Students by Type of School 1960-62 (Eritrea)

	1960-61	1961-62	% of Increase
<b>Government Schools</b>			
No. of Schools	171	38	- 77.77
No. of Students	34,005	30,712	- 9.68
No. of Teachers:			
Ethiopian	767	733	- 4.43
Foreign	31	205	561.29
Total	798	938	17.54
% of Ethiopian Teachers	96.11	78.14	—
<b>Mission Schools</b>			
No. of Schools	49	16	- 206.25
No. of Students	4,513	4,554	0.90
No. of Teachers:			
Ethiopian	132	94	- 28.78
Foreign	16	88	450.00
Total	148	182	22.97
% of Ethiopian Teachers	89.18	51.64	—
<b>Private Schools</b>			
No. of Schools	44	24	- 83.33
No. of Students	12,168	5,900	- 51.51
No. of Teachers:			
Ethiopian	121	143	18.18
Foreign	305	97	- 68.19
Total	426	240	- 43.66
% of Ethiopian Teachers	28.40	59.58	—
<b>Church Schools</b>			
No. of Schools	—	4	—
No. of Students	—	1,328	—
No. of Teachers:			
Ethiopian	—	48	—
Foreign	—	8	—
Total	—	56	—
% of Ethiopian Teachers	—	85.71	—

Source: Only schools following the Ministry of Education Curriculum Statistical Abstract, 1963, pp. 103-104.



## Secondary Level Education

The Haile Sellassie I Secondary School was the first institution of its type in Eritrea, and was described as the "finest yet erected in all Ethiopia."<sup>28</sup> It was intended to be a boarding school for 450 pupils, but the rapid increase in the demand for secondary education resulted in a change of plan.

Three buildings that were intended for dormitories, and a dining hall were converted into classrooms. This enabled the school to accommodate 1,000 secondary level students.<sup>29</sup>

In 1958 there were 331 boys and 9 girls enrolled in the school. The headmaster was a Canadian, Mr. C. Demers. There were 24 teachers, 15 of whom were foreigners, 4 Indians, 3 English, 3 Canadian, 2 Norwegian, 1 American, 1 Swiss, and 1 Czech. Three of the foreign teachers were women. Of the nationals, 6 were from Addis Ababa and 3 from Eritrea. The nationals taught morals, Amharic and sports. English was the language of instruction.

The curriculum of the school consisted of English, French, science, geography, mathematics, history and painting. "A library period for Amharic books is held weekly by one of the Ethiopian teachers. Each evening for an hour after classes terminate and all Saturday mornings the library is open for students who wish to read there under supervision."<sup>30</sup> Library books were supplied by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, and by the United States. This school, like others of its type in Ethiopia, was free but until 1959, students had to purchase their own stationery.

The Prince Makonnen School in Asmara was the other academic secondary school in Eritrea. It was a day-school, housed in an old Italian building and operated by the Eritrean

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28. Eritrea's First Secondary School," *Ethiopia Observer*, Vol. III No. 7 August 1959, p. 222.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

**Table VII**  
**Enrolment in Eritrean Academic Secondary Schools, 1961-62**

Secondary Schools	Sex	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Total		Total Male and Female Students
		Students	Cu	Students	Cu	Students	Cu	Students	Cu	Students	Cu	
Haile Sellassie I (Asmara)	M	174	—	146	—	54	—	28	—	402	—	427
	F	18	6	4	5	3	2	—	2	25	15	
Prince Makonnen (Asmara)	M	253	—	59	—	60	—	21	—	393	—	421
	F	23	8	2	2	1	2	2	1	28	13	
Total	M	427	—	205	—	114	—	49	—	795	—	848
	F	41	14	6	7	4	4	2	3	53	28	

Source: *School Census for Ethiopia 1961-62*, p. 22.

CU= Classroom units

Government Education Department. In 1958 there were 309 pupils, 290 boys and 19 girls. An Indian, Mr. B.C. Paul, was the headmaster.

In 1958 there were 3 Indian and 14 Ethiopian teachers; 4 of the Ethiopians had been trained as graduates in Beirut, Lebanon.

For the previous three years the school had added a grade each year until in 1959 it reached full secondary status by adding a 12th grade.

Table VII shows the enrolment situation for one year, the last before the reunification of Eritrea with Ethiopia. Enrollment figures show marked progress within such a short period of time.

There were some vocational-trade schools of post-elementary level. One of these was the Eritrean Vocational Trade School in Asmara. Started in September 1954, the school was operated by the Ethiopian and Eritrean Governments in collaboration with the U.S. 'Point IV'. The Eritrean Government had provided the site, with some old Italian buildings and electricity. The Ethiopian Government and 'Point IV' paid 70% and 30% of the costs respectively.<sup>31</sup>

The admission requirement to the school was a pass in the grade 8 leaving examination; entrants had to be at least 14 years old and "of sufficient strength and stature to cope with the machinery." The programme lasted three years. The curriculum included English and Amharic, mechanical drawing, science, physical training and hygiene. Instruction was given in English except in the purely Amharic subjects.<sup>32</sup>

It was a boarding school "Tuition, board and lodging, all equipment and tools required for the course, a pair of blankets, a pair of sheets and pillows, together with serviceable overalls and medical attention when required, are supplied to the students free of charge".<sup>33</sup> Students were expected to clean and maintain the school premises.

In 1958 there were 170 students enrolled in the school; 100 had already completed the course and had received their diplomas. Fourteen graduates had been retained for a fourth

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31. "The Vocational Trade School," *Ethiopia Observer*, Vol. III No. 7 August 1959), p. 224.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

year of training as apprentice teachers in the school. The teaching staff consisted of Americans and Ethiopians and Ethiopians were rapidly replacing the expatriates.<sup>34</sup>

Another post-primary vocational school was the Empress Menen School of Nursing at Asmara. Jointly established by the Ethiopian Ministry of Public Health and Point IV in 1955, and accredited by the International Council of Nursing of which Ethiopia had been a member since 1957, this vocational school provided a four-year programme leading to a R.N. diploma. In 1958 there were 67 students including 25 new entrants. Applicants far exceeded the number of places available. The teaching staff consisted of 5 Americans, 1 Eritrean and 1 Sudanese lady.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the Government post-primary schools, there were a few private ones, but in the absence of adequate data no account of them can be given here. It must also be taken into consideration that many Eritreans had access to secondary and university level education in Ethiopia, or were granted scholarships to study abroad.<sup>36</sup>

Although educational development started late because of Fascist racist and oppressive policies, once it had started, first under the British and under the Federation grew faster than expected. This was primarily due to the willingness of the people to under-take the heavy burden of investment in education, and to the enthusiasm of Eritrean children and youth in seizing the opportunities and getting the most out of them.

On November 15 1962, Federation was formally replaced by complete integration. The development of Eritrean education compared to other provinces and to Addis Ababa is set out in Table VII. The rate of enrolment growth in Eritrea was higher than for any of the 12 provinces of Addis Ababa. The increase in teachers, was higher in 1956-57 than any other province.

In the rate of growth of schools, except in 1957-58, Eritrea led the rest, although the number of classroom units in these schools may have been fewer than for the rest of

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34. *Ibid.*, p. 224-25.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 216-17.

36. Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, *Year Book*, 1951-53, p. 121.

Ethiopia. All in all, the rate of educational development was faster in Eritrea than in any other part of the Empire. This dynamism was maintained beyond the federation period. On November 15, 1962 His Imperial Majesty declared:

In the last decade, the people of Eritrea have increasingly come to realise that the federation, alien to their tradition and experience, was superfluous and unnecessary among people whose unity had stood the test of time. The people of Eritrea... recognising the harmful consequences of the operation of the federal system through the experience of the past decade, desirous of living together with their Ethiopian brothers, have formally requested, by their resolution voluntarily and unanimously adopted on November 14, 1962, that the federation be dissolved. In its place, they have asked for the

Table VIII

Percentage Increase of Enrollment, Teachers, Schools and Classroom Units in Eritrea, 1956-57 to 1959-60.

	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60
Enrollment	24.43	12.98	5.48	7.94
Empire Total				
12 Provinces	23.30	14.87	4.66	3.31
Addis Ababa	26.38	14.97	0.59	2.57
Eritrea	27.16	-4.45	15.12	23.27
Teachers				
Empire Total	15.33	11.14	13.31	2.35
12 Provinces	12.53	13.89	6.81	4.14
Addis Ababa	12.55	12.76	28.41	-3.54
Eritrea	27.31	3.46	18.97	4.69
Schools				
Empire Total	4.99	2.78	1.59	0.94
12 Provinces	3.11	6.49	-4.57	-0.68
Addis Ababa	8.57	10.52	9.52	4.34
Eritrea	10.15	-10.63	21.42	4.57
Classroom Units				
Empire Total	12.53	8.73	8.24	6.78
12 Provinces	10.05	11.92	5.98	4.87
Addis Ababa	22.46	9.52	5.97	15.41
Eritrea	10.15	0.70	19.00	6.24

Source: *Government Schools Enrollment, 1959-60*, p. 5.

complete administrative integration of Eritrea with the rest of Ethiopia in order to facilitate and speed the economic growth and development of the nation. We have accepted this resolution and have consented to its being placed into effect.<sup>37</sup>

With this Eritrea became the thirteenth province of Ethiopia. Henceforth, educational development in Eritrea was to be completely linked with that of Ethiopia.

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37. "The Emperor's Speech on the Return of Eritrea" *Ethiopia Observer*, Vol. VI No. 4 (1963), p. 311.