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## Swedish Evangelical Mission Educational Policies and Schooling in Ethiopia 1868-1935

A fairly large number of the social reformers and vital intelligentsia that emerged in Ethiopia in the decade before the 1936 Italian occupation - according to Bahru Zewde one of the most articulate groups of intellectuals that Ethiopia has ever seen - had a background in the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Not less than one third among those of the first generation, those who came of age before 1925, were Swedish-educated or, in one way or another, associated with the SEM. The second generation was much larger in 1934, amounting to some 200 individuals, mostly educated abroad. The proportion of Swedish-educated among them is not as remarkable as with the first generation but they nevertheless stand out, if not in numbers then in prominence. After 1936, during the Italian occupation, the resistance to Italian rule appears to have been most intense among those with an Anglo-Saxon and Protestant educational background. Bahru notes "the prominent role played by the Eritrean educated elite in the course of the war. Most of these tended to have a Swedish evangelical background." Neither Bahru, nor Gustav Aren's in his two volumes on the history of the SEM in Eritrea and Ethiopia however, do explain what would have been so special about the Protestant background in general or the particular Swedish evangelical setting, do analyse why and how the SEM education may have contributed to and interplayed with contemporary modernist and nationalist ambitions and how SEM followers may have had special reasons to participate in the nation-building project of the pre-war regime. The aim of the present presentation is to fill this gap by focusing on the SEM educational policies and schooling, examining if and to what extent it gave support for the modernizing policies in the decades before the Italian invasion. More broadly, it investigates how the historical background of the SEM in Eritrea and Ethiopia may have played a role in this respect. What characterized the SEM education and schooling and how did the coming to power of the modernizing ruler Tafari-Hayla Sellase affect the SEM educational efforts in Ethiopia? What were the push and pull factors behind Eritrean and Ethiopian SEM-followers in the support of the Ethiopian nation building policies before the war? In providing the empirical sources, my research shall draw on Aren's two volumes and foremost the huge collection of source materials provided by the SEM archives and periodicals. My attempt is to demonstrate that the SEM-factor is an essential component that has been left out and that it can contribute with a more comprehensive understanding of the how a Swedish Evangelical mission education interplayed with the pre-war Ethiopian nation building process.