
If education is the key to success for any group, it is doubly so for the Ethiopians. For them, it not only affects their chances for upward mobility, it plays a critical role in their integration into Israel's mainstream-modern, technological and mostly urban society (JDC 1997).

The Israeli educational system prides itself on having considerable experience with immigrants. The question is, however, what do we do with our experience? Do we learn from it, or do we simply repeat the mistakes of the past? (Sever 1997).

Introduction.

Between the early 1980s and 1993 almost fifty thousand Jews from Ethiopia immigrated to Israel. In 1973, then Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef recognized them as descendants of the Tribe of Dan and eligible to immigrate under the Law of Return (Memo of Secretary General of the Jewish Agency to members Coordinating Committee, 24 October 1984 and Wagaw 1993:57).¹ For the purpose of marriage, however, he insisted that they undergo “strict conversion procedures.” Although, the Israeli government began to foster their immigration after 1977, the issue of the legitimacy of their Jewish identity remained.²

Following the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974 and up to 1984 almost 6500 Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel. Between 21 November 1984 and 5 June 1985 the Israeli government brought almost 8000 Ethiopian Jews from Sudan to Israel in a covert

According to Wagaw, most Ethiopian immigrants "came from one of the most conservative, rural regions of Ethiopia, where modern means of communication and transportation were undeveloped, illiteracy among the adult population was more than 90 percent..." (1993:26-28). Also, between 25 and 38 percent, compared to 9 percent for Israeli families, were single parent families (Israel, Ministry of Absorption, 1996 & Wagaw 1993:74). Many families with children lacked a breadwinner (Haaretz 30 December 1998; Kaplan and Rosen 1994:73; Kaplan and Salamon 1998:7; Youth Aliyah 1995:22.). Many of the Ethiopian pupils had little or no formal education.³

As with other Jewish immigrants, the Government and Jewish Agency assumed responsibility to absorb them into Israeli society. An important component of absorption included the formal schooling of children.⁴

This paper documents how Israel's educational system absorbed Ethiopian immigrant pupils following Operation Moses in 1985 through the election of Yizhak Rabin as Prime Minister in June 1992. Issues addressed are whether absorption policies provided similar opportunities offered other Israeli Jewish children and
how similar or different were educational policies to absorb the immigrant pupils from the former Soviet Union who arrived after 1988?

The paper provides an interesting case study of how Israel's political-administrative systems influenced the absorption of immigrant children into the education system. To an extent much greater than in the United States and many other countries, political party interests determined Israel's educational absorption policies. Political decisions at the highest level segregated Ethiopian immigrant children within an inferior school system. They required Ethiopian children to study in the state religious school system for the first year (and longer). These policies denied them the option given to all Jewish Israelis and other new immigrants to attend the much larger, more diverse and academically superior state secular school system. They also mandated all Ethiopian teenagers to attend relatively few religious boarding schools, denying them the option afforded other Jewish Israeli and immigrant children to study at local schools or at secular boarding schools.

The paper should interest students of education policies to absorb immigrants. While much of the relevant comparative literature focuses on empirical studies of school performance of immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities this study emphasizes macro policy (Gibson and Ogbu 1991; Rivera-Batiz 1996; Iredale and
Fox 1997; First 1988; & Olsen 1988). It examines policy parameters that influenced the opportunities and experiences of Ethiopian immigrant children in Israeli schools.

Education and New Immigrants.

Politics have always dominated Israeli educational policies that served as the main institutional means for integrating immigrant children into Israeli society (Iram and Schmida 1998:123). Moreover, ethnic considerations (among Jews) as well as nationality (between Jews and Arabs) have always been major concerns of Israeli educational policy. The Ethiopians, perceived by most Israelis as being ‘black’ and non-white Jews, placed race on the agenda within the context of a characteristic of their ethnic or national identity (Kaplan 1999).

In 1953, two separate public school systems--state secular and state religious-- replaced “educational streams” controlled by political parties. The Ministry of Education, however, controlled only the state-secular system. The law gave a public committee controlled by the National Religious Party authority over matters of pedagogy in the state-religious system. It remained a party controlled school system devoting "considerable time to the Bible, learning daily prayers, analysis of the rules of... keeping kosher and Jewish holidays" (Weinstein 1985: 217;Iram and Schmida 198:21 & Lazin 1982).
The 1953 reform also established "recognized" private schools, many operated by ultra orthodox religious groups. They received state aid provided they adopted parts of a standard curriculum and agreed to ministry supervision (Iram and Schmida 1998:21). In practice, however, party and coalition politics have made these autonomous of ministry supervision. Today they receive government aid on par with the state systems.

During the 1950s and 60s, national, ethnic and class separation characterized the Israeli educational system (Iram and Schmida 1998). Israel settled large numbers of immigrants in specific neighborhoods and towns in central Israel. The Ministry of Education's neighborhood school policy resulted in children of veteran Israelis (mostly Ashkenazim or European Jews) and immigrants from Arab lands (mostly Sephardim or Oriental Jews) attending different schools. In addition, the more religious Oriental immigrants and more secular veteran Israelis (and most European immigrants) preferred different school systems.

In the periphery, a complex segregated demographic mix had Israeli Arabs living in their villages and Israeli Jews in kibbutzim, moshavim and in new or development towns. The Arabs of Israel wanted to educate their children in “Arab” schools, which coincided with Israeli government policy. The government and not the Arabs, however, control these schools (Majid Al Haj 1998). The kibbutzim, with almost all veteran (Ashkenazi)
Israelis had their own, ideologically oriented schools. The Jewish youth they absorbed from Arab lands in the 1950s and 1960s studied in separate tracks (Adler 1984:41).

In contrast the moshavim absorbed large numbers of Jewish immigrants from Europe and Arab lands in ethnically homogeneous settlements. Most Oriental Jews on moshavim sent their children to state religious schools while most Ashkenazi moshav members sent their children to state secular schools. When Oriental and Ashkenazi Jewish children went to the same school, they were placed in separate tracks (Halper, Shokeid & Weingrod 1984:53). In the new towns the low-income immigrant population, mostly Oriental Jews, studied in their own state secular and religious schools.

Despite a declared policy of establishing educational opportunities for all (Jewish) Israeli pupils, by the late 1950's, large numbers of Oriental immigrant children, concentrated in poor neighborhoods, development towns and moshavim received an inferior educational experience (Adler, Kahane & Avgar 1975). Beginning in the 1960s and extending through the early 1980s the Ministry of Education pursued policies to close a perceived educational gap between the stronger veteran (Ashkenazi) pupils and the weaker, newer, mostly Oriental Jewish pupils. The educational impact of these efforts remains questionable (Amir and Sharan 1984; Blass & Nir 1984; Iram and Schmida 1998 & Lazin 1994).
Education Policy Toward Ethiopian Immigrant Children.

In the early 1980s, Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education in the Likud Government and head of the National Religious Party, met with the Chief Rabbis in light of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef’s earlier ruling that the Ethiopians were to be considered Jews for the purpose of immigration and education. Thereafter, he informed the Executive Committee of the Ministry that Ethiopians would attend state religious schools during their first year in Israel. They would not be allowed to exercise their legal right to choose either the state secular or religious system (Schwartzwald 1984:105 & Ministry of Education, 1996:9). While neither enacting legislation nor passing a formal resolution, the Knesset (parliament), Government and the Jewish Agency supported this policy. 7

Hammer and his supporters believed that a religious education was necessary for Ethiopian Jews who had been cut off from Rabbinical Judaism for centuries (Jerusalem Post (JP) 3 June 1991). No similar policy was deemed necessary for the overwhelmingly assimilated Soviet Jewish immigrants arriving after 1989 who had lived in a Communist system for several generations. Almost one-third were estimated to be non-Jews.

Opposition Labor Party leaders supported this policy because they wanted to avoid the "errors" of the 1950s when the Labor
Government forced traditional religious Jews to send their children to secular schools. They now argued that religious schools would be less threatening, more supportive and reduce the shock of transition from traditional to modern society (Memo of Uri Gordon to Jewish Agency Executive "Absorption... at educational..." 18 December 1984 & JP 19 October 1990).  

Hammer's decision had political consequences. The policy increased resources for the state religious school system, controlled by his National Religious Party. Moreover, the involvement of Ethiopian families in the education of their children provided potential voters for the National Religious Party. In the long run, however, it also paid a price. After 1991, with the increased number of immigrants from Operation Solomon, the system and schools suffered from overload and "white flight". Several of its officials were willing to "give up" some of the Ethiopian pupils to the secular school system.

Officials of the state religious system deny political motives. In their view the system accepted a national challenge to help educate and absorb Jewish immigrant children.

While most Ethiopian parents upon arrival probably had no idea of the differences in the school systems, many may have preferred a religiously oriented education for their children (Gdor, 1996:28; Weinstein 1985:218). Regardless, Hammer had "consulted" only with Ethiopian religious leaders. He had no
contact with parents or non-religious Ethiopian leaders (JP 3 June 1991). Parents had no choice in the matter in the same way that religious Moroccan Jewish immigrants in the 1950s had no means to object to their children going to secular Israeli schools.

Importantly, while wanting to understand and respect the traditions of the Ethiopian pupils, the religious school system adopted a policy of assimilation. It wanted the immigrants to adopt "...mannerism, language, traditions, cultural mores and values of the host society" (Eisikovits and Beck 1990:178). Successful integration meant "...their abandoning 'old ways' and becoming models of veteran Israelis" (Sever 1997:510).

Before examining the educational consequences of this policy, it should be emphasized that upon arrival, many Ethiopian children had little or no formal schooling. A large number could neither read nor write in any language and most did not know Hebrew. They also had minimum support from often illiterate and very poor parents who had minimal knowledge of the language, curriculum and culture of Israel (JDC February 1997; Youth Aliyah 1995:8; Gdor 1996).

Second, place of residence proved to be an important variable (handicap) for elementary school education. Despite official Israeli policy not to concentrate Ethiopians in poor neighborhoods and the periphery "...the economic realities of the country continued to favor the[ir] "ghettoization"" (Wagaw
In the 1980's, the only sources of vacant public housing existed in peripheral development towns and lower income neighborhoods in central Israel. Ethiopian immigrants occupied many of these units often in the same building, street or neighborhood. Later, the government turned many temporary absorption centers (converted apartment buildings) in these areas into permanent public housing, which resulted in instant mini-ghettos of Ethiopians (Lazin 1997). Later arrivals followed relatives and friends to these lower-income environments despite policies urging them to live elsewhere. After 1988, Ethiopians occupied many new housing units that the government built in these areas for Soviet Jews.\textsuperscript{10}

The concentration of Ethiopians in peripheral development towns and in poorer neighborhoods in central Israel meant that most Ethiopian children would be assigned to schools serving low income disadvantaged and mostly Oriental Jewish Israeli pupils. Moreover, being restricted to Israel's state religious schools, placed Ethiopian pupils in the smaller of the two educational systems which insured their greater concentration within schools and individual classes (Holt 1995:100; Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 14 June 1991; Kaplan & Salamon 1998:3; Gdor 1996:28 & State Comptroller 1985:699).\textsuperscript{11}

More importantly, the overall educational level of the state religious school system and academic training of its teachers, is
far below that of its secular counterpart. It has more than double the percentage of low performing and problem pupils who compose two thirds of the student body (Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 14 June 1991; Schwartzwald 1984:102; Ministry of Education 1996; Wagaw 1993:131).

In both state educational systems, moreover, there is a wide divergence in terms of quality between schools in different locations. The level of teaching, resources and pupil performance is much lower in the periphery and much higher in the center, especially in the more established and well-to-do areas (Iram and Schmida 1988:37-42). Therefore, had they been allowed to study in secular schools their opportunities may or may not have been changed significantly since they lived in peripheral and poorer areas.

The situation was more complex. First, the recognized ultra-Orthodox school systems with extensive networks in areas where Ethiopians lived either refused to accept Ethiopian pupils or restricted applicants to those who had converted. Second, some state religious schools, including those associated with the elite Noam Group, were reluctant to take Ethiopian pupils.¹² Initially, the Ministry of Education did not oppose this policy. Third, some municipalities concentrated Ethiopian pupils in the weaker schools of the state religious system. This reflected concern with "white flight" (Halevi, 1996:19; Wagaw, 1993:142,143ff.; Holt
Fourth, in schools accepting Ethiopian pupils, authorities placed them in special preparatory classes for the first year, in accordance with Ministry guidelines. Placement, however, often lasted for several years (Jewish Agency Comptroller "Summary of..."); Kaplan and Salamon 1998:8-10; JDC February 1997; Gdor 1996:31; Ministry of Absorption 1996). Here too, the Ministry did not object. Even more importantly, teachers in these classes were poorly trained, often part time and many lacked certification (State Comptroller 1985:700). Fifth, some municipal school systems placed many normal Ethiopian pupils in special-education classes, "the educational equivalent of a death sentence" (Gdor 1996:31; Kaplan and Salamon 1998 & State Comptroller 1985:700). While a similar practice in New York City schools may serve "to segregate difficult students from the rest of the population" in Israel it also enabled municipalities to request more funding (Rivera-Batiz 1996:7).

Operation Solomon in May 1991 exacerbated this situation by increasing the number of Ethiopian pupils by two or three times. Almost all were absorbed in state religious schools located in the periphery and in poor neighborhoods of central Israel. No one enforced the Immigration Cabinet's official quota of 15 percent (unofficial 30 percent) Ethiopian pupils per school and the Ministry of Education's 25 percent (Immigration Cabinet of 23
Many schools became more than 60-70 percent Ethiopian.¹³

Other factors also contributed to problems in educating Ethiopian pupils. For example, Ethiopian families from Operation Solomon would move (or be moved) on the average of four times in six years (JDC February 1997). In response, some receiving communities refused to accept new pupils in the middle of the year. This left many children out of school for months (JP 10 August 1992; letter of Uri Gordon to Zevulun Hammer, 26 February 1992; JP 10 March 1992; Jewish Agency, Comptroller Report of 13 April 1992).

Finally, the entire educational system and particular state religious schools suffered from a lack of planning, preparation, space and resources (Memo, Moshe Nativ to Arnon Mantver, 28 August 1991; Coordinating Committee and Cabinet Notes, 26 June 1990; Protocol of Ministerial Committee for Immigration 14 July 1991).

Exacerbating this situation was the poverty of most Ethiopian families. While Israeli public education is free, parents have to purchase books and supplies. Sever (1997:519) found that as many as 37 percent of Russian immigrant pupils lacked funds for books. Considering the worse economic situation of Ethiopians and
shortcomings of aid programs probably a larger percentage did not have the proper books and supplies for elementary school.

Placing students with inadequate educational backgrounds and weak family situations into deficient schools with weak pupils resulted in minimal learning experiences (Gdor 1996; Kaplan and Salamon 1998; & Halevi 1996).

In late spring 1992 the Absorption Cabinet of the Likud Government decided to allow Ethiopian parents to send their children to state secular schools. This did not mean that the National Religious Party controlled Ministry of Education would comply. This policy would be adopted, however, by the Rabin Government after its election in June 1992 (JP 18 June 1991). Its Minister of Education, Ms. Shulamit Aloni, an activist for "civil rights and the separation of state and religion" instituted a policy allowing Ethiopians freedom to choose either public school system (Peretz and Doron 1997:269).\textsuperscript{14}

**Youth Aliyah.**

A second major component of educational policy for Ethiopians concerned the compulsory participation of Ethiopian youth between the ages of 14-18 (later 12-18) in the Jewish Agency's Youth Aliyah religious boarding schools and institutions (Ministry of Absorption 1987).\textsuperscript{15} While operating several youth villages and
schools, Youth Aliyah also subcontracted with many external institutions operated by national organizations including the National Religious Party.

Youth Aliyah accepted only immigrant Soviet pupils who applied and who met the institutions profile of need. It placed them in better academic institutions and experimented with “open” boarding schools involving their parents and municipalities (Jewish Agency, Forum of Director-Generals, 23 April 1990).

Several factors prompted the "Ethiopian" policy. First, in Operation Moses many young people arrived without their parents (Uri Gordon "Absorption... youngsters" & Absorption Department, social work division "Survey of Ethiopian immigrants 1984"). Second, the decision reflected long held assumption that the state and the boarding schools could provide a better environment than immigrant parents and the family! Third, at the time, the Jewish Agency funded Youth Aliyah. This relieved the government of the expense and the municipalities of the responsibility of educating large numbers of "weak" pupils in local schools. Although an expensive enterprise, having "Ethiopians" in Youth Aliyah helped Jewish Agency overseas fundraising efforts. Fourth, the utilization of religious boarding schools affiliated with the National Religious Party brought them important resources and kept some of them from closing (Youth Aliyah 1995:5,7,57 &
What were the consequences of this policy? Some would claim that for teenage Ethiopians, Youth Aliyah provided a place of refuge, total absorption and education (Absorption Department, Social Welfare Division "Annual report on immigration from Ethiopia," 13 February 1984).

Others were more critical. First, the academic level and standards of Youth Aliyah were very low. By 1984, it served mostly poorly adjusted Israeli problem youth. In 1988, one critic warned that to put Ethiopian teenagers in Youth Aliyah would socialize them into the "lowest level of Israeli society" (JP, 8 December 1988).

Second, Youth Aliyah policy placed most Ethiopian youth in "dead end" non-academic "vocational programs that preclude academic careers" and future job opportunities (Halevi 1996:17; Iram and Schmida 1998:59-62; & Swirski 1990). This policy would change only after 1992.¹⁶

Third, placement in state religious institutions concentrated and segregated them. As late as 1994, Ethiopian students made up over 70 percent of the student body in Youth Aliyah religious institutions. Some weaker educational facilities became 80 to 100 percent Ethiopian (Gdor 1996; Kaplan and Salamon 1998:8 & "Absorption of Ethiopian Youngsters by Youth Aliyah"). Until 1992,
several elite religious institutions would not take them.

Fourth, this policy separated Ethiopian children from their families, which "disrupted cultural continuity and undermined the community's close family structure..." (Halevi 1996:17).

Fifth, this was another example of denying Ethiopians freedom of choice. It was the first time in Israel's history that the government required an entire group of immigrant youth to study at boarding schools (Youth Aliyah 1995:26).


Conclusions.

This study has shown that the educational policies of the Israeli government through mid 1992 denied Ethiopian children access to better educational opportunities, placed them in an
inferior school system and segregated them. This resulted from two decisions taken by leaders of the government and Jewish Agency. One required all Ethiopian children to study in the state religious school system. The other mandated compulsory enrollment of all Ethiopian teenagers at religious boarding schools.

These policies had two interrelated consequences. First, they denied Ethiopian immigrants freedom to choose the school system for their children. Similarly parents of teenagers could neither enroll them in local schools nor send them to secular boarding schools. Most Jewish Israeli citizens and immigrants from the former Soviet Union and elsewhere have exercised these rights since the early 1970s.

Second, the decisions denied Ethiopian pupils the option to attend the much larger, more diverse and academically superior state secular school system. This resulted in attendance at inferior schools and greater segregation.

With the election of Rabin and the return of the Labor Party to the Government in 1992, Meretz, a left wing party opposed to religious coercion and influence in society, took over the Ministry of Education. It officially ended the requirement that Ethiopians had to study at state religious schools. It also reinforced recently altered boarding school policy that allowed Ethiopian parents freedom of choice and access to secular boarding schools. The inroads made already by the National Religious Party
and religious school system might explain the relatively small percentage of Ethiopian children who transferred. Alternatively, parents may have preferred religious schools.

The findings here also support the claim that ethnicity and race continue to be important factors in Israeli educational policy. Race perse, however, may not be the key to explain the discrimination against the Ethiopians.

More important than race is the relative political importance, influence or power of the respective ethnic or racial group within the Israeli political-administrative system. This is clearly evident in the different experiences of the European and Oriental Jewish immigrants of the 1950s and the Ethiopian and Soviet immigrants in the 1980s.

The experience of Ethiopians in Israel resembles that of Oriental Jewish immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, the Israeli Jewish establishment settled them in separate peripheral communities and placed their children in inferior schools (Iram and Schmida 1998).

Despite a general negative attitude toward immigrants and a stigma associated with Holocaust survivors (Segev 1993), new immigrants from Europe in the 1950s and 1960s received more favorable treatment in both housing and education (Lazin 1997). They had many more human resources, options to go to other
countries, relatives in the country and shared many cultural values with veteran Ashkenazi Israelis.

This pattern repeated itself in the 1980s. Both Ethiopians and Soviet immigrant children faced a less than receptive educational system operating a policy of assimilation that expected them to abandon their old ways (Eisikovits and Beck 1990 and Sever 1997). Yet, in practice, the experience proved different for both groups.

Jewish immigrant children from the Soviet Union also suffered from poor teachers, inadequate Hebrew instruction and weak support. But their large number of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union substantial and growing political influence in the Israeli political-administrative system. Their political clout influenced an initially less than supportive educational system on all levels to meet their needs (Eisikovits and Beck 1990). Moreover, the majority settled in central Israel with its better schools and job opportunities. Many of the children arrived with a rich educational experience and well educated parents. Exercising their right to choose a school system, over 90 percent sent their children to secular schools. Few sent their teenagers to Youth Aliyah boarding schools.

In sharp contrast the much smaller Ethiopian immigrant community had little political influence. They were settled in the periphery with its poor schools and fewer job opportunities. Most
Ethiopian pupils lacked educational experience and had illiterate parents. They became wards of the 'second-rate' religious state educational system. Basically, they lacked political clout and influence to resist and bargain with those wielding power.

1 All documents are found in the archives of the Jewish Agency for Israel in Jerusalem Israel.
2 Until 1985, Israel denied Ethiopian immigrants citizenship and the Ministry of Interior refused to register them as Jews unless they converted. Today, many private Jewish religious schools only accept Ethiopian pupils who have converted (Youth Aliyah, 1995:29; Haaretz, 7,8 June 1999).
3 Only 25 percent of those under 25 in Israel in 1986 had at least six years of education! Fifty percent of those 18–28 years of age from Operation Solomon had no schooling (Israel, Ministry of Absorption, 1996).
4 Established in 1929 the Jewish Agency represented world Jewry and the World Zionist Organization in efforts to establish a Jewish State in Mandatory Palestine. In 1952, the Israeli government gave it primary responsibility for the care of new immigrants, rural development and certain educational programs. While the Israeli government exercises considerable influence, the Agency remains independent. It receives its funds from the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) in the United States and the Keren Hayesod elsewhere.
5 This is an implementation study. Rather than evaluate the success or failure of policies it explains their implementation (outcomes). The author views policymaking and implementation as a single interactive and interdependent process. The research is based on a review of relevant archival materials in the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Ministries of Education, Housing, Interior and Finance. In addition, he conducted in depth structured open-ended interviews with several senior elected and administrative officials.
6 Members of a kibbutz own all property collectively. In the moshav, each family owns its own home and fields, but market and purchase as a collective unit. Israel's population dispersal policies of the 1950s built new or development towns in peripheral areas.
7 A formal decision may have been illegal and could have led to petitions to the High Court of Justice.
8 When he became Minister of Education in 1984, Yitzhak Navon, of the Labor Party, continued the policy. He "thought the policy was correct" since Ethiopian Jews were religious people. In 1988 he refused to permit a secular school to absorb 20 Ethiopian pupils (JP 19 September 1988).
9 The government denied Ethiopian immigrants participation in 'direct absorption' which enabled most Soviet immigrants after 1988 to rent private housing in a municipality or neighborhood of their choice.
10 The enlarged mortgages given Ethiopian families were "... usually insufficient to buy an apartment in a decent neighborhood" (Letter, Simcha Dinitz to Yitzhak Modai, 21 May 1992; Memo, Yisrael Schwartz to Aryeh Barr, 20 May 1991; Lazin 1997; and Halevi 1996:17).
11 From the mid 1980s until the late 1990 between 15 to 20 percent of Israeli Jewish pupils studied in the state religious system, 68 to 75 percent in the state secular and 5 to 10 percent in the recognized private religious schools (Wagaw, 1993:131 & Ministry of Education, 1996:117).
12 In the early 1980s parent groups established elite schools (Noam) within the state religious system. While being more religious (separate classes and/or
schools for boys and girls), Noam Schools attracted a better off Ashkenazi clientele that could afford special fees. This increased the percentage of poor and Oriental pupils remaining in the traditional state religious system. Some claim that these schools were established to circumvent the integration of Ashkenazi and Sepharadi pupils (Halper, Shokeid & Weingrod 1984:53ff.; Haaretz November 27, 1997).

13 In 1996–97 at least 60 schools had more than 25 percent Ethiopian pupils; in 1997, 18 schools had above 40 percent. In August 1997 the state religious school authorities ended a cap on the percentage of Ethiopian pupils in a classroom (Algazy 1998; Interview with official at Ministry of Education, July 1997; Jewish Agency Comptroller "Summary..."; Kaplan and Salamon 1998; & Gdor 1996:28).

14 In 1993 approximately 95 percent of Ethiopian pupils were in the State religious schools. The percentage dropped to 85 percent in 1995 and 76 percent in 1996.

15 Established in the 1930s to absorb Jewish refugee children from Hitler's Germany, Youth Aliyah performed a similar function for successive groups of immigrant youth. With the drop in immigration in the 1970s, it began to care for disadvantaged Jewish-Israeli youth (Halevi, 1996:18).

16 In 1990-1991, 13 percent of the Ethiopians studied in academic tracks and 87 percent in vocational. By 1994-95 40 percent were academic and by 1996 80 percent (Youth Aliyah 1995:39; Kaplan and Salomon 1998:9). In 1991 only 4.5 percent of Ethiopian pupils had the potential for full matriculation (Youth Aliyah, 1995:39). In 1994 32 percent of Ethiopian pupils (versus 80-85 percent of Israelis) were eligible to take matriculation exams. This number reached 48 percent in 1996.

17 They had considerable human capital (highly educated) and most had preferential ethnic identity. Most Jews from the former Soviet Union are Ashkenazim. A large minority is not. The latter are from the Islamic republics and Georgia.
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