

Ethiopia and the U.S.A The first official contacts between Ethiopia and the United States of America traced back to 1903 when the two countries signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with the USA delegate led under Robert P. Skinner. Germany and Israel trained and equipped the Police Force while the Swedes supported the Imperial Bodyguard and the Harar Military Academy was entrusted to British trained Indians. Hence, an agreement was concluded with Transcontinental and Western World Airline (TWA) that established Ethiopian Air Lines (EAL) in 1946 with five C-47 warplanes that served during WWII and of which three were converted to passenger version DC3. A variety of American scholarship programs under USAID and African American Institute African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) offered opportunities for many Ethiopians to go to the United States for their second and third Degrees. Other foreign countries with significant presence in Imperial Ethiopia include Sweden and Norway whose advisors were entrusted to the Air force and navy successively. In his efforts to ensure his sovereign political authority from British domination, to modernize his country and consolidate his power, Haile-Selassie I turned towards the United States as a powerful ally than Britain. Emperor Haile-Selassie I and the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, met in Egypt and discussed recognition of an American Sinclair Company to prospect for oil in Ogaden at the beginning of 1945. By granting a concession to the company, Ethiopia sought to reassert its rights in the region as much as it was eager to exploit a lucrative natural resource. Together with ELA's domestic network the improvement of road transport along with communication services played important role in facilitating national integration and the speedy transport of such lucrative commodities as coffee. In response, USA extended the Lend-Lease Agreement with Ethiopia and sent a technical mission led by Perry Fellows in May 1944. For almost three decades since the signing of the agreement with the TWA in 1946, key management and executive posts of the Ethiopian airline were seized by expatriates notably by the Americans. The relations between the two countries had been in the doldrums because of the Tripartite domination of the Ethiopian diplomatic scene until the early 1940s. In 1943, the Ethiopian vice Finance Minister, Yilma Deressa, visited the US to request expertise to assist the country's development. Following the 1953 treaty, the US launched a military aid program named the American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to equip Ethiopia's armed forces. Anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, naval craft, infantry weapons and some times even uniforms like field jackets were of American origin. There, the Ethiopian delegation approached American delegates for assistance to form a civilian airline. Russians established good relations with Ethiopia through their exhibition, library around city hall, post office, mathematics and literature. These two agreements in general but the latter in particular defined the Ethio-American partnership in the following decades. EAL got its first Ethiopian national pilot, Alemayehu Abebe, in 1957 and Colonel Simeret Medhne became the first Ethiopian General Manager of EAL in 1971. In January 1951, with financial loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Imperial High Way Authority (IHA) was set up based on the model of the US Bureau of Roads. American interest in the region began to grow especially after they acquired a communication base in Asmara known as Radio Marina from the Italians. Second, the Ethio-US Treaty that granted a continued American use of the Qagnew base in return for military assistance was signed in 1953. Meanwhile the shortage of trained Ethiopian personnel slowed the progress towards the Ethiopianization of the

EAL. The Imperial Board of Telecommunication was established with the help of International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) organization between 1950 and 1952. The radio station was later on renamed Qagnew after the Ethiopian force that fought on the side of the Americans in the Korean War (1950-3). The renewed contact between the two countries was concretized with the signing of two agreements in the 1950s. In the year between 1953 and 1968, over 2,500 Ethiopians received various forms of military training in the US. It was in the army that American military assistance and training was most noticeable. Meanwhile, many American volunteers came to Ethiopia to teach in Ethiopian schools under the Peace Corps Program. In 1956, the Qoqa Dam was built with war reparations money that the Italians agreed to pay. In Ethiopia and the Horn, British pre-dominance in 1940s was replaced by the dominance of the United States in 1950s. First, the Point Four Agreement enabled subsequent American assistance in education and public health was signed in 1952.