



NEGASSO GIDADA SOLON (*1943)

Negasso Gidada Solon was born the son of one of the first local ministers of a Protestant church in the Dembidolo area in western Ethiopia. He went into exile in Germany in 1974 and came to the Frobenius Institute as one of Haberland's PhD students. In 1984 he attained his PhD for his dissertation *History of the Sayyoo Oromo of southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia, from about*

1730 to 1886. In 1985 he became director of the *Dritte-Welt Zentrum* in Frankfurt am Main. During his exile in Germany he became an active member of the *Oromo Liberation Front* (OLF). After the overthrow of the socialist regime in 1990, he returned to Ethiopia. He became minister of information in the transitional government, helping to draft the new constitution, and went

on to become the country's first president, serving from 1995 to 2001. In 2008 Negasso became a founding member of the *Forum for Democratic Dialogue* (FDD), a coalition of opposition parties, and one year later joined the *Unity for Democracy and Justice Party* (UDJ) of which he was chairman for several years.