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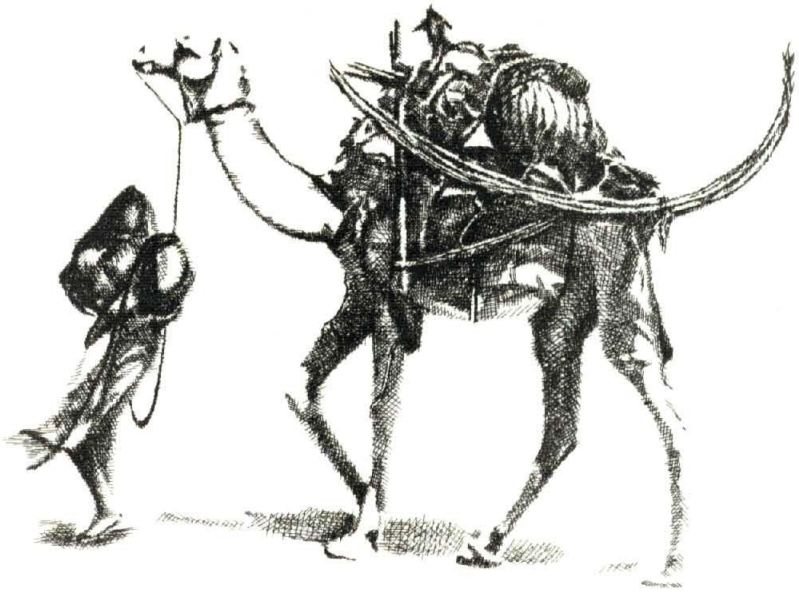
Somalia

a country study



Somalia
a country study

Foreign Area Studies
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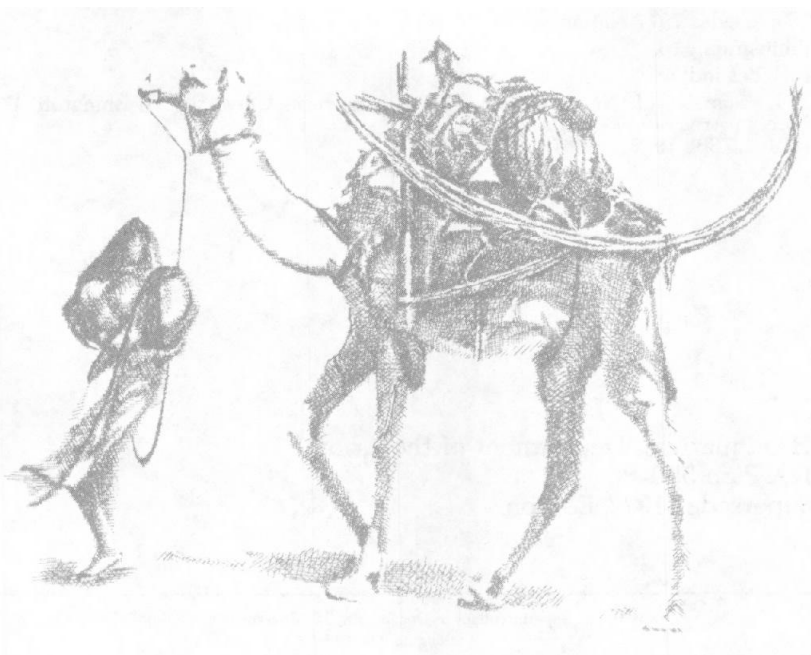

On the cover: The camel, indispensable in the Somali nomad's search for pasture and water

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Foreword

This volume is one of a continuing series of books prepared by Foreign Area Studies, The American University, under the Country Studies/Area Handbook Program. The last page of this book provides a listing of other published studies. Each book in the series deals with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its economic, national security, political, and social systems and institutions and examining the interrelationships of those systems and institutions and the ways that they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic insight and understanding of the society under observation, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal of it. The study focuses on historical antecedents and on the cultural, political, and socioeconomic characteristics that contribute to cohesion and cleavage within the society. Particular attention is given to the origins and traditions of the people who make up the society, their dominant beliefs and values, their community of interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with the national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward the social system and political order within which they live.

The contents of the book represent the views, opinions, and findings of Foreign Area Studies and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual or other changes that readers may have will be welcomed for use in future new editions.

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The appearance of this volume has been greatly enhanced by Carlyn Dawn Anderson, who designed the cover and the illustrations on title pages of the chapters. The inclusion of photographs was made possible in part by the generosity of various individuals and public and private agencies. We acknowledge our indebtedness especially to those persons who contributed original photography not previously published.

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Preface

In November 1977, a year after completion of the research and writing of the second edition of the *Area Handbook for Somalia*, the republic's military government broke ranks with the Soviet Union, whose arms support and presence in the Horn of Africa had excited much international controversy. Moscow's transfer of its military assistance to Ethiopia in that country's traditional territorial struggle with Somalia led in 1978 to the latter's defeat in combat. In light of the Mogadishu government's search for renewed military and economic support and the United States' increasing interest in the strategically important Indian Ocean area, a fresh look at Somali society and its changing role in world affairs is warranted.

Like its predecessor, *Somalia: A Country Study* seeks to provide a compact and objective exposition of the African republic's dominant social, political, economic, and national security aspects and to give the reader some idea of the forces involved at this time in Somalia's history. In presenting this new study the authors have relied primarily on official reports of governmental and international organizations, journals, and newspapers, but knowledgeable individuals also have been consulted on a number of points. Detailed information on many aspects of Somali affairs was not always readily available, however, and gaps in data and varied interpretations of certain matters existed among some of the sources considered. Such gaps and differences have been noted where appropriate in the text. Where available books and articles provide greater amplification of detail and interpretation of material presented, each author has noted them in a final bibliographic statement. Full references to these and other sources used are included in the detailed Bibliography.

The literature regarding Somalia frequently is confusing because of changes that have occurred in the spelling of names for places, persons, and Somali terms. Historically such spellings have varied with the extent of British or Italian influence. Moreover variants occurred within any one tradition as Somalis and outsiders sought to provide spellings that approximated sounds within the Somali language. In 1973 the government in Mogadishu decided that an existing Latin alphabet orthography (with minor modifications) was to be used to write Somali, but in 1981 there were indications that the new spellings were not always used consistently, particularly in the case of personal names. For the most part the authors of this book have attempted to reduce this confusion by adhering to the system known as BGN/PCGN, one agreed to by the United States Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for Brit-

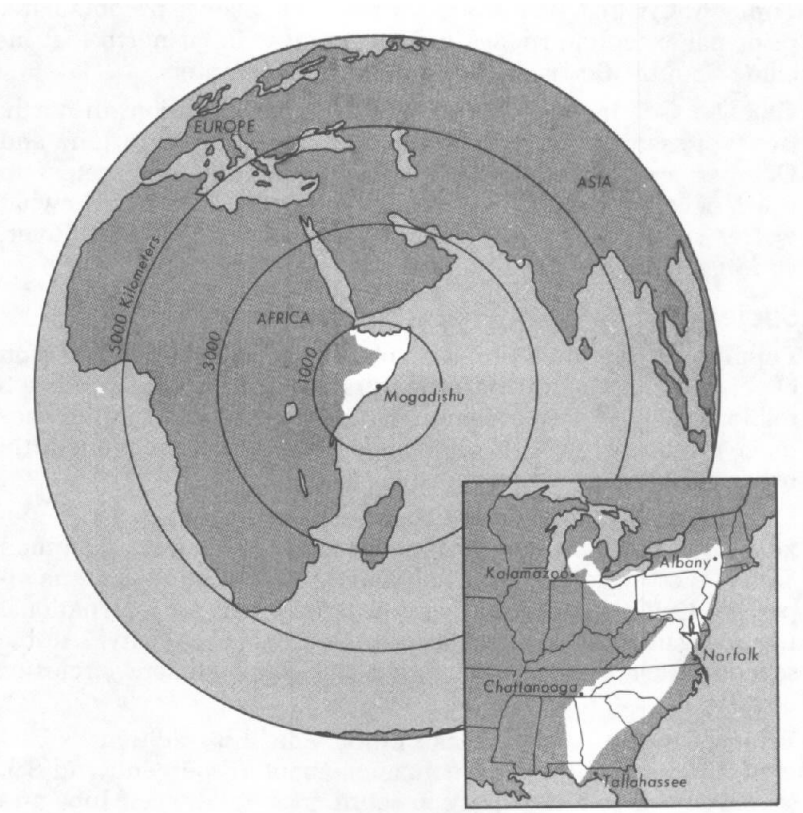
ish Use. The place-names, again with minor exceptions to accommodate historic international familiarity, are those approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names in its official gazetteer, an indispensable document that was in the final stage of revised publication in 1981.

In Chapter 1, Historical Setting, an attempt has been made to assist the reader in associating the modern spelling of place-names with their more recognizable forms. This has been accomplished by expressing parenthetically the conventional spelling after each initial use of the modern version. Thereafter throughout the book only the BGN/PCGN spellings appear.

Personal names and Somali terms have been given conventional spellings largely because an exhaustive and authoritative dictionary using the Somali orthography was not available to the research team. Inasmuch as the BGN/PCGN system reflects elements of the Somali orthography in its gazetteer of place-names, some indication of the sounds symbolized by letters in that orthography may assist the reader who encounters their pronunciation for the first time. Vowels in Somali are Italianate in pronounced form; double vowels (as in Shabeellaha Hoose Region) indicate a change in the length of their pronunciation, which is important to meaning among Somali speakers. With some important exceptions consonants are pronounced approximately as they are in English. Those that sound different include the letter *x*, which in spoken Somali becomes an unvoiced pharyngeal, and the letter *c*, which becomes a voiced pharyngeal. In conventional spellings the spoken sounds are sometimes indicated by the letter *h* or are omitted. Thus the Somali name Xuseen appears conventionally as Hussein, Maxamed becomes Mohamed, and Cabdul is seen as Abdul. The letter *q* in Somali stands for the uvular voiceless stop; thus the conventional Mogadishu becomes Muqdisho.

An effort has been made to limit the use of foreign and technical terms. When this has not been appropriate, such terms have been defined briefly where they first appear in any chapter, or reference has been made to the Glossary, which is included for the reader's convenience. All measurements are presented in the metric system. A conversion table will assist those readers who may not be familiar with metric equivalents (see table 1, Appendix).

Country Profile



Country

Formal Name: Somali Democratic Republic.

Short Form: Somalia.

Term for Citizen: Somali (pl., Somalis).

Capital: Mogadishu.

Preindependence Political Status: British Somaliland attained independence June 26, 1960; Italian Somaliland (since 1950 the Trust Territory of Somalia under Italian Administration) attained independence July 1, 1960; the two regions united on July 1, 1960, to form Somali Republic.

Geography

Size: Land area 637,540 square kilometers; coastline 2,960 kilometers; sovereignty claimed over territorial waters up to 200 nautical miles.

Topography: Flat plateau surfaces and plains predominate; principal exception rugged east-west ranges in far north that include Shimbir Berris, highest point at 2,407 meters.

Climate: Continuously hot except at higher elevations in north; two wet seasons bring erratic rainfall, largely April to June and October and November, averaging under 500 millimeters in much of country; droughts frequent; only Juba River in somewhat wetter southwest has permanent water flow. Shabeelle River, also in southwest, flows about seven months of year.

Society

Population: Preliminary results of 1975 census show population of 3.7 million. Estimated growth rate of 2.5 percent yields 4.3 million in 1981; predominantly rural—nomads and seminomads make up about three-fifths of total; sedentary rural about one-fifth; urban (chiefly in Mogadishu) about one-fifth.

Languages: Somali (script officially introduced January 1973) spoken by all but very few inhabitants. Several dialects; Common Somali most widespread. English and Italian used in some newspapers; English in official documents intended for international use or organizations; Italian in Somali National University. Arabic second official language, but used chiefly in religious circles or contexts.

Ethnic Groups: Most nationals ethnic Somalis; traditionally divided into Samaal (pastoral nomadic), about 75 percent, and Sab (sedentary or semisedentary in south on and between Juba and Shabeelle rivers), about 20 percent. These in turn traditionally organized into descent groups of greater or lesser inclusiveness and size. National government trying to end significance of these descent groups in social and political matters and in law.

Religion: Somalia officially Islamic state; most nationals Sunni Muslims.

Education and Literacy: Modern education offered free at all levels; school attendance grew rapidly in 1970s; in settled areas shortage of classrooms and teachers remained constraining factor at postprimary levels; mode of life limited establishment of facilities and attendance among nomads. Introduction of new Somali script and massive literacy campaigns resulted in substantial literacy increase in 1970s but somewhat less than government's estimate of 60 percent.

Health: Weak modern medical infrastructure suffering from

geographic imbalance, difficulty of caring for large mobile population, and shortage of medical personnel. Malaria, tuberculosis, parasitic and venereal infections, and childhood diseases serious health problems, complicated by malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions.

Economy

Salient Features: Socialist-oriented economy. Private ownership eliminated in financial sectors and wholesale trade; large-scale and some small industry restricted mainly to public enterprises. But largest part of economy still in hands of private sector in 1981 including livestock raising, traditional agriculture, retail trade, and most small manufacturing and traditional crafts. Economic development and national viability above subsistence level largely dependent on foreign and international agency aid.

Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry: Crop and livestock production, fisheries, and forestry provided employment for about 80 percent of labor force in 1981. Livestock predominant sector, source of livelihood of large nomadic population, and important supplementary means of support for settled cultivators. Livestock and animal products principal foreign exchange earners. Crop cultivation largely for subsistence; main crops sorghum, maize, beans. Small monetized sector produced bananas for export; sugarcane and food crops for domestic consumption; almost all under irrigation. Fisheries production promoted from mid–1970s but remained minor economic activity; forests chief source of fuel but little timber produced; frankincense and myrrh important exports.

Mining: Mining contribution to gross domestic product relatively negligible. Some potentially valuable mineral resources known, but exploitation remained minimal; mining operations largely limited to construction materials in 1981.

Manufacturing: Modern manufacturing sector had fewer than 15,000 employees in 1980. Sector dominated by handful of relatively large and about 40 smaller state enterprises that accounted for over 75 percent of modern manufacturing work force and gross output. In late 1970s most state firms earned little or no profit or recorded losses, resulting from shortages of qualified managers, skilled workers, and materials, lack of production incentives, and lack of export markets. Modern private sector consisted of over 200 medium and small enterprises engaged mainly in producing consumer goods. Informal manufacturing sector of over 6,000 small operations (under five workers) produced wide range of consumer goods; source of substantial employment in urban centers.

Energy: Domestic wood and charcoal and imported petroleum

provide basic sources of energy. Many state-owned generating and distributive facilities furnished electricity in Mogadishu area; other small state units provided power in about eighty other towns and locales through local grids. Some industrial and public sector activities had own generating units. Significant hydroelectric potential in Juba River; development only in preliminary stage in 1981. Exploration for gas and petroleum actively under way but no major discoveries by late 1981.

Foreign Trade: Exports almost entirely agricultural products. Livestock and products largest item; bananas only significant crop export. Trade balance strongly negative through late 1970s. Consumer goods about 40 percent of imports; intermediate goods and mineral fuels roughly 30 percent; capital goods about 30 percent. Arab countries main destinations of exports; Saudi Arabia largest customer. About half of imports from noncommunist Europe; Italy largest single supplier. Communist Eastern Europe only minor supplier since 1977 rift with Soviet Union.

Currency: Somali shilling (Sh). Two-tier rate system—US$1 equaled Sh12.46 for most imports; Sh6.35 for certain essential items as of October 1981 (see Glossary).

Fiscal Year: January 1 through December 31.

Transportation

Railroads: None.

Roads: Country lacks much of road infrastructure needed to open up large unexploited areas and to tie together isolated local economies. Roads of all categories totaled 19,380 kilometers in 1978: 2,153 kilometers hard-surfaced; 7,247 kilometers gravel- or earth-surfaced—stretches frequently impassable in rainy seasons; 10,280 kilometers of rudimentary dirt tracks. In late 1970s about 10,500 motor vehicles reported in operation; camels and donkeys still transported large amount of cargo.

Civil Aviation: International airports at Mogadishu and Hargeysa; Kismaayo only other airport having hard-surfaced runway in 1981. Fewer than twenty additional widely scattered civilian airfields and usable landing strips, all gravel-surfaced. Somali Airlines provided domestic, regional, and international services. International services also furnished by several foreign carriers.

Ports and Shipping: Three deep-water ports: Mogadishu, Kismaayo, and Berbera. Only other significant port (at Marka) required lighterage. Cargo handling equipment minimal; ship's tackle used to unload and load cargo. State Somali National Shipping Line operated five small oceangoing vessels in 1980. Somalia provided flag-of-convenience registry for foreign shipping until 1975.

Government and Politics

Government Structure: Country in effect under military rule since 1969; Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) of military and police officers, which replaced previous civilian government, supplanted by Central Committee of Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) in 1976 having both military and civilian members. New Constitution in 1979 provided for national legislature (People's Assembly) while reaffirming political supremacy of SRSP. Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, chief of state since 1969 military coup, elected to six-year term as president by People's Assembly in January 1980. Assembly had authority to pass legislation, approve budgets, and ratify treaties but in practice subservient to Siad Barre. SRC reactivated in 1980, but influence believed limited.

Administrative Divisions: Sixteen administrative regions *(gobolkas)* subdivided into eighty districts *(degmadas)*; both governed by military councils corresponding to national SRC until 1976 when local SRSP secretaries became governors. Beginning in 1980 district council members directly elected after nomination by SRSP. Regional councils remained appointive and dominated by military.

Politics: One year after military takeover Siad Barre proclaimed policy of scientific socialism on Marxist-Leninist lines with Islamic and nationalist overtones. Commitment to socialism has moderated, but pattern of state ownership in industrial and financial sectors prevailed in early 1980s. Government policies increasingly subject to personal direction of Siad Barre in spite of reduced popularity resulting from defeat in 1977–78 Ogaden war and economic setbacks. Removal of longtime military collaborators from key posts in 1981 seen as part of effort by Siad Barre to consolidate authority by installing relatives and members of own Marehan clan in high government posts.

Judicial System: Four-tier court system—Supreme Court, courts of appeal, regional courts, and district courts—based on Western models; separate military courts at national, regional, and district levels dealt with cases involving state security, public order, and malfeasance. Unified penal and civil law codes introduced in late 1960s and early 1970s, but some features of Islamic law retained in civil matters.

Foreign Relations: Member of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of League of Arab States since 1974. Paramount foreign policy issue has been status of ethnic Somalis in Ogaden area of Ethiopia, in Kenya, and in Djibouti. Government claims only to seek self-determination for Somalis in adjacent territories, but suspicion of Somali irredentism remains source of tension in Horn

of Africa. Close alliance with Soviet Union formalized by treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1974; rupture in 1977 over Soviet arming of Ethiopia resulted in shift to nonaligned foreign policy. Beneficiary of generous development and relief aid from West after rift with Moscow and influx of refugees from Ogaden war; entered into military facilities agreement with United States in 1980. Recipient of military aid from Egypt and financial support from conservative Arab oil states.

National Security

Armed Forces: In 1981 personnel in Somali National Army numbered approximately 50,000. Air force (Somali Aeronautical Corps) of 1,000 and navy of 550 institutionally subordinate to army; paramilitary forces served as reserves. Conscription not officially practiced.

Major Tactical Units: Army ground forces organized into three regionally defined corps; seven infantry divisions composed from total of three armored/mechanized brigades, sixteen infantry brigades, three commando brigades, and twenty-three artillery battalions. Serious equipment shortages aggravated by poor maintenance. Air force had four tactical strike squadrons and one transport squadron. Equipment included thirty-three combat aircraft but most grounded for maintenance. Thirty Chinese F–6 fighter-bombers being delivered in 1981. Navy, organized for coastal defense, had twenty vessels, including ten fast attack craft; serviceability poor.

Major Military Suppliers: Exclusively supplied by Soviet Union until 1977 when treaty of friendship and cooperation was terminated. Has since received limited supplies of weapons from China, Egypt, Italy, and other countries. United States in 1981 agreed to deliver limited quantities of defensive weapons.

Military Costs: As result of 1977–78 war with Ethiopia defense spending rose from 25 percent of total government ordinary expenditures in 1976 to 39 percent in 1979; 1979 budget allocated Sh592 million for defense. Military procurement supported largely by foreign, mostly Arab, financial assistance.

Paramilitary and Internal Security Forces: Under control of presidency. National police (Somali Police Force) totaled about 8,000 in 1981; People's Militia (Victory Pioneers) numbered fewer than 10,000 men and women serving as police, military reserves, and political organizers; National Security Service and other organizations provided domestic intelligence to president.

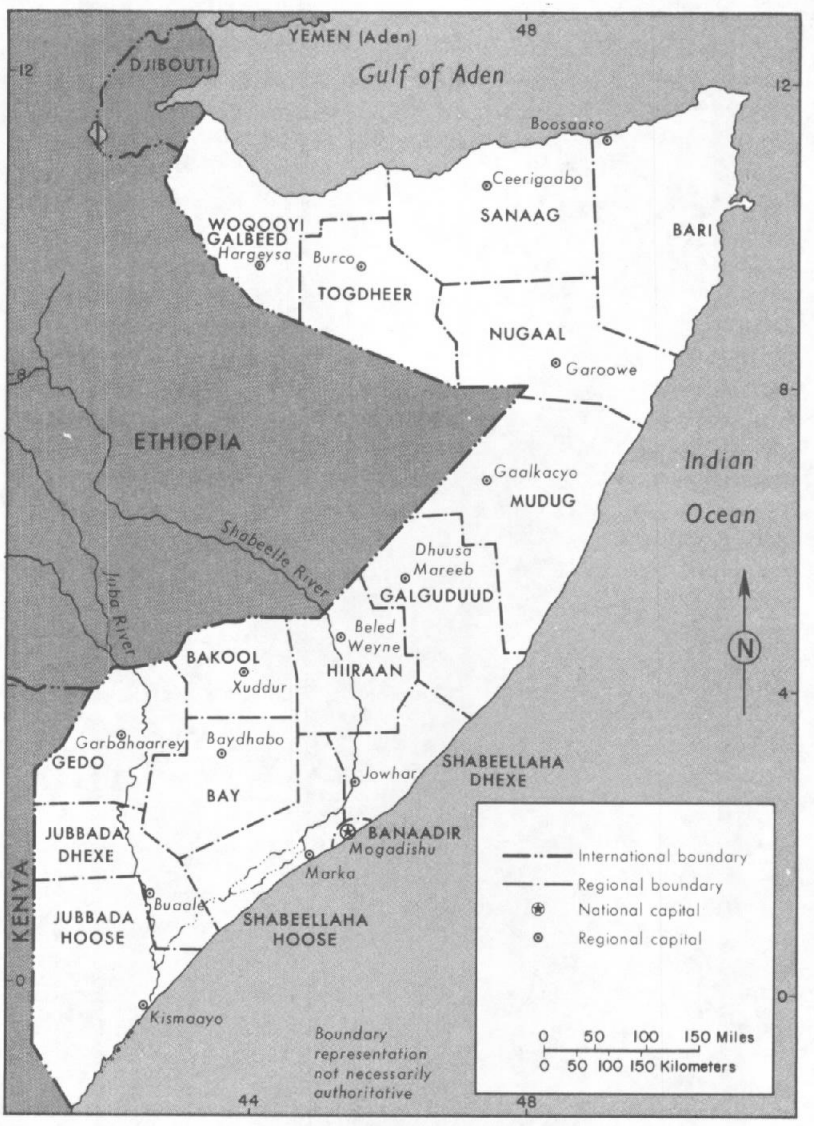


Figure 1. Somalia

Introduction

KNOWN IN ANCIENT times as the Land of Punt and renowned for its frankincense and myrrh—which it still exports—Somalia is a developing country whose modern image is marked by a struggling economy, a largely nomadic population, and a history of serious conflict with neighboring states. Beset by periodic drought and the burden of roughly 1 million refugees, the nation has been sorely tested in its efforts to achieve—and maintain—political stability and economic development in the strategically important and volatile Horn of Africa.

When the country gained independence in 1960, a parliamentary government—democratic in form, substance, and function—was established in a culturally, religiously, and linguistically homogeneous society of little more than 2 million people. The new state incorporated two colonial territories: British Somaliland and the Trust Territory of Somalia under Italian administration (formerly Italian Somaliland). Its boundaries were those agreed to by the two colonial powers as well as Ethiopia and France, which retained claim to a postage-stamp-sized territory along the Gulf of Aden known as French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti).

In newly independent Somalia the land was poor, and commercially exploitable natural resources were limited. As they had for centuries, most Somalis relied for their livelihood on pastoral nomadism or seminomadism in a harsh, arid environment. Pursuing the pragmatic tradition they and their forebears had always adhered to, they followed their livestock in a seasonal search for pasture, paying little attention to national frontiers. A minority of the people along the Juba and Shabeelle rivers in the south and a smaller number in the northwest depended for all or part of their subsistence on irrigated or rainfed cultivation. Some of them received limited income from the sale of livestock and a few cash crops, but subsistence pastoralism and agriculture—often interchangeable depending on the seasons and fickle weather—were the basic ways of life.

Sharing a common culture, the Somali people nonetheless were separated traditionally into a variety of kin-based groups of diverse size. Membership in each of them was based on the claim of descent, through the male line, from a common male ancestor. The largest of these descent groups (of which there were six) was what modern anthropologists refer to as the clan-family, a unit that many observers and most Somalis call a tribe. Each of the clan-families comprised a number of individual clans, which in turn were made up of different lineages. The characteristic relationship between any two of the descent groups was traditionally one of competition for scarce resources or, at best, temporary

alliance against other groups. Every man was entitled to a voice in his clan or lineage council but had to earn his own prestige.

The significance of descent groups was transferred with modifications to the national scene when Somalia attained its freedom from colonial domination. Among the modifications was an increasing emphasis on the clan-families, which had become the building blocks for the formation of political parties. Sometimes parties were built of a single such block; others resulted from an alliance of two or more descent groups. To some extent these clan-families corresponded to specific regionally based interests, but some were so large and widely dispersed that the interests of component clans and lineages reflected great intergroup diversity.

During the first nine years of independence the young country's political life was marked by multiparty competition for office through elections and within the party in power. A large number of parties, most of them ephemeral and representing a limited local or descent-group constituency, contested each election. One—the Somali Youth League (SYL)—became clearly dominant and throughout most of the 1960s served as the power broker for all matters political. Its membership accordingly was heterogeneous, and its greatest task was coping with the general assumption of most Somalis that government existed only to provide citizens with resources and opportunities. Because these commodities were scarce, intraparty competition for their allocation was continuous. Political leaders quickly found it necessary to give members of the country's parliament material compensation for their continued political support. In time the legislators became increasingly accustomed to a broad range of personal perquisites in addition to whatever government help they could obtain for their constituents.

Although some of the leading personalities in the SYL stressed Somali unity as opposed to clan-family divisions, the party was careful to allocate important governmental posts on a descent-group basis. For example, the president and the prime minister were always of different clan-families. The Somali people expected this and interpreted intraparty and intragovernmental conflict in these terms rather than in an ideological context.

Its internal difficulties and conflicts notwithstanding, the parliamentary regime did make attempts to develop the country's economy—an extraordinary task given the low level at which it was forced to begin. Slow progress was attributable in part to an inadequate base in resources and skilled personnel. But the inexperienced and inefficient bureaucracy, which became increasingly corrupt with the passage of time, was also blameworthy. Moreover the government was reluctant to undertake strong measures that might lead to conflicts it could not control.

The country's homogeneity and the people's sense of nationhood eliminated one of the obstacles to national unity so common among new African states. That sense of oneness was heightened by an abiding awareness that even after the country had become a recognized independent state many Somalis still resided in adjacent countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, and French Somaliland. All citizens strongly supported unification of their people according to the concept of a Greater Somalia but were divided over how it should be accomplished. A good deal of political energy and time went into attempts to deal with the issue, and these efforts led to rather difficult relations—and on occasion to direct conflict over territorial integrity—with Ethiopia and Kenya.

Soon after national independence, foreign aid was sought for economic development and for improving Somalia's military position. The aim of establishing a Greater Somalia had been incorporated in the constitution, a move that drew angry responses from neighboring states. Unable to obtain support from the United States for development of a large army, the government turned to the Soviet Union, which willingly provided military equipment, advice, and training.

Prime Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who came to power through the electoral process in 1967, turned Somali relations with neighboring countries from confrontation and hostility to accommodation—but without abandoning the ultimate Greater Somalia goal. Moscow's assistance was retained, and the army continued to grow. Many foreign observers, including the government in Washington, remained wary but felt that Soviet influence was offset by the general pro-Western orientation of Egal and other Somali leaders and by the equipment and training aid provided for Somalia's national police force by the United States and other Western countries. But the army, whose leaders were influenced by Soviet political and military doctrine, had clearly become the best organized and strongest institution in the state.

On October 21, 1969, Somalia's parliamentary government was overthrown in a coup d'etat led by a group of senior military officers. Initially the coup's leaders, headed by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, argued that their action had been motivated by the increasing corruption and nepotism prevalent within the civilian regime, which was accused of misusing public funds and catering to tribal (descent-group) interests. Having altered the form of government, the coup leaders established themselves as the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) and set about their goal of revolutionizing the society and its economy. Parliament and political parties were abolished, and the country's formal name was changed to the Somali Democratic Republic. Although ordi-

nary citizens were aware of the corruption and nepotism that had existed in former government circles, many foreign analysts reasoned that the parliamentary system's failure to provide expected resources and opportunities led most Somalis to accept the new military regime without protest.

Under the direction of Siad Barre, who was named president of the republic, the SRC soon made clear that it intended to establish a society and economy guided by what it called scientific socialism—the doctrine of Marx, Engels, and Lenin adapted to the needs and conditions of Somalia. Heavy emphasis was placed on educating the people to accept socialist goals and specific programs to achieve them. The SRC began in 1970 by nationalizing a large part of the country's economic assets. Additional attention was given to self-help and crash programs to develop social and economic infrastructure. At the same time a number of austerity measures were introduced, including a pay reduction for the civil and military services and a development levy on the pay of employees in private and state-controlled industries. These measures notwithstanding, the country was unable to overcome its requirement for foreign aid to finance a continuing need for imported capital and consumption goods.

The revolutionary government's optimistic plans for economic development were just getting under way when nature dealt them a severe blow. Drought had long been endemic in Somalia and had always led to temporary abandonment of pastoralism by those who suffered the greatest losses. Conversely, semisedentary Somalis who relied on cultivation were sometimes forced by seasonal flooding or lack of rainfall to forego crops and local forage for a time and take their livestock elsewhere. The extraordinary drought of 1974–75 led to an extensive loss of livestock and famine for large numbers of nomads. The government was forced to expend large sums to assist roughly 1 million needy people, including the operation of relief camps and the settlement of hundreds of thousands in areas where they could become cultivators or fishermen. The food grain harvests failed, and many cultivators also required help. At the same time, however, the SRC noted that the necessary settlement of nomads and their conversion to cultivation had made possible the partial realization of the government's ultimate objective. Increased production of food crops had been a long-term government goal, as had the always difficult task of establishing firmer control over the preponderant nomadic population.

As part of its effort to educate Somalis for economic development and a socialist way of life, the government adopted several social reforms to accommodate these goals. One of long lasting import was the move to promote a rapid increase in the literacy

rate, an effort made possible by the acceptance of a Latin script for the Somali language that had been pending for years. Similarly, steps were taken to grant women certain political and economic rights that traditionally had been restricted to men. In a society where roughly 99 percent of the people were adherents of the Sunni branch of Islam, this change in the status of women drew heated opposition from traditional Muslim religious leaders.

Throughout the first seven years of power, the Siad Barre regime received substantial military assistance and lesser amounts of economic aid from the Soviet Union. Much of Africa and the Western world looked askance at the implied dangers introduced by Moscow's success in achieving a foothold in the Horn of Africa. With Soviet backing the military government sponsored its own replacement through the formation in 1976 of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party. Aimed at creating a mass-based political organization uniting all revolutionary forces in the country, civilian authority ostensibly replaced the military regime. But the process proved to be a facade as basic doctrine and the wielders of power remained unchanged.

Despite the laudatory allusions by Siad Barre and his government to Moscow's economic and military assistance and Soviet leadership, many Somalis grew resentful of the large number of Soviet advisers and technicians in their midst. Few were comfortable in their routine interactions with the Communists, regardless of the treaty of friendship and cooperation that had been entered into by the two governments. But most foreign observers felt that Siad Barre was unlikely to respond to Soviet demands unless they were equally advantageous to Somali interests. A major case in point was his permission—granted in exchange for limited economic aid and large quantities of military assistance—for the Soviets to construct and use naval and air facilities at Berbera on the Gulf of Aden.

In 1977, however, Moscow was caught in the middle of an undeclared war between Somalia and Ethiopia over the unresolved Greater Somalia issue. The government in Mogadishu had long supported organized Somali guerrilla groups operating in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia with the goal of attaining the right of self-determination for the largely Somali population in roughly one-third of that country's traditionally recognized territory.

In mid–1977 Siad Barre committed large elements of his Soviet-equipped army to assist the beleaguered Somali guerrillas in the Ogaden. The Marxist Ethiopian military regime, which had replaced Emperor Haile Selassie, responded with forces that before the emperor's downfall had been equipped and supported by the United States. Ethiopia appealed to Moscow for assistance, and the response was a massive airlift of military equipment, Soviet advisers, and Cuban combat units. In return for Moscow's shift of support in the Ogaden war, Siad Barre abrogated the treaty of

friendship and cooperation and evicted all Soviet personnel from his country. In early 1980 Somalia's military intervention was brought to a humiliating conclusion as its forces, badly beaten by a superior enemy and suffering vast losses of equipment, abandoned their effort to annex the Ogaden. The president's primary task in the aftermath of military defeat became one of refurbishing his tarnished image among his unhappy people.

By early 1982 Somalia's population had risen to roughly 4 million, and its economy remained severely depressed. An annual per capita income equivalent to US$130 ranked Somalia eighth among the world's least developed countries. A growing exodus of managerial and skilled workers to nearby Arab countries and the impact of caring for nearly 1 million refugees had placed further strains on the fragile economy. A Department of State report to the United States Congress indicated that "while the government has made earnest efforts to improve the economic lot of its citizens, its bureaucratic inefficiency and doctrinaire approach to problem-solving and the nomadic nature of much of the population have weakened significantly the impact of these efforts."

Real authority remained in the hands of Siad Barre and a few close associates. A state of emergency had been declared in late 1980, and the president continued to rule through decrees approved by a reconstituted SRC. Despite the zeal with which his regime had once attacked its predecessors' reliance on "tribalism" to assure political dominance, the tradition had resurfaced as Siad Barre increasingly surrounded himself by members of his own clan in all critical positions of authority. The government's pervasive security apparatus remained alert to perceived threats of latent opposition within the country and from organized groups abroad. Increasing attention was given to sporadic bombings and other disturbances for which the growing membership of the Somali Salvation Front (SSF) claimed credit. The government carefully analyzed continuing reports that the SSF, which openly opposed Siad Barre's role as national leader, was supported financially by radical Libyan leader Muammar al Qadhaafi.

Siad Barre, recalling how he had achieved power in 1969, had thwarted several coup attempts and could be expected to remain alert to the possibility of others. He also was reported to be concerned that the Soviet-armed Ethiopian forces, aware of his own depleted military strength, might one day invade his country. His requests for military assistance had achieved a cautious response from Washington, where the Congress appeared reluctant to permit the rearming of Ethiopia's traditional enemy and risk having the United States drawn into a possible superpower confrontation with the Soviet Union on the African continent. Thus

United States acquiescence to Somali demands had been limited to the provision of modest military aid for "defensive" use and more substantial assistance for economic development. But Somalia's strategic position on the Indian Ocean—and its Soviet-built military facilities—figured prominently in United States plans to protect vital oil interests in the Persian Gulf area. As a result the government in Mogadishu had responded with the same opportunistic enthusiasm it had shown in an earlier era toward communist overtures.

Some foreign observers felt it was unlikely that, after an eleven-year flirtation with the Soviet Union, Somalia would ever again turn to Moscow for help in satisfying its national needs. Others, however, reflected on Siad Barre's history of political pragmatism (characterized by some as "vigorous opportunism") and refused to discount the possibility of such a move should his newfound alliance with the West fail to produce the desired results. Given the atmosphere of instability in the Horn of Africa and the increasing opposition to the Siad Barre government at home and abroad, it seemed clear that Washington would continue to pursue a policy of circumspection regarding the role of this ally in the United States' Persian Gulf protection strategy.

Harold D. Nelson

May 1982

Chapter 1. Historical Setting

Sheikh Abdulaziz Mosque, one of Mogadishu's oldest historical structures

THE SOMALI PEOPLE have inhabited portions of present-day Somalia for 1,000 years. The emergence of a sense of nationhood among them, however, awaited the imposition of colonial rule by three European powers (Britain, Italy, and France) on Somali-occupied territory and the extension of Ethiopian claims there in the late nineteenth century. Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, sections of the Somalis settled in the relatively fertile river valleys of southern Somalia, where they made cultivation the basis of their economy. Most Somalis living in the surrounding drier regions continued to engage in nomadic pastoralism, allowing differences in social structure, culture, and language to develop between them and their settled brethren. Despite these differences the agricultural Somalis and the more numerous pastoral groups have come to consider themselves one people. At an early date in their migrations, the Somalis came into contact with the Arab world and in time formed a strong attachment to Islam, which has further served to unite them as a people.

During the colonial era the Somalis were grouped into two major divisions—Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland—and three lesser ones—the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and those areas of Ethiopia and French Somaliland populated predominantly by Somalis. Although the Italian and British territories followed different patterns of development and education, they were successfully amalgamated on July 1, 1960, into the independent Somali Republic.

Somalia's transition to independence differed radically from that of most African states. In 1950 the former Italian colony was placed under a United Nations trusteeship administered by Italy. Although British Somaliland retained its colonial status until independence, changes instituted by the United Nations in the trusteeship territory influenced political developments there as well. As a result Somalia's independence as a unified, multiparty parliamentary democracy was attained relatively painlessly.

The early postindependence period was dominated by two difficult problems: the political and administrative integration of the former colonial territories and the conflict with Ethiopia and Kenya arising from Somalia's irredentist demands. Internal political conflicts revolved around methods of handling these difficulties. Competition for electoral support both exploited and widened cleavages within the nation as politicians sought the backing of rival regional and clan groups, often obscuring the country's pressing need for development by overemphasizing party politics.

Party composition and leadership fluctuated as new parties were formed and others declined. A great many parties, some with only a single candidate, participated in each national election, but one party—the Somali Youth League—was clearly dominant and had been even before independence. The important

political parties were not divided by significant ideological differences, and all their leaders had at one time or another served together in the Somali Youth League. The most significant tendency was for parties to be organized on the basis of clan-families or their constituent descent groups, but political alliances existed across clan-family boundaries.

The conflicts generated by competing interest groups within the parties, the time and energy given over to aggrandizing each of them as opposed to dealing with the country's more general problems, and the extent to which corruption had come to pervade the operation of government and the parliament led to disillusionment with the democratic process. On October 21, 1969, senior officers of the Somali National Army deposed the government in a bloodless coup and established the Supreme Revolutionary Council, headed by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre.

The Supreme Revolutionary Council made clear that it intended to establish a new economic, social, and political order based on an ideology it called scientific socialism. Somalia's long tradition of democracy was extinguished as all important decisions were made by the military-dominated leadership in Mogadishu and conveyed to the largely military structure in control at the regional and local levels. Opposition to the new government's policies was not tolerated. The Supreme Revolutionary Council initiated a number of development projects aimed at exploiting resources to best advantage. Priority was also given to the settlement of the nomadic and seminomadic peoples who constituted about 60 percent of the country's population.

In 1976 the Supreme Revolutionary Council was abolished and its authority transferred to the executive organs of the newly formed Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party. Executive positions in the party were taken over by members of the former Supreme Revolutionary Council who also retained the key posts in the government. Therefore the changes appeared only to broaden, not replace, the existing hierarchy.

Somalia's relations with neighboring Ethiopia deteriorated in the early 1970s when Siad Barre's government gave support to guerrilla operations conducted by Somali separatists in the Ogaden, an action that appealed to strong pan-Somali sentiment in the country. By mid–1977 well-equipped elements of the army were openly cooperating with the separatists and had engaged Ethiopian troops in the predominantly Somali region.

In 1974 Somalia concluded a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, which became a primary military benefactor. In exchange for continuing assistance, Moscow obtained rights to strategically located naval and air installations. After the Soviet Union—then in the process of establishing close

ties with Ethiopia—embargoed further supplies to Somalia in 1977, Siad Barre abrogated the treaty and expelled Soviet personnel. A massive infusion of Soviet military aid to Ethiopia and the introduction of Cuban troops ensured Somalia's subsequent defeat in the Ogaden.

Early History

Because systematically collected archaeological evidence is lacking, the prehistory of the area encompassed by present-day Somalia is obscure by comparison with that of neighboring countries. But bushmanoid hunters and gatherers, who inhabited much of eastern and southern Africa, are believed to have roamed the southern interior in search of their subsistence as early as the eighth millennium B.C. Negroid peoples subsequently settled as cultivators in the valleys of the Juba and Shabeelle rivers.

The ships of enterprising Egyptian, Phoenician, Persian, Greek, and Roman traders visited the coast of Guban (the ancient Land of Punt) for cargoes of the aromatic and medicinal resins frankincense and myrrh, tapped from trees on its parched hills. Descriptions of the northern region and its inhabitants first appeared in *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, written by an anonymous Greek mariner ca. A.D. 60, and in Ptolemy's *Geography*. A Chinese source dating from the ninth century mentions the area, and a later document indicates the continued existence of trade between its ports and China in the fourteenth century. By the tenth century Arab and Persian merchants had established a number of towns along the Benadir and Guban coasts that were links in an extensive trading network connecting East Africa with Southwest Asia and the Indies.

The origins of the Somalis and the location of the core area from which they embarked on their centuries-long migrations are matters of debate among scholars as is the chronological framework of those migrations in relation to parallel movements by the Oromo people. There is no doubt, however, that the Somalis were established in much of the region several hundred years before the first recorded use of their name in the early fifteenth century.

Coastal Towns

In pre-Islamic times Arab merchants already were conducting a thriving trade from depots along the African shore of the Gulf of Aden. The most important of these was at the walled town of Seylac (Zeila), which developed after the sixth century as an emporium for the coffee trade from the Abyssinian highlands and as a market for slaves brought from the Arab outpost at Harer in the interior. Seylac eventually became the center of Muslim culture in the region, noted for its mosques and schools. Its ruling house was also linked historically to the Muslim emirates that, after the elev-

enth century, challenged the Christian Abyssinians for domination of the highlands. The town never recovered after being sacked by the Portuguese in 1516 and was succeeded by Berbera as the northern hub of Arab influence in the Horn of Africa. After a brief Abyssinian occupation in the mid-sixteenth century, the Arab towns on the north coast became dependencies of the sharif of Mocha in Yemen and in the seventeenth century passed to the Ottoman Turks, who administered through locally recruited governors.

Arab and Persian traders began settling on the Benadir Coast in the ninth century. The merchant colony they founded at Mogadishu was initially responsible for handling gold shipped from the Sofala fields in south central Africa. When the concession for this trade passed in the twelfth century to Kilwa (an Arab colony much farther south), Mogadishu and other Arab towns on the Benadir Coast, such as Baraawe (Brava) and Marka (Merca), redirected their attention to the immediate hinterland, developing specialized markets for livestock, leather, ivory, amber, and slaves. In the thirteenth century the merchant communities organized a confederation of towns under Mogadishu's ruling dynasty. The prosperity of the Benadir towns declined in the sixteenth century, however, as a result of Somali interference with the trade routes and active Portuguese intervention in the region. Mogadishu was bombarded, and other towns were occupied periodically by the Portuguese until they were ousted in the mid-seventeenth century by the sultan of Oman, who thereafter maintained a loose suzerainty over the Benadir Coast.

The coastal towns—in which Arabic was the language of religion, commerce, and government—were an integral part of the Islamic world, tied to it culturally, economically and, in theory, politically. Arab writers, like the famous fourteenth-century traveler, Ibn Battuta, left vivid descriptions not only of the ports on both coasts but also of the peoples who inhabited the hinterlands. They referred to the Somali in the north as berberi ("barbarians"; hence Berbera) and the pre-Somali cultivators of the southern river valleys as the *zengi* (blacks). A thirteenth-century visitor, Ibn Saiid, was the first to identify by name a Somali clan-family (see Glossary), the Hawiye.

The Somalis: Origins, Migrations, and Settlement

Somali social and political organization is based on kinship groups that range in size from the clan-families, of which there are six, to lineage segments, of which there are thousands (see The Segmentary Social Order, ch. 2). Their traditional genealogies trace the ancestry of clan-families to eponymous Arab forebears who belonged to the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad, and ultimately to a common ancestor. According to these

accounts and other traditional history, these Arabs arrived in the northern part of the Horn of Africa at various times between the tenth and fourteenth centuries and established lineages that in the course of several hundred years moved to the south and west, displacing the Oromos as they went.

Although versions of the traditional genealogies varied in their telling from group to group, it was believed that the clan-families stemmed from the sons of Aqiil—Sab and Samaal (hence, Somali). From Sab were descended the Digil and the Rahanweyn, while the Dir (recognized as the oldest of the clan-families), the Hawiye, and the Isaaq were in patrilineal descent from Samaal. (The Isaaq, however, insisted in their account on direct descent from Aqiil.) The Darod, largest of the clan-families, claimed matrilineal descent from Samaal through Dir's daughter, who was taken as wife by its founder, Jabarti ibn Ismail, himself a Quraysh and a descendant of Aqiil (see fig. 2).

Scholars (among them the noted anthropologist I.M. Lewis) who have accepted traditional history (with important modifications) as a framework for reconstructing the actual history of the Somalis acknowledge that many of its references to the Somalis' Arab ancestry will not stand careful scrutiny and are probably a result of the efforts of the deeply Islamic Somalis to attach themselves to the people of the Prophet. Some scholars also point to traditional history as an attempt to recount in poetic terms a real but unverifiable historical process in which parties of Arabs came to the Horn of Africa in search of trade, adventure, or a religious following and over a period of several centuries established kinship ties with the Somalis and Oromos through intermarriage.

Even those scholars who reject the applicability of this framework—or who are critical of much traditional history—accept that there has been substantial Arab influence and an infusion of Arab blood among the Somalis. They do, however, question whether the point of origin of the Somalis was in the north, as the modified version of traditional history implies, and they have queried the pre-Somali presence of the Oromos in much of present-day Somalia.

On the basis of linguistic evidence supported by critical reading of documentary sources, anthropologist Herbert S. Lewis has argued that the core area for speakers of Eastern Cushitic languages, of which Somali is one and Oromo another, lay in southern Ethiopia. He has suggested further that the Somalis began their northward and eastward expansion out of the core area substantially before the Oromos commenced their movements in the same directions and that Somali groups not only preceded them in the north but were present in southern Somalia as early as the twelfth century, three to four centuries before there is any clear record of the Oromos in that area. In Lewis' view, sections of the Oromos began their migrations only in the fifteenth and sixteenth

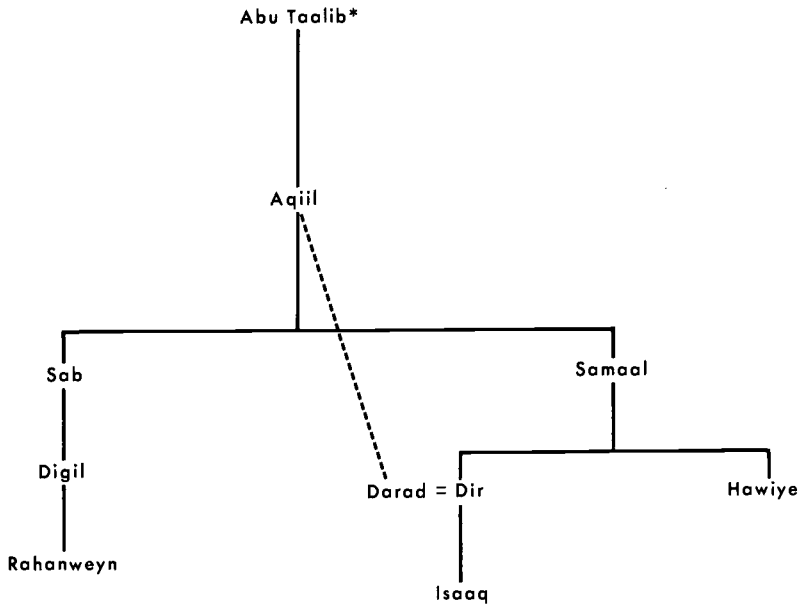


Figure 2. Simplified Traditional Genealogy of the Somali People

centuries, and their contact with the Somalis, usually hostile, dated from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this he is supported by the work of historian E. R. Turton and by the history of Oromo migrations in Ethiopia.

Among all sources, however, there is considerable agreement that the Somalis were in much of present-day Somalia and in parts of present-day Ethiopia known as the Haud (see Glossary) and the Ogaden at least by the twelfth century and probably earlier. The process of their conversion to Islam appears to have begun at about that time in the north under Arab influence but was not completed until several centuries later in the south. In the coastal towns and hinterlands—to which Arabs continued to migrate for centuries—intermarriage produced a distinct integrated Arab-Somali class of Arabic-speaking officials, merchants, craftsmen, and landowners similar to the Swahili-speaking Arab-Bantu class that emerged to the south along the East African coast. In some cases Arabs moved inland and established enclaved villages where, as the *gibil'aad* (pale skins), they became clients of the Somalis.

It was commonly held that the Shabeelle River marked the extreme limit of northward expansion of Bantu-speaking people along the East African coast and that it was reached by them in the tenth century. The black cultivators encountered by the Somalis in the Juba-Shabeelle area—the *zengi* referred to in Arab commentaries—were likewise assumed to have been Bantu-speakers, some of whom may have been assimilated by Somali clans. Although the issue remains an open one, the evidence for that hypothesis has been seriously questioned in the light of recent research. It can be demonstrated, for instance, that the ancestors of some of the Bantu-speaking population of the southern coastal area and interior were brought there as slaves after the arrival of the Somalis.

The two branches of the Somali people—the Samaal and the Sab—were differentiated culturally, physically, and linguistically, and they also developed divergent patterns of social and political organization. The Samaal nomads practiced what I. M. Lewis has described as "pastoral democracy," without permanent chiefs or formal courts. Whatever government that existed was conducted in the *shir*, an assembly composed of all adult males in a clan or lineage group. Although no less warlike, the Sab, by contrast, characteristically confederated under the leadership of a dominant lineage that held title to the land and defined themselves by the area in which they lived as well as by ties of kinship. In the southern river valleys where they settled, the Sab practiced a sedentary economy based on trade and herding and on the crops raised by their non-Somali clients. Affiliation with a landholding lineage, either by kinship or by adoption as a client, conferred the right to use its arable resources.

By the twelfth century the ancestors of some clan-families were established in the territories where most of their present-day descendants live, but movements of specific groups continued into the nineteenth century, both over long distances and as slight shifts within a given clan-family area or lands contiguous to it. For example the Dir clan-family, located primarily in the extreme northwest of the Somali distribution, has one clan, the Bimal, who lives in two segments more than 1,000 kilometers away on the southern coast and claim to have arrived there in the sixteenth century. The Darod, the largest of the Somali clan-families, range from the north to contiguous areas of Ethiopia. They are also situated west of the Juba River and into Kenya, an area from which they drove the Oromos in the mid-nineteenth century after the Darod had been forced out of the region between the Juba and Shabeelle rivers by the Rahanweyn, who had already settled there. It has been suggested that an important reason for the

conflict between the two groups was that the Rahanweyn, who were cattle herders and cultivators, could not tolerate the presence of the pastoral Darod whose camels, sheep, and goats would have destroyed crop and pastureland.

The continuing Somali migrations were in large part the result of conflict between groups of a pastoral nomadic people for access to grazing and water in a harsh environment. Such conflicts took place at least as often between clans and lineages of the same clan-family as between segments of different clan-families. Indeed from time to time there were temporary alliances between clans of one family and clans of another. In some cases confederacies were formed in which one lineage came to dominate the others, and its head, sometimes referred to as sultan, acquired a great deal of prestige. If successful in war a sultan might also exercise real political power. But with few exceptions such confederacies rarely endured for very long periods, and they did not lead to the establishment of administrative hierarchies. More often the title of sultan, when it was retained within a lineage, had only religious significance. In troubled times groups of Somalis sometimes rallied to war leaders who combined demonstrated military ability with what were seen as charismatic religious qualities. Periodically, puritanical religious orders also launched holy war against "lax" Muslims in the coastal towns or from the sedentary and ethnically mixed clans.

Ahmed Grañ

The Muslim emirates in the Horn of Africa carried on a centuries-long war of attrition against Abyssinia. The oldest and most famous of them was Adal, which had its capital at Seylac and whose line of emirs belonged to the town's ruling house. Adal was in turn part of the large sultanate of Ifat whose hegemony stretched at its height as far as the foothills of eastern Shewa. The northern Somali clans fell nominally under its suzerainty and fought in the sultan's armies. War was always waged as a religious crusade, but unity in the Muslim forces was difficult to sustain beyond a single campaign.

In 1415 Ifat was decisively beaten by the Abyssinians, and its sultan, Sad ad-Din, was killed in battle, subsequently to be revered as a saint by the Somalis. An Abyssinian victory song in celebration of the event makes the earliest recorded reference to the Somalis (or Samaal), who were listed among the defeated foes.

The sultanate fell apart, and Muslim power receded for a time, but in the second decade of the sixteenth century Adal became the base for a new assault on Abyssinia under the leadership of Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al Ghazi, better known as Ahmed Grañ—the left-handed. A famous warrior who had assumed the religious title of imam, Ahmed Grañ overthrew the ruling dynasty on the grounds

that it was more interested in the value of Seylac's trade with Abyssinia than in holy war against the Christians. Having moved his headquarters inland to Harer, the imam rallied an army of Somali and Afar warriors, reinforced by Turkish mercenaries who introduced field artillery in the Horn of Africa. In less than ten years he had conquered most of Abyssinia and divided it among Muslim emirs. Perhaps out of concern that the Ottoman sultan would attempt to impose suzerainty over the region, Ahmed Grañ dismissed his Turkish troops at a crucial point in the campaign before his victory over the Abyssinians was complete.

In 1542 the Abyssinian emperor Galawdewos, with Portuguese aid, inflicted a decisive defeat on the Muslims at Lake Tana, and Ahmed Grañ was killed in the fighting. The unity of purpose that the imam's personality had imposed on his Somali fighting force disappeared with his death, and their highland conquests were abandoned. The wars continued into the 1570s, ending only when both Somalis and Abyssinians had to face an invasion by the Oromos who, in the course of their northward migrations, drove a wedge between the older antagonists.

The Ottoman Empire cited Turkish participation in Ahmed Grañ's early campaigns to justify its territorial claims in the Horn of Africa, but otherwise the imam, through his conquests, left no lasting political legacy. Even at the apogee of his military success, he was unable—perhaps unwilling—to impose a government on the land he controlled and over the people who owed him allegiance. The nomadic pastoral Somalis were willing to fight in his cause and for Islam, but they were not amenable to being administered. Ahmed Grañ did become a folk hero among the Somalis, who tend to regard him as one of their own although there is no clear evidence of his origins. President Siad Barre has referred to him as the first significant character in Somali history.

Trade and Agriculture on the Benadir Coast

The turmoil caused by Ahmed Grañ's defeat generated the further movement of Somali clans from the north into the Juba and Shabeelle river basins. Of the two Sab clan-families living in that region, the Digil have apparently been there from an early date, but traditions of the much larger Rahanweyn speak of a continuing emigration lasting from late in the fifteenth century to the early seventeenth. As they arrived they confronted the Ajuran confederation, which was led by the Arab-influenced Hawiye, a Samaal clan-family that had entered the region from the Ogaden in the fourteenth century. The newcomers brought Ajuran rule to an end by the mid-seventeenth century, and political arrangements in the area thereafter involved the formation of confederations in which one or another Rahanweyn clan or lineage was dominant.

Non-Somali clients of the Digil and the Rahanweyn had farmed the limited fertile land in the southern river valleys for some time. Given the reluctance of Somalis to engage directly in farming, however, there were limits to the quantity of land cultivated. The increased availability of slaves, usually taken from Bantu-speaking farming peoples, permitted the extension of agriculture in the region in the nineteenth century. Slaves in turn were also the most important commodity in a network of trade carried on by the Somalis. That network brought ivory, rhinoceros horn, and aromatic woods and gums to the coastal towns for export and took up-country imported and locally made cloth, iron, dates, sugar, and jewelry. In pursuit of this trade the Somalis engaged in transactions with the peoples of southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, who included the Oromos. Some trade goods from the interior never reached the coast, as coffee, salt, and, above all, slaves were absorbed by the Somalis themselves. Clans bitterly contested the control of trade routes and in some instances established monopolies over the caravan trade into particular towns—the Bimal, for example, into Marka and their rivals, the Rahanweyn Geledi, into Mogadishu and Baraawe.

Originally slaves had been brought in by sea from southern East African ports as a small part of the slave trade to the Middle East. As Britain's Royal Navy became increasingly successful in cutting off the seaborne trade, however, slaves were walked in from the south. When the British also reduced the overland slave trade near the end of the century, agriculture declined, and some southern Somalis, who had become partially reliant on farming, reverted to nomadic pastoralism.

It was during this period of expanding trade and agricultural development that the Somali clans took advantage of the control they exercised over the trade routes to displace the ruling dynasties and merchant oligarchies of Arab origin that had dominated the towns of the Benadir Coast for centuries. These towns, however, remained under the nominal suzerainty of the Omani sultanate, which early in the nineteenth century had transferred its base to Zanzibar.

The Colonial Period

In the second half of the nineteenth century, several countries vied for control of Somali-populated territories, encountering little opposition from the Somalis. The contending powers were not only European but included Egypt (at that time an autonomous Ottoman province) and the independent African kingdom of Ethiopia. The division of territory was carried out by local representatives of the colonial powers rather than over negotiating tables in Europe. The process by which boundaries were delim-

ited contributed directly to the irredentism that became a significant political issue for the Somalis in the postcolonial period.

In 1865 the Ottoman sultan issued a decree ceding port towns on the western shore of the Red Sea to the khedive of Egypt, who was nominally his subject. The khedive cited the grant as pretext for assuming Ottoman claims to jurisdiction in the Horn of Africa. By 1874 Egypt had occupied towns on the Somali north coast, but Britain blocked additional Egyptian efforts to establish the khedive's authority in Baraawe on the Benadir Coast, which was loosely administered by Zanzibar. During a ten-year presence in Berbera, Seylac, and smaller northern coastal towns, the Egyptians improved port facilities, built mosques, and introduced limited control over the hinterlands by utilizing Somali clan headmen nominated by the khedive. Determined Egyptian attempts to expand inland met with tough Ethiopian resistance, but their troops succeeded in taking Harer. The Mahdist rebellion in Sudan compelled the khedive to recall his forces in 1883, however, and to abandon Egyptian holdings in the Horn. The Ethiopians occupied Harer the next year.

Britain's initial interest in the Somali coast was logistical. After the British annexation of Aden in 1840, treaties were entered into with two Somali sultanates to ensure an uninterrupted supply of cattle to feed the garrison there. Richard Burton's expedition to Harer in 1854, which attracted British attention to the region, was the first visit by a European explorer to the interior. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made more apparent the strategic importance of the coastal towns, and vice consuls were assigned to Berbera, Seylac, and Bulhar to protect British interests. In 1884, following the Egyptian departure, a resident political agent was appointed, and further treaties were concluded with the clans, leading to the establishment of the Somali Coast Protectorate (subsequently British Somaliland Protectorate) administered by the India Office in London. Under the treaties, protected clans allowed Britain to represent their interests in return for a subsidy paid by the British government. But as the name of the new dependency indicated, colonial authorities made no specific claims to jurisdiction in the interior. In 1898 responsibility for administering the protectorate was transferred to the Foreign Office, operating through a consul general, and in 1907 to the Colonial Office.

In 1859 France had obtained a treaty with the Afar people for rights to the small port of Obock, north of present-day Djibouti, but had used the area only as a trading station. Anglo-French rivalry along the route to India in the 1880s led the British to close the port of Aden to French shipping. As a result in 1883 the French began to develop a coaling station at Djibouti.

The Italians entered the colonial race quite late and became interested in the Horn as one of the few parts of the continent not

already claimed by a major power. The port of Aseb in Eritrea had been purchased by an Italian shipping firm for a coaling station in 1870. Ownership passed to the Italian government in 1882, and in 1885, with the agreement of the British, the Italians took over Mitsiwa from the departing Egyptians, simultaneously laying claim to the entire Eritrean coast. In 1889 Italy and the new Ethiopian emperor, Menelik II, agreed to the Treaty of Uccíali. According to a unilateral Italian interpretation of its provisions, the treaty made Ethiopia a protectorate within the Italian sphere of influence and authorized Italy to act on Ethiopia's behalf in dealing with Britain and France on border questions.

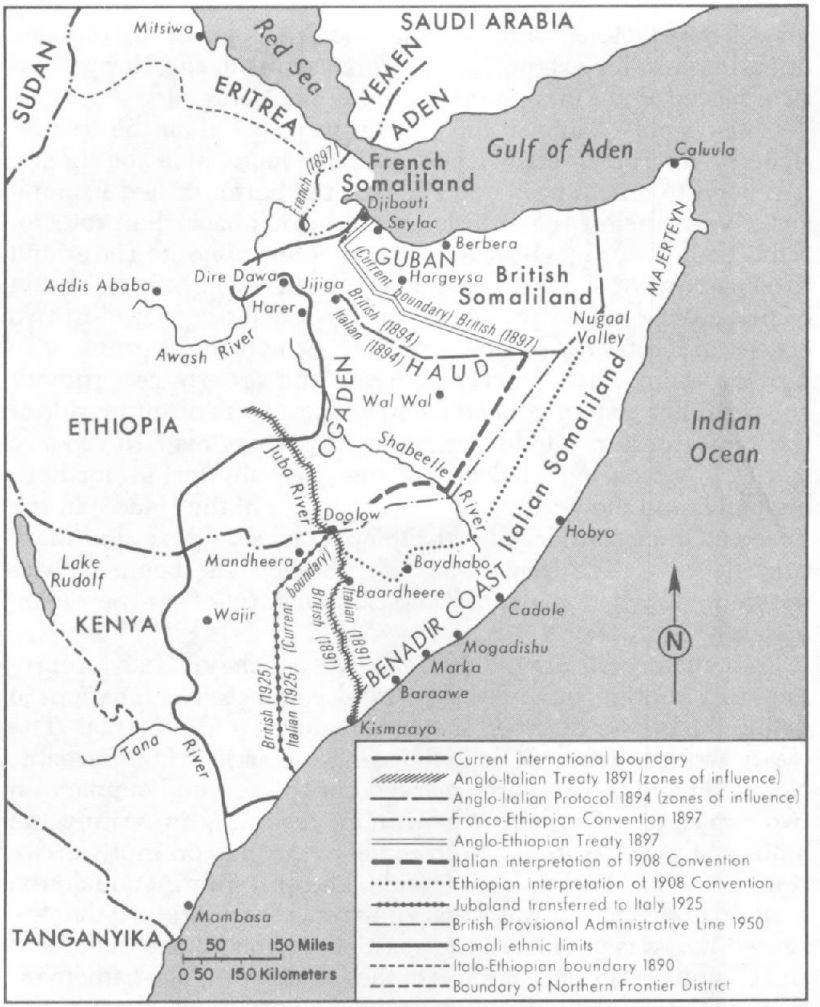
The Italian entry into Somalia proper started in 1889, when the Somali sultans of Hobyo (Obbia) on the coast of the Indian Ocean and of Caluula (Alula), facing the Gulf of Aden, began to accept annual payments from Italy in exchange for protectorate status. That same year Italy obtained rights to the Benadir Coast, partly by direct twenty-five-year lease from the sultan of Zanzibar and partly by sublease from the Imperial British East Africa Company, which had earlier leased territory from the region's nominal ruler. The leases covered the area from Warshiikh (Uarsciech) southward to the mouth of the Juba River and included Mogadishu, Marka, and Baraawe. The Italian government chartered a commercial firm, the Filonardi Company, as its representative to administer and develop the leasehold. Agents of the company expanded the area under Italian control, signing treaties with local clans in return, in some cases, for armed protection against the Ethiopians.

Division of Somali-Occupied Territory

Without consulting Ethiopia, Britain and Italy agreed to treaties in 1891 and 1894 that defined the boundaries between their respective zones of influence. The inland boundaries divided the territories claimed by Ethiopia by placing the Ogaden region in the Italian sphere and the Haud region in the British sphere (see fig. 3).

In 1896 Italian forces invading Ethiopia from Eritrea to enforce Italy's claim to a protectorate were resoundingly defeated by Menelik's army at the battle of Adowa. Despite the resulting opposition in Italy to colonial ventures and the financial collapse of the Filonardi Company, the military disaster did not weaken Italy's position in Somalia. But it did make necessary a redefinition of the interior boundaries between the European-held territories and Ethiopia.

Arrangements for delimitation began in 1897 when a British negotiator, Rennell Rodd, led a special mission to Menelik, the main purpose of which was to ensure Ethiopian neutrality in the British campaign against the Mahdists in Sudan. The Ethiopian



Source: Adapted from Irving Kaplan, et. al., *Area Handbook for Somalia*, Washington, 1977, p. 22.

Figure 3. Frontiers and Colonial Boundaries, 1891–1960

position was strengthened by the fact that Ethiopia had already claimed suzerainty over the whole of Somalia and had rapidly expanded its control over Somali-populated areas. A strong Ethiopian garrison had been established at Harer, just beyond the border tentatively claimed by Britain in its role as protector of Somali clans inhabiting the area. Furthermore Ethiopia had recently obtained territorial concessions from Britain's colonial rivals, the Italians in Eritrea and the French in Djibouti, the latter having voluntarily withdrawn their claimed boundaries by 100 kilome-

ters. These factors, combined with the British government's lack of enthusiasm for extending its commitments in the Horn of Africa, placed Rodd in a poor bargaining position.

Britain's only claims in the interior were based on the treaties signed with Somali clans whose primary motivation for signing had been to obtain protection against the better armed Ethiopians. Nevertheless the British agreed to pull back the protectorate's boundaries by about eleven kilometers opposite Harer and to concede most of the Haud region to the east. The only reflection of Britain's promised protection of the Somalis appeared in two clauses of the treaty, one requiring the Ethiopian government to provide them with "good treatment" and orderly government and the other guaranteeing the nomads pasturage on either side of the new frontier. Rodd expressed misgivings over the loss of territory, which included half of the generally fertile northern highlands and the vital seasonal grazing area of the Haud, but the Foreign Office considered that Ethiopia's goodwill was of primary consequence. The treaty was not published, the boundary was not immediately demarcated, and Ethiopian rule over the region was only lightly felt.

Immediately after the Rodd treaty was concluded, Italy's representative in Ethiopia, Cesare Nerazzini, conducted negotiations to define the border between Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia. The treaty arrangements, while definitive, were arrived at informally. Nerazzini and the emperor marked out the agreed boundary on two copies of a German map without recording in writing the limits on the treaty itself. Both copies of the map promptly disappeared and have never been found. The only information on the location of the border was Nerazzini's report on his return that the agreed line was parallel to the coast about 300 kilometers inland and terminated at the cataracts of the Juba River. The Ethiopians claimed that the boundary line decided on was much closer to the coast. In 1908, eleven years after the Menelik-Nerazzini Treaty, an attempt was made to resolve the matter. Italy paid an indemnity to Ethiopia for the territory it had already occupied, but no agreement was reached except for the delimitation of the point at which Kenya, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopia met and the tracing of the border to a location 130 kilometers north of Doolow (Dolo) on the Juba.

Somalia's present-day border with Kenya is a result of the secret arrangements that brought Italy into World War I on the side of the Allies. Britain promised to cede part of its own colonial holdings in compensation for Italy's exclusion from the division of German colonial territory already agreed to by Britain and France. A treaty drawn up in 1920 and ratified in 1924 provided that Italy take over the area west of the Juba River up to the

forty-first parallel, including the port of Kismaayo (Kisimayo). Known as Jubaland, it was incorporated into Italian Somaliland the following year. The new boundary left a Somali-populated area (Northern Frontier District) within Kenya that was equal in size to the ceded territory.

Mohamed Abdullah

The only impediments to the expansion of colonial rule were the competing territorial claims of the European powers and the Ethiopians. Somali clans acquiesced in—and frequently sought—treaties of protection offered by Britain and Italy as well as the subsidies and trading privileges that accompanied them. Direct European involvement was limited to the ports, which historically had been under non-Somali control, and was primarily concerned with improving trade. During the 1890s, for example, the British presence in the protectorate consisted of only about a dozen civilian officials, a company of Indian troops, and some local employees stationed in Berbera, Seylac, and Bulhar.

In 1899, however, the process of peaceful colonial occupation was brought to an abrupt halt by an insurrection inspired by a remarkable figure, Mohamed ibn Abdullah Hassan. An imam of the puritanical Salihiya *tariqa* (religious order or brotherhood), Mohamed Abdullah preached his order's fundamentalist version of Islam in Berbera, inveighing against the foreign influences that violated its precepts. He was particularly enraged by the availability of alcohol and by the opening of a French-run Roman Catholic orphanage that had taken in Somali children.

Mohamed Abdullah won few converts in Berbera where urban Somalis, who had prospered from improved opportunities for trade under colonial rule, cooperated with British authorities. Opposed by members of the larger and less severe Qadiriya order and the Isaaq, who were prominent traders in the town, the imam departed for the interior to preach to nomadic pastoralists less susceptible to foreign blandishments than were the coastal people. His ability as an orator and a poet—much-valued skills in Somali society—won him a large number of disciples, especially among his own Dolbahante and Ogaden clans (both of the Darod clan-family). He referred to his followers as dervishes rather than calling them by their customary lineage names.

The imam's followers venerated him as a saint endowed with a charisma that conferred on him not only prestige as a teacher but also personal immunity from attack. The authority that he exercised over them was essentially religious rather than political or military, but British officials who dismissed him as a religious fanatic—calling him epithetically the "Mad Mullah"—seriously underestimated the strength of Mohamed Abdullah's appeal to the Somalis. His insurgency was apparently touched off when

authorities demanded that he surrender one of his followers who had been accused of stealing a government-issue rifle. (To promote peace on the frontier with Ethiopia and to discourage clan warfare, the colonial administration had as a matter of policy sought to deny modern rifles to protected Somali groups, who complained as a result that they were deprived of the means of defending themselves against harassment by soldiers in Ethiopian-controlled areas.)

Summoning an army of 3,000 dervishes, Mohamed Abdullah seized the traditional watering place of the Isaaq at Bura and massacred the inhabitants of a Qadiriya settlement at Sheekh (Sheikh) about sixty kilometers from Berbera. His warriors also laid seige to the Ethiopian garrison at Jijiga and spread the insurrection among their Darod kinsmen in Kenya. Between 1901 and 1904 four expeditions were mounted to hunt down the imam. The first two were composed of British-led Ethiopian soldiers and Somali irregulars, and the last two were upgraded with several thousand reinforcements that included British regulars, Indian units, elements of the King's African Rifles, and Afrikaner mounted troops from South Africa. The Somali contingent was the largest in each of these military exercises. Although British troops met the dervishes in several engagements, the imam always eluded capture.

Still smarting from the disaster at Adowa in 1896, Italy refused to cooperate with British efforts to suppress the insurrection, but in 1905 Britain accepted Italian mediation in arranging a truce that conferred on the imam an Italian subsidy and autonomous protected status in the Nugaal (Nogal) Valley. Mohamed Abdullah did not gain extensive support in Italian Somaliland, although some clans there declared themselves dervishes and robbed cattle from the herds of other Somalis who were deemed too accommodating to the Italians.

The truce lasted only three years—long enough for Mohamed Abdullah to regroup the dervishes for a jihad (holy war) against the British and Ethiopians as well as Somalis who rejected his teachings. At the height of his strength the imam had as many as 10,000 dervishes under arms.

In 1910 the British government, unwilling to invest more manpower and resources in the colony, ordered a withdrawal to the coastal area and abandoned the interior to him. Protected Somalis were issued rifles and left to devise their own defenses. Over the next few years the dervishes terrorized the entire region, taking a heavy toll among the clans that opposed them. (It has been estimated that one-third of the male population of British Somaliland died during this period as a result of the insurrection.) In 1913 they annihilated the British-led Somali Camel Constabu-

lary in an action at Dul Madoobe (Dul Madoba). During World War I Mohamed Abdullah received German and Turkish support, including assistance in building a formidable stronghold at Taleex (Taleh), and he made an accommodation with the pro-German Ethiopian emperor, Lij Iyasu, who had lately converted to Islam.

At the end of the war London's attention turned to colonial trouble spots that had been neglected for the duration, but the dervish movement in British Somaliland had already been weakened by desertion and the defection of entire clans grown discontented with the imam. Pacification, assigned to several Indian battalions and the newly formed Somaliland Camel Corps, was carried out efficiently. In February 1920 British warplanes bombed Taleex, where Mohamed Abdullah had chosen to make his stand. Rejecting surrender and pursued by Somali irregulars, the imam fled to a camp in Ethiopia to reorganize his followers but died there of natural causes later in the year. Leaderless and demoralized, the dervish movement dissolved.

Mohamed Abdullah's twenty-year defiance of the British Empire was more than a local insurgency against colonial rule. To some modern Somali observers, it contained the elements of a war of national liberation. For the imam it was a holy war aimed not only against the infidel but also against the Muslims who collaborated with the nonbeliever. In proclaiming the holy war, Mohamed Abdullah had cited as his objectives the purification of Islam, the ousting of foreigners from Somali territory and, significantly, the unification of the Somali people. So great was his personal appeal that he could command a loyalty that superseded that of lineage. But to a great extent the insurrection was a continuation of the traditional feuds among rival clans, a confrontation between nomadic and coastal Somalis, and an excuse for large-scale cattle rustling.

In the final analysis Mohamed Abdullah was defeated as much by his fellow Somalis as by the British. They turned against him, tired of the chaos, destruction, and famine that were the consequences of his insurgency. British-led Somali forces took part in all the campaigns against him. Yet, with the emergence of nationalism in its modern form, Mohamed Abdullah has been hailed as a popular hero in Somalia and the prime source of the Somali sense of national identity.

Italian and British Colonial Administration

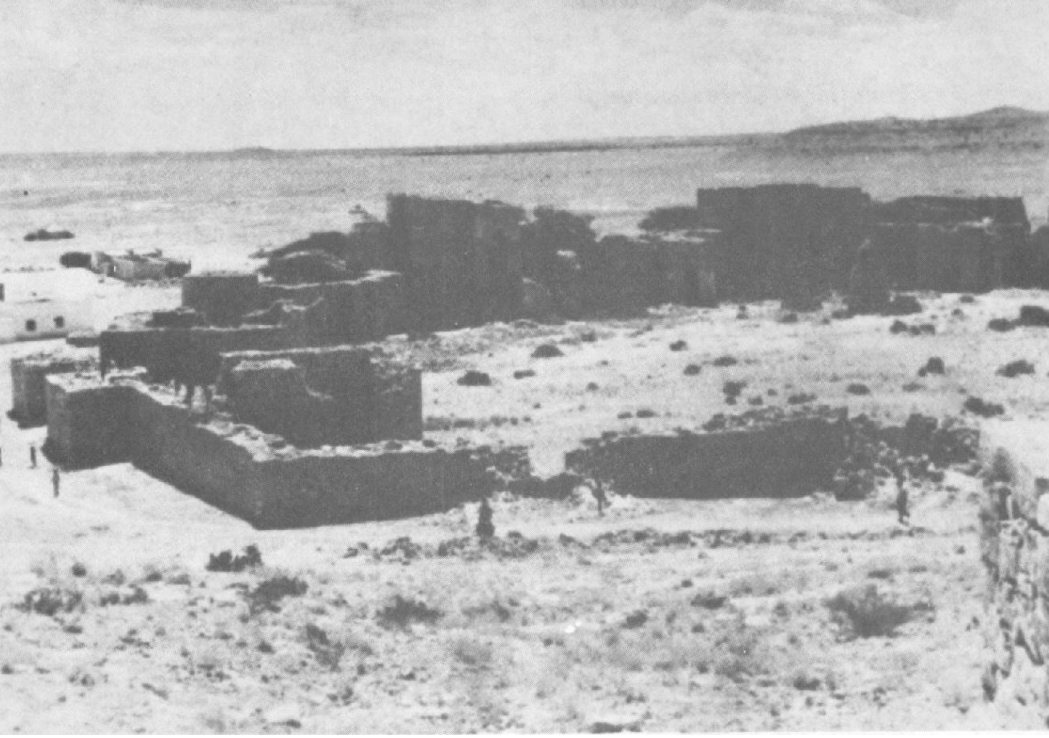
After suppressing Mohamed Abdullah's insurgency, Britain determined for security reasons to extend effective control to the borders with Ethiopia. Italian territorial expansion occurred during the same period but was largely the result of a desire to exploit the agricultural potential of the region between the Shabeelle and Juba rivers and to provide economic opportunities for Italian colo-

nists. In 1905 the Italian government had terminated the charter of the Benadir Company, successor to the failed Filonardi Company, and assumed direct responsibility for governing the colony. Not until 1927, however, when a military campaign was required to end the semiautonomous status claimed by the sultans of Obbia and Majerteyn, did all of Italian Somaliland actually come under direct colonial administration.

Completion of the railroad connecting the French port of Djibouti with Addis Ababa in 1917 diminished the value of Seylac and Berbera as depots for trade with the interior, but the Italians were able to exploit the ancient trade routes between the Ogaden and Mogadishu and thus to gain control of the import and export trade with southern Ethiopia. Intensified economic activity in the region facilitated gradual infiltration of the underadministered areas of Ethiopia adjoining Italian Somaliland. Early hopes for resettling farmers from Italy's poorer regions in the colony's fertile areas foundered, and other ambitious agricultural schemes involving concessions for large commercial plantations were slowed by the unforeseen difficulty involved in recruiting local labor. The potential labor market was composed largely of the sedentary peoples who had formerly been slaves or clients of the dominant Somalis. These people, however, preferred work on their own lands to wage labor, whereas the pastoralists were uninterested in agriculture. The colonial government at an early date began compulsory labor recruitment, which continued even after passage of new labor laws that provided for better conditions for workers.

Despite these difficulties, agricultural production in the colony increased at a good rate. In some measure this was due to the initiative of a member of the Italian royal family, Prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, duke of Abruzzi, who in 1920 found the Italo-Somali Agricultural Society (Societá Agricola Italo-Somala—SAIS) to develop about 200,000 hectares of concessionary land in the Shabeelle valley for mechanized commercial agriculture. Export crops intended for the Italian market included bananas, sugarcane, and cotton. The colony's only other significant products were livestock, hides, skins, and salt from an Italian plant begun at Ras Hafun in 1920.

SAIS was liberally underwritten by financial and industrial interests in Italy, but it was obvious that the colony's economic development required substantial public funding which the government of the day was not prepared to provide, to supplement private investment. Widely felt changes in the colonial policy were instituted by Benito Mussolini's fascist regime, which came to power in 1922. The first fascist governor of Italian Somaliland, Cesare Maria de Vecchi, brought with him to the colony a pro-



Remains of fortress at Taleex from which the dervish movement of Mohamed Abdullah resisted the British authority
Courtesy Somali Embassy, Washington

pensity for construction. By 1928 more than 6,000 kilometers of earthen and gravel roads had been built, and a light railroad (subsequently destroyed in World War II and never reconstructed) connected the plantations at Villagio Duca degli Abruzzi (Jowhar) and Afgooye (Afgoi) to Mogadishu.

The fascist administration was highly centralized, although amenable indigenous leaders were allowed to exercise a degree of influence not permitted in the British colony and were employed by the Italians to open the way for the "peaceful penetration" of the interior. Somali judges were appointed to administer Islamic and customary law. Somalis staffed the lower ranks of the paramilitary colonial gendarmerie (Corpo Zaptié) established in 1923. Limited educational facilities were created at the primary level for Somalis, a small number of whom held minor clerical positions in government offices. During the 1930s the fascists adopted racial legislation intended to ensure, in theory as well as in fact, the superior status of the Italian colonists and the subject status of the Somalis, who sometimes were made to endure brutal treatment at the hands of officials. Colonial society was more open than would appear, however, and individual settlers, who eventually num-

bered about 8,000, often bent the rules to accommodate the Somalis.

Economic development in British Somaliland between the two world wars was limited. After 1920 the colonial administration was required by the home government to finance all operations in the country from its own resources, but attempts to impose direct taxation proved impossible to implement because of Somali intransigence. Most revenue was derived from import and export duties, but the important trade route to Ethiopia, initially cut during the insurgency, was permanently closed by the completion of the Djibouti railroad. As a consequence, government expenditure for development was largely restricted to well digging and the provision of veterinary services. Some assistance was also given to encourage improvements in agriculture carried out by the Somalis on their own initiative in the better watered areas of the northwestern highlands.

Other British efforts were aimed at the expansion of the extremely limited educational facilities. The first effort to increase the number of schools, however, was linked to the imposition of direct taxation, and opposition to taxation became popularly linked with opposition to the schools. This opposition was reinforced by conservative religious sentiment that considered British-sponsored education a threat to Islam.

Wartime Somalia

The Italian infiltration of the Somali-populated Ogaden area had begun before 1930 and was assisted by several factors. Italians had come to dominate the economy through their control of the external trade routes. Moreover the boundary between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland, although confirmed by a 1908 convention, had never been marked off on the ground and was subject to different interpretations by the two parties. Because of shortages of trained personnel, the Ethiopian government had never been able to extend its administration into the eastern half of the region. In addition some Somali clans demanded Italian protection for their people who lived in Ogaden.

The Italians posed as the champions of Somali irredentism and attempted, with some success, to win the support of the Somalis of the Ogaden. Since 1930 Somali troops of the Corpo Zaptié had occupied territory to a depth of more than 150 kilometers inside Ethiopia, a fact that was evidently known but tacitly accepted by the Ethiopian government. In November 1934 the Italians provoked an armed confrontation with Ethiopian troops at Wal Wal, the site of wells used by Somalis regularly traversing the Ogaden in an area clearly inside Ethiopia.

Despite feeble attempts by the League of Nations to mediate the dispute, Mussolini used the incident as an excuse for opening hostilities with Ethiopia. Italian forces invaded Ethiopia from

Monument to Somali patriot Mohamed Abdullah occupies a prominent site in Mogadishu
Courtesy Somali Embassy, Washington

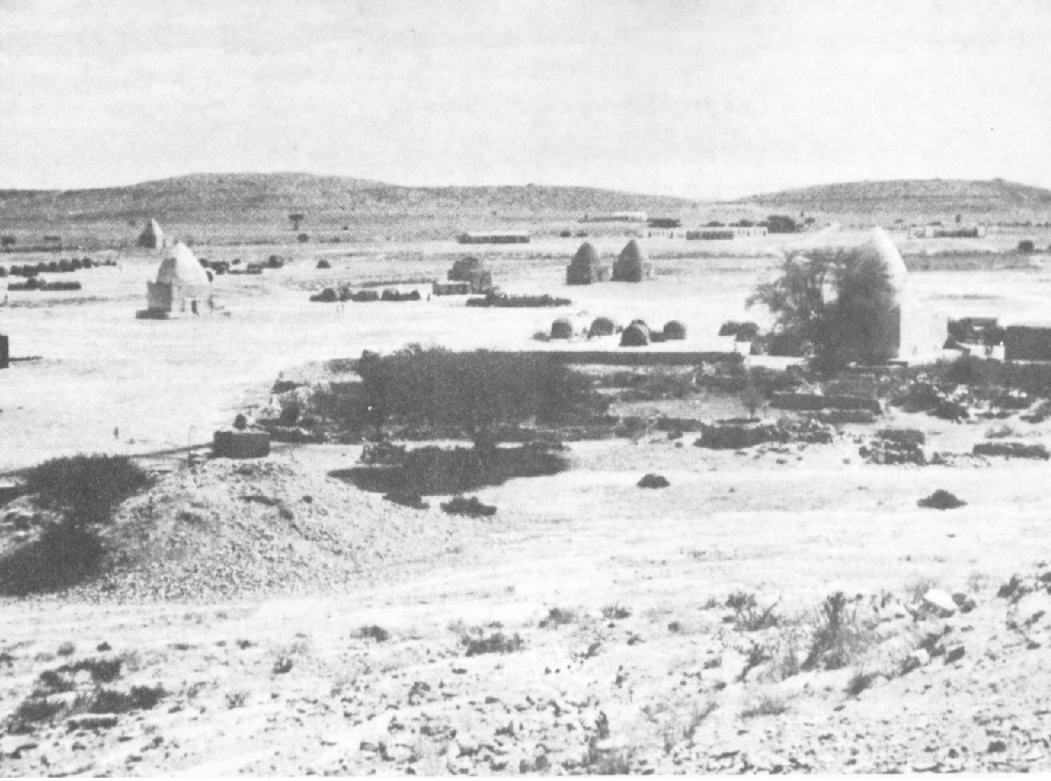
Somaliland and Eritrea without a declaration of war in October 1935, commencing a seven-month campaign that concluded with the capture of Addis Ababa and the Italian annexation of Ethiopia in May 1936. The Ogaden was detached from Ethiopia and included in the new, enlarged province of Somalia, which together with Eritrea and a reduced Ethiopia constituted Italian East Africa. Nearly 40,000 Somalis had been mobilized for service in the war with Ethiopia in combat, support, and labor units—6,000 of them in the Corpo Zaptié.

Italy entered World War II in June 1940, declaring war on Britain and France. In August three Italian columns invaded British Somaliland and within two weeks had overrun the protectorate, forcing the evacuation of the small British garrison there. Meanwhile an Italian brigade had crossed into Kenya and advanced toward Lake Rudolf. By the end of the year, however, the Italians had drawn a defense line at the Juba River in the face of a British buildup in East Africa. In early February 1941 the British launched an offensive against Italian forces in Somalia with three divisions—one South African and two composed largely of East African colonial troops—that was coordinated with a simultaneous attack on Eritrea. Mogadishu was taken within the month, and in March British units based in Aden effected a landing at Berbera. Addis Ababa was liberated in April, and the last isolated pocket of Italian resistance in East Africa was compelled to surrender in November. British forces captured nearly 200,000 Italian prisoners, including Somali troops, during the campaign, in addition to large quantities of war matériel.

The British Military Administration

British military administrations were set up in the protectorate and in both Somalia and the eastern portions of Ethiopia that had been annexed to it in 1936. Nearly all of the Somalis—except some in southern Ethiopia and the small number in French Somaliland—had thereby come under British control. No common administration for the three areas was contemplated, however, and Britain agreed to an eventual return of the Ogaden to Ethiopian jurisdiction. In British Somaliland a military governor, assisted by an army council, carried on the work formerly assigned to civilian colonial service officers. In Somalia a small corps of army political officers reported to the area military commander.

The priority of the British military administration in wartime was naturally to restore order and provide security in the region. The Somaliland Camel Corps was reorganized in the protectorate, and five battalions were raised for the Somaliland Scouts, incorporating former irregular units. In the south the Italian security organization was dismantled, and the Somalia Gendarmerie was formed to police the occupied territory under British officers. Initially manned by askari (African soldiers) from Kenya, serving with British forces, and reinforced by Somali irregulars, the par-



Relatives of Mohamed Abdullah and other Somali patriots are buried in these tombs near Taleex. Courtesy Somali Embassy, Washington

amilitary organization was later composed of local recruits who received training in a police school established by the military administration. Forces in the two territories cooperated in rounding up Italian stragglers and in the difficult task of disarming Somali nomads in the interior who had taken advantage of the windfall in weapons provided by the war. Combating the well-armed bands of *shifta* (bandits), who raided the Ogaden from Ethiopia, remained a troublesome problem throughout the period of military administration.

But the British military administrators who controlled the two Somali colonies from 1941 to 1949 also accomplished more social and political change than had their Italian and British predecessors since colonial rule was first imposed. London's reversal of the prewar policy requiring that British Somaliland be self-supporting allowed additional funds to be made available for development. The protectorate's capital was moved from Berbera to Hargeysa (Hargesa), a religious and trading center for the nomadic herders in the interior, to indicate greater British involvement in Somali problems. Although the civil service remained inadequate in

numbers, efforts were undertaken to improve agricultural and health services and to influence Somali opinion in favor of development. The military administration succeeded in opening a number of secular schools where there had been only subsidized Quranic schools before 1939.

The local court system was also reorganized, and local advisory and planning committees were established in the towns. In 1946 the Protectorate Advisory Council was created in which districts were represented by Somali appointees of both modern and traditional orientation.

In Somalia the military administration ensured better pay and working conditions for the agricultural labor force. By 1947 the number of pupils in the elementary schools had increased to twice the prewar figure, and a center for training elementary school teachers was opened. The British also provided the opportunity for Somalis to qualify as junior officials in the civil service and the gendarmerie. In addition the first chance for Somali political activity opened up as Italian-appointed clan chiefs were gradually displaced by elected advisory assemblies at the clan level. District and provincial councils were also created to advise the military administration.

The military administration continued to depend on Italian civilians in the colony to keep the economy functioning and to operate public services. Only those civilians who were regarded as security risks were interned. In early 1943 Italians were allowed to form political associations. New Italian organizations of all political persuasions immediately sprung up and began to agitate for an eventual return to Italian rule. In the face of such pressure the British and Somalis saw each other as allies. The British accordingly encouraged the formation of the first modern Somali political organization, the Somali Youth Club (SYC), founded in Mogadishu in May 1943.

SYC was strengthened from the beginning by the inclusion of better educated civil servants and police officers in its membership and leadership. Under any other British jurisdiction this group would have been prevented from engaging in politics by civil service rules, but in Somalia they were allowed to join SYC because it served as a counterweight to the Italian interests.

The SYC grew rapidly in popularity and had gained an estimated membership of 25,000 by 1946. Its name was changed to the Somali Youth League (SYL) in 1947, at which time branches operated not only in Somalia but also in British Somaliland and in the Somali-populated areas of Ethiopia and Kenya. The SYL had announced as its aims the unification of Somali territory, creation of widespread opportunity for modern education, development of the Somali language through the adoption of a standard written

form, and general protection of Somali interests, including opposition to the reimposition of Italian colonial rule. The organization's thirteen founding members represented five of Somali's six clan-families, and its members made strong efforts to promote the concept of a common Somali nationality without regard for clan divisions, going so far as to refuse to use their clan names. A second political body, initially called the Patriotic Benefit Union, was established in the same period. In 1947 it became the Somali Digil Clan Party (Hizbia Digil-Mirifle Somali—HDMS). The HDMS represented the agricultural clans of the regions between the Juba and Shabeelle rivers against what its supporters saw as the dominance of the SYL by pastoral interests. In its opposition to these interests, the HDMS was willing to accept considerable financial support from the Italians. Although the SYL had some northern supporters, the chief parties in British Somaliland were the Somaliland National League (SNL), which represented the dominant Isaaq clan-family, and the United Somali Party (USP), which had the backing of the Dir and northern Darod.

Technically, British-administered Somalia remained an Italian possession at the end of World War II, but at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 the Allies agreed that Italian colonies seized during the war would not be returned to Italy. Responsibility for deciding their disposition fell to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, which delegated the Four Power Commission (composed of representatives of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States) to study the question of Somalia's future. In January 1948 the commission arrived in Mogadishu to hear testimony. The SYL obtained permission from the military administration for a rally to demonstrate popular support for its opposition to the reimposition of Italian jurisdiction in any form. Rioting occurred, and fifty-one Italians and seventeen Somalis lost their lives when Italian-backed groups attempted to disrupt the rally and discredit the SYL in the commission's eyes. In spite of the disorder the commission continued its hearings and was impressed by the program presented by the SYL's spokesmen, Abdullahi Issa and Haji Mohamed Hussein. In addition to the unification of all Somali territories, the SYL requested a trusteeship under an international commission for a ten-year period to be followed by full independence. The HDMS offered a similar solution, breaking with its stance that Italy should be the administering power but recommending a thirty-year trusteeship. Also presenting their views were Somali groups and Italian interests that favored an Italian trusteeship or even a return to Italian rule.

Although the Four Power Commission reported favorably on a trusteeship similar to that envisioned by the SYL, the Council of Foreign Ministers could not agree on a formula for guiding the country to independence. The United States called for international administration of a trusteeship and France, for a return to

Italian control. British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin outlined a plan calling for a British-supervised trusteeship over all territory then under military administration and leading—on condition of Ethiopian approval—to eventual independence for Greater Somalia. Bevin's proposal, which mirrored in most respects the position of the SYL, was withdrawn when the United States and the Soviet Union accused Britain of seeking its own aggrandizement at the expense of Ethiopia and Italy. Prospects that a communist regime might come to power in Italy explained Soviet concern for Italian interests at that time.

In 1948 Britain turned over the Ogaden to Ethopia, in effect dashing nationalist hopes for an international agreement creating Greater Somalia. Although it had historical claims to the region, Ethiopia attempted for the first time to impose effective control over the Ogaden. The blow of the transfer was softened somewhat for the Ogaden clans, whose chiefs had unsuccessfully petitioned the British government to retain its jurisdiction there, by the payment to them of a large indemnity from Britain. The following year Britain also ended its administration of the Haud but, with Ethiopian consent, continued to station liaison officers in the so-called Reserved Areas. Their mission was to ensure the security of nomadic pastoralists who grazed their herds in the Haud six months out of the year and whose protected clans made up half the population of British Somaliland.

Meanwhile the unresolved issue of Somalia was passed by the Council of Foreign Ministers to the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) for a solution. In November 1949 the General Assembly assigned a trusteeship over the former colony to Italy for a period of ten years under UN supervision, with the clear proviso that the Italian administration was to prepare the former colonial territory for independence before the end of 1960. In coming to that decision the General Assembly accepted the argument that Italy was the best qualified power to undertake the task by virtue of political experience and economic interests in its former colony. Although the SYL had continually opposed any return to Italian control, the UN decision was accepted without protest because of the guarantee that independence would be obtained in so short a period.

Trusteeship and Protectorate: Creating the Somali State

The Trust Territory of Somalia entered the 1950s under Italian administration with a political advantage not held by other colonial territories: it had a date set for independence and the opportunity to prepare purposefully for self-government. British Somaliland, which was to be merged with the trust territory in forming the new Somali state, had no such advantage. Accordingly its development, although greatly accelerated by the colo-

nial administration, proceeded haphazardly. The marked disparity between the two areas continued until their independence in 1960.

In view of the expressed opposition to renewed Italian administration of Somalia, the Italian trusteeship was carefully circumscribed. The UN Trusteeship Agreement placed responsibility for the trust territory in the hands of a special government agency, the Italian Trusteeship Administration (Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia—AFIS). The agreement also created the UN Advisory Council, which was based in Mogadishu and reported directly to the Trusteeship Council. This international panel was empowered to examine AFIS programs and to recommend further actions to ensure the implementation of the agreement's objectives. The agreement provided for the establishment of political institutions, expansion of the education system, social and economic advancement, and guarantees of complete freedom of speech and press and the right to petition.

Despite these guarantees of political and civil rights, relations between the new Italian administrators and the Somali nationalists were strained. The Italians, fearing a violent display of opposition to their return, arrived with a show of military force and immediately attempted to suppress the SYL, which was seen as the center of anti-Italian feeling. Some SYL leaders were jailed, and others were dropped from the high civil service positions they had obtained under the British. The Somalis reacted with rioting that was forcibly suppressed. The antagonism lasted for three years, until economic and political development programs began to provide an outlet for the energies of the nationalists.

A series of seven-year development programs was inaugurated in 1954. These programs were based on plans drawn up by the UN and by the United States International Cooperation Administration (predecessor of the United States Agency for International Development). They concentrated on efforts to stimulate indigenous agriculture and to improve infrastructure. Exports were trebled during the seven-year program period, but a severe balance of payments deficit persisted, and government revenues, largely dependent on import and export duties, continued to be wholly inadequate.

The development plans for education were more successfully implemented. The number of students in 1957 had risen to double the 1952 figure. Nearly 2,000 were enrolled in secondary, technical, and university-level programs in Somalia, Italy, and Egypt. In addition attention was directed to the adult literacy program and to training the civil servants who would be the new nation's political leaders.

The development of institutions to serve as bases for the country's future self-government was also far more encouraging than the economic picture. In line with the UN resolution, the AFIS

established a national consultative body, the Territorial Council, in 1950. The council immediately became an active body, engaging in the full-scale debate of proposed AFIS legislation. The thirty-five-member body, which AFIS was required to consult on all important issues, included representatives of both traditional interests and the political parties, the latter gradually gaining a dominant position during the five years that the council sat. Those who participated in its deliberations gained experience in legislative and committee procedure, as well as a first-hand view of the political, social, and economic problems that the government would confront when Somalia attained its independence. The council's support for legislation also gave legitimacy to the AFIS operation in Somali eyes.

Other Somalis gained executive and legislative experience through participation in the forty-eight municipal councils created after 1950. With the aid of secretaries trained in municipal administration, the members handled matters of town planning, public services, and (after 1956) fiscal and budgetary matters. The central government retained the power to overrule council decisions and to dismiss mayors and councillors.

The district councils, responsible for rural areas, were considerably weaker than their urban counterparts and were concerned primarily with settling disputes over grazing and water rights according to customary law. Attempts to give the councils wider powers were limited by the nature of the pastoral economy. The nomads' search for pasture for their herds required nearly constant movement, which made any identification with political boundaries—even international borders—all but impossible. The Advisory Council's intention that the district councils could be used as channels for development proved impossible to fulfill, and the reins of government in nomadic areas remained largely in the hands of district commissioners.

The 1954 municipal elections provided the first opportunity for widespread political participation, and the elections were conducted in a spirited but orderly fashion. Eleven of the fifteen competing parties won seats, but only the SYL, which gained approximately 45 percent of the vote, and the HDMS, winning almost 25 percent, commanded the support of significant portions of the electorate.

The first national elections were held in 1956 to choose delegates to the new seventy-seat Legislative Assembly that replaced the Territorial Council. Again only the SYL, which won forty-three seats, and the HDMS, gaining thirteen seats, made significant showings in the ten-party race for sixty Somali-held posts. Ten seats in the assembly were reserved for elected representatives of the Italian, Arab, and Indian communities.

The leader of the SYL in the assembly, Abdullahi Issa, was called on to become the first premier of a government that included five

other ministers—all Somalis. The new assembly possessed full legislative power in all domestic matters, although the senior official of AFIS retained the power of absolute veto as well as the right to issue emergency regulations without prior assembly approval. The AFIS retained control over external relations including the sensitive issue of resolving the frontier dispute with Ethiopia. Foreign financial affairs remained under Italian control until February 1957, and defense and public order did not pass entirely into Somali hands until 1958.

The 1956 election was conducted in sedentary areas by secret ballot and male suffrage. In the interior the nomadic nature of the society made registration much more difficult, and for this reason a clan voting system was approved. Nomadic pastoralists of each clan met in an assembly and decided jointly on the candidate for whom all their votes would be cast. (There were 600 such assemblies.) Clan leaders then informed the authorities of the assembly's decision and the number of individual votes. The total number of votes cast in the territory far outnumbered the estimated size of the actual electorate. This incident did little to diminish the enthusiasm of the Somali people for their first opportunity at political expression, but it left a residue of interparty distrust for a number of years. Because the SYL was the strongest party in the nomadic areas, its opponents charged that it had gained the most from the alleged irregularities.

At the time of the 1956 election the clan-family distribution of the SYL's strength was estimated at 50 percent Darod, 30 percent Hawiye, 10 percent Digil and Rahanweyn, and 10 percent from other groups. (These figures may be compared with the estimated division of the trust territory's population: 18 percent Darod, 38 percent Hawiye, and 29 percent Digil and Rahanweyn.) The HDMS found nearly all of its support among Digil and Rahanweyn agriculturalists, although the party's strength was primarily along lines of common economic interest rather than clan ties.

One of the first acts of the new SYL-dominated assembly was to make it illegal for political parties to bear the name of clans or clan-families. The HDMS immediately changed its full title to the Somali Independent Constitutional Party (Hizbia Dustur Mustaquil Somali), eliminating reference to a clan while retaining the familiar acronym.

The Issa government remained in power for four years until independence and thus was able to oversee the terms under which the new state was created. Its attitudes were modernist, pan-Somali, and nationalist, although it became and remained strongly pro-Italian once Italy was no longer seen as a threat to Somali independence. The government's first concerns were to improve the country's economic stability so as to ensure foreign

assistance to replace the support Italy would continue to provide until independence. It also fulfilled its pledge to grant voting rights to women in time for municipal elections in 1958. It strongly supported the promotion of Somalis into all important government positions, but this did not constitute a major political issue because Somalization was well under way before 1956. For example all the sensitive posts of district commissioner had been turned over to Somalis in 1955. All other posts were being Somalized as fast as candidates could receive the required minimum educational background. Other efforts at modernization included attempts to weaken clan ties, particularly by limiting the payment of *dia* (see Glossary), and to further the breakup of the low status traditionally ascribed to persons in certain occupations. These changes, however, came slowly (see The Segmentary Social Order, ch. 2).

The government's second major concern was to draft the constitution that would become effective with independence. The most difficult provisions were those concerning the concept of Greater Somalia, that is, for the ultimate inclusion of the Somali-populated areas in Kenya, Ethiopia, French Somaliland, and British Somaliland into the Somali state. Such draft provisions became embroiled in the controversy over the choice of having either a unitary structure of government or a federal one that would allow the other parts of Greater Somalia to be incorporated into the state more easily. This choice was complicated by HDMS support for federalism on a lower level, which might have lessened the dominance of the numerically superior nomads over the farmers of the interriverine region, who backed the party. The SYL favored the concept of a unitary state, fearing that federalism would stimulate divisive clan interests. The SYL's political strength allowed its position to prevail without difficulty in framing the new constitution.

Because of the way in which the SYL dominated the political scene, conflicts over outstanding political issues gradually began to take place within the party rather than between the SYL and other groups. Internal divisions formed as factions within the SYL strove to win a greater voice in the party for their views or those of their clans. Individual politicians made efforts to widen the cleavage between the party's Hawiye and Darod supporters. Others accused the Issa government of being too friendly to the Italians and of doing nothing to achieve the goal of a Greater Somalia. In July 1957 Haji Mohamed Hussein, who had been president of the SYL in the early years, was again elected to lead the party. His own views conflicted strongly with those of the Issa government and with the party's leader in the legislature, assembly president Aden Abdullah Osman. Hussein led the party wing that favored

loosening ties with the West and establishing closer relations with the Arab world, particularly with the United Arab Republic (Egypt).

In April 1958 Hussein and his supporters were expelled from the SYL without causing a major split in the party. Hussein then formed a new party, the Greater Somali League (GSL), and its militant platform incorporated his pan-Arab and pan-Somali philosophy. Although Hussein remained an important political figure, the GSL was unable to draw significant support away from the SYL.

After its victory in the 1958 municipal elections, the SYL further strengthened its position on the national level at the expense of the HDMS, when some Rahanweyn politicians switched their allegiance to what was clearly the country's real power center. These changes came in time to assist the SYL in the final preindependence election for the National Assembly, which was expanded to ninety seats. The GSL and the major portion of the HDMS alleged interference in their election campaigns and boycotted the election in protest. As a result sixty-one seats were uncontested and went to the SYL candidates by default in addition to the twenty-two contested seats won by the party's candidates.

The new government formed in June 1959 was again under the premiership of Abdullahi Issa. The great expansion of the SYL allowed nearly all clans to be represented in it. Accordingly attempts were made to divide the fifteen cabinet positions among the representatives of all clan-families, but conflicts continued within the party and cabinet between conservative elements and those with a more modern outlook led by Abdirashid Ali Shermarke.

The civilian colonial administration that had been reinstated in British Somaliland in 1948 worked to expand educational opportunities in the protectorate, but the number of Somalis who had qualified for important administrative positions remained limited. There was little economic development, and exports were largely confined to livestock, hides, and aromatic wood and gum. Improvements were made in watering facilities and agricultural and veterinary services that benefited farming and herding, but intensified geological surveys failed to reveal exploitable mineral resources.

Political preparation for assuming responsibility for eventual self-government did not go beyond the extension of participation in local government. The SYL opened branches in British Somaliland, but neither it nor the SNL was able to stimulate widespread interest in party politics. In late 1954, however, a catalyst to popular involvement in political issues was provided by the withdrawal of British liaison officers from the Reserved Areas as part of

London's agreement with Ethiopia confirming that country's claims to the Haud under the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty and returning full jurisdiction there to Ethiopian authorities. British colonial authorities with responsibility in the region were embarrassed by their government's action, which some considered a betrayal of the trust put in them by the protected Somali clans whose herds grazed in the Haud.

The protest was immediate and massive. The revitalized SNL and SYL jointly supported the National United Front (NUF), which had been formed under the leadership of Michael Mariano, a Christian Somali civil servant who had been active in the formative years of the SYL. The NUF voiced demands for the return of the Haud to British Somaliland. It sent missions to London and to the UN in New York in an attempt to win support for its position and to have the question of the Haud brought before the International Court of Justice. Britain sought unsuccessfully to purchase the disputed area from Ethiopia, which filed counterclaims attesting to its historical sovereignty over both the Somali territories. The Ethiopian move served only to fuel Somali nationalism still further.

In 1956 Britain agreed to the gradual introduction of representative government in the protectorate and accepted eventual independence and union between British Somaliland and Somalia. As a first step the Legislative Council was created in 1957, its six members selected by the governor to represent clan-families. The following year the body was expanded to include a total of twelve elected members, two appointed members, and fifteen ex-officio members. As in the trust territory, this first countrywide election was by secret ballot in the towns and elsewhere by acclamation by each clan assembly. Elections—the first contested along party lines—were held in February 1960 for the Legislative Assembly. The SNL and its affiliate, the USP, won all but one of the thirty-three seats in the expanded body. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was named to lead a four-man government.

Ties between the political leaders in both Somali territories had been strengthened by the Issa government's adoption of Somali unification as a priority program. Although the leadership of the SNL would have preferred to postpone unification until British Somaliland had drawn closer to Somalia in its political development, popular opinion in the protectorate was too strongly in favor of unity for a delay to be countenanced.

In April 1960 the British government agreed in principle to end its rule in time for British Somaliland to unite with the trust territory on the July independence date that had already been set by the UN. Leaders of the two territories met in Mogadishu in April and agreed to amalgamate in a unitary state under a president

elected as head of state and a parliamentary form of government responsible to a democratically elected national legislature (initially composed of the 123 members of the two territorial assemblies). British Somaliland was granted independence on June 26, 1960, and merged with the trust territory to form the independent Somali Republic on July 1, 1960. Shermarke, leader of the SYL, was called on to form a coalition government in which his party was joined by the SNL and USP—northern clan-based parties that had no constituencies in the south. The legislature's appointment of Osman to the presidency of the republic was confirmed in a national referendum the following year.

From Independence To Revolution

During the nine-year period of parliamentary democracy that followed Somali independence, freedom of expression was widely regarded as being derived from the traditional right of every man to be heard. The national ideal professed by the Somalis was one of political and legal equality in which historic Somali values and acquired Western practices appeared to coincide. In accord with both traditional and modern democratic values, modern politics was viewed as a realm not limited to one profession, clan, or class but open to all male members of society. Politics was at once the Somalis' most practiced art and favorite sport. A radio was the most desired possession of most nomads, not for its entertainment value but for news broadcasts. The level of political participation often surpassed that in many developed Western democracies. Indeed some observers believed that Somalia's institutions suffered from a surfeit of democracy.

Problems of National Integration

Although officially unified as a single nation at independence, the former Italian colony and trust territory in the south and the former British protectorate in the north were, from an institutional standpoint, two separate countries. Italy and Britain had left them with separate administrative, legal, and education systems where affairs were conducted according to different procedures and in different languages. Police, taxes, and the exchange rates of their separate currencies were also different. The orientations of their educated elites were divergent, and economic contacts between the two regions were virtually nonexistent. The Consultative Commission for Integration, an international board headed by UN expert Paolo Contini, was appointed in 1960 at the behest of the UN to guide the gradual merger of the new country's laws and institutions and to reconcile the differences between them. (This body was succeeded in 1964 by the Consultative Commission for Legislation. Composed of Somalis, it was directed to continue the former commission's work under the chairmanship

of Michael Mariano.) But the problem of mending the cleavage created by Somalia's disparate colonial legacies proved more troublesome in the year after independence than had been anticipated. Many southerners harbored a feeling that because of experience gained under the trusteeship, theirs was the better prepared of the two regions for self-government. Northern political, administrative, and commercial elites were reluctant to accept the fact that they now had to deal through Mogadishu.

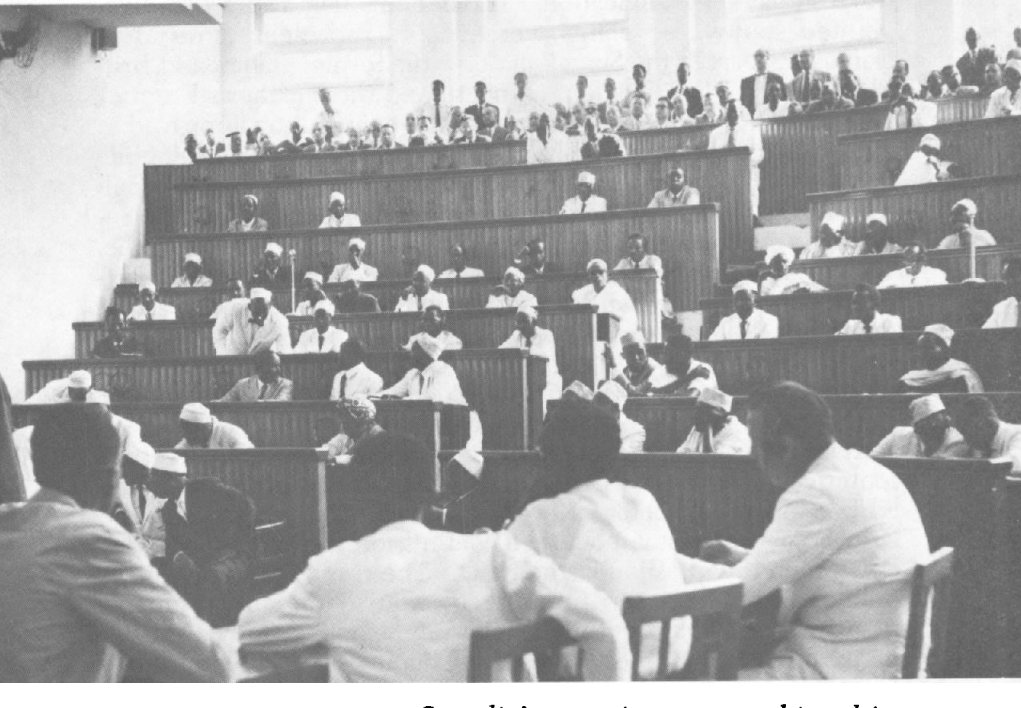
At the time of independence, the northern region had two functioning political parties: the SNL, representing the Isaaq clan-family that constituted a numerical majority there, and the USP, supported largely by the Dir and the Darod. In a unified Somalia, however, the Isaaq were a small minority, while the northern Darod were able to join with members of their clan-family from the south in the SYL. The Dir, having few kinsmen in the south, were pulled on the one hand by traditional ties to the Hawiye and on the other hand by common regional sympathies to the Isaaq. The southern opposition party, the GSL, pro-Arab in outlook and militantly pan-Somali in attitude, attracted the support of the SNL and the USP against the SYL, which had adopted a moderate stand before independence and had been responsible for a constitutional provision calling for unification of all Somali territories by peaceful means.

Northern misgivings at being too tightly harnessed to the south were demonstrated by the voting pattern in the June 1961 referendum to ratify the constitution, which was in effect Somalia's first national election. Although the draft was overwhelmingly approved in the south, it was supported by less than 50 percent of the northern electorate.

Dissatisfaction at the distribution of power among the clan-families and between the two regions boiled over in December 1961 when a group of British-trained junior army officers in the north rebelled in protest over the posting of higher ranking southern officers (who had been trained by the Italians for police duties) to command their units. The ringleaders urged a separation of north and south. The strength of Somali unity was displayed, however, in the reaction of the northern noncommissioned officers who arrested the rebels. Despite that action, discontent in the north persisted.

In early 1962 the GSL leader, Haji Mohamed Hussein, seeking in part to exploit northern dissatisfaction, attempted to form an amalgamated party, to be known as the Somali Democratic Union (SDU). It would enroll northern elements, some of which were displeased with the northern SNL representatives in the coalition government. Hussein's attempt failed. In May 1962, however, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal and another northern SNL minister re-

One of many parades in Mogadishu celebrating national independence on July 1, 1960
Courtesy United Nations



Somalia's sovereignty was achieved in 1960 when its Legislative Assembly ratified the unification of former British Somaliland and the United Nations Trust Territory of Somalia.
Courtesy United Nations

signed from the cabinet and took many SNL followers with them into a new party, the Somali National Congress (SNC), which received widespread support in the north. The new party also gained support in the south when an SYL faction (predominantly composed of Hawiye) joined it. The move gave the country three major political parties having national appeal, further serving to blur north-south differences.

Pan-Somalism

Despite the considerable difficulties encountered in integrating the two regions, the most important political issue in postindependence Somali politics was the unification of all areas populated by Somalis into one country—a concept identified as pan-Somalism. It was presumed that this issue dominated popular opinion and that any government would fall if it did not demonstrate a militant attitude toward neighboring countries that were seen as occupying Somali territory.

This preoccupation with the pan-Somali issue was emphasized by the formation of the country's institutions. The exact size of the National Assembly was not established by law in order to facilitate the inclusion in the future of representatives of the contested areas after unification. The national flag displayed a five-pointed star whose points were said to represent those areas claimed as part of the Somali nation—the former Italian and British territories, the Ogaden, Djibouti, and the Northern Frontier District (NFD) in Kenya. Moreover the constitution approved in 1961 stated prominently in its preamble that "the Somali Republic promotes by legal and peaceful means, the union of the Somali territories," and its fundamental laws provided that all ethnic Somalis, no matter where they resided, were citizens of the republic. The Somalis did not directly claim sovereignty over adjacent territories but rather demanded that Somalis living there be granted the right of self-determination. Somali leaders asserted that they would be satisfied only when their fellow Somalis outside the republic had the opportunity to decide for themselves what their status would be (see Greater Somalia, ch. 4).

At talks on Kenya's future held in London in 1961, Somali representatives from the NFD demanded that Britain arrange for the NFD's separation before Kenya was granted sovereignty. The British government appointed a commission to ascertain popular opinion on the question in the NFD. The results of its investigation indicated that separation from Kenya was almost unanimously supported by the Somalis and their fellow nomadic pastoralists, the Oromos. These two peoples, it was noted, represented a clear majority of the NFD's population.

Despite considerable Somali diplomatic activity, the British government did not act on the commission's findings. It was felt that the federal format then proposed in the Kenya constitution would provide a solution through the degree of autonomy it allowed the

predominantly Somali region within the federal system. This solution did not ease Somali demands for unification, however, and the modicum of federalism disappeared after the new Kenya government opted for a centralized constitution in 1964.

The denial of Somali claims led to steadily increasing hostility between the Kenya government and Somalis in the NFD. Adapting easily to life as *shifta*, as the Kenyans called them, the Somalis conducted a guerrilla campaign against the police and army for more than four years. The Somali government denied Kenya's charges that the guerrillas were trained in Somalia, equipped there with Soviet arms, and directed in their activities from Mogadishu. But it could not hide the fact that the Voice of Somalia radio was able to exert an influence on the level of guerrilla activity by the militant tone of its broadcasts beamed into Kenya.

Somalia refused out of hand to acknowledge in particular the validity of the 1954 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty recognizing Ethiopia's claim to the Haud or in general the relevance of treaties defining Somali-Ethiopian borders. Its position was based on three points: first, that the treaties disregarded agreements made with the clans that had put themselves under British protection; second, that the Somalis were not consulted on the terms of these treaties and in fact had not been informed of their existence; and third, that such treaties violated the principle of self-determination.

Incidents began to occur in the Haud within six months after Somali independence. At first they were confined to minor clashes between Ethiopian police and armed parties of Somali nomads, usually arising over such traditional sources of conflict as smuggling, livestock rustling, or tax collecting rather than from irredentist agitation. Despite their actual causes, these incidents tended to be viewed in Somalia as expressions of Somali nationalism. Hostilities grew steadily in scope, eventually involving small-scale actions between Somali and Ethiopian armed forces along the border. In February 1964 armed conflict erupted along the entire length of the Somali-Ethiopian frontier, and Ethiopian warplanes conducted raids on targets well within Somalia. Open hostilities were brought to an end in April through the mediation of Sudan, acting under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Under the terms of the cease-fire, a joint commission was set up to examine the causes of frontier incidents, and a demilitarized zone ten to fifteen kilometers in depth was established on either side of the border. Although further military confrontation did not occur, the potential for future armed clashes remained high.

Ethiopia and Kenya concluded a mutual defense pact in 1964 in response to what both countries perceived to be the continuing threat from Somalia. Most OAU members were alienated by Somali irredentism and feared that, if Somalia were successful in

detaching the Somali-populated portions of Kenya and Ethiopia, the example might inspire their own restive minorities divided from their brothers by frontiers imposed in the colonial period. In addition the Somalis had challenged two of Africa's most important elder statesmen, President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

Foreign Relations (1960-69)

Somalia's democratic government was in the hands of leaders who were well disposed toward the Western democracies, particularly Italy and Britain, in whose political traditions many of them had been educated. Nevertheless as a reflection of their desire to demonstrate Somalia's self-reliance and nonalignment, the Somali government established close ties with both the Soviet Union and China soon after the country attained independence.

The growth of Soviet influence in Somalia dated from 1962 when Moscow agreed to provide loans to finance the training and equipping of the armed forces. (A buildup of the country's military capability was considered necessary by the Somali government to lend credibility to its irredentist claims.) By the late 1960s a large number of Soviet personnel were serving as advisers with Somali forces whose inventories had been stocked almost entirely with equipment of communist bloc manufacture. During the same period more than 800 Somalis received military training in the Soviet Union. As a result of their contact with Soviet personnel, some Somali military officers developed a Marxist perspective on important issues that contrasted with the Western outlook of most of the country's civilian leaders.

The Soviet Union also provided a substantial amount of nonmilitary assistance, including scholarships for technical training, printing presses and broadcasting equipment for the government, and agricultural and industrial development aid. By 1969 considerable nonmilitary assistance had also been provided by China.

Somalia's relations with Italy after independence remained consistently good, and Italian influences generally continued in the modernized sectors of social and cultural affairs. The number of Italians residing in Somalia had dropped to about 3,000 by 1965, but they still dominated many of the country's economic activities. Italian economic assistance during the 1960s totaled more than a quarter of all the nonmilitary foreign aid received, and Italy was an important market for Somali goods, particularly food crops produced on the large Italian-owned commercial farms in the river valleys. Italy's sponsorship enabled Somalia to become an associate of the European Economic Community (EEC), which formed another source of economic and technical aid and assured preferential status in West European markets for Somali exports.

In contrast to the cordial relations maintained with Italy, Somalia severed diplomatic ties to Britain in 1962 to protest British

support for Kenya's position on the NFD. Somalia's relations with France were likewise strained because of opposition to the French presence in the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (formerly French Somaliland, later independent Djibouti). Meanwhile the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) provided Somalia with a moderate amount of aid, notably sharing with Italy and the United States the training of the police force. (The Somali government purposely sought different foreign sponsors for training security forces, and Western-trained police were seen as counterbalancing the Soviet-trained armed forces. Likewise, the division of training missions was believed to offset reliance on either the West or the communist countries for Somali security needs.)

During the 1960s the United States supplied nonmilitary aid to Somalia, a large proportion of it in the form of grants. But the image of the United States in the eyes of most Somalis was influenced more by its support for Ethiopia than by any assistance to Somalia. The large scale of United States military aid to Ethiopia was particularly resented. Although aid to that country had begun long before the Somali-Ethiopian conflict and was based on other considerations, the Somalis' attitude remained unchanged as long as the United States continued to train and equip a hostile neighbor.

The Hussein Government

Countrywide municipal elections, in which the SYL won 74 percent of the seats, were held in November 1963. These were followed in March 1964 by the country's first postindependence national elections. Again the SYL triumphed, winning sixty-nine out of 123 parliamentary seats. The party's true margin of victory was even greater, as the fifty-four seats won by the opposition were divided among a number of small parties.

After the 1964 election for the National Assembly, a crisis left Somalia without a government until the beginning of September. President Osman, who was empowered to propose the candidate for prime minister after an election or a fall of government, chose Abdirazak Haji Hussein as his nominee instead of the incumbent, Shermarke, who had the endorsement of the SYL party leadership. Shermarke had been prime minister for the four previous years, and Osman decided that new leadership might be able to introduce fresh ideas for solving national problems.

In drawing up a cabinet for presentation to the National Assembly, the newly nominated prime minister picked ministers for their abilities without regard to their origins. But his choices strained intraparty relations and broke the unwritten rules of clan and regional balance. Only two members from the Shermarke cabinet were retained, and the number of posts in northern hands was increased from two to five, one-third of the seats in the new cabinet.

The SYL's governing Central Committee and its parliamentary groups were split. Hussein had been a member of the party since 1944 and had participated in the two previous Shermarke cabinets. His primary appeal was to younger and more educated members of the party. A number of the political leaders who had been left out of the cabinet joined the supporters of Shermarke to form an opposition group within the party. As a result the Hussein faction found it necessary to seek support among the non-SYL members in the National Assembly.

Although the disagreements primarily involved personal or group political ambitions, the debate leading to the initial vote of confidence centered on the issue of pan-Somalism. Both Osman and the prime minister-designate were interested in giving priority to solving the country's internal economic and social problems. Although Hussein had made clear his support for militant pan-Somalism, he was portrayed as being willing to recognize the legitimacy of continued exercise of sovereignty by Ethiopia and Kenya over Somali areas.

The proposed cabinet failed by two votes to obtain an affirmation of confidence. Seven National Assembly members, including Shermarke, abstained, while forty-eight members of the SYL voted for Hussein and thirty-three opposed him. Despite the apparent split in the SYL, it continued to attract recruits from other parties. In the first three months after the election, seventeen members of the parliamentary opposition resigned from their parties to join the SYL.

Osman chose to ignore the results of the vote and again nominated Hussein as prime minister. After extensive intraparty negotiation, which included the reinstatement of four party officials expelled for voting against him, Hussein presented a second cabinet list to the National Assembly that included all but one of this earlier nominees. The new cabinet, however, contained three other ministerial positions filled by men chosen to mollify opposition factions. The new cabinet was approved with the support of all but a handful of SYL members in the National Assembly. Hussein remained in office until the presidential elections of June 1967.

The presidential elections, conducted by secret polling of the members of the National Assembly, pitted Shermarke, the former prime minister, against Osman. Again the central issue was moderation versus militancy on the pan-Somali question. Osman, through Hussein, had stressed the need to give priority to internal developments. Shermarke, by contrast, had led the country as prime minister during the period when pan-Somalism was at the height of militancy. This distinction was decisive in Shermarke's election as president of the republic.

The Egal Government

The new president nominated as prime minister Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, who raised the membership of the cabinet from thirteen to fifteen members and included representatives of every major clan-family as well as some members of the rival SNC. His appointment was confirmed by the National Assembly in August 1967 without serious opposition. Although the new prime minister had supported Shermarke in the presidential election, he was a northerner and had led a defection of the northern SNL assembly members from the government in 1962. He had also been closely involved in the founding of the SNC but, with many other northern members of that group, had rejoined the SYL after the 1964 elections.

A more important difference between Shermarke and Egal, other than their past affiliations, was the new prime minister's moderate position on pan-Somali issues and his desire for improved relations with other African countries. In these areas he was allied with the"modernists"in the government, parliament, and administration who favored redirecting the nation's energies from confrontation with its neighbors to combating social and economic ills. Although many of his domestic policies seemed more in line with those of the previous administration, Egal continued to hold the confidence of both Shermarke and the National Assembly during the eighteen months preceding the March 1969 national elections.

Egal's policy of regional détente resulted in greatly improved relations with Ethiopia and Kenya. The prime minister did not relinquish Somalia's territorial claims, but he hoped to create an atmosphere in which the question could be peacefully negotiated. In September 1968 Somalia and Ethiopia agreed on establishing commercial air and telecommunication links. The state of emergency in force in the border regions was ended, allowing for a resumption of free access by Somali pastoralists to their traditional grazing lands and for the reopening of the road across Ethiopian territory between Mogadishu and Hargeysa. In general, foreign affairs became a less consuming issue, releasing the government's energy and the country's meager resources to deal more effectively with problems of internal development. The relaxation of tensions, however, had another unanticipated effect. To some extent the conflict with its neighbors had promoted Somalia's internal political cohesion and solidified public opinion at all levels on at least one issue. As the tension subsided from that source, old cleavages based on clan rivalries tended to attract greater attention.

The March 1969 elections were the first to combine voting for municipal and National Assembly posts. A total of sixty-four parties contested the elections. Only the SYL, however, presented candidates in every election district, in many cases without opposition. Eight other parties presented lists of candidates for national

offices in most districts. Of the remaining fifty-five parties, only twenty-four gained representation in the assembly, but all of these were disbanded almost immediately when their fifty members joined the SYL.

Both the plethora of parties and the defection to the majority party were typical of Somali parliamentary elections. In order to register for elective office, a candidate needed only the support of either 500 voters or of his clan, expressed through a vote of its traditional assembly. After registering, the office seeker then attempted to become the official candidate of a political party but, failing this, was left as an individual contestant on the ballot. Voting was by party list, making the individual candidate in effect a party. (This explains not only the proliferation of small parties but also the transient nature of party support.) Many candidates affiliated with a major party only long enough to use its symbol in the election campaign and, if elected, abandoned it for the winning side as soon as the National Assembly met. Thus by the end of May 1969 the SYL parliamentary group had swelled from seventy-three to 109.

In addition the eleven members of the SNC had formed a coalition with the SYL, which held 120 of the 123 seats in the National Assembly. A few of these 120 left the SYL after the composition of Egal's cabinet became clear and after the announcement of his program, both of which were bound to displease some of those who had joined only to be on the winning side after the election.

In the enormous listing of candidates, the almost 900,000 voters in 1969 had the opportunity to defeat incumbents and evidently took delight in doing so. Of the former deputies, seventy-seven were not returned (including eight out of eighteen members of the previous cabinet), but these figures did not unequivocally demonstrate dissatisfaction with the government. Statistically they were nearly identical with the results of the 1964 election and, given the profusion of parties and the system of proportional representation, a clear sense of public opinion could not be obtained solely on the basis of the election results.

The fact that a single party—the SYL—dominated the field implied neither stability nor solidarity. As anthropologist I.M. Lewis has noted, "The SYL Government...could not be other than an extremely heterogeneous assemblage of competing personal, family, and lineage interests. The maintenance of any semblance of unity with such an ill-assorted crew would clearly prove a most costly business."

At the same time candidates who had lost seats in the assembly and those who had supported them were frustrated and angry. A number of charges were made of election rigging by the government—at least some firmly founded. Discontent was exac-

erbated when the Supreme Court, under its newly appointed president, denied that it had jurisdiction over election petitions, although it had accepted such jurisdiction on an earlier occasion. Moreover the Egal regime's increasingly friendly relations with Ethiopia and Kenya could always be used against the government by those whose primary discontents lay elsewhere.

"Finally," as Lewis has put it, "official corruption and nepotism seemed to be flourishing on a scale hitherto unknown in the Republic,...but there was little sign that either the [Prime Minister] or the President were unduly disturbed by their persistence." It may be argued that, in a society based on kinship and one in which kin groups perceive each other as either enemies or allies in competition for benefits, nepotism and corruption might be regarded as normal practices. Nevertheless there were some who were embittered by it and by the ineptitude of the National Assembly. "It had," reported Lewis, "been turned into a sordid marketplace where deputies traded their votes for personal rewards with scant regard for the interests of their constituents."

Among those most dissatisfied with the government were intellectuals and members of the armed forces and police. (General Mohammad Abshir Musa, the chief of police, had resigned just before the elections after refusing to permit police vehicles to transport SYL voters to the polls.) Of these the most significant element was the military, which since 1961 had remained outside politics. This was partly because the government had not called upon it for support and partly because, unlike most other African armed forces, the Somali National Army had a genuine external mission in which it was supported by all Somalis—that of protecting the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya.

Coup d'Etat

The stage was set for a coup d'etat, but the event that precipitated it was unplanned. On October 15, 1969, Shermarke was killed by a member of his bodyguard while Egal was out of the country. The assassin was a member of a lineage said to have been badly treated by the president, and he was subsequently tried and executed by the revolutionary government. Egal returned to Mogadishu to arrange for the selection of a new president by the National Assembly. His choice was, like Shermarke, a member of the Darod clan-family (Egal was an Isaaq). Critics of the government, particulary a group of army officers, apparently saw no hope for improvement of the country's problems through this course of action. In the early morning of October 21, 1969, when the results of the assembly' deliberations were apparent, army units took over important points in Mogadishu and rounded up government officials and other prominent political figures. In this enterprise

the police cooperated with the army, but according to some accounts its collaboration was initially somewhat reluctant.

Although not regarded as the author of the military takeover, army commander Major General Mohamed Siad Barre assumed leadership of the group of officers who deposed the civilian government. The new governing body was introduced as the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), and Siad Barre was installed as its president. Leading members of the democratic regime, including Egal, were arrested and detained at the presidential palace. Political parties were banned, the National Assembly abolished, and the constitution suspended. The goals of the new regime were said to be an end to "tribalism, nepotism, corruption, and misrule." Existing treaties were to be honored, but national liberation movements and Somali unification were to be supported. The country was renamed the Somali Democratic Republic.

The Revolutionary Regime

The military group that brought down the democratic regime retroactively defined its action as a Marxist revolution not only instituting a new political order but also proposing the radical transformation of Somali society through the application of what the regime referred to as "scientific socialism." Despite the presence of Soviet advisers with the armed forces, no evidence has been produced to indicate that the coup was Soviet-inspired, although this was suspected in the West at the time it occurred. SRC membership included officers ranging in rank from major general (Siad Barre and Jama Ali Korshel) down to captain, but the young Soviet-trained junior officers—well-versed in Marx and Lenin—who had encouraged the coup were excluded from important positions in the revolutionary regime.

The SRC, which was synonymous with the government, directed its attention to the systematic reorganization of the country's political and legal institutions, formulated a guiding ideology based on the Quran as well as on Marx, and purged corrupt civilian officials who were not susceptible to reeducation. The influence of lineage groups at all levels and elitism in public life based on clan affiliation were targeted for eradication. Although officially power was shared collectively by members of the SRC, Siad Barre quickly emerged as Somalia's strongman, spokesman for its revolution, and leader of its government. In 1971 he announced the regime's intention to phase out military rule after the establishment of a political party whose central committee would eventually supersede the SRC as a policy and decisionmaking body.

Supreme Revolutionary Council

On coming to power the SRC stated that the primary objectives of the revolution were to end widespread corruption in public life and to eliminate what it defined as "tribalism," a term commonly used in referring to clan particularism. But high priority was also

given to rapid economic and social development through "crash programs," to providing efficient and responsive government, and to establishing the Somali language in a standard written form as the country's single official language. The revolutionary regime also pledged to continue the policy of regional détente in its foreign relations without relinquishing Somali claims to the disputed territories.

The SRC's domestic program was spelled out in its initial declaration in 1969, known as the First Charter of the Revolution. With Law Number 1, an enabling instrument promulgated on the day of the military takeover, it was intended to provide the institutional and ideological framework for the new regime. Law Number 1 assigned to the SRC all the functions previously performed by the president, the National Assembly, and the Council of Ministers, as well as many duties of the courts. The role of the twenty-five-member military junta was clearly that of an executive committee involved in decisionmaking and holding ultimate responsibility for the formulation of policy and the supervision of its execution. Actions to be taken were decided by majority vote, but the content of discussion and conflicts within the group were rarely made public. SRC members met in specialized committees to oversee government operations in several given areas. They were assisted by a subordinate fourteen-man secretariat—the Council of the Secretaries of State (CSS)—which functioned as a cabinet and was responsible for the day-to-day operation of government, although as a body it was without political power. The CSS was largely composed of civilians, but until 1974 several key ministries were held by military officers who were concurrently members of the SRC. All existing legislation from the previous democratic regime remained in force unless specifically abrogated by the SRC, usually on the grounds that it was "incompatible...with the spirit of the Revolution." In February 1970 the democratic constitution of 1960, suspended at the time of the coup, was formally repealed by the SRC under powers conferred by the enabling law.

Although under the revolutionary system the SRC monopolized executive and legislative authority as a body, Siad Barre filled a number of executive positions: titular head of state, chairman of the CSS (and thereby head of government), senior member of the armed forces, and president of the SRC. His titles were of less importance, however, than was his personal authority, to which a majority of the other members of the SRC deferred.

Military and police officers, including some members of the SRC, were placed at the head of important government agencies and public institutions to supervise economic development, financial management, trade, communications and public utilities. Top

civilian district and regional officials were replaced by military officers who took control of local administration. Meanwhile civil servants were made to attend reorientation courses that combined professional training with political indoctrination, and those found to be incompetent or politically unreliable were fired. A mass dismissal of civil servants in 1974, however, was in part dictated by economic pressures.

The legal system continued to function after the coup but was subject to modification. In 1970 a military tribunal, the National Security Court, was set up as the judicial arm of the SRC and using a military attorney as prosecutor, operated outside the ordinary legal system as a watchdog against counterrevolutionary activities. The first cases that it dealt with involved Shermarke's assassination and the charges of corruption leveled by the SRC against members of the democratic regime. The court subsequently heard a number of serious cases both with and without political content. A uniform civil code introduced in 1973 replaced predecessor laws inherited from the Italians and British and also imposed restrictions on the activities of sharia (Islamic) courts. The new regime subsequently extended the death penalty and prison sentences to individual offenders, formally eliminating collective responsibility through the payment of *dia* (see The Legal System, ch. 4).

The SRC also overhauled the system of local government, breaking up the old regions into smaller units as part of a long-range program of decentralization that was intended to destroy the influence of the traditional clan assemblies and—in the government's words—to bring government closer to the people. Local councils, composed of military administrators and representatives appointed by the SRC, were established under the Ministry of Interior at the regional, district, and village level to advise the government on local conditions and to expedite its directives.

Other institutional innovations included the organization (under Soviet direction) of the National Security Service (NSS), directed initially at halting the flow of professionals and dissidents out of the country and at counteracting attempts to settle disputes among the clans by traditional means. The newly formed Ministry of Information and National Guidance set up local political education bureaus to carry the government's message to the people and utilized Somalia's once freewheeling print and broadcast media for the "success of the socialist, revolutionary road." A censorship board, appointed by the ministry, ensured that information was tailored according to SRC guidelines.

The SRC took its toughest political stance in the campaign to break down the solidarity of the lineage groups that was officially defined as tribalism and condemned as the most serious impediment to national unity. Siad Barre denounced tribalism in a wider

context as a "disease" afflicting not only Somalia but also the whole Third World and obstructing efforts at development. Prison terms and fines were meted out for a broad category of proscribed activities classified as tribalism. The traditional headmen, who had been recognized a representatives of their groups and had been paid a govenment stipend under the democratic regime, were replaced by reliable local dignitaries known as peaceseekers (*nabod doan*), who were appointed by Mogadishu to represent the interests of the government. The concept of community identification to supersede lineage affiliation was implemented through orientation centers set up in every district as the focal point of local political and social activity. The SRC decreed, for example, that all marriage ceremonies were to take place at the orientation center rather than in the traditional lineage group setting. Siad Barre personally officiated from time to time at these ceremonies and took the occasion to contrast the benefits provided by socialism to the evils he associated with tribalism.

The resettlement of 140,000 nomadic pastoralists in farming communities and in towns on the coast far from their traditional grazing lands, where the herders were encouraged to engage in sedentary agriculture and fishing, had as its purpose increased production and better control over the nomadic Somalis. By dispersing the nomads and severing their ties with the land to which specific clans made collective claim, clan solidarity may also have been diminished. In many instances real improvement in the living conditions of resettled nomads was evident, but despite government efforts to eliminate it, clan consciousness as well as a desire to return to the nomadic way of life persisted. Concurrent attempts to improve the status of Somali women were unpopular in a profoundly Muslim society, and Siad Barre's argument that reforms in this area recommended by the SRC were compatible with a developing understanding of Islamic concepts met with determined opposition from traditionalists.

Challenges to the Regime

Potential opposition to the SRC following the coup and subsequent challenges to Siad Barre from within the revolutionary regime were unorganized and subject to intense surveillance by the security apparatus. Siad Barre also proved to be a skillfully manipulative politician who preferred to win over the opposition by a mixture of coercion and blandishments or to find compromise solutions if those solutions would move the country in a direction compatible with his ideas. From 1971, when the second of two coup attempts against him failed, until the war in the Ogaden in 1977, no divisions within the SRC became public. On a few occasions civilian members of the CSS resigned to protest specific policies of the SRC, but no reprisals were taken against them.

Within certain undefined limits, criticism of personalities and policies was permitted. What was not tolerated was anything that seemed to indicate active support for the old order, opposition to the major lines of the government's ideology, or anything that the authorities thought might serve as the basis on which significant opposition might build. The NSS attemped to ferret out and arrest those who verbally attacked the SRC, and stiff jail sentences were imposed for "rumor-mongering" against the revolution. Security forces were assisted in surveillance activities by members of the Victory Pioneers (Gulwadayal), a youth militia whose symbol was an ever-vigilant eye. At village meetings people were told that they must destroy the old order by isolating hostile elements who were still heeded by sections of the population. Political officers bragged that members of religious communities had been arrested for counterrevolutionary activities and that merchants had been jailed for "refusal to accept the new order." In the most notable case of this type, ten religious leaders were tried and executed in 1975 for accusing the SRC of violating the teachings of the Quran by attempting to improve the position of women before the law.

The SRC announced on two occasions that it had discovered plotters initiating coup attempts against it. Both involved SRC members. In April 1970 Korshel, the first vice-president, was arrested and charged with treason. Korshel had not been among the 1969 coup leaders who brought the SRC to power and was believed to have opposed them during the first few hours, so that he may have remained the odd figure in the ruling body. The detailed charges against him included the allegation that he had organized mercenaries among the nomadic clans to provoke border incidents with Ethiopia that could be used as an excuse for foreign intervention in Somalia. Whatever the basis for this indictment, Korshel apparently represented the more conservative elements within the police and army and thus was potentially if not actually in opposition to the socialist orientation of the majority of SRC members. He was convicted of treason in a trial before the National Security Court and sentenced to a prison term.

In May 1971 the second vice-president, Major General Mohamed Ainanche, and a fellow SRC member, Soviet-trained Lieutenant Colonel Salah Gaveire Kedie, who had served as head of the Ministry of Defense and later as secretary of state for communications, were arrested along with several other army officers for plotting the assassination of Siad Barre. The conspirators, who had sought the support of clans that had lost influence in the 1969 overthrow of the democratic regime, appeared to have been motivated by personal rivalries rather than by ideological concerns.

Accused of conspiring to assassinate the president, the two key figures in the plot and another army officer were executed after a lengthy trial.

By 1974 the SRC felt sufficiently secure to release Korshel and most of the leaders of the democratic regime who had been detained since the coup. Egal and three other former ministers were excepted from the amnesty, however, and were sentenced to long prison terms, Egal to thirty years on charges of embezzlement.

Siad Barre and Scientific Socialism

Somalia's adherence to socialism became official when Siad Barre proclaimed on the first anniversary of the military coup that Somalia was a socialist state, despite the fact that the country had no history of class conflict in the Marxist sense. For purposes of Marxist analysis, therefore, tribalism was equated with class in a society struggling to liberate itself from distinctions imposed by lineage group affiliation. At the time, Siad Barre explained that the official ideology was composed of three elements—his own conception of community development based on the principle of self-reliance, a form of socialism based on Marxist principles, and Islam. These were subsumed under the title of scientific socialism, although such a definition was clearly at variance with the Soviet and Chinese models to which reference was frequently made (see The Ideological Base, ch. 4).

The theoretical underpinning of the state ideology was a mélange that combined aspects of the Quran with the influences of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Mussolini, but Siad Barre was pragmatic in its application. "Socialism is not a religion," he explained, "it is a political principle" of use in organizing government and managing production. Somalia's close alignment with communist states, coupled with its proclaimed adherence to scientific socialism, led to frequent accusations by critics that the country had become a Soviet satellite. For all the rhetoric extolling scientific socialism, however, genuine Marxist sympathies were not deep-rooted in Somalia. But the ideology was acknowledged—partly in view of the country's economic and military dependence on the Soviet Union—as the most convenient peg on which to hang a revolution introduced through an essentially nationalist military coup that had supplanted a Western-oriented parliamentary democracy.

More important than the Marxist ideology espoused by the SRC for the success and popular acceptance of the revolutionary regime in the early 1970s was the personal power exerted by Siad Barre and the image he projected. Styled the Victorious Leader (Guulwaadde), Siad Barre fostered the growth of a cult of personality around himself. Portraits of him in the company of Marx and Lenin festooned the streets on public occasions. The epigrams, exhortations, and good advice of the paternalistic leader who had

synthesized Marx with Islam and had found a uniquely Somali path to socialist revolution were widely distributed for handy reference in Siad Barre's little blue-and-white book. For some Somalis he had become the "Big Man," the warrior often possessing a religious charisma who was a traditional figure in Somali history. Despite the revolutionary regime's avowed intention to stamp out the particularism that had led to political competition among clans and clan families under the democratic regime, the government was commonly referred to by the code name MOD—standing for Marehan (Siad Barre's clan), Ogaden (his mother's clan), and Dolbahante (the clan of a son-in-law who was head of the NSS), whose members formed its inner circle. In 1975, for example, ten of the twenty members of the SRC were from the Darod clan-family, of which these three clans were a part, while the Digil and Rahanweyn, the sedentary interriverine clan-families, were totally unrepresented.

The Language and Literacy Issue

One of the principal objectives of the revolutionary regime was the adoption of a standard orthography for writing the Somali language, enabling it to become the country's official language. Since independence in 1960 Italian and English had served as the languages of administration and of instruction in Somalia's schools, English being used universally in the north and Italian to a great extent in the south. All government documents had been published in the two European languages, and it had been considered necessary that some important civil services posts that carried nationwide responsibilities should be held by two officials, each proficient in one of them. During the periods of the Hussein and Egal governments when a number of English-speaking northerners had been brought into prominent positions, English had appeared to dominate Italian in official circles and had even begun to replace it as a medium of instruction in schools in the south. Arabic—or a heavily arabized Somali—also had been widely used in cultural and commercial areas and in Islamic schools and courts. Religious traditionalists and supporters of Somalia's integration with the Arab world had argued for its adoption as the official language, leaving Somali as a vernacular.

The Somalis possessed a splendid oral literary tradition manifested in highly stylized forms of poetry, some of which had been transcribed first in Arabic script and later in Latin or in one of several indigenous scripts. Despite attempts to adapt Arabic orthography more closely to the Somali language, the significant differences between the phonetic structures of Arabic and Somali presented substantial difficulties for accurate transliteration. In the 1920s the poet Osman Yusuf Kenadid worked out an indigenous script, known as Osmanya, which he used for writing in the

dialect spoken in northeastern Somalia. Because of the nationalistic symbolism offered by an indigenous script, the SYL for a time supported the adoption of Osmanya as the standard script for Somali, but its use in schools was suppressed by Italian colonial authorities. A Latin orthography had been favored by some educated Somalis, but it was difficult for them to espouse such a position in the face of opposition from religious leaders who held that a "Christian" script was unsuitable for the language of a Muslim country. Nevertheless in the 1950s Shire Jamac Ahmad devised a Latin script adapted to the writing of Somali and introduced it to the reading public through a literary journal that he published.

A few months after independence, the Somali Language Committee was appointed to investigate the best means of writing Somali. The committee considered nine scripts, including Arabic, Latin, and various indigenous scripts. Its report, issued in 1962, favored the Latin, which the committee regarded as the best suited to represent the phonemic structure of Somali and flexible enough to be adjusted for the dialects. Facility with a Latin system, moreover, offered obvious advantages to those who would find it necessary to seek higher education outside the country. Modern printing equipment would also be more easily and reasonably available for Latin type. Existing Somali grammars prepared by foreign scholars, although outdated for modern teaching methods, would give some initial advantage in the preparation of teaching materials. Disagreement had been so intense among opposing factions, however, that no action was taken to adopt a standard script, although successive governments continued to reiterate their intention to resolve the issue.

On coming to power the SRC made clear that it viewed the official use of foreign languages, of which only a small fraction of the population had an adequate working knowledge, as a threat to national unity, contributing to the stratification of society on the basis of language. In 1971 the SRC revived the Somali Language Committee and instructed it to prepare textbooks for schools and adult education programs, a national grammar, and a new Somali dictionary. No decision was made at the time, however, on the use of a particular script, and each member of the committee worked in the one with which he was familiar. The understanding was that on adoption of a standard script all materials would be immediately transcribed into it.

On the third anniversary of the 1969 coup, the SRC announced that a Latin script—a modified version of that devised by Jamac Ahmad—had been adopted as the standard script to be used throughout Somalia beginning January 1, 1973. As a prerequisite for continued service with the government, officials at all levels

were given three months (later extended to six months) to learn the new script and to become proficient in it. During 1973 educational material written in the standard orthography was introduced in elementary schools and by 1975 was also being used in secondary and higher education.

Somalia's literacy rate was estimated at only 5 percent in 1972. After adopting the new script the SRC launched a "cultural revolution" aimed at making the entire population literate in two years time. The first part of the massive literacy campaign was carried out in a series of three-month sessions in urban and settled areas and reportedly resulted in several hundred thousand people learning to read and write. As many as 8,000 teachers were recruited from among government employees, members of the armed forces, and others to conduct the program.

The campaign in settled areas was followed by preparations for a major effort among the nomads that got under way in August 1974 and was carried out by more than 20,000 teachers, half of whom were secondary school students whose classes were suspended for the duration of the school year. The rural program also compelled a privileged class of urban youth to share the hardships of the nomadic pastoralists. Although adversely affected by the onset of a severe drought, the program appeared to have achieved substantial results in the field in a short period of time (see Education, ch. 2).

School enrollment had increased dramatically by the mid-1970s in response to an ambitious building program and the introduction of free education at all levels. The Somali National University was established at Mogadishu in 1971 over the objections of some Somali educators and foreign experts who argued that the country lacked the professional resources to sustain a program of higher education at acceptable standards. In 1972 private schools, which had accounted for about 20 percent of the total enrollment, were brought under state control.

Economic Development

At the time of the coup that brought the SRC to power, Somalia was listed by the UN in the special category of least developed countries. Having an estimated per capita gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) equivalent to less than US$80, it was one of the world's ten poorest countries. Some 60 percent of the population consisted of nomadic and seminomadic pastoralists. Only about 15 to 20 percent were fully engaged in agriculture at or a little above the subsistence level. Industrial activities, mainly food processing, absorbed no more than 6 percent of the economically active work force, and in urban areas large numbers were idled by the lack of employment opportunities. Livestock sales, primarily to Saudi Arabia, accounted for over half of the country's

meager export earnings. Another 25 percent of earnings came from the export of bananas to Italy, but the traditional market there was declining. Having few other marketable resources to offer abroad and dependent on imports for all of its fuel, most of its manufactured articles, and some of its food supplies, Somalia suffered from a lopsided trade imbalance and chronic scarcity of foreign exchange. During the 1960s the country had relied on foreign assistance not only for development but also to meet basic economic needs. Despite Somalia's apparently limited economic potential and shortage of trained personnel, the SRC outlined ambitious plans for economic development shortly after taking power.

Although the revolutionary regime's development schemes depended on continued—and increased—technical and economic assistance, Siad Barre roundly condemned the former regime for having permitted undue interference by foreign donors. The SRC's approach, he emphasized, would insist on the broadest possible popular participation in keeping with his concept of self-reliance to develop resources, provide services, and alleviate the country's poverty. Self-help efforts, exemplified in a series of so-called crash programs that were aimed at achieving specific goals in agriculture, public works, and community development, maximized the use of unskilled labor—the resource in most abundant supply. Crash programs involved the construction of schools, mosques, and sports facilities, reclamation projects, road repair, and well digging. Maintenance of existing public facilities, improved sanitation, and clean-up campaigns in urban areas also ranked high among the regime's priorities. In 1972 the SRC unveiled a comprehensive five-year economic development plan for the period 1974-78, which it optimistically anticipated would increase agricultural production and processing for the export market while achieving self-sufficiency in food for domestic use.

Crash programs based on self-help were of two kinds. Short-term projects mobilized students, civil servants, and army personnel for specific periods of time and had the added ideological objective of inculcating social equality and an appreciation of the dignity of labor. Jail terms reportedly awaited those who failed to "volunteer" for work assignments. The unemployed and those in fringe occupations were also rounded up from the streets of Mogadishu and other towns and sent to join work gangs. In the second of the crash programs, which was concerned with public works and long-term agricultural development, the salient objective in recruiting laborers was to provide stable employment.

According to SRC declarations in the early 1970s, one of the aims of scientific socialism was to build a completely socialist economy in which the state would control the means of production. In the first of its development programs, however, the revolutionary regime recognized that the problems posed by limited capital

made "the continued existence of a mixed economy, as a transitional stage, inevitable." Private business and foreign participation in the economy were therefore allowed to continue, but emphasis was on expanding the public sector wherever feasible. Nationalization of key foreign-owned enterprises with compensation and the indigenization of management remained important items on the SRC's agenda. Already in 1970, for example, Italian- and British-owned banks and petroleum companies operating in Somalia were brought under state control as were foreign-owned utility companies and the sugar refinery. Responsibility for the marketing abroad of bananas, grown mostly on Italian-owned plantations, and some other crops was assumed by the state. Likewise the import trade and distribution of imports was put under direction of the National Agency for Trade, which was also in charge of providing vehicles and building material for public use. In an effort to eliminate price fluctuations and to ensure equal access to supplies throughout the country, the state also took over the distribution of some domestically produced goods such as sugar, but intervention resulted in steeply rising prices, food shortages, and the growth of an illegal private market that required the imposition of rationing to curb.

The Soviet Union provided the most generous bilateral economic and technical assistance to Somalia during the early 1970s, focusing primarily on the development of an export-oriented agro-industry based on meat and fish processing. China began a major road-building project and assisted the Somalis in introducing rice and tobacco cultivation. Chinese aid was also accepted in setting up a light industry to manufacture cigarettes and matches for domestic consumption, in order to save money otherwise spent abroad on those items. Italy continued to supply bilateral aid, particularly for education, and contributed to an EEC-sponsored assistance program. In 1970 the United States, which had been the second-largest Western donor after Italy, terminated its aid program in Somalia in retaliation for the merchant vessels flying the Somali flag-of-convenience that carried cargoes to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Grants, credits, and loans were made available by UN agencies to fund irrigation and other agricultural development projects and to relieve the pressure on Somalia's foreign exchange. By the mid-1970s Somalia was becoming increasingly reliant on project financing from Arab countries.

Drought had always been a common phenomenon in Somalia. Occurring periodically, often at intervals of about five years, it caused extreme hardship, particularly among the nomads, but the herds were quickly replenished, and the pastoralists returned with them to their traditional grazing grounds when rain came again. The drought of 1974–75 was the worst in memory, however, and it lingered without relief. The loss of livestock, reckoned in the mil-

lions of cattle, goats, sheep, and camels deprived many pastoralists of their livelihood and seriously reduced Somalia's most important export commodity. In desperation the government suspended the five-year plan and diverted assistance funds earmarked for development projects to meet the needs of refugees, who by early 1975 numbered at least 200,000, quartered in famine relief centers. The conditions imposed by the drought also had the effect of encouraging participation in the governments's program for resettling nomads in sedentary occupations, and about 140,000 were reportedly relocated in the south—most with the aid of a Soviet airlift. The drought and the need to resettle refugees hastened the government's decision to proceed with nationalization of farmland for redistribution to family units (see Land Use, Soils, and Land Tenure, ch. 3).

Creation of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party

One of the SRC's first acts was to prohibit the existence of any political association. Under Soviet pressure to create a communist party structure to replace Somalia's military regime, Siad Barre had announced as early as 1971 the SRC's intention to establish a one-party state. The SRC had already begun organizing what was described as a "vanguard of the revolution," composed of members of a socialist elite drawn from both military and civilian sectors. The National Public Relations Office (retitled the National Political Office in 1973) was formed to propagate the ideology of scientific socialism with the support of the Ministry of Information and National Guidance through orientation centers that had been built around the country, generally as local self-help projects.

The formative congress of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) was convened by the SRC in June 1976 and voted to establish the Supreme Council as the new party's central committee. The council included the nineteen officers who composed the SRC in addition to civilian advisers, heads of ministries, and other public figures. Civilians accounted for a majority of its seventy-three members. On July 1, 1976, the SRC dissolved itself, formally vesting power over the country's government in the SRSP under the direction of the Supreme Council.

In theory the creation of the SRSP marked the end of military rule, but in practice real power over the party and the government remained with the small group of military officers who had been most influential in the SRC. Decisionmaking resided with the new party's politburo, a select committee of the Supreme Council that was comprised of five former SRC members, including Siad Barre and his son-in-law, NSS chief Colonel Ahmed Suleiman Abdulle. Siad Barre was also secretary-general of the SRSP as well as chairman of the Council of Ministers, which had replaced the CSS. (When the SRSP congress proposed to elevate

him to the rank of field marshal, however, he declined to accept the honor.) Military influence in the new government was increased when former members of the SRC were assigned to take over additional ministerial posts. Likewise, the MOD circle was widely represented on the Supreme Council and in other party organs. Upon the establishment of the SRSP, the National Political Office was abolished, and its functions were undertaken by the local party leadership.

Foreign Policy under Military Rule

The major foreign influence on Somalia after independence was clearly the Soviet Union. Soviet involvement in the country had begun with the extension of military and economic aid and scholarships to Somali students for training in the Soviet Union in the 1960s. By 1969 a large number of Soviet officers were serving as advisers to the Somali armed forces, which was equipped almost entirely with weapons of Soviet-bloc manufacture. Many officers, including leaders of the 1969 coup, had become ideologically disposed to some form of socialism and looked to Marxist solutions as the best means for ending their country's abysmal poverty. The SRC was favorably inclined, therefore, to turn first toward the Soviet Union for advice and continued assistance, and the Soviet response was prompt and substantial. Supplies were provided for a Somali military force that was nearly doubled in size to more than 20,000 by 1975. An estimated 1,000 Soviet advisers were present at all levels of the armed forces, training the Somalis in the use of an inventory that included fifty-two combat aircraft and at least 250 tanks. The Soviets reorganized the Somali intelligence and security services and cooperated in dealing with a contingent of dissident Somali army officers who were deported to the Soviet Union for "training." Cuban training cadre were also introduced, and advisers from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) were assigned to the national police.

Much of the Soviet aid was nonmilitary in nature and the Soviet Union scored its greatest success in cementing relations with Somalia through extensive humanitarian assistance provided during the disastrous drought of 1974–75. The basis for Somali-Soviet relations after 1974 was the treaty of friendship and cooperation signed during a visit of the Soviet president Nikolai V. Podgorny, to Somalia in July of that year. Although the resulting Soviet presence in Somalia became massive and Siad Barre declared that Marxism-Leninism was the basis of the country's revolutionary ideology, the alignment with Moscow was far from that of a Soviet satellite. Siad Barre claimed that a major reason for such intimate ties was that Moscow had not asked anything of Somalia in return for unconditional aid; however, the Soviet defense minister obtained access to Somali port and airfield facilities at Berbera after agreeing to improve them.

By 1977 a Soviet facility that included an airfield, harbor, storage depot for missiles, communications station, and barracks was operational at Berbera. The Somalis categorically denied the existence of the base at Berbera—even after detailed evidence had been revealed to the contrary—and offered to allow United States naval vessels to call at Somali ports along with the Soviet ships that regularly put in there.

The questions of United States military assistance to Ethiopia and the Soviet base at Berbera hampered improvement in United States-Somali relations, which had deteriorated after the termination of the United States aid program in 1970. A considerable amount of assistance from the United States continued to reach Somalia, however, in the forms of multilateral aid programs and emergency grain shipments during the drought. Relations with France were vexed by the continued French presence at Djibouti, while those with Britain had never recovered from the diplomatic rupture in the 1960s. Italy maintained its good contacts with Somalia despite the adverse impact that SRC policies had on Italian investments there.

Somalia was bound by historical and religious ties to the Arab world and had its most important trade links to Saudi Arabia. The country had also benefited in the past from aid provided by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war Somalia offered to send troops to the Sinai front and had allowed the Egyptian navy to use the port of Berbera. At the time of the 1973 world oil crisis, Somalia chose to accept the invitation to join the League of Arab States (Arab League) that had been extended years before, and in February 1974 it became that organization's only non-Arab member.

Somalia's decision to join the Arab League was announced without the prior public discussion that characterized most other major decisions. In explaining the move, Siad Barre stressed Somalia's historical associations with Arab countries and their common adherence to Islam. He foresaw a situation in which assistance and investment from oil-rich but food-importing states would be used to develop Somalia's agricultural potential to their mutual benefit. In addition a number of valuable foreign aid commitments were secured from the Arab states, and new marketing agreements were obtained for Somali livestock. Somalia's diplomatic reorientation toward the Arab world also came at a time when relations with neighboring African countries were once again becoming tense.

Although the armed forces had seen their mission as one of carrying forward the country's pan-Somali objectives, the SRC immediately made it clear that the revolutionary regime would adhere to the former government's policy of regional détente. This commitment was underscored during Haile Selassie's state

visit to Somalia in 1971, but comments by Somali leaders were no always reassuring to their neighbors. For example in 1973 at annual meeting of heads of state of the OAU, Siad Barre again raised the issue of Somalia's claims to the Ogaden, spurred apparently by new reports of the imminent discovery of oil and natural gas deposits there. The SRC asserted that Somalia's position did not place it in conflict with the OAU policy regarding the inviolability of national borders because, from the Somali viewpoint, theirs was not a border claim but rather a problem resulting from "continuing colonial occupation."

In response to a Somali request the OAU agreed to take up the question of the disputed territories and attempted mediation through the good offices of an eight-nation committee. To the embarrassment of many members, Siad Barre reopened the issue at the 1974 OAU summit, hosted by Somalia in Mogadishu. The SRC warmly welcomed the overthrow of Haile Selassie later that year by a military group that, like Somalia's ruling body, also pledged to bring about revolutionary change to its country. But friendly words were accompanied by the continued growth in size and capability of the Somali armed forces, the implications of which were not lost on Ethiopia or Kenya.

War in the Ogaden

Somalia promoted the organization of insurgent movements by Somalis and Oromos in Ethiopia's southern regions in the early 1960s and provided them with material as well as moral support. During the period of détente with Ethiopia, however, the Egal government and subsequently the SRC attempted to distance themselves from the insurgents and denied recognition to their representatives in Mogadishu. Encouraged by the apparent breakdown of authority in Ethiopia after the 1974 coup that deposed Haile Selassie, some members of the SRC urged active Somali intervention in the Ogaden to recover the "lost territories," but Siad Barre counseled patience, predicting that Ethiopia would collapse of its own accord. Following demonstrations of popular solidarity with the Ogaden Somalis early in 1975, the president ordered security forces to arrest and jail militant leaders in the capital.

Siad Barre continued to seek a negotiated settlement with the military regime in Addis Ababa that would allow for self-determination in the Ogaden. Only when his diplomatic initiative appeared to fail did Siad Barre agree to extend formal recognition late in 1975 to the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which had recently been reorganized by new leaders who had been schooled in the old SYL. Operating in the Ogaden, the WSLF was committed to the Greater Somalia concept. Linked to it was the Somali-Abo Liberation Front, which incorporated

One of the Somali women who fought in the Ogaden as Western Somali Liberation Front guerrillas
Courtesy Somali Embassy, Washington

Western Somali Liberation Front guerrillas celebrating the capture of a village in the southern Ogaden. The sign in Somali reads "May all colonized peoples win their independence."
Courtesy Somali Embassy, Washington

dissident Oromos and had its sphere of operations in Bale, Sidamo, and Arsi. Somalia also backed and armed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, a Marxist-Leninist group dedicated to establishing a civilian communist government, that fought a vicious underground war against Ethiopia's military regime.

WSLF guerrillas engaged Ethiopian troops in combat for the first time in 1975, systematically hitting police posts and army garrisons from base camps across the border in Somalia. As the tempo of fighting picked up, the WSLF acquired an armored and artillery capability. In June 1977 the Somali insurgents were successful in cutting the railroad bridges between Addis Ababa and Djibouti over which about one-third of Ethiopia's external trade was carried, and the WSLF claimed effective military control over 60 percent of the Ogaden. At that time the WSLF could count on about 6,000 men in well-disciplined units, an unspecified but reportedly substantial percentage of them volunteers from Somalia's armed forces who had apparently crossed into the Ogaden on their own initiative.

In July Somali mechanized units based in Hargeysa invaded Ethiopian territory in a preemptive thrust at Harer, the region's military command center, that was intended to decide the issue in the Ogaden before reinforcements and Soviet equipment in the pipeline to Ethiopia arrived on the scene. The capture of Jijiga in August, less than 100 kilometers from Harer, was to be the high-water mark in that latest attempt to secure the Ogaden for the Somalis.

The decisive factor in the debacle that followed was the complete shift in Moscow's support from Somalia to its enemy. In March 1977 Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro had sought to reconcile differences between the two socialist regimes during visits to Mogadishu and Addis Ababa, but Siad Barre continued to deny Somalia's active participation in the Ogaden fighting. But when Addis Ababa issued an urgent appeal for assistance after the fall of Jijiga, Moscow responded with a massive military supply effort, and deliveries of large quantities of modern equipment began to arrive at the front in September. Resupplied Ethiopian troops regrouped and were reinforced by Cuban combat units to turn the tide of battle against the Somalis. In November, as the weight of the Soviet intervention on Ethiopia's side began to be felt in the Ogaden, Siad Barre evicted the Soviet personnel from his country and abrogated the friendship treaty with the Soviet Union (see Greater Somalia, ch. 4; Performance in the Ogaden Conflict, ch. 5).

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The available literature on the history of Somalia and the Somali people is limited in volume but not in the scope of scholarly atten-

tion conferred on it by a small body of specialists writing in English. I.M. Lewis, the prolific doyen of Somali studies, provides an easily accessible historical survey in *A Modern History of Somalia*, updated in the 1980 edition to cover the 1970s, with which any further study of the country should commence. Margaret Castagno's *Historical Dictionary of Somalia* is a helpful reference work for additional reading. The basic argument for the modified traditional view of Somali origins and migrations is given by I.M. Lewis in "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa." The revisionist view is presented by Herbert S. Lewis in "The Origins of the Galla and Somali." Based on persuasive linguistic evidence, his argument is supported and amplified by E.R. Turton's "Bantu, Galla, and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa." Robert L. Hess' *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* is a detailed study of the colonial episode in the south. The only available biography of Mohamed Abdullah is Douglas Jardin's vintage *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, but more recent research on his life and times has been published in excellent articles by Hess, B.G. Martin, and Leo Silberman. I.M. Lewis' *A Pastoral Democracy* and David D. Laitin's *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience* are invaluable for an understanding of the social and cultural aspects of Somali history. The origins and growth of nationalist sentiment and political movements are traced in Saadia Touval's *Somali Nationalism.* The problem of Somali irredentism is treated in its historical context by John Drysdale in *The Somali Dispute* and in its contemporary manifestation by Tom J. Farer in *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa.* I.M. Lewis calls on his thorough knowledge of Somali society and politics to analyze the background and initial consequences of the military coup in "The Politics of the 1969 Somali Coup," while Laitin considers the ongoing development of the revolution in "Somalia's Military Government and Scientific Socialism," published in *Socialism in Sub-Saharan Africa.* (For further information see Bibliography.)