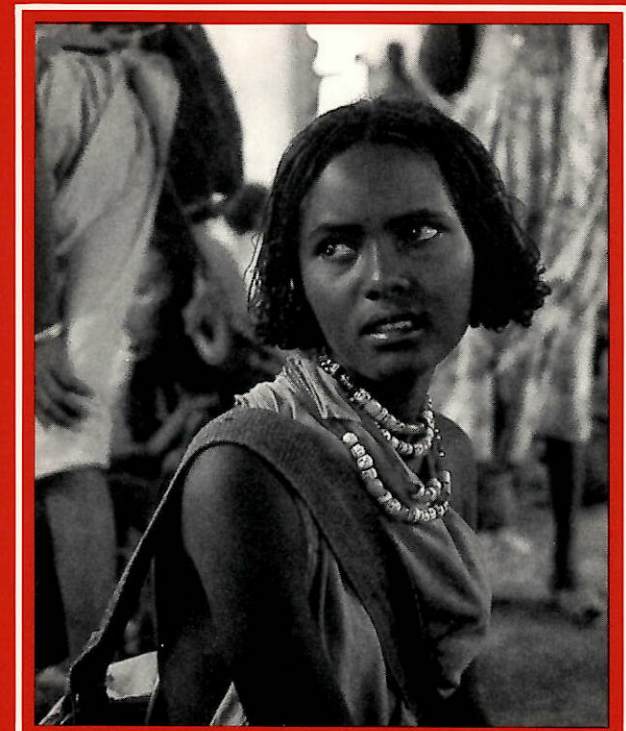


SOMALIA

Nation in Search of a State

David D. Laitin
and
Said S. Samatar



Profiles / Nations of Contemporary Africa

Laitin
Samatar

SOMALIA: Nation in Search of a State

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SOMALIA

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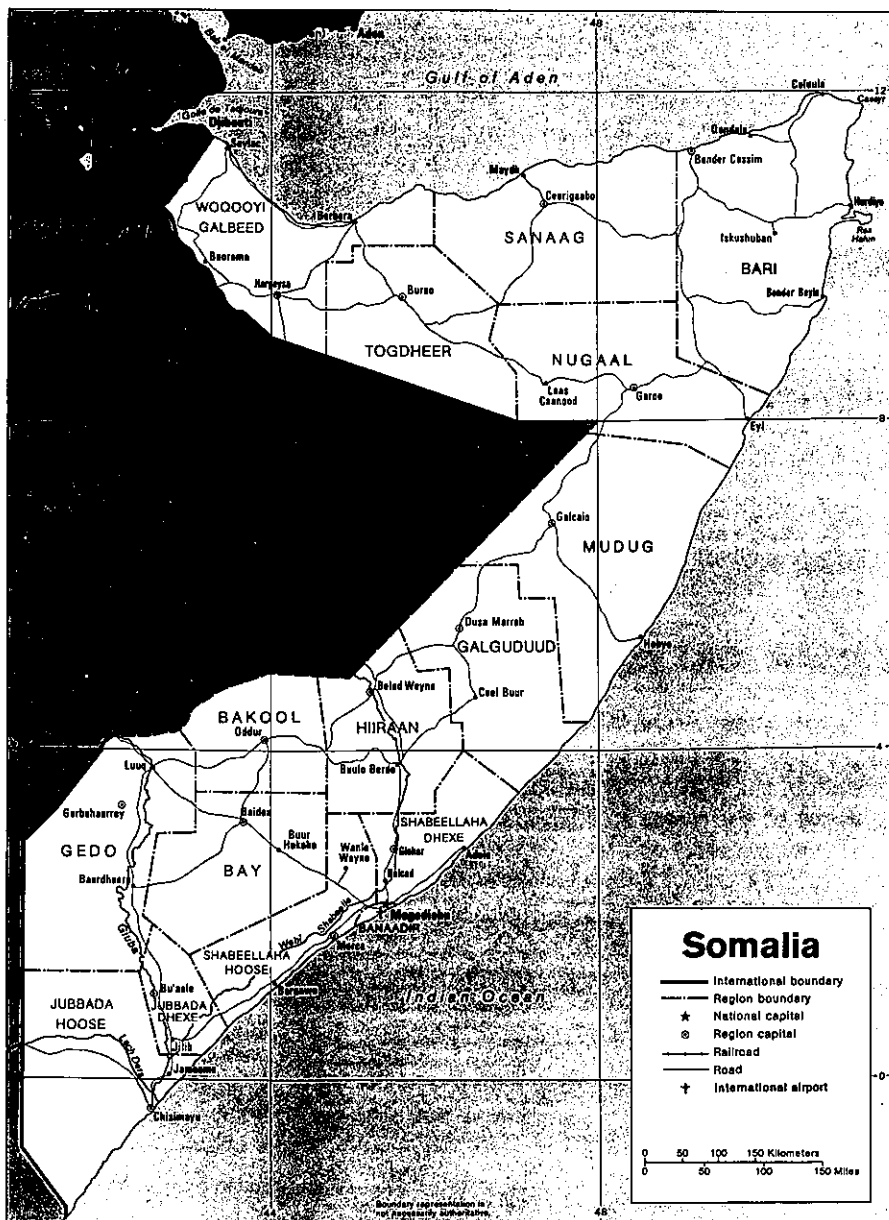
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ABOUT THE BOOK AND AUTHORS

Situated at the crossroads of Africa and Asia and dominating the confluence of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, the Somali peninsula is a region of great strategic importance. For centuries, it has been the focus of outside world powers—from the ancient Egyptians, who called it “God’s land,” to the late-nineteenth-century European empire builders. Today there is a contest between the United States and the Soviet Union for military bases and other strategic stakes in the Horn region. Conflicting nationalisms and incompatible territorial claims (for example, those between Ethiopia and Somalia), together with a simmering residue of religious antagonisms, further compound the problem of superpower competition. Of late these factors have combined to make the Horn of Africa one of the world’s principal trouble spots. In this introduction to Somalia and the Somali people the authors examine the important events, themes, and influences of the past in order to explain the complexities of the politics, society, culture, and economy of contemporary Somalia.

David D. Laitin is professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego. **Said S. Samatar**, a native Somali, is associate professor of history at Rutgers University.



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and
Said S. Samatar

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To Muuse Galaal

*Inkastoon waxbadan aragno, waxaan ku taagannahay
garbaha waaya-aragga, uu ka mid yahay
aqoonyahanka Muuse Galaal.*

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Note on Transliteration of Somali Words

In transliterating Somali words, we have adopted the official Somali orthography in use in the Somali Republic since 1972. This orthography uses Latin characters with minor adjustments designed to accommodate Somali phonetic sounds. There are, however, three consonants that do not conform to the new system of Somali spelling: the aspirate *h*, the palatal *d*, and the *ayn*.

In the new Somali orthography, the letters *x*, *dh*, and *c* are used respectively to render these consonants. In this book, by contrast, we use the letters *h*, *d*, and an apostrophe to represent these Somali symbols. Thus, we adopt:

- h instead of x
- d instead of dh
- ' instead of c

This measure is taken to meet the needs of the English reader who is unacquainted with the official Somali orthography or with Somali phonetic sounds. Where any of the three consonants appear on a Somali author's name or book title, however, we use the official orthography. On charts and maps we employ diacritical marks that have been omitted from the text for technical reasons. Bibliographic entries of Somali names conform to indigenous designation, that is, first name comes first.

The glottal stop, or Arabic hamza, is rendered by an apostrophe. The two leading cities of Somalia—Mogadishu and Hargeisa—and the Republic of Djibouti retain their conventional spelling in the Western press.

The frontispiece map is derived from a U.S. government source. The spellings on it may not coincide with the transliterations used in the text.

Introduction

The unique emphasis of this volume, which is part of the Nations of Contemporary Africa series, merits some explanation. Although the focus of many of the other volumes in this series is on the contemporary and the modern, this study of the Somali Democratic Republic is steeped in tradition and in history. Why are we, the authors, so enthralled with Somalia's past, and why do we take the ancient history of the Horn of Africa so very seriously?

The answer to the question points not to the authors' idiosyncrasies but rather to the special circumstances of nation and state building in Somalia. The very organization of this volume, then, should give the reader a good sense of the political role of history and tradition in modern Somalia.

Permit us to elaborate by discussing the changing role of the concept of tradition in the study of modern African politics, especially as it has developed in the United States. In the late 1950s, when independence for French- and British-controlled Africa appeared inevitable, a few intrepid scholars earned their doctorates by studying the nationalist movements. In the early studies, exemplified by the work of David Apter,¹ political scientists read the anthropological studies of the major groups in the country and searched within those traditions for some clues as to the kinds of political developments that would occur once the country became self-ruling. Apter recounted Ashante traditions in his study of Ghana and Baganda traditions in his work on Uganda. One major problem with this strategy soon became obvious: The two countries' post-independence leadership was not in the hands of the Ashante or the Baganda. African states were multicultural, multilingual, and religiously diverse. How could a study of a single tradition (or even a few dominant traditions) help to predict future politics in complex heterogeneous states?

Subsequent studies either focused on particular regions where in fact there was a unified tradition,² or they ignored traditions altogether and discussed different tribes as if they were interest groups seeking power and wealth. In the former case, scholars were unable to say much about politics and policy in the central government, and their studies did not have major impacts in political science. In the latter case, nothing particular about an individual group's tradition (for example, how leaders were chosen or the role of art in the society) was deemed relevant.³ All traditional groups were thought to seek jobs and resources from the center in more or less similar ways. This view has become the model approach in the study of African politics.

Somalia is different because virtually all the people within the boundaries of the Somali Democratic Republic share a common tradition. They speak the same language, respond to the same poetry, derive their wisdom (and their experience) from the camel economy, and worship the same God. This tradition, and its endless interpretations, provides the stuff of contemporary political debate. Questions such as the geographic origins of the Somali people, the relationship of a wayward son to the father of one of the founding clan-families, or the role of artisans in the traditional social structure all have poignant meaning in contemporary debates about policy and leadership in Somalia.

History, therefore, means something different in Somalia than in, let us say, Nigeria. In Nigeria, where the profession of history is well advanced,⁴ historians have often wished to demonstrate the heroic efforts of various peoples in the face of European economic penetration and colonialism. History has been used to enhance the self-respect of the citizenry, not to settle scores in contemporary debates about allocation. New findings on the relationship between the cities of Ilorin and Oyo in the face of the Yoruba civil wars in the nineteenth century or the political dealings of Usuman dan Fodio in the northern emirates are not the stuff of daily debate in Lagos political circles. In Somalia, on the other hand, history is used to enhance or depreciate the status of particular groups that still play a role in coalition building. Any new finding concerning Somalia's ancient past reverberates through government circles in Mogadishu.

One of the authors of this volume, to give but one example, presented a paper to the First International Congress of Somali Studies (held in Mogadishu in 1980) on the role of a particular religious man (Sheikh Isahaaq b. Ahmad b. Muhammad) in the anticolonial struggle who has long been seen as a man who betrayed his own people in service to the Italians. The paper suggested that this sheikh's role was not too different from that of Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan, who is often held to be the father of Somali nationalism. In the wake

of the scholarly presentation, the minister of state in the president's office stood up and castigated the professional historian for his naïveté and his ignorance of the real history of Somalia. The entire audience understood the ensuing dialogue in terms of clan history and the situation of the clans that make up the ruling coalition of contemporary Somalia. The point should be clear: In Somalia, history is deadly ammunition in today's political wars. Perhaps the only appropriate analogy to the Somali case is that of Israel, where biblical geography is an important clue in unravelling the skein of conflict among diverse Israeli factions.

By far the most unfortunate consequence of Somali history for current politics is the fact that a significant percentage of those people who are part of the Somali tradition do not live within the boundaries handed to the Somalis by the colonial powers. Large numbers of Somalis still live as second-class citizens in Kenya and as unwanted subjects in Ethiopia. Many straddle the borders and rely on water holes and grasslands on both sides. This most difficult situation has added tragedy and pathos to the story of contemporary Somali politics. Because of the significance of this issue of boundaries—and the deep desire of so many Somalis to be united under the flag of a single state—its history and current meaning constitute the subtext of this book and provide a thread connecting its chapters.

Although Somalis may have been cursed by their history, it also has given them the strength and vision to face difficult economic, social, and political problems. The symbolic repertoire provided by what we shall call the camel complex, for example, gives virtually all Somalis a sense of common purpose. Similarly with Islam: Because virtually all Somali citizens are Muslims, they are bound by religious law and custom to treat each other with respect, no matter what each individual's situation in life might be. Somalia's shared history and culture are resources that can be exploited. Consequently, the authors hope to give the reader a full sense of how Somali history (Chapters 1 and 3) and cultural traditions (Chapter 2) shape contemporary politics (Chapter 4), economics (Chapter 5), and, especially, foreign policy (Chapter 6). In the final chapter, where the authors speculate on Somalia's future, Somalia's history and traditions will of course continue to act as guide.

Although both authors have contributed significant material to and take full responsibility for what appears in all the chapters, Said Samatar provided the original draft of Chapters 1–3 and 7, and David Laitin did the same for Chapters 4–6.

David D. Laitin
Said S. Samatar

1

The Peopling of the Somali Peninsula

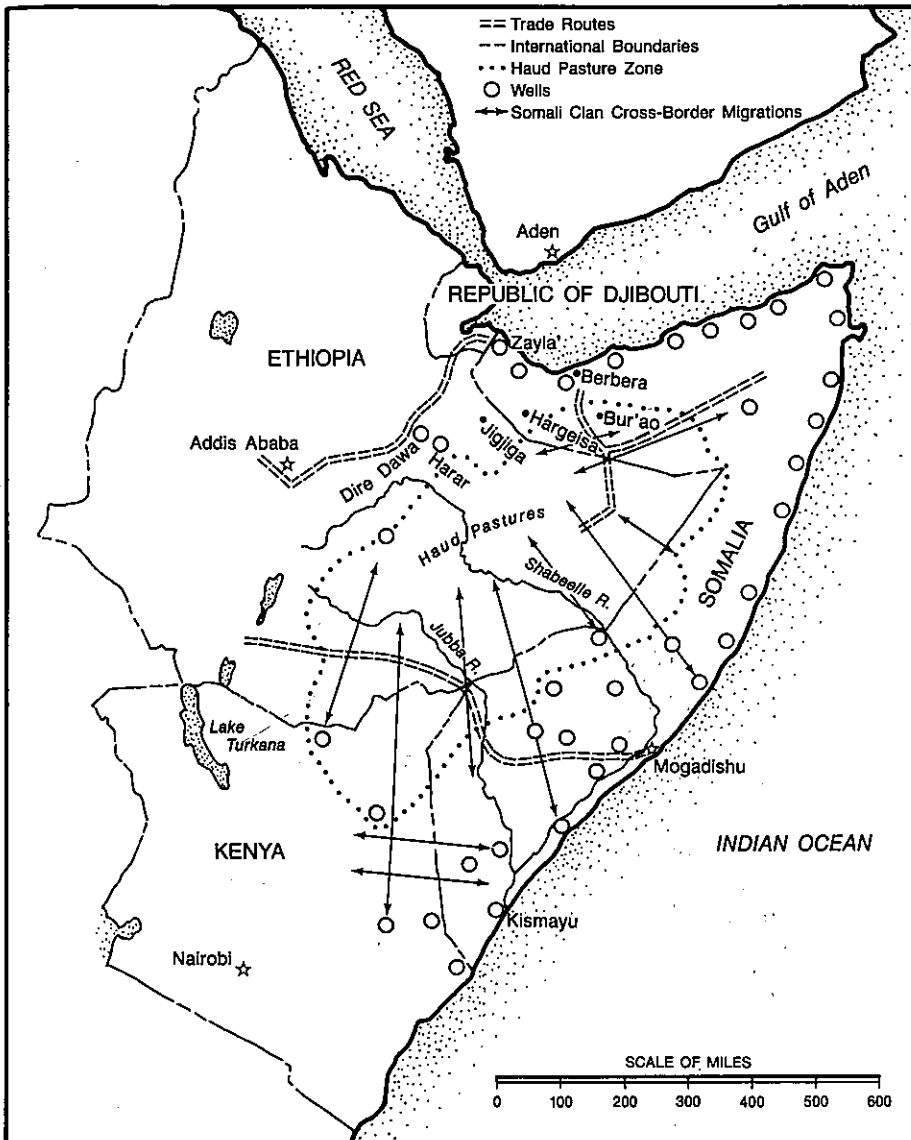
"If all he could hope to explain was how one barbarian succeeded another," Voltaire observed sarcastically to a student of Turkish history, "where is the advantage to mankind?" Although Professor Basil Davidson reproduces the Voltairian observation in his *Africa in History*¹ as a general warning to the intending historian of the Africans, the point applies with particular relevance to the would-be historian of the Somalis. There is no dearth of kingdoms and cataclysmic conquests in Somali history, but these do not constitute its dominant themes. Rather, these themes are marginal to the evolution of Somali society, whose temper and tastes have been shaped by the dynamic interplay of pastoral nomadism, migratory movements, coastal urbanization, and the strong effects of Islamization. In this chapter we hope to treat, however tentatively, each of these themes in order to reconstruct the story of how the Somalis came to occupy their present home in the eastern half of the Horn of Africa and how they acquired their national characteristics and cultural patterns.

Environment has made a significant contribution to the shaping of Somali society. Inhabiting roughly 400,000 square miles of what is often termed a savannah grassland in the Horn of Africa, the Somali population is estimated at 5–6 million. Of these, 3.5 million live in the Somali Republic (260,000 square miles), 2 million in Ethiopia's Ogaadeen region, 240,000 in the northern provinces of Kenya, and 200,000 in the Republic of Djibouti. (These figures, it should be noted, are based on an informed guess rather than on reliable census data, which do not exist for the Somali population.) The Somali Republic is bounded by the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden to the east, by Kenya to the southwest, by Ethiopia to the northwest, and by the Republic of Djibouti to the north (see frontispiece map).

Geographically, Somalia may be differentiated into four topographic zones: the coastal plains, the northeastern mountains system, the central plateau of the Haud lands, and the fertile interriverine area of the southwest. Locally called the Guban (or burned from the scarcity of water and grueling heat), the coastal plains stretch from the lava-strewn wastelands of the Djibouti Republic along the Gulf of Aden shore to Cape Gardafui on the eastern tip of the coast. Barren of vegetation and enjoying no more than four inches of annual rainfall, the Guban is deserted in the hot months (June–September) except in urban centers such as the cities of Djibouti (population, 150,000) and Berbera (population, 70,000).

The Oogo and Golis mountain system rises beyond the Guban and constitutes the towering features of Somali physical topography. Precipitous and breathtakingly bleak, this mountain range extends westward and rises to an altitude of 9,000 feet at the city of Harar (Ethiopia), ultimately merging into the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands. From the northern mountains a plateau descends gently southward, maintaining an average altitude of 3,000 feet and comprising most of Somalia. The Haud, as this region is known, extends from Hargeisa (population, 100,000) in the northwest to Gaalka'yo (population, 50,000) in the northeast and from the Ogaadeen Doollo plains in the west to the Nugaal valley in the east and forms the bulk of Somali pasturelands. During the rainy season, the Haud rangelands attract Somali herdsmen who are drawn to the lush vegetation this region provides for their herds as well as the momentary respite from the harsh conditions of the dry season (*jiilaal*) drought. The Haud as a grazing zone, however, is beset with a serious disadvantage: It is devoid of permanent water. This circumstance compels the nomads, especially those with less hardy animals such as cattle and sheep, to vacate the Haud as soon as the vegetation turns dry and migrate to the string of wells along the coast. Indeed, this ecological peculiarity of pasture without water in the Haud and water without pasture on the coast explains not only the historic transhumant migrations of the Somali pastoralists, but also why the imposition of colonial boundaries—which lopped off the grazing areas of the central plateau from water sources on the coast—makes life untenable for the pastoralists. The point is illustrated graphically by Map 1.1, which shows seasonal migrations of Somali clans in relation to colonially imposed boundaries.

Climatically, Somalis recognize four seasons, two of which are rainy (*gu'* and *dayr*) and two dry (*jiilaal* and *hagaa'*). The *gu'* rains begin in April and last until June, producing a fresh supply of pasture and for a brief period turning the desert into a flowering garden.



MAP 1.1 Trade Routes, International Boundaries, Haud Pasture Zones, Wells, and Clan Cross-Border Migrations

Lush vegetation covers the greater part of the land, especially the central grazing plateau where grass grows several feet tall and sways brilliantly in the sunshine. The *gu'* therefore is a season of plenty and active social intercourse. Milk and meat abound, water is plentiful, and the animals do not require much caretaking. The clans, having at long last received a welcome reprieve from the exacting scarcity of *jiilaal*, assemble to engage alternately in banter and poetic exchange or in a new cycle of hereditary feuds. They also offer sacrifices to Allah and to the founding clan ancestors, whose blessings they seek. It is no wonder, therefore, that the *gu'* season has come to signify numerous social functions: Marriages are contracted, outstanding disputes settled or exacerbated, and, most significantly, a person's age is calculated in terms of the number of *gu's* he or she has lived. The *gu'* season is followed by the *hagaa'* drought (July–September) and the *hagaa'* by the *dayr* rains (October–November), which are in turn followed by *jiilaal* (December–March), the harshest season for the pastoralists and their herds.

In focusing on the interplay between nomadic pastoralism and climatic vagaries we do not mean to imply that all Somalis are pastoral or live off animal husbandry. Both urban and agricultural modes of life have had considerable impact on the shaping of Somali society. Yet despite the massive influx of nomads and peasants into the towns and the consequent large scale—and rapid pace—of urbanization during the last forty years, some 60 percent of Somalis continue to make their living from animal husbandry. We, therefore, have in the Somali Republic a rare example of a sub-Saharan African state in which the pursuit and practice of pastoralism occupy a central, rather than a marginal, role in national life, thereby affecting almost every sphere of social activity and economic planning.

THE EVOLUTION OF SOMALI SOCIETY, 500 B.C.–A.D. 1000

The First Great Migration

Having provided a brief introduction to the present setting, we now trace the slender threads of early Somali history, beginning with prehistoric times. The absence, or paucity, of documentary historical evidence compels the student of early Somali history to rely on the evidence of archaeology, anthropology, historical linguistics, oral tradition, and related fields. Although the application of the methods of these disciplines to the Somali past is still in its infancy, it has already provided sufficient insights to revolutionize our understanding of ancient Somali history and, in particular, to overturn conventional

interpretations of the origins and migrations of the Somali people. Where once conventional wisdom held that the Somalis originated from the Red Sea coast, if not from across the sea in southern Arabia, it is now all but certain that the ancestral home of the Somalis, along with related Cushitic peoples, has to be sought in the highlands of southern Ethiopia. Where once it was held that the migration into the Somali coast of Arabian Muslim saints was central to the formation of Somali society, it now appears that the Arab factor—other than the conversion to Islam—is not pivotal or even crucial to the Somali past. Where once it was thought that the migration of the Somalis took a north-south direction, the opposite now seems to be the case.

This radical revision in interpreting early Somali history is, as we have noted, based on the insights and contributions of scholars from numerous disciplines, especially linguistics, ethnography, and archaeology. According to these, the Somalis—by language and life-style, by economic mode and social institutions, by traditions and physical demeanor—belong to a wide family of peoples termed Eastern Cushites by linguists or Hamites by an earlier designation. These are the same groups of people whom medieval Arab writers distinguished from other Africans by the name of Berber or Berberi and who evidently gave their name to the ancient Somali port of Berbera. (It would form the subject for a fascinating study to relate the history and cultural institutions of the Berbers of the Horn of Africa to those in the North African countries of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia to determine whether their roots go back to the same origin.) Other members of the Cushitic linguistic/culture family include the Oromo who played so eventful a part in Ethiopian history and are now represented in both Ethiopia and Kenya, the nomadic 'Afar (Danakil) who, straddling the bed of the Rift valley, are divided between Ethiopia and the Republic of Djibouti, and the Saho of northern Ethiopia. Along with the Reendille of northern Kenya and the Aweera (Boni) of the Lamu coast, the Somalis form a subdivision of the Omo-Tana, a group composed of peoples who speak languages that are almost mutually intelligible. The ancestral home of the Omo-Tana group, as the name implies, seems to be the cultural zone of the Omo and Tana rivers, stretching from Lake Turkana to the coast.

Linguists trace the earliest history of the Eastern Cushites to the lake region of Ethiopia where the Omo-Tana group (or Proto-Sam, as they were sometimes termed) split off from the mainstream of Cushitic peoples. In a series of migratory movements, the Proto-Sam spread to the grazing plains of northern Kenya by the second half of the first millennium B.C. Moving in a southeasterly direction, the Proto-Sam communities seem to have followed the course of the

Tana River and reached the coast of the Indian Ocean well before the first century A.D. Here the Proto-Sam splintered further, one branch (the Boni) staying on in the Lamu area, while the other branch swept northward to southern Somalia where it eventually developed a mixed economy of farming and pastoralism—a condition that still remains the economic base of southern Somalia today. The representatives of the Proto-Sam who occupied southern Somalia are labeled Samaale, an obvious reference to the mythical founder of the major pastoral clan-families, from which the name Somali derives.

The Samaale again moved northward, apparently in pursuit of water and pasturelands, and occupied the vast Ogaadeen grazing region of western Somalia. Ultimately, the Samaale reached the eastern coast of the Red Sea and of the Indian Ocean, where their contact with Islam was to set off another migratory trend, reversing the south-north direction of migration. Thus, the German scholar Bernd Heine—who wrote about these matters with considerable insight and ability—observed:

Within a relatively short period the Samaale or "Somali proper" . . . overflowed and occupied the entire Horn. If there existed any earlier populations on the peninsula they were either driven away or absorbed both culturally and linguistically. By around 1000 A.D., if not earlier, the entire Horn including what Arab writers had referred to as the [Berber] coast had been occupied by the Samaale.²

Other members of the Eastern Cushites who, like the Samaale, wandered further afield from their home area in southern Ethiopia include the Oromo, the 'Afar, and the Saho of Ethiopia. The remaining twenty-one or so branches of the Eastern Cushites are today scattered in their "original homeland of southern Ethiopia–northern Kenya."³

What set off these migrations of the eastern Sam, and especially of the Samaale, which ultimately came to cover hundreds of miles? We will probably never know fully. In any case, all we can do at present is to conjecture and speculate: Because the eastern Sam were primarily camel-keeping herders they could have been induced to migrate by the socioenvironmental pressures of intertribal feuds and clannish warfare, drought, and the scarcity of pasturelands. The camel is an ideal animal for trekking across large distances of waterless wilderness because at the same time it is able to provide herders with milk, meat, water, and other necessities. (It may be of interest to note here that a common practice of the Somalis and the neighboring Oromos—and probably of other Cushitic herders—is to extract water from the intestines of slaughtered camels. The operation is called *uusmiirad* in Somali and is done by hanging the stomach of the camel

in a tree and draining the falling droplets of liquid in wooden buckets for subsequent consumption. It is therefore probably the case that wherever a migration across a long, waterless expanse was involved, the use of camels must have been a crucial factor in the people's ability to survive.)

The question of who—if any—inhabited the Somali peninsula before the arrival of the Samaale remains a puzzling one, especially as academic opinion on the matter is characterized by contradiction and controversy rather than fruitful speculation. A special conundrum is the origin and movements of the pockets of Bantu communities in the valley systems of the Shabeelle and Jubba rivers in southern Somalia.

Bantu economic and social institutions differ markedly from those of the Cushites. If the Bantus are almost certainly not the autochthonous inhabitants of southern Somalia, then how, when, and by what route did they get there? Are they the descendants of the vanguard of Bantu expansion into East Africa or remnants of ex-slaves catapulted there in the chaos of the East African slave trade? Given that evidence in *Kitab al-Zinji*⁴ (The Book of the Negroes) and Somali oral tradition hinted that the Bantus—at least people described as Negroes—were in southern Somalia by the sixteenth century A.D., what role did they play in the early history of population movements in that area? Informed speculations on these questions, which we invite the interested reader to consult, were offered by Bernd Heine, I. M. Lewis, H. S. Lewis, E. R. Turton, and N. Chittick.⁵ Although these authors disagreed in their interpretations of the early history of population movements in the region, they all seemed to identify the Negroid peoples of southern Somalia as possible offshoots of Bantu groups who claim descent from the legendary state of Shungwaya, which is alleged to have once flourished between the Tana and Jubba rivers. Scholars now discount the historical reality of such a state and tend to explain Shungwaya as the political eponym of a cluster of Bantus on the lower reaches of the Tana River.⁶ The numbers of southern Somali Bantus were augmented greatly in the latter half of the nineteenth century by fugitives from the disruptive effects of the East African slave trade who found a safe haven in the isolated but well-watered valleys of the Shabeelle and Jubba rivers.

KINGDOMS, COASTAL CITIES, AND THE PASTORAL HINTERLAND, 1200-1870

Islam and the Second Great Migration

The occupation of the peninsula up to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean coasts brought the Somalis into intense and sustained contact

with Persian and Arab immigrants who had formed a string of settlements along the coast. The origins and arrival of these immigrants are obscure, although almost certainly they predate Islam. The regular traffic of people, commerce, and ideas between the two shores of the Red Sea is known to extend back to prehistoric times. It is therefore not surprising that in the early years of Muhammad's ministry, a strong party of persecuted Muslims, with the prophet's encouragement, fled pagan Mecca across the Red Sea into Abyssinia where they were given protection by the Abyssinian negus. This and similar episodes point to the introduction of Islam in the African coast even before that religion took firm root in Arabia. Despite the likely early penetration of Islam, however, the mass conversion of the Somalis seems to have taken place only in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries when the arrival of Muslim patriarchs, the legendary Sheikh Daarood Jabarti and Sheikh Isahaaq, initiated a period of Islamic resurgence and aggressive proselytization.

Somali contact with the coastal Muslims began near the end of the eighth century and changed Somali society in a number of creative ways. The contact introduced Islam, which was to become the universal faith of the Somalis (and of neighboring peoples), as well as the beginnings of Islamic culture and technology, which, however primitive, opened new horizons of initiative and action to the Somalis; the contact also led to the development of a new hybrid culture—the Somali version of the Swahili further south—in which cities (such as Zayla' and Berbera in the north, Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe in the south) emerged as emporia of trade and ideas, connecting the Somali coast to regional trends. Finally, contact with coastal communities helped transform the Somali economy from a single mode based on pastoralism to one in which pastoralism went hand in hand with long distance trade. These elements combined to create, or stimulate, the two principal trends of Somali history in the next several centuries—namely, the occurrence of a second great Somali migration and the development of centralized state systems.

The second Somali migration is associated with the arrival from Arabia of two Muslim saints. These are Sheikh Daarood, the mythical founder of the Daarood clan-family, who is alleged by tradition to have arrived at the end of the eleventh century in Somalia and to have married the daughter (named Doombira Dir) of a local Somali patriarch. According to tradition, their issue gave rise to the various lineages of the Daarood clan-family. He was followed two centuries later by Sheikh Isahaaq, the legendary founder of the numerous Isaaq clans. (Clan structure is a key theme in Chapter 2; numerous clan names and their structural position in the Somali kinship system are

outlined in Figure 2.1.) Other than their alleged burial sites in northeastern Somalia (Sheikh Daarood's at Hagato district in Warsangali country and Sheikh Isahaaq's at Mayt, also in Warsangali country), there is little physical evidence to support the historicity of these sheikhs as real persons. Thus, although we may dismiss as fanciful the elaborate traditions casting them as the ancestral founders of the Daarood and Isaaq clans, these saints signify the expanding influence of the coastal Muslims into the pastoral hinterland. Beginning in the twelfth century, the coastal communities, as a result of growth and immigration, seem to have expanded beyond their means and resources. Under the stimulus of population pressure, an interest in upland trade developed and, with it, the imperative to proselytize. This prompted waves of Muslims to move inland, often under the leadership of religious divines who took to marrying local women and spreading the faith with equal zeal. This inland expansion set off the second great Somali migration, this time in a reverse direction from the northeast to the southwest.

This great southward expansion (which ultimately took the Somalis to the eastern banks of the Tana River in northern Kenya and to the plains of Harar in eastern Ethiopia) began in earnest in the thirteenth century and was still in progress when the Europeans arrived at the Somali coast in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The main features of this movement have been ably recounted by I. M. Lewis, who labeled it the "Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," a population movement that in the light of the evidence cited earlier may more accurately be characterized as a reverse migration, not a conquest. The remarkable thing is that this second migration seems largely a northern Somali episode in which the southeastern portion of the country was hardly affected. The migration mainly involved the Ogaadeen Daarood, who in their drive southward followed the Shabeelle and Jubba river valleys, thereby pushing groups of harried Oromo before them as well as a confederation of Habar Magadle Isaaq and sections of the Mareehaan Daarood who migrated westward into the eastern highlands of present-day Ethiopia. The latter two clans were to play an important role in Imam Ahmad Gurey's conquest of the highland Christian kingdom of Abyssinia in the sixteenth century.

An important by-product of these migrations was the growth of long distance trade and trade routes, which brought the Somali peninsula into a measure of interdependence with the Abyssinian hinterland and with the Oromo lands to the southwest. It is possible to retrace the general outline and direction of this trade and of the resulting trade routes. On the whole, there were three routes. One

originated from Zayla' on the Somali coast, passed through 'Ise and 'Afar countries and onward to the Shoan highlands via Harar. This was traditionally the most lucrative route; it served as the main outlet of trade for the rich Abyssinian hinterland on which Zayla' battered and that made Zayla' the renowned commercial emporium of medieval Arab writers.

The second route led out of Berbera and stretched through the Jiirato Pass. At the Oogo plateau this route ramified; one branch passed through the Milmil and Doollo plains into the Ogaadeen and eventually to the then sultanate of Harar. This, it may be noted in passing, was the route that Richard Burton took on his return from Harar during his first trip to the Somali coast in 1854. The other branch took a southeasterly direction, serving as the principal outlet of trade for the Dulbahante, Habar Tol Ja'alo, and Majeerteen clans. The third long distance route originated from Mogadishu on the Benaadir coast, traversed the Jubba River at the Baardeere settlement of mullahs, and linked the Benaadir coast with the Arsi and other Oromos as far as Sidaamo. (For a graphic sketch of these routes, see Map 1.1.)

Of the goods that passed through these caravan routes and found their way to the Gulf and to India—sometimes as far as China—it is possible to identify ivory, ostrich fathers, civet, furs, hides and skins, frankincense and myrrh, coffee, and livestock. In the case of Zayla', gold and slaves from the Abyssinian interior formed an important part of the trade. From outside, principally India and the Middle East, came cloth, rice, dates, swords, and a variety of household utensils, and in the nineteenth century, a much sought-after import was firearms.

The Rise of Adal

If southward migration constitutes one theme of Somali history from the thirteenth century onward, then state formation is another. As we have noted, one consequence of the settlement of Arabs and Persians on the Somali coast and the consequent Islamization of the Somalis was the rise of city-states along the coast. Of these cities Zayla' and Berbera in the north and Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe (Brava) in the south benefited greatly from their convenient location as trade outlets and as focal points of contact between nomadic and urban cultures. As a result, they rose to a position of power and influence in the fourteenth century and maintained that position through the seventeenth century, only to decline thereafter. In the age of their growth and vitality, these cities either developed into centralized states themselves or inspired state systems further inland.

The experience of Zayla' represents a telling example of the changing fortunes of the Somali coastal cities.

Zayla' figures prominently in the conflicts between the growing Abyssinian highland kingdom and the fragmented Muslim principalities of Ifat, Dawaro, Hadiya, and Bale. The influence of these Muslim states extended from Zayla' to the southeastern edge of the highlands of present-day Ethiopia. Zayla' was the commercial port of the Muslim kingdom of Ifat whose core centered around the eastern escarpment west of Harar. Ifat's rulers, the Walashma' dynasty, claimed a fictive descent—much like the Somali myth of Arabian ancestry—from noble Arab forebears. The kingdom of Ifat seems to have been in existence as early as the twelfth century and to have grown as a result of the conversion to Islam of the peoples inhabiting the highlands west of Harar and the plains east of it.

For centuries prior to the fifteenth, Muslims had entertained an amicable view of Abyssinian Christians, a view that went back to the beginning of Islam. This tolerance stemmed mainly from the debt and the gratitude that Muslims felt they owed to Abyssinian Christians for the protection the latter extended to destitute Muslim refugees from Mecca at the beginning of the seventh century. As a result, a Muslim tradition, allegedly based on a prophetic injunction, declared the Abyssinians were not to be subject to any Muslim *jihads* (holy wars). Whatever the truthfulness of this tradition, the Muslims did refrain from moving against Abyssinia during their early centuries of expansion. Although the inaccessibility of the Ethiopian highlands and the weakness of the Muslim navy may have played some part in the Muslims' early behavior, it is remarkable that Abyssinia remained largely undisturbed when the Byzantine and Sassanian empires were rapidly crumbling under the onslaught of Muslim armies.

The apparent amity and goodwill between the Muslims and the Abyssinians came to an end by the middle of the fifteenth century, especially with the reign of the ambitious Abyssinian negus Yeshaq (1414–1429), whose expanding empire came into an inevitable conflict with the sultanate of Ifat. Concealing his political ambition in religious idiom, Yeshaq declared the Muslims "enemies of the Lord" and invaded Ifat in 1415, where he inflicted a crushing defeat on Ifat's king Sa'ad ad-Din. Sa'ad ad-Din's precipitous flight to the coast was of no avail, for he was pursued all the way to the island off the coast of Zayla' (which to this day bears his name) where he was ignominiously executed. Forcing the Muslims to pay tribute, Yeshaq, for good measure, ordered his court jesters to compose a hymn of victory celebrating his triumph over the Muslims, and it is in this hymn that the word Somali first appears in written form. In succeeding

years, the Muslim center of power moved eastward to Dakkar in order to make it secure from Abyssinian threat, and the name of the kingdom changed to Adal. Henceforward, the Walashma' rulers styled themselves kings of Adal. It was during their rule that Zayla' rose to its cosmopolitan fame.

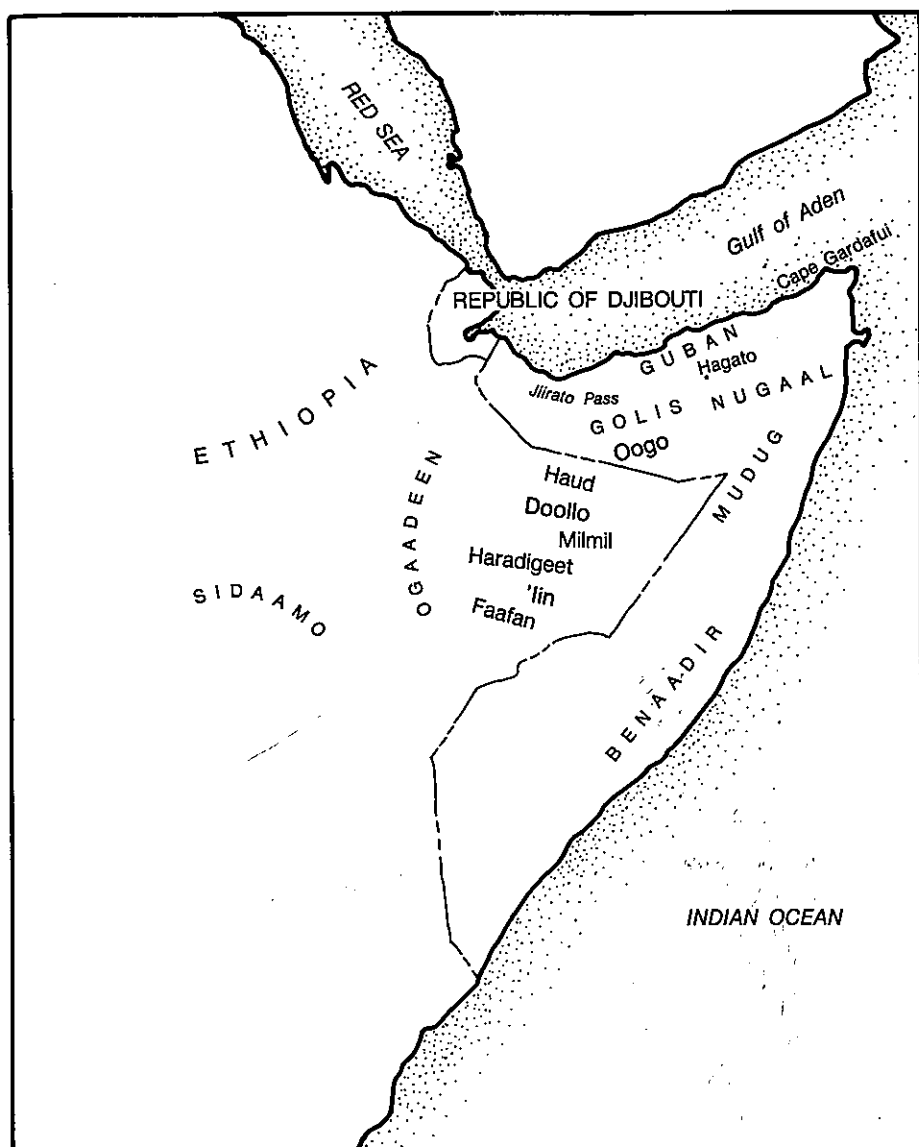
Nearly a century later the Muslims recovered sufficiently not only to free themselves but to carry the offensive into the Abyssinian heartland itself. Led by the charismatic figure Imam Ahmad Gurey (1506-1543), who was called the Left-Handed (*Gran* in Amharic), the Muslims invaded Abyssinia and savagely despoiled it until the tide of the war was turned in favor of the Christians by Portuguese intervention.

Gran's campaigns against Abyssinia and Adal's eventual reduction have been adequately recounted elsewhere, so it is unnecessary to retell the tale here.⁸ It may be said in passing, however, that although Somali clans—principally the Habar Magadle Isaaq, the Harti Daarood, and the Mareehaan—played a strong role in Gran's conquest of Abyssinia, these clans went to war not so much as Somalis but as Muslims. Even so, the memories of this savage war have remained alive in the consciousness of Somalis and Abyssinians alike, and the war served as part of the background to Emperor Menelik's conquest of Harar and the Ogaadeen in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It also colors the present conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. To anticipate a moment, Menelik was to declare boastfully shortly after he occupied Harar in 1887: "This is not a Muslim country, as everyone knows."⁹

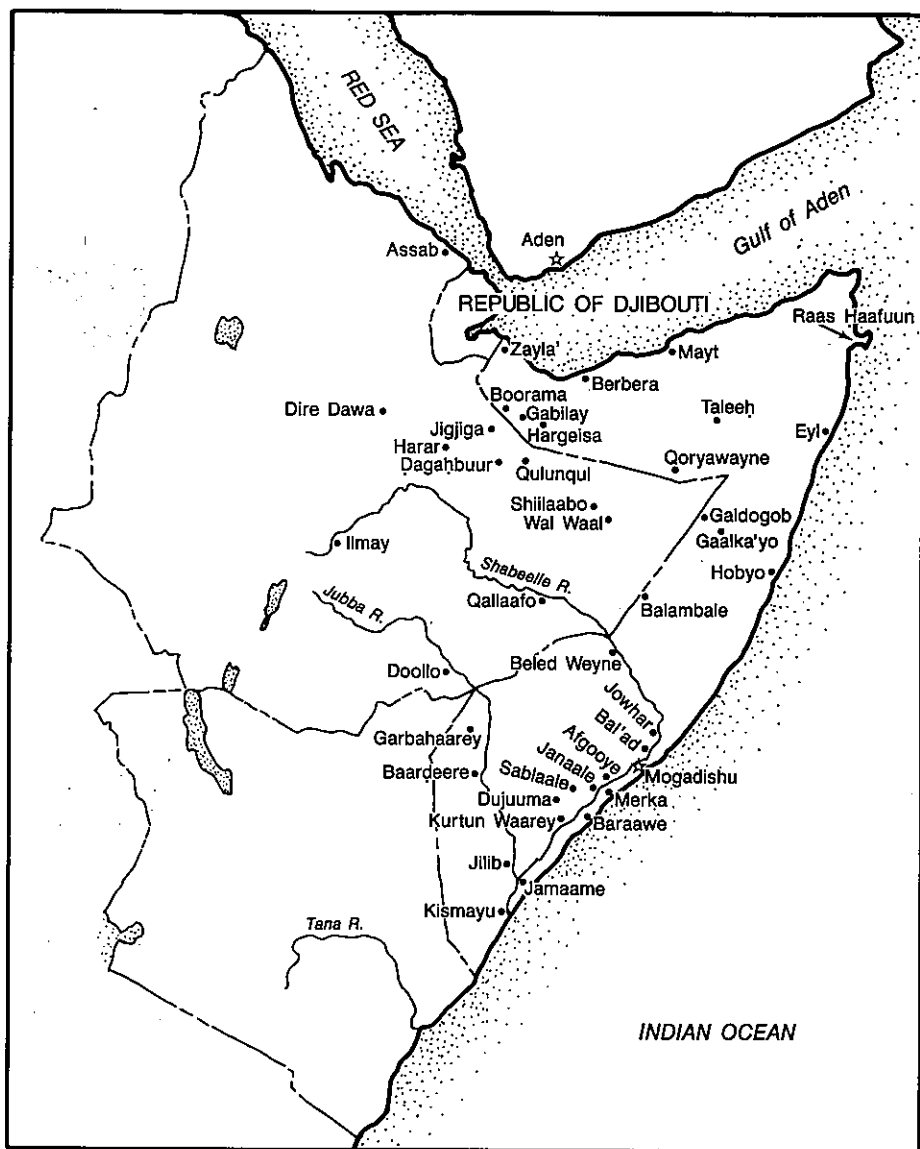
Mogadishu and the Benaadir Hinterland

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Zayla' had fallen into oblivion and disgrace, its role in regional power and economic significance reduced to a pale shadow of what it had been in former times.¹⁰ The counterpart of Zayla' in the south, Mogadishu, had shared a similar rise of fortunes, then a decline in power and influence, although it was not as bad or as precipitous a decline as that suffered by Zayla'. (All towns, campsites, and regions that appear throughout the text are marked in Maps 1.2 and 1.3.)

Like Zayla', Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe (Brava) owe their origin and growth to a creative fusion of disparate elements—Shirazi Persians, Arabian divines, and coastal Somalis—which in time coalesced into a hybrid culture of distinctive style. One local tradition (which is not unanimously held) claims that the name of Mogadishu derives from the Arabic *maq'ad shah* (the seat of the shah), thus pointing to the possibility of a Persian role in the founding and



MAP 1.2 Regions and Districts Mentioned in the Text



MAP 1.3 Towns and Campsites Mentioned in the Text

evolution of the city. Although Mogadishu emerged as an urban center of note as early as the ninth century, the first substantive description of Mogadishu comes from the eyewitness account of the Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta, who visited the city in 1331. Leaving Zayla' ("a large city," which nevertheless did not impress him), Ibn Battuta and his party "proceeded by sea for fifteen days and came to Maqdashu, which is an exceedingly large city. Its inhabitants are merchants and have many camels of which they slaughter hundreds everyday, and have many sheep. They are rich merchants. In Maqdashu incomparable cloth is made and exported to Egypt and other countries."¹¹

Ibn Battuta described in useful detail the religious, economic, and social life of the city. Located in the central quarter of the city were a congregational mosque (probably Masjid Arba'a Rukun, which to this day remains an elevated place of worship in Mogadishu), a theological school frequented by a *qadi* (Muslim jurist) and his students, and a palace. The ruler of Mogadishu was a Berber (Somali) sultan who spoke Somali and Arabic with equal ease. Ibn Battuta seemed to have been astonished by the wealth and urban ease of Mogadishu whose inhabitants he found a food-engorging group: "One of the people of Maqdashu eats as much as a group of us. They are extremely fat."¹² Of particular interest is his description of Mogadishu as an "exceedingly large city," for the globe-trotting Ibn Battuta (who hopped about cities in the Muslim world from Tangier to Cairo to Damascus to the great urban centers of central Asia) was unlikely to have been sentimental or to exaggerate what constitutes an "exceedingly large city."

The administration of such a large urban center (especially one whose prosperity depended on the smooth flow of trade) must have required a central authority of considerable skill and sophistication, and this was provided by a sultan and his retinue of *wazirs* (ministers), legal experts, commanders, royal eunuchs, and assorted hangers-on. Other than the fact that he was a Berberi (the familiar term of medieval Arabs for Somalis and related peoples) who spoke the Benaadir dialect of Somali, we do not know much about this ruler, his ethnic affiliation, or his relationship with the hinterland tribes. He may have belonged to one of the Hawiye clans, such as the Abgaal, who predominated in the Mogadishu area by this time, or to the Ujuuraan dynasty whose sultanate was to be established in the lower Shabeelle valley a few centuries later.

Through trade, proselytization, and political influence, Mogadishu and other trading cities of the coast exerted a powerful cultural influence on the hinterlands of the Benaadir in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From these coastal cities sufis (mystics), saints,

and spiritual seekers fanned out into the interior and settled among the nomadic clans where they married local women and, by pious example, did much to temper the pastoral habits of rapine and warfare. They also helped to soften the pressure of southward migrating herders on the nonwarlike cultivating communities of the Shabeelle and Jubba valleys. In short, it was through the mediation of these itinerant sheikhs and holy men that the system of clientship and resource sharing—which Lee Cassanelli put forward as the key historical bases of southern Somali society—was achieved.¹³ Sheikh Hasan Buraale (whom tradition commemorates as the champion/defender of the pastoralists against the oppressive hand of the Ujuuraan in the closing decades of the seventeenth century) and Sheikh Hussein Bale, who even today is venerated alike by Muslims and Christians, are but two examples of the religious figures with whom the Islamization of the Somalis is inexorably bound.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the initiative seems to have passed from the urban coast to the interior. As wave after wave of migrant pastoralists poured from the north into the fertile interriverine region to swell the ranks of kin already settled there, they exerted pressure on the coast. One example of that shift of power from the coast to the interior was the rise in the lower Shabeelle basin of the fabled Ujuuraan sultanate ruled by the noble clan of the Gareen at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The story of the Ujuuraan (their legendary origins, their wars, the structure and character of their state) need not detain us, as its essential outlines have been reconstructed by Enrico Cerulli.¹⁴ At the height of their power, between 1550 and 1650, the Ujuuraan (also pronounced as Ajuuraan) dominated much of the Benaadir from the upper reaches of the Shabeelle as far as the town of Qallaafu all the way down to the coast where their kin, the Muzaffar aristocracy, ruled Mogadishu and had done so since the thirteenth century. It may be said in passing that the Ujuuraan sultanate, like that of Adal, represents one of the rare occasions in Somali history when a pastoral state achieved large-scale centralization. It also is an interesting example of cultural and economic interaction between an urban coast and a pastoral hinterland. Although Ujuuraan state formation owes much to the innovative ideas of centralized statecraft and to large-scale coastal enterprise, in time the sultanate grew larger and more powerful than the coastal city-states of Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe (or all three combined) in much the same way that Macedonia, a peripheral state, came to overwhelm Athens in fourth century B.C. Greece.

By the end of the seventeenth century the Ujuuraan kingdom, plagued by internal discord, nomadic incursions from the north, and

Portuguese disruption of Indian Ocean commerce, began to disintegrate. Nearly a full century passed before another state emerged in the Benaadir hinterland—the Geledi sultanate in the lower Shabeelle centered around the town of Afgooye, whose history belongs more appropriately to the nineteenth century.

The present state of available evidence does not permit us to determine adequately the extent to which the Portuguese eruption in the Indian Ocean contributed to the decline of the Ujuuraan state as well as the city-states of the Somali coast. To be sure, the Portuguese intervention in the Somali coast, although intermittent and erratic, was considerable, long-lasting, and damaging in its ultimate effects. What is evident is that from the moment Vasco da Gama, on his way to India, rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 and stumbled on the rich trading cities of eastern Africa until 1728 when the last Portuguese foothold was dislodged from the great Mombasa castle of Fort Jesus by Omani and Swahili resisters, the Portuguese had enjoyed what amounts to two centuries of open season on East Africa. They ravaged and pillaged one city after another from Kilwa to Zayla', burning what they could not take as spoils.

Although a detailed account of the Portuguese plunder of East Africa is not the domain of this discussion, it may be in order to point out that the Somali coast was not spared from the general destruction. Berbera was sacked and razed to the ground in 1518 by Saldanha, Zayla' and Baraawe by da Cunha. In the same year Mogadishu was attacked but not ruined. Of Baraawe, Duarte Barbosa, writing in 1518, observes how this "great city of fine stone and mortar houses" was pillaged "by the Portuguese, who slew many of its people and carried many into captivity, and took great spoil of gold and silver and goods. Thenceforth many of them fled away toward the inland, forsaking the town."¹⁵ Yet it was the destruction of the Indian Ocean trade system that ultimately undermined the health and prosperity of the Somali and East African cities. In the words of Basil Davidson: "This looting and burning need not have been fatal to these cities. . . . What proved much more serious to them, and what finally undermined Kilwa and nearly all the other cities of the southern stretch of the coast, was the wrecking of the Indian Ocean trade."¹⁶

The Somali Peninsula Prior to the Imperial Partition

Having ousted the Portuguese, the Omanis ruled the Somali along with much of the East African coast. Although Omani authority on the Benaadir coast (see Map 1.3) continued until the "European scramble" in the 1880s, Omani rule throughout was a light-handed

one. As long as the Somali cities paid their yearly tribute (which was by no means extortionate), flew the Omani flag, and accepted Omani overlordship, the Omanis allowed the Somalis to run their internal affairs. The role of the Omani governors in Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe was largely a ceremonial one. However, when Omani authority was challenged, the Omanis could be severe. From 1824 to 1827 Mogadishu, prodded by a false promise of British protection given by the flamboyant captain Owen of the British Indian Navy, rebelled and declared its autonomy from Omani rule. But in 1828, Omani reprisal came, and it was swift and severe. The city was bombarded into submission, a few heads of its ruling families were executed, and a few more were exiled to Zanzibar.

With the division of the Omani dominions in the middle of the nineteenth century, Sayyid Said, the reigning monarch, moved his capital in 1840 from Muscat to Zanzibar. This brought the Somali Benaadir coast under the nominal authority of the sultans of Zanzibar. Zanzibari sultans, like their Omani forebears, had neither the incentive nor the resources to take direct control of their Benaadir possessions, a circumstance that predisposed them to rule through Somali intermediaries. Thus, although the Zanzibaris held the legal title to Mogadishu, the real ruler of this city throughout the nineteenth century, and especially from the 1850s onward, was the powerful sultan of Geledi at Afgooye, behind whom the Zanzibaris exercised a shadowy authority. He often intervened to arbitrate or impose a *pax Gelediana* on the great disputes of the two opposing factions of Mogadishu, the Hamarwayn and the Shangaani.¹⁷ The political intrigues and interminable quarrels of these factions kept the city in a state of disorder throughout much of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the Zanzibari representative at Merka relied on the advice and consent (sometimes acquired with subsidies from Zanzibar) of the elders of the fierce Biyamaal clan that inhabited the immediate hinterland of the city. By instituting a commercial blockade when necessary and threatening it otherwise, the Biyamaal exercised a preponderant influence in Merkan affairs. In Baraawe, on the other hand, a similar position of primacy was held by a confederacy of Tunni clans.

While the Benaadir was being increasingly drawn into the orbit of Zanzibari sultans, the northern coast, beginning in the mid-1700s, had fallen under the rule of the shariifs of Mukha, who exercised their feeble authority on behalf of the decaying Ottomans. The Arabian shariifs, like the Zanzibari sultans, contented themselves with a token yearly tribute from a Somali governor, the remarkable Haaji Sharmaarke 'Ali Saalih of the Habar Yoonis clan who ruled Zayla' in the 1850s. Sharmaarke's rule there as well as the general condition of

life in that city and its environs were invaluabley documented by the British explorer Richard Burton.¹⁸ By the time of Burton's visit, Zayla' had declined to the point where the ancient city was no longer in control even of its immediate outskirts. The town itself had degenerated into a forlorn cluster of mud and wattle '*ariishes*'; its water system was no longer in operation, its defensive walls were wrecked beyond repair, and its streets were frequented by wild tribesmen who insulted and oppressed with impunity the nonwarlike inhabitants of Zayla'.

Sharmaarke, an illiterate but ambitious man, had been entertaining at the time of Burton's visit the dream of conquering Berbera, the Harar emirate, and the lands in between with an army that amounted to forty Hadraami musketeers! Further east in the port of Berbera, Ottoman influence was even less visible, if it existed at all. Berbera and its environs were dominated by the Habar Awal clan of the Isaaq whose two rival sublineages, the Ahmad Nuuh and the Makaahiil, had riven the town with civil strife in the 1840s and 1850s. A century of nomadic expansion, of which these civil wars were the last phase, had almost wiped out Berbera as an urban center. By the time of Burton's visit in 1854-1855, the town could only be distinguished from the nomadic surrounding by a few dirty huts. Yet despite the loss of its urban character, Berbera still retained some importance as a seasonal port of trade, especially as a supplier of meat and other fresh produce to the British garrison in Aden. The acquisition of supplies from the Somali coast through Berbera was in fact to serve as the main impetus for Britain to stake out a protectorate in northern Somalia.

Our summary account of the political zones in Somalia immediately prior to the colonial conquest would not be complete without mention of two tiny kingdoms on the east coast—namely, the Majeerteen sultanate of Boqor 'Ismaan Mahamuud and that of his kinsman, Sultan Yuusuf 'Ali Keenadiid of Hobyo (Obbia). The Majeerteen sultanate (whose origins are obscure but certainly go back to the end of the eighteenth century) was forged into political and economic importance by the remarkable achievement of one man, the shrewd Boqor 'Ismaan. While his kingdom received British subsidies for protecting the lives and property of British vessels wrecked on the coast from 1839 onward and Zanzibari grants for acknowledging a vague allegiance to them, the wily sultan managed to keep his desert patrimony free from foreign domination until the colonial scramble compelled him to submit to the superior force of Italy. Through the trade of livestock as well as myrrh and frankincense (for which this territory was famous since pharaonic Egypt) and the thorough application of an enlightened rule, Boqor 'Ismaan transformed

a barren coast into a prosperous kingdom that was to attract Italian colonial attention.

Boqor 'Ismaan's kingdom was, however, nearly wrecked in the 1860s by a power struggle between 'Ismaan and his cousin, the enterprising Yuusuf 'Ali Keenadiid. After five years of destructive civil war, Boqor 'Ismaan managed to preserve his throne against the challenge of his upstart kinsman. Thereafter, Yuusuf 'Ali (whose surname Keenadiid means the "resister of subjugation" on account of his refusal to submit to the rule of his cousin) was banished to southern Arabia. A few years later the irrepressible Keenadiid returned with a shipment of muskets and a band of devoted followers, and in the 1880s he proceeded to carve out a small principality at the port of Hobyo (Obbia) south of the Majeerteen sultanate after conquering the local Hawiye clans.

By the mid-nineteenth century, two millennia after the first Somali migrations to the north and east from the highlands of southern Ethiopia, and on the eve of the colonial partition, a vibrant and homogeneous society had populated a significant corner of the African continent. The Somali people had built city-kingdoms of some scope and had also witnessed the rise and fall of a variety of foreign governors hoping to control and to profit from Somali commerce. We must now break from our historical narrative, however, to say something about the culture that the Somalis constructed on the Horn of Africa, for it is a distinctive one. In fact, only with an understanding of Somali culture is it possible to make sense out of the colonial experience.

2

Society and Culture

One feature of Somali society that strikes the eye of even the most casual observer is the homogeneity of Somali culture. In contrast to the vast majority of independent African states whose challenge has been to forge out of a plethora of tribes a common national consciousness within boundaries drawn up by departed colonials, the Somalis essentially constitute a one-nationality state, and one of their major postindependence predicaments has been, ironically, to create a larger state whose boundaries embrace those of the entire nation. Whether Somali ethnic and cultural uniformity has proved a blessing or a curse to the task of Somali development remains an unresolved matter, given that the Somalis' efforts to recover what they regard as their missing kin in Kenya and Ethiopia have enmeshed them in an unrewarding friction with their African neighbors.

What imbues the Somalis with a sense of common national identity, notwithstanding a history of nearly one hundred years of colonial partition, is their long-term occupation of nearly 400,000 square miles of arid semidesert in the eastern Horn of Africa; a common language universally spoken and understood, although with dialectal differences; a way of life that is predominantly pastoral; a shared poetic corpus; a common political culture; a profound Islamic heritage; and a deeply held belief that nearly all Somalis descend from the same source and are therefore drawn together by emotive bonds of kinship and genealogical ties.

THE PASTORAL BASE

What gives these features a unifying center—and fosters in the Somalis a sense of common values and ethic that cuts across ethnic, class, and regional differences—is their overwhelmingly pastoral base. The Somalis have been called a nation of nomads whose world is defined by a wary cycle of transhumant migrations between campsites,

water wells, and grazing grounds. The label is simplistic—as all labels often are—but useful in that it places a deserved emphasis on an institution that has been central to the shaping of Somali society. Somalia is the only sub-Saharan African state in which an estimated two-thirds of the population earn their livelihood from animal husbandry and related enterprises. The pastoral attitude and outlook wield a pervasive influence in national life, impinging on plans for economic development as well as on almost every case of social interaction.

If geography is the progenitor of history, it could be said that Somali ecology gave birth to Somali pastoralism. Much of the Somali peninsula is an arid semidesert unfit for reliable cultivation and only precariously suited for raising livestock. This is especially true of the northeastern and central portions of the country, which together make up roughly 80 percent of Somalia's land mass. In this land of hardy vegetation, steaming sand dunes, and sun-baked coastal plains, the Somalis have evolved during the centuries a way of life peculiarly suited to their demanding environment: on the one hand, a transhumant pastoralism designed to maximize the meager resources of water wells and pasturelands for the pastoralists and their herds and, on the other, a social organization that encourages collective action and mutual aid.

To facilitate the reader's appreciation of the evolution of Somali society and culture, it might be helpful to summarize briefly the main features of Somali pastoralism. The Somalis raise a variety of animals including cattle, sheep, goats, and camels. Although cattle-, goat-, and sheepherding play a considerable part in the Somali economy, the camel is the true hero of Somali material life, as is also true of neighboring Cushites such as the Oromo of Ethiopia and Kenya and the 'Afar of Djibouti and Ethiopia. If, in the language of anthropology, the "cattle complex" constitutes the defining characteristic of Masai and Nuer cultures,¹ the Somalis may be said to have a "camel complex." The camel forms the mainstay of Somali pastoralism, the "mother of man" in the words of the Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan, the great Somali poet, patriot, and warrior who is universally regarded as the founder of modern Somali nationalism.

Somali camels are one-humped dromedaries that appear to have been introduced into the Horn from Arabia during the middle of the first millennium B.C. They are of hardy constitution, and their practical value stems on the one hand from their ability to survive, indeed thrive, without water for weeks—the scarcest resource in the Somali environment—and on the other, from their unfailing capacity to produce milk, meat, and transport for the pastoralists. In times of



Photo 2.1. Cattle being watered from a deep well.



Photo 2.2 Boy with baby camels.

harsh drought when the punishing dry heat of the *jiilaal* season reduces the pasture to shriveled rubble, camels only need water about once a month. When the rains come, camels can go completely without water, given a fresh supply of moist grass. Goats, which come nearest to camels in stamina and desert survival, must have water at least once every week, sheep once every week, and cattle every three days. This means that flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle must frequent grazing areas near a water source so as to meet their weekly watering needs. By contrast, the camel, a born survivor, can wander far afield into distant grazing grounds, covering hundreds of miles from water point to water point in any given season.

The significance of the camel's tenacious constitution rests on the fact that pasture near water is rapidly exhausted during a season of severe drought, a circumstance that often results in a widespread loss of less hardy animals (goats, sheep, and cattle) to famine as well as to disease and pestilence. At such trying times, the ever-reliable resource of camel milk, camel meat, and transport stands between the Somali people and starvation. Camel milk is nutritious and thirst quenching. Camel meat is as tender as veal, and, during an especially severe drought, the last drop of liquid in the land is extracted from the intestines of the camel through an operation called *uusmiirad*. In times of sufficiently moist pasture, two milch-camels produce enough milk to feed a family of ten, while in dry times it takes four milch-camels to feed the same number of people. During frequent nomadic migrations and long marches across hundreds of miles of waterless wilderness, the camel serves as the principal means of transport; it carries the aged, the sick, and the feeble, in addition to the pastoralists' portable huts.

A measure of the importance of camel stock in Somali life may be gauged from the fact that camels have traditionally served as the principal medium of exchange; they are, in effect, the currency of the land. Blood moneys or compensation for homicides are paid in camels, as is bride-wealth. The compensation for a male homicide, in accordance with Islamic law and with Somali common law, is 100 camels, and for a woman, 50 camels, while a bride of noble lineage traditionally fetched 30 camels in bride-wealth. (However, in 1975 the socialist government of General Mahammad Siyaad Barre struck down by decree the inequality in male and female homicide compensation and in so doing provoked a religious uprising in which ten prominent mullahs were executed.) When the clans congregate during the rainy season to hold grateful feasts to Allah and to their founding fathers for having survived the drought, camels are sacrificially slaughtered to solemnize the event. Camels and feuds about

them form the chief themes of Somali pastoral poetry, which in B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis's informed judgement, constitutes one of the Somalis' "principal cultural achievements."²

Given the importance of camel husbandry in the life of the Somalis, it is no wonder that camel culture pervades Somali society, even in towns and cities where most Somalis have no direct experience in pastoral living. Nowhere is this more evident than the pervasive influence of camel vocabulary and concepts in modern Somali life. In literature, for example, modern Somali writers draw their images and inspiration from themes signifying the usefulness of the camel. Thus, in modern drama, a man complaining of his unrequited love compares the pangs of his affliction to *dukaan*, the disease that afflicts drought-stricken camels. The lyricist of popular music, on the other hand, compares his tender feeling toward his beloved to a camel's feeling for her young: "I am afflicted with the trauma of frustrated love," he complains, "as a camel whose baby has been unjustly separated from her." For her part, the woman singer reminds her lover that the way "to get plenty of milk from her is to give her lush pastures, and to caress her gently on the nipples." In the heat of sarcasm and bitterness, the jealous husband admonishes his unfaithful wife: "It is only camels that enjoy being milked by two men at the same time, and even then, not in all seasons but solely when they are in full lactation. Anything else of the feminine kind shared by two men," he moralizes, "soon loses its luster."

Similarly, camel vocabulary has made its inroads into business and bureaucratic language, and its usage indicates how town Somalis draw on the language of their forebears to face the demands of city life. The urban man of means and sophistication says, "I groan for your sentiment" (*Hadalkaagii waan u guuxay*) when he wishes to acknowledge the importance of something being said. The word *guux* denotes the sound a thirsty camel—or one joining her baby—makes. The word used to identify the fleet of government limousines—*gaadiid*—in the nomadic context signifies burden-bearing camels. In modern education, students speak of *laylis* to describe exercises in a school workbook, a word that for the pastoralists means the breaking of a young camel. Perhaps the most colorful use of camel imagery in today's bureaucratic language is *warfin* (express mail delivery), which in pastoral nomenclature describes the act of slinging a rock at a crow to keep it from pecking the wounded hump of a camel. For their part, modern researchers employ the word *raadraa'* (to investigate a problem), which in pastoral vocabulary means to trace lost animals or to track down stock thieves. To judge by the creative use that Somali Marxists have made of the word *hugaanka*, the pastoral



Photo 2.3 Somali women are noted for their beauty and sense of humor.



idiom has made a similar impact on the language of revolutionary politics. *Hugaan* is a nomadic term referring to a kind of rope used for leading a camel. The word is nowadays employed to describe the Bureau of Ideology (*Hugaanka Ideolojiyada*) of the ruling socialist party.

The examples just cited represent a mere fragment of the many ways in which town Somalis have adopted the vocabulary—and by implication the imagery—of their pastoral forebears to deal with urban life. These examples serve to illustrate that although many Somalis no longer lead a pastoral life, they nevertheless continue to draw on their pastoral heritage to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing, technologically sophisticated world.

THE SEDENTARY CULTURE OF SOUTHERN SOMALIA

The emphasis on pastoralism in Somali life and lore should not lead us to underestimate the influence of other elements on Somali society. The culture of southern Somalia, for example (and to some extent that of the pockets of fertile farmlands between the towns of Gabilay and Boorama in the northwest), has a strong agricultural component. Here, wealth and its attendant social prestige derive from the ownership of cultivable land, not the possession of a herd of milch-camels. Where in the pastoral north and center of the country the popular proverb holds that "camel-lessness is death" (*Geel la'aani waa geeri*), landlessness promises a similar catastrophe in the south. This contrast in life-style and economic pursuit is, once again, largely a function of ecology.

Unlike the arid terrain of the waterless Haud and the overheated northeastern plains (the Guban), the Benaadir hinterland of southern Somalia is a well-watered region. Once a year—sometimes twice—the rising waters of the Shabeelle River overflow into the adjacent plains and leave behind a fertile alluvial soil, thus creating excellent conditions for irrigated agriculture in the lower Shabeelle valley from Jowhar and Afgooye districts around Mogadishu to Janaale in the hinterland of Merka. Further south, the Jubba River produces similar conditions in the lowlands surrounding the towns of Jilib and Jamaame. Scattered throughout this region, and especially along the river banks, are Bantu agricultural communities that may have originated in the great Bantu expansion into East Africa. Although early Bantu settlements were later augmented by ex-slaves and runaways from the East African slave trade of the nineteenth century, the original Bantu seem, by oral traditions and material artifacts, to have been in southern Somalia as early as the end of the first millennium A.D. What this seems to imply is that the Bantu population in southern Somalia is

of considerable antiquity, although it almost certainly postdates, perhaps by as much as a millennium, that of the pastoral Cushites.

Whatever the time-depth and circumstances of early Bantu settlement in southern Somalia, the arrival of the Bantu introduced into the region the knowledge and practice of farming, an economic mode that the pastoral Cushites are unlikely to have pursued prior to their contact with the Bantu. The confluence and subsequent commingling of Bantu and Cushitic culture eventually gave rise to a hybrid culture in the hospitable soil of southern Somalia based, on the one hand, on a mixed pastoral/agricultural production and, on the other, on a mutually beneficial system of patron-client relationships between the pastoralists and the farmers. The result has been a creative fusion of life-styles and economic modes that traditionally gave this region, in Lee Cassanelli's informed judgement, "the highest overall standard of living in all of the Somalilands."³

The interriverine region (between the Jubba and Shabeelle) is marked by teeming cattle herds, fields of sorghum and corn, citrus fruits, and permanent mud-and-wattle conical huts. Frequent celebrations, marked by midnight dances, Cushitic poetry, and Bantu drumming, give to southern Somalia a rich and varied culture, and their agricultural surpluses have facilitated the growth of urban populations in Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe.

This extended tradition of agricultural economy gives southern Somalia some unique cultural patterns. In contrast, for example, to the segmented, decentralized social world of the pastoral regions, chieftaincies and chiefly institutions proliferate in southern Somalia, especially among the Digil and Rahanwayn clans. The organizing principle of clan life in this region is the central lineage, whose position of social and political primacy stems largely from its spiritual charisma or ritual attachment to the land rather than from any genealogical preponderance (as among the pastoralists). Thus, of the confederacy of Geledi clans near the town of Afgooye, the Goobroon lineage has traditionally held a position of social preeminence not so much by virtue of its numerical strength but by reason of its seniority or *'urad* (firstborn) status. The latter confers on the Goobroon formidable mystical powers based on the religious prestige of their sheikhs and on the clan's relation to patterns of land tenure.⁴ For this reason, the Goobroon have historically held power among the Geledi and related clans, producing a line of autocratic rulers who wielded authority in extensive areas of the Shabeelle basin.

The *'urad* principle also operates—although not as markedly as among the Geledi—in such neighboring groups as the Wa'daan near Mogadishu and the Hintire near Janaale as well as among the Tunni

in the hinterland of Baraawe town. The society of nearly all these groups has been distinguished by marked social hierarchies of chiefs and subjects and of patron and client clans in which inherited authority plays a dominant role. Chiefs of agricultural clans, needless to say, exercise real authority as compared to the largely ceremonial—and therefore powerless—sultans of the pastoral clans. Moreover, although genealogy and genealogical relations serve to shape group identity and loyalty among Somalis in general, these do not play as crucial a role in defining a group's corporate existence in settled communities as they do among pastoral ones. Unlike pastoral clans where an individual's place in a group—and the group's relation to the larger society—is primarily determined by blood ties, agricultural clans tend to consist of units of village communities that coalesce around a central lineage by reason of economic interest or spiritual primacy—or both.

THE PARADOX OF LINEAGE SEGMENTATION

According to a satirical Somali creation myth, God first created the family of the Prophet Muhammad and was very pleased with the nobility of his handiwork; then he created the rest of mankind and was modestly pleased; then he created the Somalis and he laughed! Aside from the cheerful self-mockery the Somalis enjoy, the tale powerfully signifies the Somalis' consciousness of their corporate unity—a people created separately, as it were, even though they may be destined to remain a laughable sort of creation. This fervent sense of belonging to a distinct national community with a common heritage and a common destiny is rooted in a widespread Somali belief that all Somalis descend from a common founding father, the mythical Samaale to whom the overwhelming majority of Somalis trace their genealogical origin. (Even those clan-families, such as the Digil and Rahanwayn in southern Somalia, many members of whom do not trace their genealogy directly to Samaale, readily identify themselves as Somalis, thereby accepting, at least in a symbolic sense, the primacy of Samaale as the forebear of the Somali people. Genealogy therefore constitutes the heart of the Somali social system and is the basis of the Somali collective predilection to internal fissions and internecine sectional conflicts as well as of the unity of thought and action among Somalis—a unity that borders on xenophobia.

Although its members have a vague sense of group consciousness, a clan is either too big (the Daarood number more than 1 million, for example) or too unwieldy to act jointly. The focal unit for Somali political and social action is the local mag, or diya-paying, unit. This

unit consists of the families (ranging from 200 to 2,000) of an immediate lineage whose members are unified by virtue of their collective obligation to pay or receive compensation or blood money for homicide and other injuries.

The nation symbolically consists of a vast genealogical tree—traced through the father's line—of ever-expanding or dwindling branches, depending on the context. These member segments are linked together in a web of crisscrossing kinship ties. Although the accompanying genealogical chart (Figure 2.1) portrays this tree in a manner far more static and unambiguous than is actually the case, most Somalis believe that their lineage system has a geometric elegance somewhat akin to our chart. Although nearly all African nations (for example, the Yoruba or the Masai) hold similar beliefs about their respective lineage structures, what makes the Somali case different is that the branches of a single tree encompass virtually all Somali citizens. The meaning of clan membership in contemporary Somali politics, as opposed to politics elsewhere in Africa, is thereby different. Tribalism elsewhere in Africa refers to battles between peoples who do not share a common kinship structure; in Somalia tribalism involves battles among people who do so share.

The major branches of the Somali lineage system are four overwhelmingly pastoral clan-families (the Dir, Daarood, Isaaq, and Hawiye) and two predominantly agricultural ones (the Digil and Rahanwayn). As Saadia Touval noted in his brief study of Somali nationalism, these six clan-families correspond to the "Old Testament version of the tribal segmentation of the Children of Israel."⁵ Like the children of Israel, the children of Samaale are, with minor exceptions, politically acephalous and prone to internal schism and factionalism. Although the modern Somali state—which is largely a child of colonialism—manages to exercise, through the armed forces and the civilian bureaucracy, a measure of centralized authority, most Somalis continue to give greater political and emotional loyalty to their lineages. Indeed, the composition of the civilian and military governments that have ruled the country since 1960 has tended to reflect the numerical strength and influence of clan coalitions rather than individual merit or proven leadership abilities. This, in turn, is due to the widespread and time-honored Somali practice (which was reinforced by colonial policies) of distributing national resources through clans rather than through an impartial system of selection and distribution.

A curious feature of Somali segmentation is that it is both centripetal and centrifugal, at once drawing the Somalis into a powerful social fabric of kinship affinity and cultural solidarity while setting

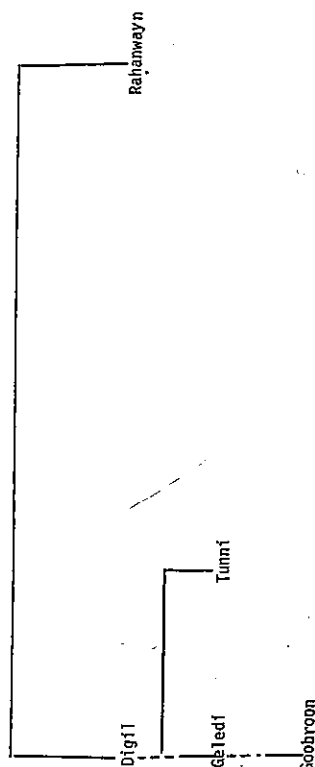
them against one another in a complicated maze of antagonistic clan interests. A person, for example, gives political allegiance first to his/her immediate family, then to his immediate lineage, then to the clan of his lineage, then to a clan-family that embraces several clans, including his own, and ultimately to the nation that itself consists of a confederacy of clan-families. Each level of segmentation defines a person's rights and obligations as well as his/her standing in relation to others. The segmentary law dictates, for example, that two lineages that are genealogically equidistant from a common ancestor should stand in an adversarial relationship to each other but should be drawn together as allies against the members of a third lineage whose genealogical lines fall outside of the common ancestor. The result is a society so integrated that its members regard one another as siblings, cousins, and kin, but also so riven with clannish fission and factionalism that political instability is the society's normative characteristic.

But this does not mean that there is an absence of traditional political institutions or that Somali political culture is marked only by conflict. The mathematics of clan alliances is hardly a precise science, and there is more to clan alliance than biology. Because exogamy is not uncommon among the Somalis, and there is a special son-to-mother bond in Somali culture that defies the laws of patriarchy, Somali leaders often construct key alliances with their mothers' clans. In fact, the essence of great politics in the Somali context is the clever reconstruction of one's clan identity.

However imprecise, genealogical reckoning accounts for nearly every citizen. One therefore does not belong to Somali society unless one belongs to a kinship group. This explains why some groups, such as, for example, the urban families of Arab and Persian descent in Mogadishu, Merka, and Baraawe and the Bantu communities in the south, who lack real genealogical links to the major clan-families, often resort to the construction of fictitious ones in order to place themselves within the system and therefore within the society. It also partially explains the suspiciousness and even paranoia (remarked on by numerous foreign observers) that color the Somalis' relations with outsiders and strangers, mainly because the latter are beyond the scope of genealogical identification. The system guards itself against alien penetration and outside influences by a defensive bulwark of kinship solidarity, at best, and at worst by clannish exclusiveness.

Needless to say, this political and structural segmentation has many far-reaching implications—both domestic and external—for the future health and welfare of Somali society. Domestically, it means, among other things, that Somali politics—whether conducted in an urban or pastoral setting—is likely to be dominated by genealogical

FIGURE 2.1 cont.



The first chart shows the four overwhelmingly pastoral clan-families of Dir, Hawiye, Isaaq, and Daarood and their descendant clans. The second chart shows the two predominantly agricultural clans of Digil and Raahanwayn. Tradition holds that the word "Somali" (properly "Somaali") comes from Samaale, name of the mythical ancestor of the four pastoral clan-families and etymologically derives from the phrase "Soo maal" {"Go and milk"}, thus underlining the pastoral ethic of the culture).

A dotted line indicates omission of genealogical lines deemed unnecessary for this chart; wavy lines indicate maternal kinship. Parentheses indicate a variant name.

Note: It is important to emphasize that these charts mainly show clans and ethnic groups mentioned in the text. Many important lineages are not represented here because they do not figure prominently in the narrative.

manipulation and a concern among political actors with who in power is related to whom and how. Externally, the ideology of a common descent will continue to make it agonizingly hard for the Somali collective psyche to accept the internationally recognized boundaries that cut off large segments of Somali-inhabited territories from the Somali Republic and place them within Kenya and Ethiopia. The idea that some kin must live, against their will, outside of the national fold simply goes against the very grain of the Somalis' ethnic and corporate world view. The sense of loss and calamity occasioned by the fracturing of Somali collective existence is cogently expressed by this lament composed by a pastoral poet shortly after the Ethio-Somali war of 1977-1978. The poet was denied permission by an Ethiopian garrison near the town of Jigjiga to cross the border in order to join his family in Ethiopia.

My brother is there
I can hear the bells of his camels
When they graze down in the valley,
And the leaves of the bushes they browse at
Have the same sweetness as the bushes near my place
Because the rain which
Makes them grow comes from the same sky.
When I pray, he prays,
And my Allah is his Allah.
My brother is there
And he cannot come to me.⁶

A NATION OF POETS

This poetic lament brings us to a consideration of poetry and the verbal arts and their considerable importance in Somali life. If a pastoral/agricultural economy, an ideology of common national identity, and a segmentary lineage system constitute the central components of Somali social institutions, oral poetry forms one of their principal cultural achievements. Foreign students of Somali language and culture have persistently remarked, often in astonished tones, on the pervasive, sometimes sinister, influence of poetry and the poetic arts on Somali life. Typical of these observations is that of the peripatetic Brit, Richard (later Sir Richard) Burton, who visited the Somali coast and the city of Harar in 1854. Not without self-love, he claimed to be taking the *First Footsteps in East Africa*.⁷ Despite Burton's condescending ways, he felt great respect for Somali culture.

The country teems with 'poets.' . . . Every man has his recognized position in literature as accurately defined as though he had been reviewed in a century of magazines—the fine ear of this people causing them to take the greatest pleasure in harmonious sounds and poetic expressions, whereas a false quantity or prosaic phrase excites their violent indignation. . . . Every chief in the country must have a panegyric to be sung by his clan, and the great patronize light literature by keeping a poet.⁸

Burton went on to pontificate, in a note of barely concealed incredulity, on what he regarded as a "strange" phenomenon: that an unwritten language "should so abound in poetry and eloquence."

Burton's remarks have been echoed during the years by observers of the Somali cultural scene, including M. Maino, Margaret Laurence, B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, and John Johnson.⁹ Almost without exception, these scholars speak of the Somalis as a nation of poets whose poetic heritage is intimately connected with the people's daily lives, and their assessment of the preeminent role of oral poetry in Somali life and lore has been confirmed on numerous occasions by Somali commentators, most remarkably by the late president of the Somali Republic, 'Abdirashiid 'Ali Shermaarke. Shermaarke spoke of his country's pastoral verse as "one of the two national assets of inestimable value."¹⁰ The other asset that Shermaarke judged to be of equal merit was Islam, and in placing poetry in the same category as Islam in the ranks of cherished national values, the president clearly meant to lavish the highest possible praise on his country's poetic heritage.

The vehicle of Somali poetry is of course Somali, a language noted for its poetic style and expressive diction. The Somali language belongs to a family of African tongues known among linguists as Cushitic, whose other branches in the Horn of Africa include those spoken by the Oromo of Ethiopia and Kenya and the 'Afar who straddle the Rift valley between Ethiopia and Djibouti. Although the Somali language, for all intents and purposes, was unwritten until 1972 (seventy years of religioethnic politics obstructed efforts to select a suitable script), it possesses an impressive body of oral literature, including folktales, fables, poetry, and other literary genres.¹¹ From the viewpoint of quantity, mass appeal, and prestige, oral poetry—and the written version of it in existence since 1972—holds a commanding position in the nation's literary heritage, "the queen," as one educated Somali put it "of Somali verbal arts."¹²

A poetic ethos and outlook pervade the Somali culture, exercising a profound influence in both public and private life. A person explains

his or her behavior toward others in verse; marriages are contracted and terminated by use of verse; vitriolic verse is composed to incite clans into lethal blood feuds and vendettas as well as to bring these deadly activities under control; and almost all issues of national importance are debated through the medium of poetic dialogue and exchange. In short, poetry is for the Somalis, according to the authoritative reflection of Sheikh Jaama' 'Umar 'Iise, "the central integrating principle without which harmonious relationships in society would be unthinkable."¹³ To put Sheikh Jaama's observation in a different metaphor—poetry equips the Somalis with the methods and means by which to articulate the abiding questions: Whence come we? What are we? Whither go we?

To explain the astonishing prestige and mass appeal of poetry in Somali social relations, some scholars have pointed to environment as the prime determinant.¹⁴ The life of Somali nomads, it is claimed, is a life of hazardous wandering in which the nomads are condemned to eke out a meager livelihood from an unyielding environment. Deprived of the leisure and luxury of settled life and therefore unable to engage their imagination in aesthetic works of visual art, such as sculpture or painting, the Somalis—we are told—turn their creative impulses and energies into verbal art, the one form of expression that does not exact any material price from them, while providing them with drama and excitement in an otherwise drab existence. Without their religion and their poetry, the theory goes, the Somalis would succumb to misery and despair. Such propositions are clearly inadequate, although they may have some merit. Environmental drabness per se hardly inspires poetry or poetic creativity. To explain the bucolic verse of Somali pastoralism merely as a survival strategy, in effect a distracting verbal trick designed to help the Somali nomad cope with life's cruelties, is to miss the point of the Somali poetic heritage. In addition, recent scholarly investigations, such as those conducted by the Foundation for Cross-Cultural Understanding, have demonstrated the existence in Somali culture of considerable varieties and numbers of objets d'art worthy of attention and respect in their own right.¹⁵

What then explains the universal hold of pastoral verse on Somali life? To the Somalis, the answer is as simple as it is self-evident: Not only is poetry the principal medium of mass communication but also the vehicle of politics and the acquisition of political power. The Somali pastoral (as well as urban) poet is, to borrow a phrase, the public relations person for the clan or for other political patrons and exercises a vast influence on the distribution of political power among competing interest groups. Owing to the potency and prestige of

their craft, Somali poets are powerbrokers of the first order; they are respected and feared by their enemies, whom they discredit and humiliate by bitter poetic satire and ridicule, and patronized by their political partisans, whose merits the poets publicly exaggerate and glorify through verbal flattery and panegyrics. (When praise or blame is overdone, the poets get accused by their enemies of *afmishaarism*, or using words as sharp as the teeth of a saw.) In this respect Somali poets perform a role similar to that of Western journalists and television anchors whose singular control of news sources enables them to inform and persuade the public and thereby to make and unmake—albeit in subtle ways—politicians and public figures.

In addition to its political and communicative functions, Somali poetry embodies the aesthetic values of the community. Culturally and temperamentally, the Somalis are an exceptionally verbal people who are fascinated, almost to a fault, by language's potential to affect and express the beautiful and the pleasurable. Thus, the use of artistic and rhetorical devices—the elegant turn of phrase, graceful utterance and proper tone, the harnessing of eloquence and diction to enhance meaning—gives many Somalis an immense pleasure. Poetry for them represents the ultimate in linguistic beauty—hence their obsessive national predilection to explore and articulate in this medium whatever is meaningful to them: family, love, fidelity and betrayal, war and peace, life and death, transcendental meaning and humankind's ultimate destiny.

The pastoral poet, today as in the past, speaks before an audience, chanting or reciting a poem slowly, emphasizing and repeating key lines deliberately in order to give the audience time to absorb them. The audience may be composed of a formal gathering of numerous clans and lineages who have come together, often under the shade of a tree, to engage in poetic contests, diatribes, satires, and other forms of literary combat among rival poets. Often the combat is about the quality of the poetry itself, as is evidenced by the following selection from Salaan 'Arrabey's work:

I find that composing verse is as natural to me as milking:
 No one can vie with me in the coining of new words, which come
 like dust
 In reciting poetry I excel others by [my] distinctive style and chant. . . .
 Although [my opponent] may know the art of alliterating,
 When I appear
 It is very likely that [this simple man] who ventures into bush country
 will get lost.¹⁶



Photo 2.4 In 1972, during the literacy campaign of the rural development program, advanced students spent many months in the countryside teaching the new Somali script. The motto of the campaign was "What you know, teach; what you do not know, learn."

Alternately, the audience may consist of a small group of literature devotees who meet to enjoy poetic performances. In formal pastoral assemblies poetic contests are judged and overseen by a hoary panel of elders and literary connoisseurs called *heerbeegti*.¹⁷ Their verdict is universally accepted, and they declare the winner(s) to the audience. Such contests may last for days, even weeks, and involve severe tests of talent. But reward for the successful is also great: Not only do they receive prizes (ranging from, say, a horse, a camel, and other forms of livestock to a silver-handled dagger, depending on talent), but they win lasting fame for themselves and honor for their clans. For a clan to count a great poet among its numbers is considered by the pastoralists to be a great fortune as they then possess the agent for the immortalization of their corporate deeds.

Such gatherings give the (truly gifted) poet the opportunity to attract many admirers, who commit his/her poetry to memory. These memorizers, or *hafidayaal* in Somali, who play a very important part in the transmission and dissemination of Somali oral poetry, learn a verse by heart and chant or recite it to other audiences. Given that nomadic society is in constant motion with groups of clans comingling and dispersing, poems are disseminated, and publicized throughout the Somali peninsula within weeks or even days of their first recital. So rapid is the speed with which poetry spreads that pastoralists claim it is carried by *jinn* and other supernatural agents.

If Somali pastoralism molded the potency and popularity of Somali oral poetry, then urbanization and the introduction of literacy seem to have changed the vehicles for its expression. Unlike pastoralists who engage openly and freely in interclan poetic duels in the vast immensity of the desert, urban dwellers have to practice their craft mindful of the restrictions and opportunities inherent in the nature of their new habitat.¹⁸

To begin with, that great forum of the pastoral poet, the tribal assembly, does not exist, at least officially, in the urban setting. The word *tribe* has been proscribed from Somali vocabulary—although tribalism itself has stubbornly refused to go away—by a succession of national governments anxious to impose on the Somalis a measure of centralized authority in place of traditional clan rule. Feud and vendetta, which used to feed pastoral satire and poetic acrimony, are no longer vital factors in the city—or so, at least, it is officially claimed. In addition, urban poets have to be careful lest they offend the political powers that be, a restriction that does not impinge on their pastoralist counterparts. Nonetheless, there has evolved an urban counterpart to the *heerbeegti*. In most Somali towns a pervasive social pastime has been the consumption of *qaat* (*Catha edulis*), a mild

narcotic of which many Somalis are fond. When *qaat* eaters gather to socialize, they sometimes retain a poet to entertain them. (In 1983 *qaat* was banned by the government, but the poetry sessions survived).

Because poetry can be used by and against government to terrific effect, public officials are ever watchful of, and sensitive to, the compositions of urban poets. Therefore, the talented poet in the city is under tremendous pressure either to compose progovernment stanzas, in which case the poet runs the risk of losing public respect, or to resist government patronage and protection, in which case the risk is hostile political action, such as harassment, exile, or even imprisonment. Indeed, the latter has been the fate of a number of dissident poets—the best known among these are 'Abdi Qays, Ahmad Ismaa'iil Diiriye ("Qaasim"), and "Hadraawi" (Mahammad Ibrahim Warsame). These poets fell foul of the political authorities after composing antigovernment pieces. Faced with potential political persecution, urban poets resort to creative dodges of authority. In this, modern technology has proved to be their greatest benefactor. The portable tape recorder enables these poets to record secretly onto cassettes that are then distributed privately or spirited out of the country for distribution among Somali communities in the Middle East, Western Europe, and North America. As they do not have to perform publicly, these poets can more easily hide from government surveillance.

While the cassette tape has turned out to be the main avenue for the dissemination of the work of dissident poets, politically inoffensive poets have their poems regularly featured on the radio and in newspapers, of which the leading one is the government daily *Xiddigta Oktoobar* (October Star). Despite the relatively high levels of literacy in Somalia (as compared with the rest of Africa), the truly literate are still hardly more than 30 percent of the population, and this limits the circulation and appreciable reading of printed poems. Thus, broadcast poems have been spectacularly successful. Inexpensive shortwave transistors enable considerable numbers of Somalis—both rural and urban—to tune in to the national radio stations in Mogadishu and Hargeisa and to a variety of Somali programs aired by foreign stations from Cairo, Rome, and, most notably, the BBC in Great Britain. These stations regularly feature Somali drama and poetry readings. Thus, it is not uncommon to find throngs of town Somalis gathered in the many tea shops of Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and other urban centers sipping tea while avidly listening to—and arguing among themselves as to the literary merits of—the latest radio production. More colorful still is the sight of a group of nomads in the deep recesses of the bush huddled around a small shortwave transistor, somberly discussing the contents of a poem just broadcast



Photo 2.5 Somali dancers.

over the BBC Somali service, while their camels lazily graze nearby, oblivious of their owners' impassioned literary criticism.

This and similar episodes seem to indicate that the onset of literacy and urbanization, far from diminishing the oral traditions, may actually have extended their reach. Urban or pastoral, the Somalis remain a nation in which the art and craft of poetry continue to shape national temper and tastes. If he could have overcome the barriers of space, language, and culture, perhaps Shakespeare would have won many literary devotees among the Somalis!

POLITICAL CULTURE

Traditional political institutions in Somalia promote a curious blend of democracy, equality, and anarchy. To be sure, it would be impossible to maximize all these values at the same time because they are often in conflict. But appeals to each of them can be legitimately and effectively justified in Somalia by citing central aspects of the historical tradition.

The legal foundation for traditional Somali politics is the *heer*, which is an informal contract by which Somali society settles its legal and political disputes. The *heer* forms the basis of Somali political sanctions. For example, a covenant of *heer* may be entered into by

groups of lineages whose numbers range from 250 to 3,000 Somali men and women. *Heer* agreements, incorporating families from the same clan along with allied groups from other clans, are usually guided by Islamic legal arrangements but often have their own regulations for determining such questions as how much compensation should be paid for homicide, wounding, or insult.

The *heer* functions in the context of ad hoc deliberative councils, which meet from time to time in order to resolve conflicts. These assemblies—or *shirs*—have the right to declare war and to make peace. In theory, all male members of a *shir* assembly are entitled to participate in its deliberations. In this sense, the *shir* promotes democratic participation, largely for men. (Although women exercise a powerful influence at home, they do not publicly participate in the *shir* assembly.) In practice, however, *shir* assemblies are often dominated by men with wealth, skill in public oratory or poetry, religious knowledge, or bravery. But the high status that derives from wealth or skill confers no special rights or privileges. As Lewis pointed out, in the *shir*, “all men are councillors, and all men politicians.”¹⁹

This democratic participation goes hand in hand with a deep belief in individual freedom. A nineteenth-century Baganda (today's Uganda) policeman escorting a British officer in Somaliland warned his escort in this way: “Somalis, Bwana, they no good; each man his own Sultan.”²⁰ This “insult” is a point of pride among the Somalis, and virtually all foreigners who visit Somalia notice this love of freedom. Richard Burton, for example, noted in his journal that “they are as free as Nature e'er made man.”²¹ Somali love of freedom is sanctified in folklore. In one often-told story about a gazelle and a sheep, the sheep asks the gazelle why he runs away from humans, especially considering he is always starving. If he did follow humans, the sheep argues, the best pasturage would be made available to him. The gazelle responds: “A sheep cannot understand. My family and yours are not alike. We are the children of liberty and open space. As for me, I prefer to die on my own feet while running away before being gorged with food by a master who would kill me when I became fat or who would kill my children. My heart is not the heart of a sheep.”²² Nor, it should be added, is the Somali's.

Egalitarianism is also embedded in Somali democratic values. At the *shir*, all men have an equal right to participate. In the colonial period, Somalis refused to submit to external authority based on the supposed cultural superiority of Europe. “It is wonderful,” wrote J.W.C. Kirk when he was the British consul of Zanzibar, “how little we have yet managed to impress the Somalis . . . with respect for our superior power.”²³

The U.S. co-author of this volume has been perpetually reminded of Somali egalitarianism during his visits to Africa's Horn. When he was teaching at Somalia's National Teacher Education Center in 1969, he attended a daily departmental meeting that addressed issues concerning curriculum and individual student and teacher problems. It took him a long time to accept the fact that the school's bus driver and cook could come into those meetings, sit down, and actually participate. To his Somali colleagues this did not seem strange, and he watched once, incredulously, as the bus driver defended his point of view on an educational issue. He was similarly amazed when he was escorted in a government car while interviewing a minister and observed the chauffeur entering into the discussion about policy issues, meanwhile calling the minister by his nickname. Finally, he was amused in his latest trip to Somalia, as he watched Somali flight attendants unable to protect the status differential between first- and tourist-class toilet facilities.

The Somali co-author, perhaps more critical of his own society, will point to the outcast clans or the wealthy business class—both of which indicate a Somali tolerance of unfairness and inequality. But both authors agree that there are abundant Somali traditions that support the equality of all men to basic rights of participation and reject the claim that by birth or wealth, certain men have the right to rule others.

In Somali tradition the democratic norms and the rejection of all claims to domination support a tradition of anarchy. By this we do not mean disorder. Rather, we mean a lack of institutionalized authority roles—hence the previous characterization of the Samaale clans as acephalous. Although some *shirs* do elect a sultan (*suldaan*, or, alternatively, *boqor* or *garaad*), and religious men (*wadaads*) are oftentimes given deference in the *shir*, neither role carries special powers or authority. Lewis summarized this point in his appropriately titled *A Pastoral Democracy*: "What is generally characteristic of the northern Somali political system," Lewis observes,

is its striking lack of formal political offices. Even the office of clan-head is generally little more than a nominal title corresponding to the degree of social and territorial exclusiveness which the clan more than other orders of grouping possesses. . . . Within [the diya-paying groups] and at every level of association policy is determined by the majority decisions of all the adult men of the group concerned meeting in *ad hoc* councils. This lack of stable and formally defined political offices thus seems consistent with the extreme fluidity of political groupings.²⁴

It is not particularly surprising to see in nomadic culture the lack of any institutionalized authority roles, but even among the agriculturalists of southern Somalia, there is less emphasis on formal authority roles than in other agricultural societies. Although we have indicated that there is a more hierarchical system in the south, this should be seen in the light of the north's quintessential anarchy. As Luling reported in her study of the Geledi people of Afgooye (Rahanwayn clan family), the famous sultan Yuusuf Mahamuud, who had an army of almost twenty-five thousand men, had no private body of followers, owned no land of his own, and exerted "power through rather than over his people."²⁵ The Somali political culture, which favors democracy, equality, and anarchy, has had a profound effect on postindependence political development.

ISLAM, CLASS, AND ETHNICITY

A distinctive Somali poetic tradition and political culture are balanced by a deep and extensive Somali devotion to the world religion of Islam. The entry of Islam into the Horn of Africa is of considerable antiquity and might have occurred in the first century of the faith. The greatest numbers of Somalis, at any rate, seem to have converted to Islam by the fifteenth century. Although traces of pre-Islamic traditional religions are clearly visible in Somali folk spirituality (in the use, for example, of the pagan Cushitic word *waaq* for God in archaic Somali or the prevalence of popular belief in and practice of spirit possession, especially that of *saar*, a typical spirit/deity in the Cushitic cosmology), Islam today is deeply and widely entrenched not only as the principal faith of the Somalis, but also as one of the vital wellsprings of their culture. A pervasive sense of a common Islamic cultural community contributes vitally to Somali consciousness of a shared national identity.

This vibrant devotion to the values and beliefs of Islam has prompted the Somali, rather like the Hausa of Nigeria, to fabricate and perpetuate an elaborate genealogy tracing their roots to Arabian ancestry. Although most educated Somalis dismiss the claim to Arabian descent as a pious historical fraud, the Somali populace sets much store by it, a circumstance that explains the massive popularity—even if touched with some ambivalence—of the 1974 decision of General Mahammad Siyaad Barre's regime to join Somalia to the Arab League. However much Islam and the infusion of Arabic culture into Somali society support Somalia's historic attachment to the Arab world, Somali language, culture, and history are manifestly non-Arab.

The Somalis are sunnis, adhering to the Shafi'ite school of Islamic jurisprudence, and their Islam is characterized by saint veneration, enthusiastic belief in the mystical powers of charismatic roving holy men, and a tenuous measure of allegiance to sufi brotherhoods. Muslim religious orders in Somalia include the Qaadiiriya (the most venerable association), which traces its founding and spiritual efficacy to the Baghdadi saint 'Abdulqaadir Jilani (d. 1166), the Ahmadiya founded by the great Moroccan mystic and teacher Ahmad b. Idris al-Fasi (1760–1837), the Saalihiya, which goes back to the nineteenth-century reformist work of Ahmad b. Idris's Sudanese student, Muhammad Salih, and a host of smaller orders. The vast majority of Somalis are associated, however loosely, with one of these mystical orders, which sometimes cooperate in joint ventures, such as mosque construction, and sometimes fiercely compete for the hearts and minds of the Somali people. Although strong (sometimes virulent) theological and doctrinal differences—especially between Qaadiiriya and Saalihiya—tend to prevent individuals from simultaneous membership in separate orders, these orders recognize one another as belonging to orthodox Islam, and therefore their devotees have no compunction against common worship.

Regular Islamic practices, summed up by the five pillars of Islamic faith—the confession of faith; daily prayer; the pilgrimage to Mecca; alms giving; and fasting during the month of Ramadhan—form only part of Somali devotion. It is supplemented by periodic pilgrimages to one of the tombs of local saints (for example, 'Abdirahman Zayli's in the north, Sheikh Uways's in Biyoolay, Sheikh 'Ali Maye's in Merka, and Sheikh Hussein Baleyaal's in southeastern Ethiopia). A marked inclination to saint veneration induces a climate of religious rapture at these festivals. Thousands of the faithful from discrete clans and regions congregate in a vast assembly to worship together and to undergo a collective experience of cathartic ecstasy during which many are healed of their physical, emotional, and spiritual anxieties. Therefore, membership in an order, allegiance to its spiritual master, and active involvement in its communal rituals tend to cut across, sometimes to override, tribal allegiance, fostering a widespread awareness of a pan-Somali, multiethnic community unified by a vibrant devotion to common spiritual values. Hence, while ethnicity divides the Somalis through binary oppositions of lineage segmentation, Islam unifies the Somalis under the umbrella of nontribal mystical associations.

In the clan a Somali enjoys a modicum of economic and political security, binding his household to those of his kinsmen who are prepared to stick with him through thick and thin, and times are

often thin in Somalia. In Islam, on the other hand, a Somali imbibes the spiritual and moral fortitude necessary to embrace the challenges of life, to face adversity with a measure of calm equanimity that would astonish Westerners. *Insha Allah Khayr bay ahaan* (God willing, it will be well with us) is a motto heard often from Somalis. It insists on an attitude of optimism in the face of hardship; it affirms life, and it serves to evoke the mixture of hope, serenity, and hardheaded determination that the spirit al-Islam has helped inculcate in Somali consciousness.

If al-Islam serves, among other things, as a survival ideology in the Somalis' difficult environment, then the pastoral ethic of clan socialism continues to thrive in urban settings where new surroundings and conditions of life might be expected to foster new forms of group identity, such as, for example, those based on economic differentiation. In actual fact, however, urbanization has not radically diminished the power of ethnicity and ethnic feelings. In some ways it may have intensified them, especially in urban politics. Selfish politicians—the "big men" we refer to later—have discovered the potent political mileage to be derived from exploiting kinship loyalties in order to prolong and maximize political careers. Indeed, it is a mark of the strength of ethnic ties in the political process that government functionaries, who use public office for personal enrichment and who are widely known to be thoroughly corrupt, manage to hang onto power by mustering the crucial backing of their numerically powerful clans. The big men provide jobs, lucrative construction permits, outright cash payments, and other forms of patronage to certain influential clan members and their families in return for the latter's ability to deliver the clan's support. Here as elsewhere in Africa, ethnic support becomes the key to political success, mainly because politicians find it convenient to distribute scarce national resources through the clan structure. The result is that urban Somali politics has witnessed an alarming resurgence in recent years of intra- and interclan conflicts as politicians seek to harness the support of their ethnic backers.

In addition to political factors, economic imperatives contribute significantly to the continued vitality of ethnic consciousness in urban life. The absence of strong industry and industrial production in the Somali milieu precludes any sharp division of Somali society into wealthy and poor or managerial and working classes. Thus, to speak of class in the Somali context—with all the economic inequalities and social stratifications the term implies—is to engage in a dubious intellectual exercise. Even so, it is not inaccurate to say that the exposure to urban life, together with the diversification of economic and social opportunities this exposure entails, has spawned a quasi-

class of government bureaucrats, commercial entrepreneurs, land speculators, livestock merchants, and assorted petty traders whose careers place them above the floating, jobless mass of urban Somalis. But economic inequality or job difference—given the character of Somali political culture—does not give rise to a permanent underclass. Furthermore, clan ties blur the cleavage of class. For instance, because there is no public assistance for the disabled and the unemployed, or indeed any other form of national program for the relief of the poor—except for refugees of the 1977–1978 war to reclaim the Ogaadeen—the Somali haves are expected to support their kindred have-nots. However much the well to do may grumble at having to look out for, and even house and feed, their less fortunate relatives, the ethic and pressure of mutual kinship obligation compels just that. It could be said that the clan is the only reliable welfare system in Somali society. Although Somalis are keenly conscious of the power, prestige, and social status that wealth confers, this does not translate into a consciousness of class difference, nor does it suggest a permanent system of stratification. The rich and poor continue to be bound together by an ethos of kinship and religious interdependence and an ideology of individual equality.

3

Colonialism and the Struggle for National Independence

We left our historical narrative with a discussion of the last of the precolonial Somali kingdoms—the Majeerteen sultanate of eastern Somalia. As we saw, its resourceful founder, Boqor 'Ismaan, had to rely on British subsidies to assure his sovereignty. But the world was changing too fast to allow the Majeerteen sultanate to grow and to institutionalize. The opening of the Suez Canal increased astronomically the number of ships that passed the Benaadir coast. The European powers wanted more control of the coast to support their trade with the Far East. This need had serious implications for Somali autonomy. It was the economic preface to the colonial partition.¹

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH, FRENCH, AND ITALIAN RULE

In January 1839, with the opening of steamer service from India to Suez, Britain needed a coaling station in the Red Sea. The British therefore captured Aden, a rather useless rock but with a good harbor, from the sultan of Lahej. Once established in Aden, the British found that their prosperity depended on the steady supply of meat and other fresh produce from the Somali coast. Thus, some sort of rapport with the tribes of the 'Afar and those on the Somali coast was desirable, if only to forestall their passing to a hostile power, such as France or Germany.

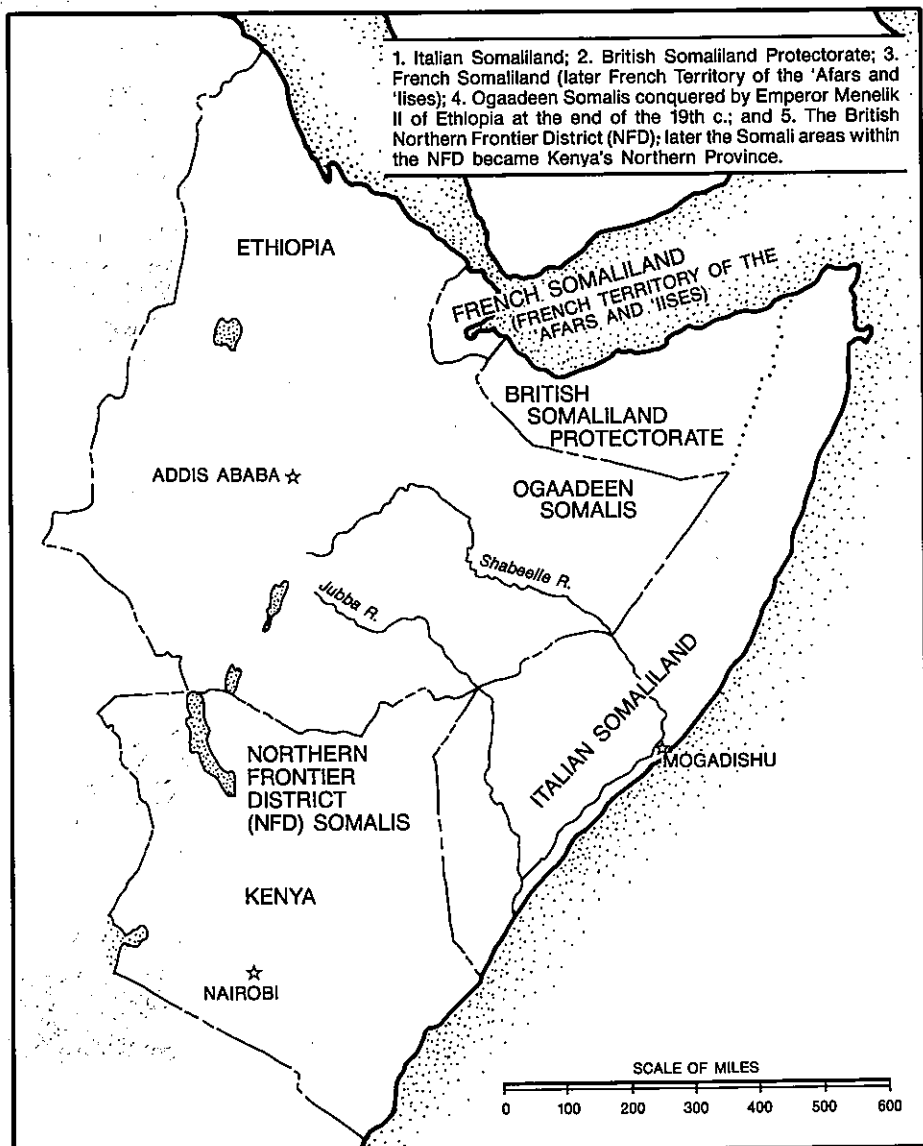
Too occupied with absorbing its recent acquisitions elsewhere in Africa and under parliamentary pressure to limit spending on apparently useless pieces of real estate, Britain at first seemed somewhat reluctant to annex the Somali coast. But in view of the coast's economic

importance to Aden, British colonial authorities were even more reluctant to let it be annexed by another power hostile to British interests. For a while the matter was solved for Britain by the appearance of a new candidate for the possession of the Somali coast. This was Ismaa'il Pasha, the ambitious khedive of Egypt, who as vassal, first of the Ottomans and then of the British (when British influence became preponderant in Egypt after the 1870s) was busy implementing a remarkable project for the extension of Egyptian rule in northeastern Africa. By the 1870s he had already carried Egyptian influence to the Sudan and even further inland to the lake region of East Africa.

Although at first suspicious of him, the British eventually decided to aid and abet the khedive's occupation of Berbera in 1875 and his expedition further inland where the Egyptians overthrew the long-independent sultanate of Harar and set up an Egyptian administration that was to last a dozen years. But the khedive's ambitious imperial adventures bankrupted his feeble treasury, wrecked the fragile economy of his country, and, worse still, provoked the Sudanese Mahdist revolt that resulted in the collapse of Egyptian authority in northeast Africa. In the wake of this Egyptian fiasco, the British entered into direct dealings with the coastal Somali clans and established themselves, through guile and treaty, on the Somali coast by 1884.

From 1886 onward Britain also began to acquire the extreme southwestern edge of the Somali peninsula, an area that became known as Jubbaland, as part of its East African sphere of influence. Here the overriding British concern was to safeguard the headwaters of the Nile—Egypt's lifeline—and this called for British control of the East African coast from Kismayu to Zanzibar. Part of Jubbaland was later ceded to Italy (1925) and merged with southern Somalia, but Britain retained a vast interior region of shrublands that later became known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya. (See Map 3.1 for details on the colonial partition.)

The establishment of British rule coincided with similar French enterprises in the region. In 1862 France acquired Obok, a forlorn port on the Danakil coast, for the alleged price of 50,000 francs but exercised little sovereignty over it until 1881 when the Franco-Ethiopian Company Treaty was set up there. French interest in the Somali-Afar coast was fueled by France's seizure of Madagascar and much of Indochina in the 1870s and by the disintegration of the Anglo-French condominium in Egypt by 1884. In order to facilitate naval communication with their Madagascar and Indochina possessions and to checkmate the formidable British garrison in Aden, the French now sought to establish their own base on the Red Sea. This was



MAP 3.1 Partition of the Somalis into Five Imperial Zones

all the more desirable from the French point of view, given the humiliating restrictions, such as high duties on French products and bureaucratic harassment, that the British authorities in Aden placed on French shipping in that port. Accordingly, a French protectorate was proclaimed on the strip of territory that came to be known as French Somaliland (now the Republic of Djibouti) under the governorship of Leonce Lagarde, a flamboyant colonizer who was to play so important a role in the extension of French influence in northeastern Africa and Ethiopia.

While France and Britain engorged huge chunks of African real estate and smarted from political indigestion, Italy was distracted by its own national unification, which was not completed until 1870. Therefore, in Jones and Monroe's fitting observation, "Italy came late to the African feast as a poor relation."² Italy's first successful venture into the Horn was conducted by Father Giuseppe Sapeto, a former missionary turned imperialist. Authorized by the foreign ministry to seek a place for Italian expansion, Sapeto obtained control of the port of Assab in Eritrea in 1870 and proposed plans to set up a shipping service.

In the succeeding years, the Italians extended and consolidated their influence at Assab, and by 1885 the Italian government of Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, at first apprehensive, then increasingly confident, declared a protectorate on the Eritrean coast from Assab to Massawa. Initially, British officials viewed Italian moves with hostility but eventually came to accept them as less harmful to their interests than French activities. Hence, the British encouraged the Italians, as a convenient counterforce to the French, to move secretly and occupy Massawa soon after the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrison. Not unnaturally, France took note of the fact and began to do its own intriguing, at Anglo-Italian expense, with various Abyssinian princes, first with Emperor Johannes IV, then with Menelik. (Menelik's renunciation of the Treaty of Wuchale, which obliged Abyssinia to Italian protection, is attributed at least partially to French intrigue.)

Meanwhile, Italy was also active in southern Somalia, better known as the Benaadir coast, where it was the main colonizer. Although Italy had relatively little European competition, the extension of Italian rule was slow and cautious. This was due in part to the lack of zeal on the part of the Italian public for imperial expansion. Although Risorgimento leaders such as Giuseppe Mazzini and Vincenzo Gioberti, in concert with commercial expansionists, called for a "place in the sun" for Italy, social Darwinism and belief in "the white man's burden to civilize the world" do not seem to have had any significant place

in Italian opinion in the 1880s. Nevertheless, the Italians, somewhat haltingly to be sure, extended a protectorate on the Benaadir coast and the northeastern sultanates of Hobyo (Obbia) and Majeerteen between 1885 and 1893.

ETHIOPIAN PARTICIPATION

An account of the imperial partition of Somali lands in the closing decades of the nineteenth century can scarcely be reconstructed even in bare outline without mention of Ethiopian participation. Indeed, the roots of the present turmoil in the Horn of Africa go back to this period when a triumphant Ethiopian prince, Menelik II, took advantage of a number of propitious events and extended Ethiopian authority in Somali, Oromo, and 'Afar lands. The remarkable story of Menelik's rise to power, his territorial conquest—which resulted in the quadrupling of the Ethiopian empire—and his brilliant triumph over the imperial powers of the day reveals Menelik's statesmanship and shrewd diplomacy as well as the character of European imperial rivalry that he consummately exploited.

As we have seen, by 1884 Britain, France, and Italy were established on the Red Sea coast and were competing for trade with the Ethiopian interior. It would be hard to imagine Menelik's plans for conquest and trade coming to fruition without the steady support of the Italians throughout the 1870s and 1880s. During this period Italy provided Menelik with the material and the diplomatic means necessary to guarantee both Ethiopia's success over its rivals and, ultimately, the means for undoing Italian interests in the region. After the death of Emperor Yohannes IV of Tigre in 1889, Menelik acceded to the Ethiopian throne and assumed the title of king of kings and negotiated the Treaty of Wuchale (Ucciale) with Pietro Antonelli, Italy's enterprising representative in Ethiopia. The Italian version of this treaty placed Ethiopia under Italian protection while the Amharic version, the only one Menelik signed, merely gave him the option to use Italian offices in the conduct of his foreign affairs. The discrepancy between the two versions was the root of the conflict that led to the Italo-Ethiopian war in which the Italians were ultimately defeated at Adowa in 1896. The treaty of Wuchale also recognized formally Italy's protectorate in Eritrea.

Meanwhile, Menelik used Italian friendship and Anglo-French rivalry to ensure the uninterrupted flow of arms. In 1890 Italy sponsored Ethiopian admission into the Brussels General Act, which permitted Ethiopia as a Christian state to import arms on an unrestricted scale. Once his troops were equipped with modern arms

and had vanquished his rivals to the throne, Menelik played one European power against another almost to a standstill, thereby freeing him to carry out his own imperial plans. In 1891, prodded by the Italians who mistakenly felt that their colonial interests coincided with those of Ethiopia, he wrote his famous circular to the European powers: "I have not the least intention of remaining a disinterested onlooker if powers from a distance come with the notion of dividing Africa between themselves, Ethiopia having been, during the course of quite fourteen centuries, an island inhabited by Christians in a sea of pagans."³

Menelik did not remain an indifferent onlooker. Having let it be known that he intended to have a piece of the imperial action, Menelik turned his well-equipped army on his neighbors. He seized the rich Oromo province of Jimma in 1886 and the commercial emporium of Harar in 1887. Soon after he took Harar, Menelik boasted: "I hoisted my flag in [Amir Abdullaahi's] capital and my troops occupied his city. Gagne [Gran] died. Amir Abdullaahi in our day was his successor. This is not a Muslim country, as everyone knows."⁴ With the fall of the buffer city-state of Harar, the Somali Ogaadeen became an open field to Shoa despoliation—a subject we shall remark on in some detail shortly.

THE DERVISH RESISTANCE TO COLONIAL OCCUPATION

At first glance it may have seemed odd that we chose, in our chapter title, to lump together the seemingly disparate themes of colonialism and Somali national struggle for independence. Yet if we follow Robinson and Gallagher⁵ in believing that African nationalism was a child of European colonialism, we may be justified in treating these subjects simultaneously in order to illustrate the effects of the one upon the other. Many of the problems faced by postcolonial Somali society were set in motion by the peculiar character of colonial occupation in Somalia and by the nature of the resistance that the occupation provoked. By 1900 the Somali peninsula, one of the few extremely homogeneous regions in Africa, was radically partitioned into minilands—into British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Ethiopian Somaliland (the Ogaadeen), and, for good measure, what came to be known as the Northern Frontier District of British Kenya. It is unnecessary to go into the opportunistic and unrealistic character of the partition of Somalia, except to cite in passing Lord Renell Rodd's rueful observation decades later that

if we had been interested enough . . . (and if the world had been sensible enough), all the Somalis . . . might have remained under our administration. But the world was not sensible enough, and we were not interested enough, and so the only part of Africa which is radically homogenous has been split into such parts as made Caesar's Gaul the problem and cockpit of Europe for the last two thousand years. And Somaliland will probably become a cockpit of East Africa.⁶

Although the turmoil in the Horn of Africa since the mid-1960s may have given Lord Rodd's words an uncanny, prophetic poignancy, the great mass of Somalis did not seem to have appreciated at the time the implications of what was happening to their country. If we take the Somali poet Faarah Nuur as their spokesman, many saw the colonial conquest in apocalyptic terms. Bewildered at the brisk competition for influence in the Somali peninsula and the land-grabbing that ensued, the poet sang:

The British, the Ethiopians, and the Italians are squabbling,
The country is snatched and divided by whosoever is stronger,
The country is sold piece by piece without our knowledge,
And for me, all this is the Teeth of the Last Days!⁷

Because the bulk of the Somali people lived inland as nomadic pastoralists, they were not unduly traumatized by the European intrusion, which was confined to a few coastal areas. The case was different with the Ethiopians who expanded into the heart of Somali pastureland and whose sudden eruption in the lush grazing zones of the Ogaadeen constituted a disquieting presence. Furthermore, because the Ethiopian highlands were devastated by the "succession" wars of the 1890s and by an ensuing famine, the Ethiopians descended on the lowlands to recoup their losses from the "great herds" of the Oromos and Somalis. Driven alike by the need to feed his growing and hungry army and by a political desire to make his occupation of the Ogaadeen good, Menelik, between 1890 and 1900, allowed his warlords to raid livestock indiscriminately in the Ogaadeen. These raids repeatedly despoiled the Ogaadeen Somalis.

There was another important sense in which Ethiopian colonization differed markedly from that of the Europeans. Unlike the Europeans, the Ethiopians lacked an industrial home base or access to international monopoly capital to finance their colonial schemes. Theirs was a subsistence economy, and this meant the conquering army had to live off the conquered land. In the words of the noted Ethiopianist Margery Perham:

One reason for Menelik's southern conquests was his need to open up fresh lands on which to quarter his growing armies of hungry men who were pressing hardly upon the resources of Shoa. During some of these lean periods in the [eighteen] nineties, Menelik found the cattle seized from the Galla and Somali herds a very valuable asset for his soldiers and people. It is interesting, too, to read that after the Emperor John had despoiled Gojjam so that its *Negus*, Takla Haimanot, could no longer support his own army there, Menelik proposed to him that he should invade Kaffa in order to provide for his soldiers.⁸

To be the object of an Ethiopian raid was apparently to be subjected to a rugged experience, especially for the civilian population. Somali and Oromo oral accounts abound with tales of horror about the "unspeakable"⁹ devastation that Menelik's robber bands left in their wake in Oromo and Somali lands—a testimony whose validity is enhanced by Perham's assessment of the traditional methods of Ethiopian warfare and conquest. She writes:

By the sanction of custom, soldiers on the march ruthlessly took all that they could from the inhabitants in order to save their own supplies. Many European travellers, from the earliest to the latest days, have remarked upon the arrogant and extortionate behavior of the soldiers. Cattle, mules and donkeys trampled down and ate the crops. . . . But woe betide those same soldiers if they returned defeated! For then the people whom they had despoiled would turn on them and take their revenge for the injuries they had suffered. It might almost be said that every large-scale campaign in Ethiopia had some of the features of a civil war.¹⁰

Indigenous testimony puts the number of Ogaadeen livestock seized by Menelik between 1890 and 1897 at 100,000 head of cattle, 200,000 head of camels, and 600,000 sheep and goats. Because the Amharas, the dominant ethnic group in the Ethiopian empire, neither drink camel milk nor eat its meat, the seized camels were used principally as a bargaining asset with the Somalis who were invited to recover their looted camels with payment of cattle, sheep, or goats. (The value of one camel was worth three cattle or ten goats or sheep.) The Somali clans that particularly suffered from Ethiopian raids included the sedentary Geri and Bartire on the plains of Jigjiga, the Reer Shabeelle on the Shabeelle valley, and various sections of the Ogaadeen, such as the Amaadin and Maalinguur, who were repeatedly harried.

Given the frequency and virulence of these raids, it is not surprising that the first pan-Somali struggle against colonial occupation,

namely, the Dervish resistance movement, should have been directed at the Ethiopians rather than at the Europeans. Indeed, it is one of the ironies of Somali resistance that the Europeans (mainly the British) should, through blunder and misunderstanding, have bungled into a war that was conceived and conducted, at least initially, as a self-defense against Ethiopian plunder of Somali livestock. The character and direction of that resistance war were shaped by the circumstances of its immediate provocation. In their predatory incursions the Ethiopians had not spared the twenty or so Qaadiiriya and Ahmadiya Muslim orders that were settled in small clusters in the Faafan and 'Iin valleys of the Ogaadeen interior. Having renounced this world in favor of the one to come and guided by a rigid spiritual code, these mystical orders spent their time in congregational worship, ascetic living, and impartial arbitration of clannish disputes. Their humble quarters served as a quiet sanctuary to the sick, the displaced, and the fugitives from pastoral violence and vendetta. The orders therefore acquired a reputation for sanctity and piety, which made them sacrosanct from warfare and other secular mischiefs. If we are to believe the contemporary account of the Italian explorer Vittorio Bottego, who visited the Somali interior in 1893, the "belongings" of these orders "had been looted by the Amhara."¹¹ When he moved down to Qulunqul, he found the tomb of the Qaadiiriya's northern saint, Sheikh 'Abd ar-Rahmaan Zayli'i, in ruins, "sacked by the Ethiopians."¹² By slaughtering and despoiling these humble worshippers, the Ethiopians had violated ancient norms in the conduct of war between the Muslims and Christians of the Horn, just as the Muslims abused their own ethical code five centuries earlier when, during Ahmad Guray's (Gran) conquest of Abyssinia, they looted and desecrated Christian monasteries.

As the religious orders suffered grievously from Ethiopian raids, it was understandable that Somali resistance should have been spearheaded by the leadership of a religious order, namely, the Saalihiya. The Saalihiya is a subsidiary order of the Ahmadiya, and Sayyid Mahammad himself (the "mad mullah" of British history) was an Ogaadeen of the Bah-Gari sublineage. This double bond of sectarian and ethnic affiliation explains why many of his followers came from the Ogaadeen; it also explains the ready acquiescence of the egalitarian clans to his rigid autocracy when he presented himself to them as their champion/defender against Ethiopian pillage.

The story of the roving holy man who was to consolidate hitherto disparate clans into a cohesive movement and lead the nationalist resistance against three colonial powers (Britain, Italy, and Ethiopia) for more than twenty years began in 1895 when Sayyid Mahammad

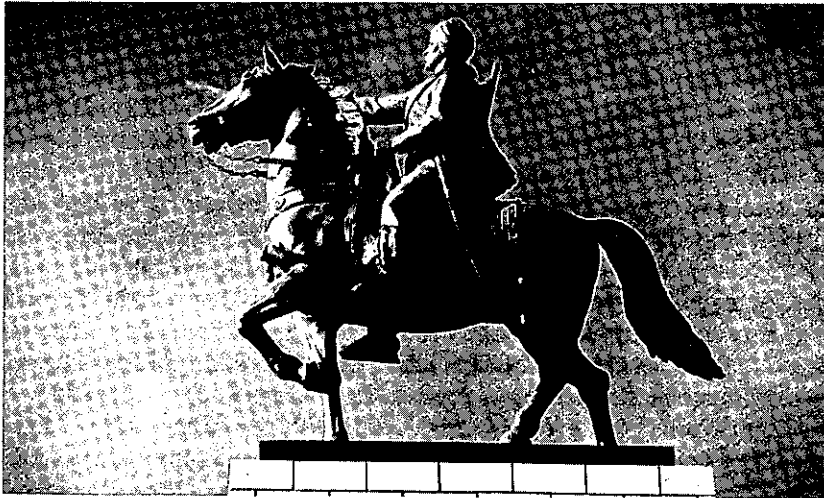


Photo 3.1 Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan on his favorite horse, Hiin Finiin (Sound of Flying Gravel).

'Abdille Hasan returned to Berbera from a pilgrimage to Mecca. After two years of unrewarding theological dispute with the leadership of the old order of Qaadiiriya in Berbera (he was spiritual director of the new Saalihiya sect), the Sayyid returned to the country of his maternal kin, the Dulbahante, in the newly established British Somaliland protectorate. Here he founded his headquarters at Qoryawayne in Dulbahante country and began to collect men and arms with the object of helping his Ogaadeen kin against Ethiopian raids. Thus, in April 1899 Britain's representative on the Somali coast, Consul J. Hayes Sadler, anxiously reported to his government on "the doings of a Mullah . . . who is collecting men and arms with the ultimate aim [of] head[ing] a religious expedition against Abyssinia."¹³ In 1900 the Sayyid, who now styled himself and his followers *Dervish* (from the Arabic *Darwiish*, pl. *Daraawiish*, meaning one who is dedicated in service to God and community), moved to the Ogaadeen in response to an appeal for help from Mahammad Subeer clans. They had been thoroughly looted of their herds in February of that year. In March the Sayyid assembled a force of 6,000 warriors and stormed the Ethiopian garrison at the wells of Jigjiga. Although the Dervishes succeeded in recovering the looted stock, they sustained heavy casualties (170 dead and many more injured).

Shortly thereafter, the Sayyid pan-Somalized the resistance by appealing to the major clan-families, principalities, and orders in the Somali peninsula. He claimed that "infidel invaders have come to

surround us; they have come to corrupt our ancient religion, to settle our land, to seize our herds, to burn our villages and make our children their children."¹⁴ The Sayyid sent messages to the major Isaaq clans in the north, to the Majeerteen and Hobyo (Obbia) sultanates in the east, and to the Biyamaal, Geledi, and other Hawiye clans in the Benaadir impressing on them the need for a common national front against all colonial invaders. In the spring of 1901 the British and the Ethiopians, with Italian logistical support, agreed to undertake a common action against the Sayyid, who was now dubbed the mad mullah. A British force commanded by Lieutenant Colonel E. J. Swayne marched from Berbera in May to coordinate the campaign against the Dervishes with an Ethiopian expedition 15,000 strong, which made a simultaneous start from Harar. Thus, a pan-Somali resistance provoked a pancolonial action to put it down.

The history of the Anglo-Ethiopian operations against the Somali resistance has been adequately reconstructed elsewhere.¹⁵ At the height of the war in 1903–1904, 10,000 British troops, representing as one official put it, "the best seasoned British, Indian and African troops at the empire's disposal,"¹⁶ allied with 15,000 Ethiopian troops to face a Dervish force of 20,000—of whom 8,000 were cavalry. Although inferior in firepower and organization, the Somali resisters managed to hold their own by engaging in guerrilla tactics strongly suited to the terrain of the country. Breaking into small parties of 50–100 men, the Dervishes drew the British and Ethiopians into the waterless shrublands of the Haud, lands that were well known to the Dervishes but pathless to the invaders, and in doing so, dictated both the time and place of subsequent battles. After three years of bloody but inconclusive warfare, the Sayyid wrote his famous letter to the colonial powers:

I have no forts, no houses. . . . I have no cultivated fields, no silver or gold for you to take. You gained no benefit by killing my men and my country is of no good to you. . . . The country is jungle. . . . If you want wood and stone, you can get them in plenty. There are also many ant-heaps. The sun is very hot. All you can get from me is war. If you wish peace, go away from my country to your own.¹⁷

The colonial powers did not go away, so the resistance continued to rage on until 1920 when a new advance in military technology—namely, the invention of the aircraft as a military weapon—gave the British an overwhelming advantage against the Dervishes. Aerial bombardment was mounted against the Dervish capital at Taleeh and other regional forts in northern Somalia; there followed an outbreak

of a disastrous epidemic, and the Dervish resistance was broken by the end of 1920. In December of that year, the founder of modern Somali nationalism, aged about sixty-four, succumbed to a bout of influenza and died quietly. With his death, the first phase of the Somali nationalist resistance to colonial occupation came to a dramatic halt.

The Consolidation of Colonial Rule

The twenty years between 1920 and 1940 may be described in Somali history as the period of colonial consolidation. Of the four colonial authorities that had partitioned the Somalis, only Italy seems to have had any plans for economic development for its colony. From the start, Italy intended to plant an Italian colony of settlers and commercial entrepreneurs in the fertile interriverine area of southern Somalia, partly to relieve population pressure at home, partly to spread the civilizing Roman mission, and partly to enhance Italian prestige through overseas colonization, as the French and the British had done. An Italian version of the British White Highlands of Kenya would spring up in Somalia. This scheme, first put forward by Governor Carletti (1906-1910), received a great boost from the extension of fascist ideology and planning into the colony in the early 1920s, especially during the administration of Governor de Vecchi. A series of large-scale development projects designed to lay the foundation for a prosperous colony were initiated. These included the introduction of a system of plantation farming in which banana, cotton, sugar, and numerous citrus fruits were raised along several spots in the lower valley of the Shabeelle between Jowhar and Janaale, the construction of roads to facilitate the easy movement of trade, the digging of scores of wells to improve the pastoral section of the economy, and the introduction of basic health and educational services.

The effect of these activities was to diversify, but hardly to transform, southern Somali society. Towns grew, a new form of economic differentiation sprang into existence, and a nascent working class appeared. Indeed, by 1940 although Benito Mussolini's plan to lift Somalia from its humble status as a supplier of livestock into a prosperous new Italy had not been realized, the Italians could point, with justifiable pride, to the fact that they had laid the groundwork in their colony for an infrastructure far superior to any in the other Somali colonies.

In contrast to Italian Somalia, the British protectorate had remained under British rule a neglected "outpost" of the British Indian empire. Partly owing to Britain's limited interest in the Somali coast as a supplier of meat to the British garrison in Aden, partly due to

the exhaustion of considerable funds in the suppression of the Dervish revolt, and partly as a result of the deep antipathy that British officialdom held toward the Somalis (for not having sufficient respect for British imperial might), Britain had formulated no plan for its Somali possession. Somali territory was thus treated as an expendable asset, alternately to be traded, when the occasion arose, for higher imperial stakes in Ethiopia or to serve as "Aden's butcher shop." Thus, when British Somaliland joined Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic in 1960, the north lagged behind the south in economic and educational development. This may help explain the gradual domination since independence of jobs and other privileges by southern bureaucrats—a domination that fostered considerable tensions and antagonisms within the civil service of the young republic and also forms the background to the legitimate grievances of today's northerners.

Nor was the lot of the NFD under British rule any better. If anything, it proved far worse. Administered separately by military officials and barred from economic and political integration with the rest of Kenya, the NFD floundered in a colonial limbo throughout British tenure. In the words of Negley Farson, the NFD became the "one-half of Kenya about which the other half knows nothing and cares even less."¹⁸ That alienation, caused in part by the NFD's history of isolation and in part by Somali ethnic consciousness, contributed to the desire of NFD Somalis to secede from Kenya following its independence and to join their kin across the border in Somalia.

The French attempted seriously to develop their Somaliland colony, but their efforts were hampered by the lack of any developable substance in their tiny territory of Djibouti. Encrusted on a lava-strewn, sun-baked wasteland, Djibouti is devoid alike of agriculture or natural resources. French development efforts therefore consisted mainly of the construction of a modern port at the town of Djibouti and the extension of a railroad line from that port to the Ethiopian interior. The rail line reached the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa in 1917. The French wished to draw Ethiopian trade from nearby Zayla', and in this they singularly succeeded for Djibouti soon acquired a commercial preeminence in the region that it retains to the present.

Of the Ogaadeen, there is little to show in the way of economic or social development for the forty years of Ethiopian rule. Restrained alike by the martial qualities of the Ogaadeen people and by the fevers of the lowland climate, the Ethiopians never managed to impose a coherent administration on the Ogaadeen. Rather, they contented themselves in the first three decades of their tenure with periodic seizures of pastoral livestock (the notorious "tax-collecting" expedi-

tions), mainly to replenish the dwindling reserves of their military garrisons and to impress the existence of Ethiopian authority on the ever-resistant Somalis. Beginning in the 1930s, however, a new policy took effect wherein a more serious extension of Ethiopian authority in the Ogaadeen developed. Prodded by Italian encroachment on their border and by British talk of the need to readjust the boundaries, the Ethiopians began to occupy strategic spots in the Ogaadeen such as the water wells of Dagahbuur, Iimay, Qabridahare, Qallafo, and Wal Waal. (It was in Wal Waal that a confrontation between an Italian police outpost and an Ethiopian expedition in 1934 set the pretext for fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.) From these fortified positions armed bands of the Ethiopian military sallied forth periodically to exact tribute from the pastoral clans and "to show the flag" to a population that barely made a secret of its hostility to the Ethiopian presence in its midst. Understandably, no contacts of the sort that would make for amicable Ethio-Somali relations could be expected to proceed from a rule whose primary instrument of application was the armed expedition.

Throughout partitioned Somalia, a condition of neglect and marginality characterized Somali society under colonial rule. Although all of the colonial powers attached real strategic value to their new Somali possessions, none, except possibly Italy, regarded them as significant economic prizes. Therefore, the colonial powers were not inclined to think of their Somali territories as worthy of serious development efforts. Yet even if the colonial administrations had attempted such efforts, they would likely have been hampered by the peculiar nature of the partition. In establishing their respective frontiers, the colonial powers tended to ignore the economic necessity underlying the pastoral clans' cyclical migration between water wells and pasturelands. Consequently, the colonizing countries drew up boundary lines that mutilated kinship units into bewildered fragments, and when colonial administrations attempted to turn their boundaries into blockades, as happened at various times with various levels of success through the colonial period, this cut off entire clans from their traditional sources of water and/or pasture for their herds. To take a few examples, the Mareehaan clan was shattered by the new frontiers into three parts, one part in the Italian zone, another under the British in the NFD, and still another in Ethiopia's Ogaadeen. So were the Bah-Gari and Mahammad Subeer Ogaadeen clans as well as a host of smaller clans. The Mareehaan and Bah-Gari sections who were cut off to the Italian side were lucky to have access to traditional water wells in the Shabeelle, but they lost essential pasturelands on the Ethiopian side. Conversely, their kin on the

Ethiopian side retained the grazing grounds but were cut off from water sources in the Shabeelle valley. In the north, the Dulbahante and Isaaq became British subjects, and this enabled them to hold the water points on the coast, but they were denied access to their traditional grazing zones in the Ogaadeen, which was lopped off to Ethiopia. The Ogaadeen clans had the unique fortune of having access to both water and adequate grazing in the Doollo-Haradigeet plains, but they were cut off from coastal trade, especially from the port of Berbera on the British side through which 90 percent of their trade passed.

The Temporary Restoration of Somali Unity

Ironically, the triumph of fascist Italy over Ethiopia resulted in the restoration of Somali unity—after a fashion. During their occupation of Ethiopia in 1935–1940, the Italians reunified the Ogaadeen with their southern Somali colony, bringing together for the first time in forty years Somali clans that had been separated arbitrarily by the Italo-Ethiopian boundaries. The removal of this arbitrary boundary and the unification of a large chunk of Somali-inhabited territory enabled the Italians to regularize prices and taxation, to extend large-scale agriculture, to build new roads and markets—in short, to define a national economy. Thousands of Italians, both emigrants and ex-servicemen, became actively involved in the Somali economy as plantation farmers, merchants, and mechanics. While the Somalis were subjected to a bewildering assortment of discriminatory laws designed to separate the Aryan race of Roman conquerors from native contamination (a regulation that was difficult to enforce given the passion of Italian men for Somali women), a great many Somalis benefited from the new order of economic prosperity and social mobility. Some groups, like the Haaji Diiriye and Yuusuf 'Igaal families, grew exceedingly rich from the boom times. As I. M. Lewis put it, "In public buildings and roads, and in the plantation industry, the foundations of a modern colony had been created, the benefit of which, despite the many injustices committed against them, Somalis were to reap in the future."¹⁹ It is a mark of the Somali outlook that no major insurrection against Italian authority occurred during this five-year period, despite the harsh regimentation of fascist rule.

With the outbreak of World War II, Italian East Africa, which now included Ethiopia, invaded and ousted the British from northern Somalia in August 1940. The Italians added the British portion to their already enlarged colony of Somalia, and this added fuel to the fire of Somali reunification, although Italy's actions were not meant to fulfill Somali aspirations, but to realize Mussolini's dream of

acquiring an African "place in the sun." The Italian victory proved short-lived, however. The British returned in March 1941 and reoccupied northern Somalia from whence they initiated their swift campaign to reconquer Ethiopia from Italy for Emperor Haile Selassie, thereby taking southern Somalia in the process. Haile Selassie, then in London exile, harassed and exhorted the British government for a promise to have his full sovereignty restored at war's end. This promise he received in 1942. (In an associated military convention between the British government and the emperor in exile, the British were given rights to temporary administrative control of the Ogaadeen and portions of the Haud, which were called the Reserved Areas.)

MODERN NATIONALISM: THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOMALI YOUTH LEAGUE

Following the Italian defeat, the whole of the Somali peninsula (with the exception of French Somaliland) came under British military administration, which was to continue for almost a decade. The most notable development under British military rule was the growth of a new and fervent sense of national awareness. In mosques and markets, in public and private meetings, urban Somalis began to question the legitimacy of colonial rule, to call for political unity, and to debate large, supratribal issues. A complex number of factors helped to foster this new attitude: the memory of the Dervish nationalist resistance, the recent unification of the country and the specter of another dismemberment, the public humiliation of colonial masters (first the British, then the Italians) hitherto presumed invincible, the progress in education and in economic complexity, the growth of an articulate elite, and the lifting of the ban on open political debate by the new administration. These were some of the forces that served to give rise to the new nationalist climate. Out of that climate was born the modern political party that was to lead two parts of the Somalilands to independence.

First formed as the Somali Youth Club (SYC) on May 13, 1943, and later changed to the Somali Youth League (SYL), this modernist movement was galvanized into existence by the threat (and soon the reality) of the country's repartition. In 1946 the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, proposed the reunification of all the Somalilands—under the British, of course—to his three counterparts on the Four Power Commission (France, the United States, and the Soviet Union) responsible for the disposal of the ex-Italian colonies. "Though Mr. Bevin, with characteristic British sentimentality, made a stirring speech concerning the need 'to give those poor nomads a chance' to get a

'decent living,' his colleagues on the commission remained unimpressed."²⁰ The rejection of Britain's proposal to reunify the Somalis by the other three members of the commission was based to some extent on their suspicion that Britain might be conniving to obtain a new colony behind the facade of Somali unity, but it was due largely to Ethiopia's successful lobby for the return of the Ogaadeen. In this Emperor Haile Selassie found useful the powerful backing of the United States with whom he was in negotiation for the provision of a U.S. military base in Eritrea, in the event of that territory's federation with Ethiopia. Additionally, Ethiopia gained considerable political mileage as a victim of fascist aggression and had been acquiring the sympathy of the world community ever since the fugitive emperor delivered his famous oration ("God and history will remember your judgment") before the League of Nations, shortly after Ethiopia's conquest by Italy. In 1897 as in 1946 the sin of European aggression against Ethiopia was atoned for by the surrender of Somali territory to Ethiopia and the consequent sacrifice of Somali interests.

With Britain's abandonment of the Ogaadeen and the Reserved Areas to Ethiopia (a process that was completed by 1954), the Somalilands reverted to their former possessors: northern Somaliland to British tenure, the NFD to its isolated association with the colony of Kenya, and southern Somalia to Italy as a U.N. trusteeship. It may be worth mentioning in passing that although the British government presided over the repartition of the Somalis, British administrators on the spot were, to their credit, as vehement and unanimous in their opposition to the repartition as were Somali nationalists. It was therefore with extreme distaste that these administrators had to implement a decision they so deeply abhorred. One of them, John Drysdale, was to write an eloquent book on this "sordid affair."²¹

Having failed to stave off Somali redivision, the SYL and other nationalist groups in southern Somalia coordinated efforts and strategies with northern nationalist parties—such as the Somali National League (SNL) and the National United Front (NUF)—to wage a peninsulawide struggle for Somali independence. SYL branches were opened in nearly all urban centers of the Somali territories, and these soon began to gain large-scale mass support. As a climate of feverish nationalism set in and as SYL followers engaged in protest demonstrations, colonial officials (except in the Italian-controlled sections where U.N. observation was in effect) forcibly suppressed Somali resistance. The suppression took a most brutal form in the Ogaadeen where the Ethiopians, through executions, jailings, and mass exiles, attempted to stamp out Somali opposition. For example, in 1948, when the British surrender of the Ogaadeen to Ethiopia was made

public, a spontaneous protest demonstration broke out in Jigjiga and provoked the Ethiopians to open fire on the demonstrators, killing twenty-five and wounding dozens of others. At the same time, the Ethiopian secret service mounted a massive purge in Dire Dawa, Harar, and other towns to weed out SYL adherents and sympathizers.

Parties and Elections in the Preindependence Period

In Italian Somalia, in preparation for the U.N.-mandated independence in 1960, electoral politics began in 1954 with a municipal election based on direct male suffrage.²² Twenty-one parties competed, nearly all of which were associated with a particular Somali clan. The SYL—the major exception although it recruited only among the Samaale clan-family—received 48 percent of the vote. Coming in second with 22 percent of the vote was the Hisbia Digil Mirifle (HDM), a party representing the Digil and Rahanwayn clans, which are primarily agriculturalists in the southern portions of the territory. The HDM in its campaign contended that the SYL represented clans that could easily align with northerners (especially if amalgamation with the British territory occurred) and that southern agricultural interests had to be protected.

In 1956 the first general election was held, and it was the last to be held under full Italian supervision. There was universal male suffrage, and in the rural areas, votes were counted in the *shirs*. Here again the SYL won decisively, with forty-three out of sixty seats. The HDM won thirteen. Six of the smaller parties of the 1954 election, representing particular clans, joined together to form the Somali Democratic party but got only three seats. There were still many parties, but after the election, the stunning SYL victory put a stop to their proliferation. Many opponents joined the SYL to share the spoils with the winner.

Abdullaahi 'Iise of the SYL was appointed by the Italian administration to form the first Somali government. His ministers were chosen largely from within the Samaale clan-family, and the HDM stood as opposition. But once the government formed, conflict broke out among and within clans of the Samaale. In this period, a new opposition to the SYL—the Greater Somali League (GSL)—organized a coalition of Samaale clans that were somewhat underrepresented in 'Iise's cabinet. In this period the HDM, in an attempt to avoid the charge that its members were merely tribalists, changed its name to the Hisbia Destour Mustaqil (Independent Constitutional party)—thereby eliminating the clan references while keeping its former acronym. It tried to recruit beyond its clan base and to expand its appeal.

The SYL, with Italian power waning, began to treat all opposition ruthlessly. In 1959, claiming foreign intervention in the electoral process leading up to the final election before independence, the SYL arrested hundreds of GSL members and members of other opposition groups, and some opposition party headquarters were closed. With full control of government resources, the SYL had little trouble winning this election. It won eighty-three out of the ninety seats. With such a victory, it might be assumed that forming a government would have been an easy task. But it wasn't. 'Iise sought to balance clans within the government, but many SYL members from clans other than 'Iise's argued that this balancing would institutionalize clanism. In fact, 'Abdirizaaq Haaji Hussein, who would become a prime minister in the 1960s, complained before the U.N. Trusteeship Council that the SYL was engaging in politics "incompatible with the political evolution of Somalia." Despite SYL dominance, then, the 'Iise government was not without vocal opposition.

In contrast to the Italian trust, the British protectorate did not make provision for the incubation of political parties prior to the heat of elections. Political parties were illegal until 1959. The British administration insisted on clan representation in governing councils, and this prohibited the development of national or supraclan parties. Also, the British refused civil servants the right to engage in politics, thereby emasculating the potential size of an educated political class. However, there were two de facto political parties from the 1950s that existed on the edge of legality. First, the SYL was a branch of the pan-Somali party of the south. British administrators saw SYL-members as communists and encouraged the development of a countermovement among the merchants, traditional leaders, and religious sheikhs. This group was the seed of the second party, the Somali National League.

The first general election in British Somaliland took place in March 1959, but the SNL boycotted the election claiming that the British were rigging it against the parties and in favor of the clans. (Still, one of the SNL's founders, Mahammad Haaji Ibrahim 'Igaal, a future prime minister of the independent republic, won a seat.) Another election in February 1960, the first based on universal male suffrage, was the real test of party strength. In it, the SNL won twenty out of thirty-three seats. Two other parties did well. The National United Front (an amalgamation of groups that organized in an unsuccessful attempt to stall the return of the Reserved Areas to Ethiopian administration) won 24.6 percent of the vote, but only one seat. The United Somali party (USP), led by important Daarood chiefs, won twelve seats. The SYL failed to win a seat. In the north,

as in the south, voting and political coalitions correlated closely with clan membership. The SNL and NUF were both Isaaq parties. But the SNL drew mostly from the Habar Yoonis and Habar Awal ('Iise Muuse) clans; the NUF drew from the Habar Tol Ja'alo and Habar Awal (Sa'ad Muuse) clans. The USP, on the other hand, was largely a Daarood party.

With internal divisions such as we have described, it is not surprising that the amalgamation of the two territories brought ever more interclan conflict, and the timing of amalgamation considerably exacerbated matters. In April 1960 the British made a surprise and sudden decision to permit their territory to become independent within days of Italian Somalia's independence. This decision was broadly supported by virtually all Somalis, but it made the task of unification no less easy. With almost no time to plan, and just days after the British announcement, representatives of north and south met in a conference held in Mogadishu to create a "unitary, democratic and parliamentary state."

Their task was formidable. Somali leaders only had a few months to fashion the agreement, yet they were fully engaged in working out the transfer of authority from the British and the Italians in their own territories. To further complicate matters, no individual or body had any official responsibility for laying the foundation of the union. When the two territories joined together in July, there were

two different judicial systems; different currencies; different organization and conditions for service for the army, the police and the civil servants. . . . The governmental institutions, both at the central and local level, were differently organized and had different powers; the systems and rates of taxation and customs were different, and so were the educational systems.²³

INDEPENDENCE: A BITTER HARVEST

In July 1960—after months of negotiation between the SYL under the leadership of 'Abdullaahi 'Iise and northern leaders such as Mahammad H. I. 'Igaal of the SNL and Michael Mariano of the NUF (who commands a place of towering preeminence in the struggle for Somali liberation)—the northern and southern parts merged to form the independent Somali Republic.

Independence, in the words of an anonymous Somali poet, has proved a "bitter harvest" for the Somali people. In addition to the formidable task of nation building common to African states in the wake of decolonization, the Somalis have inherited what they see as

a dismembered nation—three of whose essential constituent parts are missing (the Ogaadeen, the NFD, and Djibouti). Somali nationalism (based on the peculiar features of Somali clanship and kinship ties) inculcates in Somali consciousness a sense of distinct community with a common past and a common destiny. That sense of national self-awareness fuels Somali patriotism and the yearning for national political unification. Reinforcing the powerful appeal of Somali nationalism is the reality of economic necessity. The Somalis live in a desert environment where centuries of experimentation and social adaptation have established a fragile balance between people, animals, scarce water supply, and plant forage. Any disruption of that balance tends to set off an economic crisis, which leads to famine and loss of life. In this connection one need only mention that the 1977–1978 conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia resulted in a massive displacement of persons where but for the timely intervention of international aid, the world would have witnessed a horrendous disaster.

The fragile interdependence fostered by Somali ecology and the centripetal pull of Somali ethnic/nationalistic particularism draw the Somalis of the Somali Republic into an almost obsessive concern with the fate of their "lost brethren." This concern underlines the central fact of Somali society; although ridden with internal fission and clannish factionalism, the Somalis nevertheless are drawn together by highly emotive supratribal bonds of nationhood.

Given the reality of Somali nationalism, it is no wonder that Somali leaders have been engrossed since independence with efforts, so far unrewarded, to bring all Somalis into the national fold. Two consequences have resulted from this national preoccupation. One is that the search for national reunification has claimed an undue portion of the nation's attention, thereby draining energies and resources badly needed for internal development into fruitless external ventures. Second, the Somali leaders' sustained concern with the fate of the Somalis outside of the borders of their state has entangled the republic in unfortunate disputes with its African neighbors, principally Ethiopia, but also Kenya. Ethiopia and Kenya, consisting of disparate ethnic and regional groups and bent on forging a nation out of these, find Somali commitment to national unification anathema—inconsistent with, and therefore inimical to, their philosophy of nation building. Although Somalis appreciate Kenyan and Ethiopian concerns about the political stability of their states, they, on the other hand, are exceedingly embittered by what they see as a cynical suppression of Somali rights and aspirations to self-determination by Kenyan and Ethiopian leaders behind a bogus, although diplomatically marketable, facade of territorial integrity. Rarely has there been a more tragic clash of different approaches to state building in Africa.

4

Government and Politics

July 1, 1960, was a euphoric day for all Somalis. Italian Somalia and British Somaliland joined together to form the newly independent Somali Republic. "Freedom and dignity have reached us," Somalis sang in the streets. "We have brought together the two lands. Glory to God! Say, 'It is God's victory!'" Not only did independence bring unity—it also brought democracy, something clearly consistent with the pastoral ethos of the Somali people. The independence constitution of 1961 gave parties the freedom to organize and to compete for political office. Opponents to government policies were free as well to publish their criticisms, and regular elections assured opponents the opportunity to turn incumbents out of office.

But Somali society, in a manner consistent with the pastoral ethos, continued to be anarchic. Presidents and prime ministers were challenged, and political parties proliferated to the point where Somalia had more parties per capita than any other democratic country except Israel. In parliamentary debates, every member exerted his right to speak, so that there was endless debate with virtually no party discipline.

It is in part for this reason that independence was a bitter harvest. The newly independent republic faced a broad agenda of problems that required immediate attention. Foremost in the eyes of most Somalis was the need to bring Somalis still living under colonial rule in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti under the Somali flag. Two of the dismembered territories were now united, and three more territories, from the Somali point of view, needed to be incorporated. Second, mechanisms to integrate the former British and Italian territories, each with a different administrative structure, into a single state had to be worked out. Third, an official language of education and administration had to be chosen. Although nearly all citizens of

the new republic spoke the Somali language, Somalis could not agree among themselves upon an appropriate script for their written language. The new government would either have to choose a script so that Somali could become the state language, or it would have to choose among Italian, English, and Arabic, the languages of foreign contact. Finally, the new government would have to address the problem of urgent economic needs. To be sure, even the poorest Somalis—except in times of severe drought—have found ways to dress well and eat heartily. It would therefore be inaccurate to call Somalis “poor,” yet Somalia’s Gross National Product (GNP) was (and is) among the lowest in the world. Electricity, plumbing facilities, refrigerators, and medicines are rare luxuries in Somalia. In this sense, the republic’s new leaders felt a popular mandate to bring Somalia some of the fruits of the twentieth-century world economy.

Thus, the political dilemma that faced Somalia at the dawn of its independence was how a vibrant democracy placed within an anarchic society could address itself in a sustained way to a broad agenda of problems. The task of this chapter is to describe the interaction between democratic norms, an anarchic culture, and the hopes of the Somali people for unity and progress.

Immediately after independence, the legislatures of the two territories met in joint session and elected with near unanimity Aadan ‘Abdullah ‘Usmaan, from a small Hawiye subclan, as provisional president. ‘Usmaan had been a mainstay of the moderate faction of the Somali Youth League and had developed good ties with a wide cross section of Somali clans. Unable to get the former prime minister of the Italian trust territory, ‘Abdullaahi ‘Iise, a fellow Hawiye, appointed premier of the Somali Republic, ‘Usmaan recommended the appointment of a Majeerteen leader, ‘Abdirashiid ‘Ali Shermaarke. In the early weeks of July 1960, ‘Usmaan and Shermaarke painstakingly negotiated an ethnically balanced cabinet. There were four Daaroods (two Dulbahantes, a Majeerteen, and a Mareehaan), two Isaacs (one Habar Awal and one Habar Yoonis), three Hawiyes (one Habar Gidir and two Abgaals) and three Digil and Rahanwayn. Clan balancing became a standard operating procedure in democratic Somalia, as government jobs necessarily meant representation for any clan. Any clan left out of a government would express its alienation.¹

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1961

The first major task facing the National Assembly was to finish drafting the constitution that had been outlined in the final months of the colonial period. Nearly all the preparatory work had been

accomplished in the south, in negotiation with Italian officials, before the British agreed to grant independence to their protectorate in conjunction with Italian Somalia's schedule. Thus, northern politicians only could make marginal effects on the constitutional draft, and there was considerable resentment in the north that the south had defined the political agenda. These tensions were obscured on independence day as euphoria caught nearly all Somalis. But when time came to ratify the constitution in June 1961, the hostility surfaced. The constitution was approved overwhelmingly in the south but got less than 50 percent support in the former British colony. Nonetheless, the constitution was approved, and we can turn now to its major provisions.

Somalia was to become a liberal democracy, with all citizens having the right to vote. Citizens would vote for members of the National Assembly, which in turn would vote for a president who would become the head of state. The president would serve for six years. He had the right to authorize government-sponsored legislation and to compel the Assembly to reconsider laws it had already passed. He could dissolve the Assembly when, in his view, it ceased to discharge its functions; and he could appoint and dismiss the prime minister. He also had the right to give pardons and to commute sentences.

The prime minister and his subordinate ministers constituted the government, which had responsibility for implementing the laws of the National Assembly. The army was put under the jurisdiction of the minister of defense, the police under the minister of the interior.

The constitution also provided for a judiciary that would be independent of the executive and legislative powers. The judicial system was a careful mixture of the British and Italian court systems and of the Shariah (Muslim legal system) and the civil court traditions. The precise constitutional wording on judicial matters took considerable imagination and analogic reasoning, especially for cases that required the Supreme Court to decide in areas that bordered on Shariah, customary, and statutory law.

The constitutional draft was not, despite its attempt to balance interests, universally praised. Northerners, as we have seen, were suspicious. Compounding this difficulty was the fact that both the president and prime minister were from the South. It is therefore hardly surprising that a majority of northerners voted against the 1961 constitution. When northerners learned that the vote in the south was unequivocally positive, and that the number of "yes" votes in some towns was higher than that of the estimated total population, opposition forces became hostile. In December 1961 there was an

attempted military coup in the north, with the officers hoping to break up the union. The coup failed, but it reflected deep fissures in the Somali body politic.² The constitution was approved, but the problem of uniting the republic demanded immediate attention.

The Integration of the Two Regions

Given the coup attempt in 1961 and the alienation felt by northerners, the most remarkable aspect of the first decade of Somalia's independence is the fact that two territories, with different colonial metropolises, official languages, administrative structures, and constitutional developments were able to merge into a unitary state. Countless studies of state political integration in Africa and elsewhere in the world have confirmed the fact that admirable intentions and shared culture are rarely sufficient to achieve success.³ As we saw, the institutional hurdles in Somalia were high indeed.

A Consultative Commission for Integration was therefore established a few months after the official union had begun. This commission had to deal with some vexing questions. Its chairman recounted some of them:

What was the effect of the union on the jurisdiction of the Northern and Southern courts, both territorially and as to subject matter? Did the laws in force in the North and in the South before the union continue to be applicable in the respective territories? Were the powers and competence of public authorities in the Northern and Southern Regions affected by the union? Was it permissible to use in the North moneys included in the budget for the South, and vice versa? Did a citizen of former British Somaliland or Italian Somalia automatically become a citizen of the Somali Republic on the day of the union? Was a Northern civil servant transferred to the South entitled to his previous salary or was he subject to the different salary scale applicable to Southern civil servants? Was it permissible for imported goods to move freely throughout the territory of the Republic even though the custom tariffs in the South were generally higher than those in the North? Did treaties extended to one or both territories before independence become binding on the Republic as a whole upon the formation of the union?⁴

Some of these technical problems created political brouhahas. The most significant case concerned the role of the civil servant in the political system. In the north, civil servants were not permitted to run for political office. This reflected the technical and "objective" view of administration inculcated by British overrule. In the south, it was believed that because civil servants were among the better

educated people in Somali society, it would enhance the quality of the government if they were permitted to seek office. The 1961 constitution instituted a careful compromise on this issue: Civil servants, although permitted to take leaves of absence in order to run for the National Assembly, were not permitted to become party leaders. An independent Civil Service Commission was also established to mollify the north.

Despite technical problems and fear in the north of southern domination, efforts by the political elites in the early 1960s laid a firm foundation for the political unity of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia. As should be clear, the Somali people shared a common national consciousness. That northern noncommissioned officers helped save the union in 1961 by defying their own senior officers and remaining loyal to Mogadishu is a testimony to this broad national cohesiveness that we have already outlined. In fact, these officers arrested their rebellious commanders. Since that time, many northerners have bought property in the south and engaged in trade throughout the republic. The great achievement of the parliamentary regime was to ride the wave of nationalist unity in the early months of independence to secure a united Somalia. The unity of the two territories was the single enduring contribution of parliamentary democracy to Somalia. The euphoria of national unity and the acceptance of a unitary constitution did not, however, make governing Somali society any easier.

The constitution, after all, only provided a framework. Within that framework, there was room for political maneuver and intrigue, intrigue that dated from parliamentary politics in the Italian trust. After one year of independence, a Hawiye deputy, Sheikh 'Ali Jam'aale, sought to depose his fellow Hawiye from the presidency. Jam'aale, arguing to his own people that the president had abandoned Hawiye interests, allied with some Isaaq deputies, who themselves were upset by their lack of power vis-à-vis the Daarood. President 'Usmaan's forces squeaked by with a sixty-one to fifty-nine victory in the vote of deputies in the National Assembly in July 1961. Sheikh Jam'aale was dismissed from the cabinet, but his group almost won a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Shermaarke's government in April 1962. Clan fission and fissure, so apparent in traditional Somali politics, were transferred to a modern arena.

Still, the Somali Youth League—with its origins in the south—maintained itself as the most powerful political party. The two leading parties from the north, the Somali National League (with an Isaaq base) and the United Somali party (with a base of Daarood and Dir), agreed to cooperate with the SYL on all matters affecting unification.

But in 1962, two SNL cabinet ministers resigned and formed a new national party, the Somali National Congress, which not only got strong support in the north but recruited among many SYL Hawiyes from the south. The SYL maintained its electoral dominance, however, and won 74 percent of the seats in the 1963 municipal elections and 69 of 123 seats in the 1964 national elections.

The burden of governing Somalia did not get any easier, even after these significant electoral triumphs. After the 1964 elections, when President 'Usmaan looked like he was in firm command, his surprise decision to appoint a new premier, 'Abdirizaaq Haaji Hussein, to replace Shermaarke, created quite a stir, and it took six months for 'Abdirizaaq to get a cabinet approved. Somalia remained virtually without a government for this period. 'Abdirizaaq, who came from a Majeerteen subclan different from Shermaarke's, was a brilliant orator and had captured the imagination of the urban unemployed and the young educated civil servants. He was single-minded in his desire to create an effective central government that could lead Somalia, economically and socially, into the modern industrial world.

'Abdirizaaq guided Somali politics until June 1967 when the National Assembly met to elect a new president. Shermaarke, still bitter about his demotion three years earlier, regathered his supporters and defeated 'Usmaan. Repaying the crucial debt that enabled him to get elected, Shermaarke nominated a northerner, Mahammad H. I. 'Igaal, as prime minister. 'Igaal had left the SYL-dominated cabinet in 1962 and had helped create the Somali National Congress.

The Shermaarke-'Igaal partnership brought apparent stability to the Somali political scene. Both the north and the south appeared to be reconciled. However, Shermaarke was a strong supporter of the goal of Greater Somalia at all costs; 'Igaal wished to strike a deal with the United States that required Somalia to tacitly renounce its territorial goals in return for hefty U.S. economic aid. Whatever their similarities, the president and the prime minister differed completely on the issue of how to deal with the dismembered nation issue. As a result, Somali politics, in order to avoid chaos, grew stagnated.

Although the democratic regime had indeed solved the problem of the political integration of the two regions, it failed to address in a sustained way any of Somalia's other problems. Somalia was unable to get any diplomatic support for its effort to unite the other fragments of the Somali nation; its 1964 military skirmish with Ethiopia in the Ogaadeen (which we describe in our discussion of Somalia's foreign relations) was ill-organized and weak. Its economic development

program (which we discuss in Chapter 5) did not capture anyone's imagination, nor did it mobilize the Somali people.

Finally, the parliamentary regime was unable to make any progress on the issue of Somalia's written language. Many of the SYL leaders pressed for an indigenous script called 'Usmaaniya. This script was linguistically accurate, but it would have made it very difficult for Somalis to import typewriters or to send telexes to each other around the world. Also, the founder of the script and most of its proponents were of the Majeerteen clan, and many Somalis opposed the script because it implied Majeerteen supremacy. A number of religious leaders wanted Somali to be written in the Arabic script or even for Arabic to become the official language of the Somali state. But Arabic is vowel short while Somali is vowel rich, and adaptation would have been very difficult. The third choice was a modified Latin script, which would have been technically sound, but many religious leaders opposed it and relied on the catchy phrase *Latin waa La Diin* (Latin is without God) to register their opposition.

Two prime ministers attempted to resolve the script crisis that was creating a bureaucratic nightmare. The educational system was operating in three languages, as was the bureaucracy. There were some movements toward the anglicization of both schools and the civil service, but this process was facing much opposition from the (Italian-speaking) south. Two appointed commissions recommended the modified Latin script, but when the findings were leaked, political opposition from advocates of the other two scripts was so strong that both prime ministers suppressed the public announcement of the results.⁵

This nondecision was beginning to have adverse consequences for national unity. In the course of the 1960s, English began to dominate in Somali administration, which gave an advantage to Somalis who were educated in the north. Because the central government is the major employer in the modern sector of Somalia, and because language ability is crucial for most modern sector jobs, those Somalis who were literate only in Italian found their skills diminishing in value. By the late 1960s, almost in reverse of what occurred in response to the 1961 constitution, a southern identity began to form—especially as more and more northerners were migrating south and getting the best administrative jobs. By then a unified school curriculum, with instruction and exams in English, had reached the secondary level, which put students in the south, whose education in English was often given by teachers who did not speak English themselves, at a disadvantage. The problem faced by the southerners was clearly indicated in the results of the first centralized Standard

Eight leaving exam. In it, 88 percent of the northern students but only 54 percent of the southerners passed. Although there are twice as many people in the south as in the north, the number of southerners who took the exam was only 50 percent greater than the number of northerners. More northerners passed the exam than did southerners, which meant that northerners would get the majority of available jobs.

Thus, we can see that although democracy remained vibrant, Somalia was not addressing its problems with any success. The scourge of anarchy was on the horizon, for below the surface unity of the Shermaarke-Igaal partnership, fissures were constantly appearing. By the time of the March 1969 elections, sixty-four parties contested the election. The large number of parties that suddenly came into existence could be explained by the conjunction of the kinship structure of Somali society and the proportional representation system of voting, a system that had been in operation since independence but had not demonstrated its full effects until 1969. The voting system specified forty-seven electoral districts, which would send 123 deputies to the National Assembly; the number of deputies sent by each district was a function of its aggregate number of votes. Each party established a list of potential representatives. Parties, not candidates, were the recipients of votes. If the party earned one seat, then the candidate at the top of its list would win a seat; if the party earned two seats in a district, then the two top candidates would win seats. The consequence of this procedure was that all candidates fought for high places on the SYL lists. If they could not get the top place, it was to their interest to get sufficient signatures from members of their clan and to form their own party. A candidate who secured victory as a single member of a party normally rejoined the SYL after the National Assembly met.

This system invited factions and exacerbated the anarchic tendencies already present in the society. It also led to the expenditure of vast sums of money by both challengers and incumbents. The resultant chaos made a mockery of the democratic process. Although the Shermaarke-Igaal partnership persevered amid the cacophonous 1969 election, seventy-seven of the former deputies, including eight cabinet ministers, were defeated. The losers were the first to point out numerous examples of rigged elections and misuse of public funds for private purposes. In subsequent months the elected government reigned but could not rule. Maintaining balance rather than solving Somalia's deep problems became the leitmotif of Somalia's democracy. Stagnation was socially, economically, and politically debilitating. One Somali correspondent to the *Somali News* despondently wrote of the

need for a "benevolent deity" to pull Somalia out of the morass in which it was so deeply enmeshed.⁶

THE ARMY

To the joy of many Somalis, the benevolent deity appeared in military fatigues. General Mahammad Siyaad Barre, the highest ranking officer in the Somali army, headed a Supreme Military Council after a coup d'état toppled the constitutionally elected regime. Despite the fact that the warrior (*warranleh*) in Somali tradition is accorded weight and status nearly equal to the religious leader (*wadaad*), we have not paid much attention to the historical and cultural development of the Somali army. We do so now, if only to serve as a preface to our discussion of Siyaad's military rule, which is at the time of this writing in its seventeenth year.

It is hardly surprising that the great nationalist figure in Somali history, Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan, whose poetry is greatly extolled by Somalis, was equally admired for his military prowess. When he committed himself to the purging from the Horn of Africa all non-Muslim elements—which of course included colonial authority—he found himself in a twenty-one-year battle against mostly British-trained soldiers. His magnificent victories against the Camel Corps of Richard Corfield in 1913 and his resistance to the aerial bombing of his fort in Taleeh in 1920 are legends in Somali history.

The origin of Somalia's "modern" army lies in the British and Italian constabularies of the 1880s, such as Corfield's, which were designed as police forces to protect internal security. During World War II, the British, in retaliation for Italian conquests in Ethiopia and Somaliland, swept the Italians out of the Horn in a remarkably swift campaign in 1941. In their reconquered protectorate, public order was maintained with the old Camel Corps, but the British also used the Somaliland Scouts and armed police called *Ilaaloos* who were equipped with armored vehicles. In the former Italian colony, the British Military Authority established a gendarmerie, which by 1943 had 3,070 Somali and African ranks and 120 British officers. Although the British attempted to attract members of all clans into the gendarmerie, official reports suggest that they overrecruited men from Daarood clans, something that brought considerable tension within the territory.⁷

After the war, the Italians reestablished control over their former colony, this time as a U.N. trust. They received permission from the U.N. Trusteeship Council to establish a national army, and this new unit combined with the British Scouts to form a 5,000-troop army at the time of independence.⁸

Once independent, Somalia's leaders, despite the constitutional renunciation of war as a means of settling international disputes, recognized that their hopes for a unified Somalia might one day bring them into armed conflict. They felt they needed to quadruple the size of their army, and they sought foreign aid to achieve this goal. Somalia's leaders went first to the United States, which was reluctant to arm the Somalis in light of the U.S. alliance with Ethiopia. (Whatever attempts U.S. diplomats make to build a foundation of friendship with Somalia, Somalis will long remember with a bitter taste in their mouths the fact that at its birth, their state's security needs were ignored by the United States.) A joint U.S., West German, and Italian proposal to upgrade the 5,000-troop force with better internal security equipment worth some \$10 million was rejected by the Somalis as totally inadequate.

The Soviet Union was pulled into this power vacuum. By 1962 the Soviets had agreed to grant loans that eventually reached \$52 million and to help build a 14,000-troop army. The Soviets provided the Somali army with T-34 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and MiG-15 and MiG-17 aircraft. Some three hundred Soviet advisers worked in Somalia and more than five hundred Somali personnel were trained in the Soviet Union during the 1960s. Despite U.S. support for a sophisticated police force, by the end of the decade the Soviet Union had great influence on the security network in Somalia. In fact, there is considerable evidence that Soviet advisers helped the Somali army stage the coup d'état of October 1969, the subject to which we now turn.⁹

THE 1969 REVOLUTION AND THE RISE OF GENERAL MAHAMMAD SIYAAD BARRE

Seven months after the 1969 election, President Shermaarke, while reviewing troops, was assassinated by a soldier. The soldier came from a Majeerteen subclan that was a rival of the president's, and Shermaarke's murder was supposedly a "payment" for the sufferings of the soldier's subclan in the preelection violence. Prime Minister Igaal was at that time in the United States, trying to work out an aid deal, and he quickly returned home. In subsequent days the Parliament worked overtime to choose a successor to Shermaarke. The debate exposed all the deep sores in the Somali body politic, and citizens were disgusted by the self-serving posture of the political debate and by the very limited qualifications of the proposed successor to Shermaarke.

There was therefore great excitement and relief on October 21, 1969, when Radio Mogadishu announced that the combined forces of Somalia's military and police had seized power in a bloodless coup d'état. The National Assembly was abolished. Major-General Muhammad Siyaad Barre would lead a Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) in its quest to cure Somalia of its ills. President Siyaad Barre is a member of the Mareehaan clan and was born near Shiilaabo (in Ethiopia). To get a job in the Italian police force, he claimed Garbahaarey as his birth place. His mother was Ogaadeeni, an important clan ally. But in the early days of military rule, few Somalis cared about Siyaad Barre's clan ties. He spoke a language of national unity that transcended kinship. The SRC was made up of military and police officers, but it relied on a number of civilians to hold ministerial portfolios. Appointments, for the first time in the republic's short history, were not carefully scrutinized according to clan affiliation. Merit appeared to be the order of the day.

The early announcements by the SRC focused on the corruption of the old regime. Drawing on an onomatopoeic expression from the poetry of the Sayyid, the SRC accused the politicians of *musuq maasuq*—of going in different directions at the same time. Politicians were also accused of *afmishaarism*—literally, acting like “saw mouths”—because they put praise singers on their payrolls. Government cars were being used as private taxis; government medicine was on sale in local pharmacies. The new government helped mobilize the people's support through its campaign of *hisaabi hil-male*, an “accounting [of theft by government servants] without shame.” The use of these colloquial political expressions lent a populist aura to the military junta's image.

Also populist was the new regime's anti-Americanism, even if the source of it was external. The Soviet Union's role was signalled from an early broadcast on Radio Mogadishu. Before the coup, the radio station announced itself as the “voice of the Somali Republic”; but within days, it was the voice of the Somali Democratic Republic, a clear signal of alignment with the Soviets. But many Somalis, both urban and rural, were disillusioned with the United States and did not need to be prodded by Soviet propaganda. The United States was seen as anti-Muslim and against the unification of Somalia's dismembered nation. In December the SRC gave U.S. Peace Corps volunteers notice to leave the country in two weeks. Siyaad pointed out that these youths, through their poor dress and their use of illicit drugs, were a threat to Somali values. This eviction was most popular, and masses of Somalis celebrated publicly as volunteers packed their belongings. (The United States still had a key link to the centers of



Photo 4.1 Major General Mahammad Siyaad Barre, president of the Somali Democratic Republic.

power through its association with the police, the junior partners in the SRC. But in April 1970, General Jaama' 'Ali Qoorsheel, head of the police force, was named as a conspirator in a counter coup, and he was arrested. The Somali-Soviet tie became stronger.) With every vitriolic remark castigating the United States for its imperialism, Siyaad Barre's regime seemed to gain greater popular support.

Somalia Under Siyaad Barre's Rule

In the post coup regime, Siyaad Barre was the unquestioned leader. He chaired the Supreme Revolutionary Council, which had the power to legislate new laws, repeal old ones, and to direct ministers on questions of administration. The SRC could appoint and fire ministers without the advice or consent of any popularly elected legislative body. The National Security Service (NSS), which was closely linked to the SRC, was headed for a long time by Siyaad Barre's son-in-law, Ahmad Sulaymaan 'Abdullah. The NSS, heavily aided by specialists from the German Democratic Republic, hired agents within every subclan in Somalia. The SRC was therefore able to get reliable information about dissidents, and it was able to intimidate the population, making most citizens afraid to voice their opinions to anyone but their closest kin.

The SRC in conjunction with the army created an ideological apparatus to socialize the entire elite into committed and *loyal* Siyaadist socialists. Young women and men, in the early revolutionary years, were recruited into a paramilitary organization called Victory Pioneers, and they engaged in public marches as well as organized self-help projects. These Victory Pioneers have been less visible in recent years, but ideological training is still (even after the 1979 constitution) an essential component of Siyaad's rule. All secondary school graduates are still compelled to attend a military camp, which, always short on ammunition but long on words, emphasizes ideological conformity. In virtually every urban neighborhood citizens are encouraged to attend weekly orientation meetings in which socialist rhetoric is espoused and community action for socialist advance is planned. This extensive ideological apparatus has helped to inculcate, if not to legitimate, the socialist ideology of the military leaders.

Scientific Socialism

On the first anniversary of the revolution, Siyaad Barre announced that henceforth Somalia would be a "scientifically socialist" state.¹⁰ The president's key socialist link was, of course, the Soviet Union. A series of economic and military agreements provided resources for Siyaad Barre to enhance the power of his army and to fund his first

five-year plan. Somalia's incorporation into the socialist world was symbolized by the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in July 1974.

Siyaad's populism and socialism clearly unleashed latent ideological energies. A new socialist vocabulary became part of the discourse of Somali politics. The very translation of socialist concepts into Somali helped to raise popular consciousness. To overcome the divisions based on claniship, the socialist regime would call everyone comrade, *jaalle* (literally, playmate or team member). This was a clear signal to the people that socialist camaraderie would surpass kinship (formerly, one addressed casual acquaintances in the language of cousinhood) in the scientifically socialist state.

Hantiwadaag, or "wealth sharing," meant socialism. For "scientific," the government, after considerable debate, chose *'ilmi ku dissan*, (built on knowledge). These definitions were hardly neutral, as the chosen words had rich connotations in the Somali language. *Hantiwadaag* connotes "livestock sharing," and this term enraged many nomads who feared their herds might be seized by a zealous government seeking to distribute animals to less fortunate pastoralists; *'ilmi* connotes Islamic knowledge, which raises questions about the role of Islam in a supposedly atheistic Marxist-Leninist state. Debates about terminology involved Somalis from all walks of life and to a certain extent helped many Somalis believe truly that they were an autonomous people who could improve their material condition.

The Period of Modest Socialist Successes: 1970-1974

Scientific socialism is a general ideological framework; it is not a specific program. Yet this framework provided a set of policy guidelines for Somalia. With a socialist framework, the Siyaad regime achieved two major political goals: language reform and the overcoming of certain vestiges of societal inequality. On the second anniversary of the revolution, the Supreme Revolutionary Council decreed Latin as the official script for the Somali language and Somali as the official language of the republic. Suddenly, all opponents to the Latin script vanished. There was euphoria as government airplanes dropped grammar texts in Somali amid the assembled crowds celebrating the revolution. The decision on a script for the language had immediate ramifications. It made possible citizen input into the political process. Virtually all government officials to whom we have talked told us of the avalanche of views and opinions made possible by the new script to the government coming from nomads in the wake of the official recognition of the Somali language.¹¹

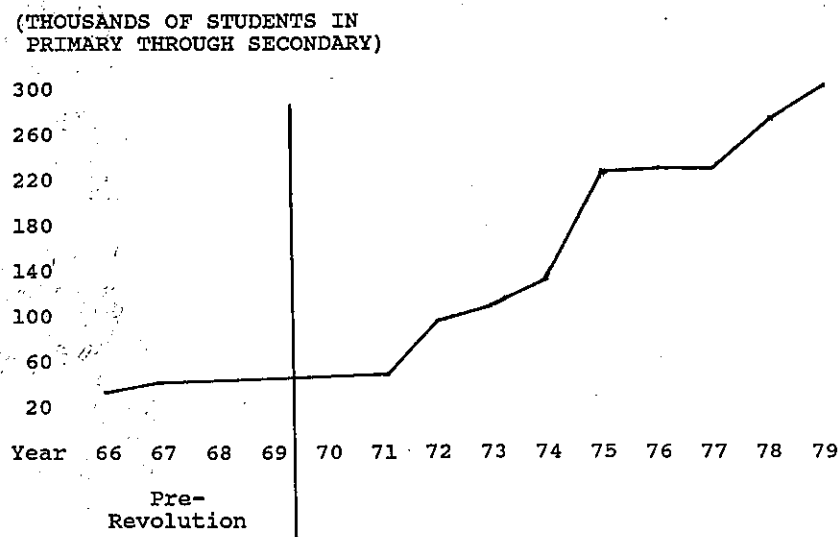
The linguistic reform also made possible a serious literacy campaign. Although the government's initial emphasis was on urban literacy, in March, 1974 a major effort was made to promote rural literacy. Previous rural literacy campaigns had failed because of nomadic resistance, the lack of a script for the indigenous language, and the necessity to teach a foreign language as well. But this time secondary schools were closed for a year so that student-teachers could teach the nomads in their common language. Vast strides were made in the development of rural literacy. The Ministry of Information and National Guidance estimated a countrywide literacy rate of 55 percent in 1975, as opposed to a 5 percent literacy rate prior to the adoption of a national script.¹² Even if this figure, as we suggested in Chapter 2, is a bit exaggerated, Somali progress in literacy is indeed a great achievement. By so doing, the socialist regime provided greater opportunities for social mobility—a fundamental element of equality.

In a homogeneous society like Somalia's, the use of an indigenous language as the official language of state fosters egalitarian educational policies. In other African countries, where European languages continue to be the languages of education, those citizens who leave primary school lose their literacy skills at an alarming rate because they spend most of their day using their native tongues. Furthermore, it generally takes twelve years of education in a foreign language to develop sufficient skills to perform most bureaucratic tasks. Literacy provided in an indigenous language, on the other hand, is generally self-maintaining and makes it possible to recruit literate citizens with only primary school experience into the bureaucracy. In addition, because fewer expatriates are needed to teach in the primary schools, the egalitarian goal of a universal primary education is much more likely to be achieved. Figure 4.1 shows a rapid expansion in school enrollment during the early postrevolutionary period, which further demonstrates how an effective language policy can aid educational goals.

The decision to write the Somali language also helped to reduce the tensions that continued to exist between the northern and southern regions. As a consequence of the decision by the Supreme Revolutionary Council to change to a Somali-language curriculum, northerners lost their advantage in the competition for jobs. Regional equity now could rest on a firmer foundation.

To be sure, any educational policy, in creating a technical elite, will foster new types of social stratification. In Africa the bureaucratic elites, certified by their diplomas and retaining many of the perquisites of their colonial predecessors, are clearly a new social stratum. Such

FIGURE 4.1
Social Progress: School Enrollment



Sources: Somali Democratic Republic, Current Statistical Trends in Somali Education (1971) and UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks.

stratification is inevitable in any attempt to establish a modern state in a traditional society. Siyaad's language policy, however, which was embedded in the rhetoric of socialism and self-reliance, helped to reduce societal inequality to the greatest extent possible.

Siyaad also was committed to eliminating the cosmopolitanism of the Somali civil service. When Somali became the official language of the civil service, those Somalis who had studied abroad and who viewed themselves as a special elite by virtue of having been to London, Paris, Rome, or Washington lost their elite status. Only these Western-educated Somalis, Siyaad observed, now would obey the commands "of those who were their inferiors in terms of education or intelligence . . . because they were members of the colonizing regime in our country."¹³ An indigenously educated civil service is less estranged from the people it is serving, Siyaad maintained, which also promotes equality. A modern state must give some perquisites to its technical elites, but to be effective these elites need not have all the advantages. Here Siyaad was being consistent with Somali tradition and socialist ideology.

TABLE 4.1

Nonrecurrent Government Expenditures in Development Programs
(in million Somali shillings)

Area of Investment	Years	
	1963-1968	1971-1973
Industry	214	87.3
Agriculture, fisheries, forestry, animal husbandry, irrigation	142	220.3

Source: Economic Commission for Africa, Summaries of Economic Data, Somali, Addis Ababa, compiled January 1975, M75-168, 6th year/no.9.

Somalis share a quintessentially egalitarian political culture. Social and political change during the past century, however, has institutionalized a new pattern of social stratification in Somalia. A new urban class, educated in Western-type schools, working as merchants or in government, has been formed. The social distance between this class and the nomads, in terms of wealth, access to government services, and life chances for their children, has increased. The revolutionary regime of President Siyaad Barre made serious attempts to reduce inequalities, whether based on tradition or modern social patterns. To the extent that socialism entails a commitment to inhibit social stratification, the military regime's stated objective to redress inequalities is consistent with its professed socialist ideology.

Although 80 percent of the Somali people are engaged in either nomadic or agricultural life and only about 20 percent are urban residents, most of the benefits obtained under the civilian regime went to the cities. The nomads were virtually ignored. They received little economic aid, and the government invested few resources in attempting to exert its authority in the bush or to put an end to clan warfare. In contrast, the socialist government emphasized equality, as is indicated by a comparison of the development (capital) budgets in the pre- and postrevolutionary governments. In Table 4.1, the nonrecurrent expenditures of the two governments on development programs in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, animal husbandry, and irrigation (programs that are primarily rural in focus) are distinguished from those in industry (programs whose impact is urban). The postrevolutionary regime immediately reversed the priorities. In the 1963-1968 period, there was approximately 33 percent more invest-

ment in industry than in agriculture; in the 1971-1973 period, which inaugurated Siyaad's tenure, two-and-one-half times more development money went into the rural programs than into industry. Similar changes were made in the design of a new electrical power grid. The original design would have augmented capacity in the three major cities, but the socialist government began to decentralize the grid "in line with our socialist principles that the benefit of electricity facilities be spread to cover the maximum number possible in an effort to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas."¹⁴

The regime also committed itself to political penetration of the bush. In this period of early socialist rule, internal warfare among Somalis in the bush was virtually stopped by the government. Keenly attuned to the conditions in rural Somalia, President Siyaad Barre would send peace emissaries (*nabadoon*) to tribal groups in conflict. He used the resources of the state to cool down conflict. This, too, demonstrated the new government's early commitment to penetrate rural Somalia.

On the urban scene Siyaad worked to reduce the level of opulence—in comparison to life in the bush—in which his civil servants lived. He turned his anticorruption campaign, called *hisaabi hil male*, into a focus on bureaucrats' salaries and benefits. A new board studied every ministry, and it reset salaries and reduced perquisites where they were considered too high. Civil servants still lived comparatively well, but under Siyaad's stewardship the gap between their life-style and that of others was reduced. Thus, the egalitarian consequences of language reform and the redirection of budgetary priorities began to erode some of the inequalities in Somali society that had emerged in the past century.

The socialist regime also sought to erode social stratifications that inhered in traditional society. The most glaring traditional inequality was sexual. The opportunities open to Somali women have long been restricted. In fact, Somali women, who played an important role in early political action against the colonialists, had virtually no opportunities for education or economic advance both before and after independence. The postrevolutionary regime of General Siyaad made some efforts to challenge sexual inequality, even though it proceeded cautiously. Practices relating to inequalities in divorce and to bride-wealth were challenged; the penalty for murdering a woman became equal to that for murdering a man; and liberal maternity leaves and equal pay for women became part of the Somali labor code. The government remained fairly quiet, however, about the continued practice of female infibulation. In Mogadishu the social restrictions on women lessened after the revolution, but as the Ministry

of Information and National Guidance pointed out, norms on these issues change slowly because most Somalis do not "put theory into practice lest their daughters remain unwedded."¹⁵

It is in education that opportunities to increase social mobility for women are greatest. When the revolution was born, 20 percent of primary school students were girls. In 1979 the figure approached 40 percent. The figures are positive but less substantial at the intermediate and secondary levels. (At the university level, before the revolution only 11 women were enrolled in the University Institute; in 1974, the last date for which we have figures, 181 were enrolled.)¹⁶

In terms of employment in the modern sector, the situation of women is not clearly defined. The Somali government reported that 65 percent of those who passed the first civil service literacy test in Somali were women, which attests both to their ability and to their presence in significant numbers in the civil service. However, no one lost his (or her) job for failing the test, nor was he or she promoted for passing it, so the test did not serve to increase the social mobility of women. Progress for women in terms of employment can perhaps be assessed more accurately in the Ministry of Education, which publishes the sex ratios of its teaching employees. The percentage of women teachers in Somalia's primary schools has slowly but inexorably advanced since the revolution, from about 10 percent in 1969 to about 30 percent in 1979. In a 1983 field trip to Somalia, one of the authors found many Somali women holding high positions in government ministries, but none is on the Supreme Revolutionary Council. Professor B. W. Andrzejewski, one of the leading students of the Somali language, has told us that women are now participating as combatants in Somali poetic discourse. The poetic calling in Somalia has been the ultimate male preserve and a basis for authority in traditional social structure. The fact that women are now entering this profession bodes well for their future social mobility. The government has blown its own horn in regard to its policies on Somali women:

The Blessed 21st October Revolution under the leadership of SRC President, Jaalle Mahammad Siyaad Barre, has assumed the task of emancipating women from the exploitation of reaction and has given its attention to their mobilization toward production and development. . . . The basic answer to benefiting from this vast untapped labor source has been found to be education.¹⁷

Although the available data do not allow us to heap such praise on the Somali government, it is clear that progress has been made to overcome the vast inequality between Somali men and women.

The information presented here concerning social equality, although limited, indicates a basic trend. Under the institutional forms of democracy in the early years of independence in Somalia, little was done to reduce the gaps between the haves and have-nots. Under the authoritarian regime, action was taken to remedy some inequalities.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION FOUNDERS, 1975 AND BEYOND

The revolution began to founder in 1975. Despite the launching of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party to great fanfare in 1976, the regime could only brag about past successes rather than propose new programs for the fulfillment of socialism. Anticorruption drives cannot sustain a revolution. Siyaad Barre, a military man, was reluctant to rely on intellectuals or even on the vagaries of democratic institutions. Many Marxist ideologues lost their welcome. The National Security Service began to intrude upon the privacy of virtually all Somalis, and Somali citizens lost their de facto right to free expression. Scholars such as Nuuruddiin Faarah, who had in a burst of revolutionary enthusiasm returned to Somalia to teach literature, began to sour on Siyaad. Faarah's novels reflected a Somalia in which arrests, intrigue, insensitivity, and brutality had become the norm.¹⁸ He joined the significant flow of talented Somalis who voted with their feet—that is, who became political refugees from scientifically socialist Somalia. The decline of the period of revolutionary success illuminates the darker side of Siyaadism.

By the mid-1970s Siyaad Barre began to lose interest in socialism and its emphasis on class struggle and turned his attention to the possibilities of national struggle. His regime (he thought) would achieve an historic success, perhaps more stunning than getting the language written, if he could help to "liberate" the Ogaadeen from Ethiopian control. The focus of the regime turned away from five-year plans and toward the mobilization of the military materiel made available through Somalia's alliance with the Soviet Union.

The key historical event that refocused Somali politics was the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia in 1974. Throughout Ethiopia's history the fall of an emperor invariably led to years of turmoil before a successor could consolidate his power. The socialist revolution that emerged in the wake of Selassie's overthrow portended a similar period of chaos. This was the time when a united Somalia—well armed and equipped—could successfully challenge Ethiopian control of the Somali populated areas of the Haud and the Ogaadeen.

Siyaad Barre began to give his support to the leadership of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the umbrella organization of the Somali guerrilla movements in Ethiopia. As a consequence, hostilities heated up. By 1977 Somali regular troops entered the fray and made substantial inroads. But the Soviet Union refused to support the Somali war effort; in fact, it began massively to support Somalia's enemy. Ultimately, the Ethiopian forces, aided by Cuba and the Soviet Union, drove the Somalis back across the border, leaving Somali hopes for victory dashed. A full discussion of the war and its international consequences will come later; for purposes of this chapter it is important to see the Ogaadeen war as the central turning point in Siyaad Barre's rule. The jolting military setback in March 1978 created an intolerable refugee crisis, a domestic political crisis, and an economic crisis as well. These crises will be discussed in later chapters, but it is important to point out here that the costs of the 1977-1978 war are still being paid.

The socialist revolution foundered not only because of the fallout from the Ogaadeen war but also because of a too-confused ideology. From the very beginning of the socialist experiment, Siyaad's scientific socialism was suspect. If *scientific* is to mean anything, it must presuppose the use of the scientific method to tackle various problems in socialist development. Historical research as the fundamental basis for policymaking is the hallmark of scientific socialism. In the original councils held by President Siyaad, a number of socialist ideologues had important roles, but many of them were quickly excluded. For example, 'Abdulaziiz Nuur Hersi, founder of the Hawl iyo Hantiwadaag (Work and Socialism party) in the prerevolutionary period, was first ignored by Siyaad, then consulted, and then sent to jail. Arrested with Hersi was Mahammad Aadan, a former secretary of higher education. In addition, two other Marxist intellectuals—Mahammad Wayrah, former secretary of finance, and Ahmad Haashi, a lawyer educated at the University of Moscow—were jailed, and Yuusuf 'Usmaan Samatar, a leader of the left prior to the revolution, has been in and out of jail since the revolution. Some Somalis argue that these men were jailed because they were too Peking-oriented or too closely identified with Eurocommunism, but more probably Siyaad saw in their ideological expertise a power that could become a threat to his freedom of action.

Siyaad's socialist thinking has never been fully articulated nor has it been coherent. On the one hand, he declared that there is no such thing as African socialism—that there is only scientific socialism—but on the other hand, he announced that "a Soviet socialist cannot tell me about Somalian problems, which must be put in an African

context."¹⁹ Rather than searching out the class enemies of socialism ("The Somali people as a whole are workers"²⁰), he found the enemies of socialism in former parliamentarians, pseudoreligious men, and pseudointellectuals.²¹ This was a flaccid ideology that concealed a self-serving pragmatism; by no means do Siyaad's actions or pronouncements show policy directions born of scientific analyses of economic problems from a socialist perspective.

Despite Siyaad's inconsistencies, in the early years of the revolution many Somali citizens were in fact energized by the visions of Somalia's future offered by scientific socialism. It was seen as a way to overcome imperialism, to engender self-reliance, and to wage war against poverty, ignorance, and disease. But in the wake of the Ogaadeen war, when Soviet advisers—having absconded with Somali military maps—were instructing Ethiopian troops on how to defeat the combined Somali-WSLF army, Siyaad's ideological apparatus came apart. He became a born-again capitalist and friend of the West. He criticized the United States for not coming immediately to his aid to counter the evil Soviet empire. He suggested that a post-Vietnam syndrome was holding the United States back from its historic role of containing the Russian bear. He invited capitalist investments with open arms, and he did all this without once recanting his scientific socialism.

Siyaad Barre has most certainly been pragmatic. A Somali proverb says, "Either be a mountain or lean on one," and Siyaad understood well that Somalia is not a mountain. Without Soviet help he had to lean on the United States. But to most Somalis, Siyaad's ideological pragmatism is a means to maintain him in power, not a definition of a future course for Somalia. Siyaad's new ideology of capitalism may win him friends in Washington, but it will not serve to mobilize and provide direction to his people. His self-serving use of ideology has turned his people into cynics but not citizens. The Somali revolution has lost its ideological vision.

Somalia has a strong basis for cultural unity combined with a political culture that invites faction. This factionalism manifested itself in a proliferation of political parties in the 1960s. During the period of the revolution, despite great attempts by the regime to portray Somalis as united in socialist purpose, Siyaad Barre's government has faced opposition on a number of fronts.

When President Siyaad first came to power, he seemed committed to the merit principle for advancement and sought to eliminate clan membership as a criterion for success in public life. "It is not who you know," he had children chant everywhere, "but what you know." Siyaad's Mareehaan clan had been the prodigal child among the

Daarood clan-family, and tradition holds that Sheikh Daarood had punished Mareehaan by ordering him to bring his *reer* (extended family) to an area where it would be surrounded by rivals. In the early years of the Somali republic, the Mareehaans tended to fend for themselves as a party, without making transclan alliances. Coming from a clan that did not have a commanding presence in the Somali state, Siyaad therefore had an interest in minimizing clan as a basis for advancement.

In the heady months after the revolution was born, Siyaad made cabinet appointments that seemed to tap talent from many clans. A prominent member of his ruling junta came from an outcast group, and there existed a general feeling in Somalia that the tribalism of the party system had been destructive to the society. Siyaad, through his attack on the politics of the parliamentary years, was therefore able to emphasize the unifying aspects of Somali nationalism. This stance helped Somalia realize the socialist goals discussed earlier.

But the rise of internecine conflict among Somali clans eroded the mobilization. How did this happen? The president cannot be held blameless. From the early period of the revolution, Siyaad exhibited what some would call paranoia but others a justifiable fear of the Majeerteen clan. The Majeerteens were the clan that held the key to power throughout most of the civilian era. They had developed an ideology that justified their right to rule based on their political finesse and administrative competence. Siyaad made allusions to his enemies among the Majeerteens in many of his early remarks. To confront his enemies directly, Siyaad found himself identifying them on the basis of their clan membership. In so doing, Siyaad (perhaps inadvertently) relegitimated the language of tribe in Somali politics. In 1971, in response to an apparent coup attempt, he identified the rebels as members of three opposition clans. Whether or not these clans were supporting this counter coup, the fact that Siyaad executed members of three leading clans reintroduced the calculations of tribe into Somali political reckoning. In the wake of the economic and refugee crises of recent years, Siyaad has resorted again to tribalistic techniques to hold onto power. He has been shuffling political appointees back and forth throughout the bureaucracy and building ever new and changing tribal alliances. This technique divides his enemies and of course heightens general awareness of clan membership.

However culpable the president may be, social forces out of his control also worked toward the perpetuation and even exacerbation of the rhetoric of tribalism in Somali politics. The dominant clans in the civilian period, the Hawiye, the Isaaq, and the Majeerteen—these

three clans supplied both presidents and all three prime ministers—were not preeminent in Siyaad Barre's government. Naturally, they felt *relatively* deprived. A sort of mutual paranoia began to develop. As the leaders of the Majeerteen, Hawiye, and Isaaq began to voice their qualms about their status under the rule of Siyaad Barre, the president began to surround himself with more people from his clan, from the clan of his mother, and from the clan of his son-in-law. Despite Siyaad Barre's early intention to eliminate tribalism, he found himself in the center of a Mareehaan-Ogaadeen-Dulbahante clan-based coalition (known as MOD).

Other forces sustained tribalism. Traditional trade with the Arab states, now that it operated under the aegis of scientific socialism, faced all sorts of foreign exchange problems. Socialism meant that there was greater government control of the banking sector. Merchants had more and more to rely on private loans and informal banking for much of their commercial dealings. This sort of trade requires greater trust between lender and borrower than does a formal banking system; and that trust was only available between members of the same clan. Of course, with NSS agents behind every bush, many Somalis began to trust only their closest relations. This especially exacerbated tribalism.

Finally, the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 helped unleash the Western Somali Liberation Front in the Ogaadeen region in Ethiopia. WSLF leaders attempted to mobilize their elders for the upcoming battle through the evocation of clan ties. The WSLF use of clan imagery to mobilize Somalis against Ethiopia spilled over into domestic politics as each of the clans in the Ogaadeen region had clan connections within the SDR.

This set of complex relationships became self-reinforcing. When the 1977–1978 Ogaadeen war failed, the Majeerteen officers were the first to criticize Siyaad Barre's leadership. Although the president had encouraged his officers to voice their complaints, he ordered the execution of a number of officers who took his advice too literally. In April 1978 a civil war broke out in the garrison camps in which the demoralized Somali troops regrouped, and some Majeerteen officers, led by Mahammad Sheikh 'Usmaan ("Cirro"), attempted to stage a coup d'état. It failed, but one of his men, 'Abdillaahi Yuusuf Ahmad, escaped. He is now one of the leaders of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), headquartered in Ethiopia. Joining the officers are a number of Majeerteen civilians, such as Hasan 'Ali Mirreh, who in the parliamentary years had been the director of the Somali Institute of Public Administration. Not surprisingly, the SSDF

manifestos do not call for the self-determination of the Somali-speaking peoples in the Ogaadeen.

In April 1981 a number of Isaaq emigres living in London formed the Somali National Movement (SNM), and this became the second clan-based opposition group to Siyaad Barre's rule. At first, the movement's political program was directed against Siyaad Barre and oriented in favor of political democracy in conjunction with a mixed economy. When the Somali president broke ties with the Soviet Union and sought friendship with the United States, the SNM distanced itself from the United States. By 1982 the SNM was in an uneasy coalition with the SSDF. In early 1983 SNM commandos attacked the Mandeera prison and released a dozen of Siyaad's political prisoners, and in late 1984 the SNM sent commando units to attack at least a dozen military posts in the northern region. Although SNM leaders have tried to make a broad appeal to Somali values—criticizing the president for neglecting the Islamic and democratic values of all the Somali people—they remain preeminently a party of Isaacs. Even their appeals to the common religion are seen by most Somalis as Isaaq chauvinism because Sheikh Isahaaq, the progenitor of the clan-family, is held to be more closely related to the Prophet Muhammad than is any other Somali historical figure.

These opposition movements, headquartered in Ethiopia, have not as yet been able to mobilize discontent within the Somali Democratic Republic. First, because of their complicity with Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Ethiopian head of state, they are subject to the charge of treason, a charge made regularly by Somali authorities in Mogadishu on national radio. Second, there have been considerable conflicts and mutinies within the opposition forces themselves. In May 1984, for example, internal fighting within a SSDF guerrilla camp led to the return to Somalia of about two hundred guerrillas who no longer fight against the present regime. In 1985 there was yet another split in the SSDF command. Those who were disaffected by Colonel Yuusuf's leadership created a new movement, the Somali Patriotic Liberation Front, which is seeking to establish itself in Aden (as of late 1985). Third, Somali diplomacy in April 1985 reached an accommodation with Libya, whose fickle leader, Muammar Qaddafi, has agreed to stop supporting the SSDF and SNM. Fourth, the Somali government has received covert support from the United States, Egypt, and now South Africa (which pays for the pilot training of white emigre Rhodesians in Somalia) to help infiltrate and fight the guerrilla forces.²²

In the wake of the coup attempt in 1978 and the subsequent foundings of the SSDF and the SNM, virtually every political action

in the Somali Republic today is analyzed with a view to the tribal affiliations of the relevant actors. Siyaad is accused of surrounding himself with kinsmen of the MOD clans as a *laager* protecting himself from the rest of the society. It is indeed the case that political marriages and alliances have created a backbone of support for Siyaad that is best understood by the acronym MOD. But there is a much wider clan coalition supporting Siyaad than his SNM-SSDF critics claim. In a recent research effort at the military front, one of the authors of this volume interviewed twelve leading officers. Only four were from the MOD clans. There were two Isaacs, two Majeerteens, and one Hawiye. Similarly, in an accounting of leading ministers and businessmen, there was a wide range of clan affiliations. Other recent appointments by Siyaad also reflect a broader base of inclusion. The third mechanized division in the Hargeisa region is commanded by Colonel Muhammad Khalil, a Hawiye; and the first division of the same region is now headed by Abduhraman Jamaa' Warsame, from the Majeerteen clan. In October 1984 Siyaad appointed Hasan Keite, a popular leader of the Habar Awal clan, as governor of Hargeisa.²³ Siyaad has indeed been too clever to allow himself to survive on a MOD foundation alone. He has made alliances with many Somalis from small, politically powerless subclans of Majeerteen, Hawiye, and Isaac, and he has rewarded them with jobs and contracts. This strategy makes the prominent members of the non-MOD clans even angrier. (Lest the reader think that the MOD alliance is a complete fabrication by Siyaad's enemies, it is important to note here that the armed brigades near Mogadishu are led by Siyaad's closest kin. His son Shire Muhammad Siyaad and his son-in-law Abdinasir Haaji Hashi are both colonels in charge of Mogadishu-based brigades. Dulbahante officers are also prominent in Mogadishu and Kismayu.)²⁴

Today in Somalia, interclan enmity is worse and potentially more violent than in any period of Somalia's history. That even Siyaad's opposition is deeply divided by clan affiliations suggests that the social forces sustaining interclan tensions go well beyond the Somali government. Because interclan rivalries focus societal attention on the distribution of jobs and contracts and not on the creation of new wealth or development of the society as a whole, this enmity is a disease that has seriously weakened the body politic.

With the vast socioeconomic changes that have occurred in Somalia since 1969, one should expect considerable opposition to arise, and indeed it has. With the coming of socialism and its attempt to organize trade and manufacturing according to state-mandated criteria and by state-controlled boards, many private businessmen were threatened. A good number of these businessmen quietly migrated

to the Arab Gulf states and resumed their business dealings, but their opposition to Siyaad remained. (Many have become the financial backbone of the SNM.)

Still another source of opposition came from the religious elites. Somali *wadaads* were never happy about the revolution. Siyaad Barre's attempts to demonstrate the links between socialism and Islam were not cogent or coherent. His choice of the Latin script to write the Somali language overrode the devout Muslims' admonition that *Latin waa La Diin*. Finally, Siyaad Barre's celebration of International Woman's Year, in which he promulgated a new law giving women equal inheritance rights, brought many sheikhs into vocal opposition to Siyaad's secularism. In response to their opposition, in January 1975 the regime executed ten of these sheikhs in public. This destroyed any credibility the regime may have obtained by joining the Arab League in 1974. Tensions between religious and military elites persist.

Finally, Siyaad Barre faces politically weak but ideologically loud opposition from some of his former socialist allies. The Somali Democratic Union, based in Aden, is one of the more prominent socialist-oriented anti-Siyaad groups. It has tried rather unsuccessfully to provide ideological coherence and a supraclan façade to the SSDF and SNM leaders; however, the movements remain distinct from each other.

In the early months of the revolution, Siyaad's popularity skyrocketed as he exposed the corruption of the civilian leaders. But in the wake of the Ogaadeen disaster and the collapse of the socialist program, Siyaad's regime has begun to thrive on corrupt practices, which has made the citizenry ever more cynical toward its government.

Corruption takes many forms. Now that Somalia is receiving foreign aid from the Western industrial states as well as from the Arab Gulf states, contracts must be sent out for bid. It is well known that government ministers and middlemen skim up to 40 percent of each contract as a private payoff. Thus, much of the development aid enhances private wealth.

Somalia's underground trading system—called *franco valuta*—is a special form of corruption. In this system Somali migrants working in the Arab Gulf states provide (Arab) money to Somali traders who have already loaned (Somali) money to relatives of the migrants still living in Somalia. The traders then use their foreign exchange to bring goods into Somalia. In order to avoid foreign exchange regulations in Somalia, the traders bribe customs officials and claim they are bringing in personal belongings. In this way, the private wealth of the traders and the customs officials is enhanced, and the public wealth of Somalia is reduced.

With all these private fortunes now being made, inflation has become rampant, and there has been a rush on the purchase of private property that can only be compared with the California real estate market in its heyday. Simple civil servants, who at one time could live frugally on their *hisaabi hil male* salaries, can no longer afford rice, meat, or sugar. Only on-the-job corruption makes it possible for these workers to provide their families with a decent urban existence. Corruption, like tribalism, has reached epidemic proportions.

Siyaad Barre's autocracy—that is, his sustained affront to his society's democratic values—is the rock on which the revolution has foundered. In 1969 when General Siyaad disbanded the Parliament, he promised free and fair elections coincident with the democratic aspirations of the Somali people. However, in the second charter of the revolution, issued in 1970, there was no mention of elections.

The denial of democracy in revolutionary Somalia has had two consequences: the denial of any opportunity for the public to participate effectively in the political process and the growth of social control mechanisms in the central government.

Initially, Siyaad Barre was not completely averse to the idea of democratic reforms. In any event, he knew that the Somali people treasure the opportunity to participate in political discourse and that they wanted reform. He accepted, albeit reluctantly, Soviet suggestions to form a socialist party and to convene a congress. The resulting party, the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party (SRSP) was convened in 1976 and was charged with the task of drafting a new constitution. By 1979, with the draft completed, the SRSP held an extraordinary congress to give its approval to the final draft. The constitution was then overwhelmingly approved (3,597,692 versus 7,898) in a popular referendum held in August 1979.

Under this new constitution the government is headed by a president (currently Mahammad Siyaad Barre), who is the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. The candidate for the presidency is proposed by the Central Committee of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party (whose secretary-general and president of the Politburo is Mahammad Siyaad Barre) and requires election by the People's Assembly, a legislative body of 121 deputies elected by the people, with 6 additional deputies chosen by the president. According to a 1980 amendment to the constitution, during a declared state of emergency all issues involving state security and high national interest can be referred to the revived Supreme Revolutionary Council, the military junta of some twenty-five officers that ruled Somalia from the coup d'état that brought General Siyaad to power in October

1969 until the new constitution took effect ten years later. Mahammad Siyaad Barre presides over the new SRC.²⁵

Under this new constitution the president has wide powers. He is empowered to conduct foreign affairs, declare war, appoint vice presidents as well as members of the Supreme Court and all government ministers without need for advice or consent by any legislative, judicial, or executive body. He can invoke emergency powers without legislative approval either. The only institution he does not fully control is the People's Assembly, but all of its candidates are chosen by the SRSP, the only legal party. In the first elections for the Assembly in August 1979, a 99.91 percent response in favor of the government was announced. The Assembly convened in January 1980, and its first chair was Ismaa'il 'Ali Abokor, a former member of the SRC and a vice president of the republic. (Abokor, together with six other high-ranking members of the Central Committee of the SRSP, was arrested on June 9, 1982 and shortly afterward charged with treason. He languishes in jail without trial at the time of this writing in late 1985.) The chair as of June 1984 is Ahmad Mahammad Ibrahim. The Assembly has, at this writing, ratified draft proposals submitted to it by the head of state. At most, it plays a gadfly role. In an interview with David Laitin in 1983, President Siyaad pointed out that the Assembly grilled the then finance minister Abdillaahi Ahmad 'Adow (former Ambassador to the United States, now minister for presidential affairs, and a son-in-law of the president) about an incompetently prepared budget. The president appeared pleased because the grilling impelled the rather lackadaisical minister to burn some midnight oil.

Outside of a few gadflies in the People's Assembly, the president faces no legal opposition. Because of this obvious continuity with the preconstitutional military autocracy, one Somali critic has interpreted the government's claim that it is a democracy as "fraudulent and cynical" and cites, by way of justification, that the total vote favoring the 1979 constitution was larger than the size of the Somali voting population and that there were "crude techniques of intimidation" employed at the polling stations. Siyaad's reliance on a Soviet-designed security apparatus to build democracy, the author implies, can hardly be anything but cynical.²⁶

Indeed, the critics have a point. Voters were unable to register any sort of opposition to the regime: They could only abstain. But perhaps more indicative of the hypocrisy involved in calling the present constitution democratic is the fact that major policy decisions and appointments invariably come from the president's office and involve shuffling among high-level military personnel. The major political news from Somalia in 1984, for example, was the power

struggle between two generals—Mahammad 'Ali Samantar and Mahammad Hashi Gani—who were arguing about whether Gani could report directly to the president rather than through Samantar, the minister of defense. On this issue, Gani won, and the implications of his victory have bearing in any assessment of Samantar's political future, a topic that will engage our attention in Chapter 7.²⁷

Our interpretation of this sorry move toward democracy is that Siyaad Barre wanted to fulfill the democratic aspirations of his people but did not want to pay the cost—that is, the possibility that he might be rejected by his people. He could not have accepted the sage advice of Abdi Sheik-Abdi—offered in the journal *Horn of Africa*²⁸—to move toward democracy by appointing a prime minister because he believed he was indispensable to the Somali nation. Megalomania rather than cynicism explains Siyaad's failure to support democratic processes. Whatever one's interpretation, the facts are clear: In the years of Siyaad's rule, the Somali people have not been given the opportunity to nominate and elect representatives who might provide alternate leadership.

The other component of Siyaad's autocracy is the growth of repression. The greatest achievement in institution building in the SDR has undoubtedly been the development of the security services. The USSR and the German Democratic Republic have provided Siyaad with a service of inestimable value for purposes of social control—an institutionalized network of internal spies. To be sure, Siyaad is no Idi Amin. He has not exterminated his enemies with ruthless ferocity. Many of his former opponents are today free to come and go as they please in Somalia. The prime minister Siyaad overthrew (Igaal) is a prosperous businessman in Somalia, and another former prime minister ('Abdirizaaq) served under Siyaad as ambassador to the United Nations. Although he resigned his post in large part due to his disgust with Siyaad's autocratic rule, he is often courted by Siyaad to return to Somalia.

No Amin to be sure. But Siyaad has jailed and intimidated his political enemies without giving them any opportunities to defend themselves. Mohamoud Hasan has enumerated sixty-one public executions in Somalia from the time of the revolution through mid-1980.²⁹ The charges—antisocialist, antirevolutionary, or antigovernment activities—could hardly stand the test of a fair trial. The arrest of seven leading officials in June 1982 demonstrated ever more clearly the intimidation on which the present government survives. As of this writing in late 1985, these officials still have not been tried.

As if physical coercion were not enough, Siyaad's sycophants have tried to sustain the regime by turning their leader into a cult

figure. Siyaad's quotations appear everywhere. Children sing his praises as "the father of knowledge," and it is claimed that he gave them, through his revolution, their mothers. Personal rule by Siyaad, backed by the force of the military with the apparatus of the NSS, has provided a thin veneer of legitimacy to an increasingly unpopular government.

In August 1982 the Ethiopian army along with some troops of the Somali opposition groups invaded Somali territory. Troops loyal to Siyaad Barre were able, with some aid from the United States, to hold back the rebels. Siyaad's domestic opponents, backed by Ethiopian troops, occupied two towns—Galdogob and Balambale—within the Somali Democratic Republic. (Persistent rumor holds, however, that the president has, in a rather Machiavellian manner, tricked the Ethiopians into occupying these Somali towns in order to drum up more aid from sympathetic Western friends. We cannot confirm this, but the very existence of these rumors demonstrates a shocking lack of national consensus in today's Somalia.) The Somali army remains loyal to its president, although there are grumblings that the president's commitment to an alliance with the United States has not yielded sufficient materiel. The loyalty of the armed services and the vibrant commercial activity generated by the underground economy suggest that the basis of Siyaad Barre's rule remains moderately strong despite the continuing economic, refugee, and political crises that so deeply threaten the integrity of the country.

President Siyaad Barre is in control, but the society's anarchic tendencies and the intractability of the problems that Somalia now faces may mean that the president has already had his hour on the political stage. (Surely a long hour: to hold supreme power in a society that stumped even the European colonialists is no small achievement.) But unlike his predecessor, Aadan 'Abdullahi 'Usmaan, Siyaad Barre, in our view, will not yield power peacefully, and given the current climate of interclan animosity, political alienation, and personal cynicism, the specter of yet another violent change of government will continue to haunt Somalia.

5

The Economy

Somalia, like most African countries, is on the periphery of the world economy. Its role in the world economy has long been as a supplier of primary products and an importer of manufactured goods. Since the Industrial Revolution the gap between the rich and the poor states in the world economy has increased exponentially. The humiliating experience of European colonialism for African peoples was made possible by the enormous power of the industrialized over the nonindustrialized states of the world. Per capita Gross National Product in Somalia is about \$150, which is one-fortieth of the figure for the United States. The World Bank reports that the Somali figure for GNP per capita has *decreased* since independence.¹

The Somali people, proud to the point of xenophobia, are perennially aware that from an economic point of view they are among the poorest in the world and that the gap between their country and the advanced industrial states is growing. Somali nomads, far from urban society, often have a keen understanding of world affairs. They want Somalia to play an important role in human history—culturally and politically. But the country does not have the economic base to be taken seriously by others. Economic poverty leads not only to malnutrition, starvation, and susceptibility to disease; it leads as well to recurrent political frustration. For these reasons, the desire for economic development that will allow the country to leave the periphery and to join the center (or at least the semiperiphery)² of the world economy is a central goal of Somali leadership.

PASTORALISM AND COMMERCE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Let us begin our discussion with the economic backbone of Somalia: livestock. We described the central importance of the camel complex earlier. Perhaps here we should note that Somalia's nomadic life has never been completely isolated from the rest of the world.

Nomads for many centuries have sold cows, goats, and older camels to butchers in the coastal cities. With the profit from these sales, they would buy tea, coffee beans, and salt. In the nineteenth century, nomads in the north were quick to see opportunities for selling goats to middlemen representing the British, who needed to supply meat to their colony in Aden, which was a coaling station for the boats that traveled through the Suez Canal. By the turn of the century, 1,000 cattle and 80,000 sheep and goats were exported annually from Berbera to Aden.³

Pastoralism is by no means a mere symbol of Somalia's precolonial past. It remains the most vibrant sector of Somalia's economy. The government estimated that by the mid-1970s there were 34 million domestic animals in the national herd, of which 5.3 million were camels, 4.2 million cattle, 9.5 million sheep, and 15 million goats. This herd constitutes a formidable national resource. In fact, the sale of live animals to the Middle East remains the strongest export for the Somali Republic, and in 1980 it accounted for approximately 76 percent of export earnings (see Table 5.1). The richer nomads have become well-established international businessmen. Nomads who remain in the bush use their revenues to help educate their children in the cities of Somalia and abroad, to purchase clothes and food, and to buy radios and cassettes so they can keep up with world news and developments in Somali verse.

International commerce in livestock suggests that Somalia is not a newcomer to the international economy. The land that now constitutes the Somali Democratic Republic was once known as the Land of Punt, from which myrrh and frankincense were purchased by Egyptian merchants in order to grace the terraces of the pharaohs' temples. Although the people from Punt were not necessarily Somalis, it is important to remember that the Horn of Africa has never housed an isolated economy.

From the fifteenth century onward, the northern ports of Zayla' and Berbera played important roles in the Arab economy. Military equipment, slaves, hides and skins, gums, ghee, ostrich feathers, and ivory were traded at these ports. On the Benaadir coast, especially in Mogadishu but also in Merka and Baraawe, a lively trade with China, India, and Arabia is well recorded beginning in the fourteenth century.

Somalis not only traded goods on the coast; many also joined the crews of the ships that traveled throughout the Middle and Far East. That Somalia has traditionally been a crossroads of world trade has meant that the Somali people have long been aware of the important events taking place elsewhere in the world. Traders and

TABLE 5.1
Somalia's Trade: Trends Over 15 Years (figures in million current U.S. dollars)

	1965	1970	1975	1980
I. TOTALS				
Exports	33.2	31.4	89.5	133.3
Imports	49.5	45.1	154.7	466.4
Balance of Trade	-16.2	-13.7	-65.2	-333.1
II. EXPORTS BY COMMODITY: IN MILLION US DOLLARS (AND %)				
Livestock	9.4 (28%)	16.7 (53%)	57.9 (65%)	101.6 (76%)
Bananas	15.1 (46%)	8.7 (28%)	12.9 (14%)	8.1 (6%)
III. IMPORTS BY COMMODITY: IN MILLION US DOLLARS (AND %)				
Foodstuffs	12.7 (26%)	11.7 (26%)	37.3 (24%)	43.7 (9%)
Petroleum	2.3 (5%)	2.8 (6%)	9.4 (6%)	65.1 (14%)
Vehicles	3.6 (7%)	3.9 (8%)	19.1 (12%)	37.6 (8%)
IV. EXPORTS TO LEADING COUNTRIES: IN MILLION US DOLLARS (AND %)				
Saudi Arabia	12.9 (39%)	16.5 (53%)	57.3 (63%)	92.7 (70%)
Italy	16.2 (49%)	8.2 (26%)	6.5 (7%)	17.1 (13%)
V. IMPORTS FROM LEADING COUNTRIES: IN MILLION US DOLLARS (AND %)				
Italy	14.1 (29%)	13.3 (30%)	49.5 (32%)	120.2 (26%)
United States	2.5 (5%)	3.6 (8%)	3.7 (2%)	32.0 (7%)
Soviet Union	3.9 (8%)	3.0 (7%)	11.9 (8%)	-----

Sources: UN Statistical Yearbooks (various years)

seamen, approaching old age, would often return to the nomadic life and bring the nomadic hamlets information about world events.

International commerce remains a central occupation in the Somali economy. About two hundred fifty thousand Somalis, taking advantage of the massive profits of the oil-exporting countries on the Arab Gulf, have established themselves in the Arab peninsula. Many have developed a form of trade known as the *franco valuta* system (described in Chapter 4), which assures, despite attempts by a government suspicious of individual initiative, that a significant percentage of Somali wealth will continue to be earned through international commerce.⁴

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ECONOMY

Colonial economic penetration in Somalia was lackluster. In Italian Somalia, despite heroic rhetoric by the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio ("Africa is only the whetstone on which we Italians shall sharpen

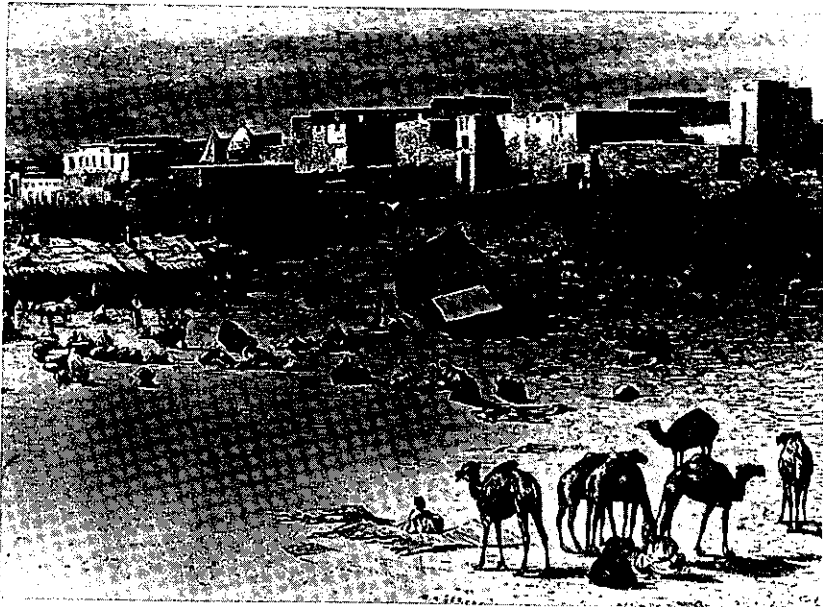


Photo 5.1 Market in Mogadishu in 1882.

our sword for a supreme conquest in the unknown future") and ambitious plans by Mussolini, there was only modest economic development.⁵ There was still less in British Somaliland. There India was the formal governing authority, and it charged the administration of Somaliland a hefty fee for India's patrol of Red Sea waters. The only major expenditures by the British colonial government in nearly three-quarters of a century of rule were those to put down the rebellion of the Dervishes. For example, in 1947 the whole protectorate budget was only £213,139.⁶ If Italy's rhetoric about Somalia outpaced its actual performance, Britain had no illusions about its protectorate in Somaliland. At best, it provided protection for Britain's eastern trading empire and an assured food supply for Aden.

Nonetheless, two major economic developments worthy of discussion occurred during the period of European rule. In the south the Italians laid the basis for profitable export-oriented agriculture through the creation of large plantations and irrigation systems. In both the north and the south many Somalis became salaried employees of the colonial state.

In the early twentieth century, Italian schemes to use Somalia for the settlement of Italian citizens from crowded Europe failed miserably. In 1919, however, with the arrival to Somalia of the duke

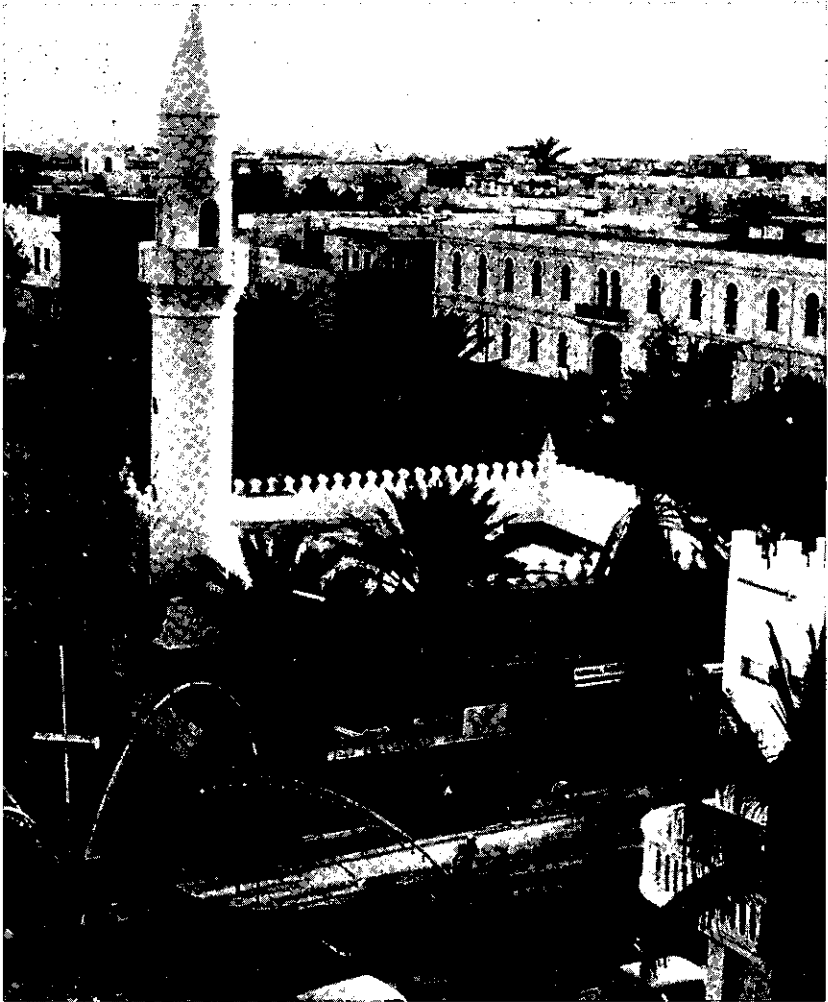


Photo 5.2 Downtown Mogadishu, an aerial view.

of Abruzzi, and with the technical support of the fascist government of Governor de Vecchi, Somalia began to develop a plantation sector.⁷

The Shabeelle valley provided the venue for these plantations because although rainfall in Somalia is everywhere scarce, there is for most of the year (but not all) sufficient water in the Shabeelle River for irrigation. The plantations produced cotton (the first Somali export crop), sugar, and bananas. Banana exports to Italy began in 1927 but became of primary importance in the colony after 1929 when the world market for cotton collapsed. Somali bananas could

not compete in price with those from the Canary Islands, but Italy passed laws in 1927 and 1930 imposing tariffs on all non-Somali bananas. These laws facilitated Somali agricultural development. In 1929, 930 acres were under banana cultivation, with 230 tons exported; seven years later acreage increased tenfold to 9,820, with export tonnage reaching 20,400. By 1935 the Italian government constituted a Regia Azienda Monopolio Banane (Royal Banana Plantation Monopoly, or RAMB), in order to organize banana exports under state authority. Seven Italian ships were put at RAMB's disposal for the encouragement of the Somali banana trade. This agency was one of many instituted by the fascist government to fashion Italy into an autarchic society. (After the war, when Italy was given Somalia as a trust territory, RAMB was reconstituted as AMB to encourage the revival of a sector that had been nearly demolished by the war.)

Plantations developed under Italian tutelage were owned by a number of Italian concessionaires, although a few Somali businessmen eventually got concessions. By 1955, 235 concessions constituted 112,000 acres (with only 20,000 acres devoted to bananas) and produced 94,000 tons of bananas. Under fixed contracts the three banana trade associations in Somalia sold their output to the AMB, which (for political reasons, having to do with Somalia being a colony and then a trust territory) exacted an indirect tax on the Italian consumer by keeping out cheaper bananas from other sources. The protected Italian market was a mixed blessing for the Somali banana sector. Of course, it made possible the initial penetration of Somali bananas into the Italian marketplace, but in the long term, Somali producers had no incentive to become internationally competitive or to seek out markets beyond Italy.

Cotton showed some promise in 1929, but it fell precipitously in the wake of the collapse in the world market. Exports were nearly 1,400 tons in 1929, but fell to about 400 tons by 1937. (During the trust period, there were years of decent export performance—in 1952, for example, about 1,800 tons were exported—but no solid growth. In 1953 exports dropped by two-thirds.) Economist Mark Karp gives two reasons for this failure: first, unstable world market conditions; second, the necessity for and lack of (in Somalia) wage labor for cotton harvesting. Due to this scarcity of labor, Italian concessionaires worked out co-participation contracts with Somali farmers—the Italians got sole purchasing rights to the crop in return for the provision of seed, cash advances, and technical support.

Sugar plantations were different from bananas and cotton in two respects. First, sugar was for domestic consumption; second, a single firm, the Società Agricola Italo-Somala (Italo-Somali Agricultural

Society, or SAIS), an Italian corporation headquartered in Genoa, controlled the sector. Organized in 1920, the SAIS estate near Jowhar had, by the time of the trust period, about five thousand acres under sugar cane production. In 1950 the overall output of the sugar factory reached 4,000 tons, meeting about 80 percent of domestic demand; by 1957 production had reached 11,000 tons, and Italian Somalia no longer imported sugar.

Problems in labor supply beset Italian concessionaires and administrators in all plantation crops. Most ethnic Somalis refused to work on farms for wage labor. The Italians at first conscripted (for forced labor) the Bantu peoples who lived in the agricultural region. Later, Italian companies began to pay wages to agricultural families for planting and harvesting export crops and permitted them to keep private gardens on some of the irrigated land. This strategy met with some success, and a reasonably permanent work force developed.

However, Somali plantation agriculture was never a real success story (export of bananas reached \$6.4 million dollars in 1957; cotton, \$200,000). But in terms of the overall economy of Italian Somalia, it made a significant impact. In 1957, for example, plantation exports were 59 percent of total exports from the Italian trust territory.

The second economic impact of the colonial period involved the employment of salaried officials. In British Somaliland many of the nomads scorned European education and fought against the establishment of Christian missions. There was consequently no pool of literate Somalis to work for the British administration. Kenyans were therefore hired. But Somalis soon caught onto the economic potential of compliance with the colonial state. Very quickly in the south, but grudgingly in the north, Somalis sent some of their children to colonial and mission schools, and they subsequently found positions in the colonial police forces, as customs agents, as bookkeepers, as medical personnel, and, of course, as teachers. These Somalis resided in urban areas and helped to develop a whole new Somali urban culture. With regular monthly checks coming from the state, these new salaried employees were freed from the grave threats to life and safety of the nomadic economy.

Literate in Italian or English, these Somalis were equipped to challenge the colonial control of European elites. Many of them became political activists and sought to rid their land of foreign control. Yet to a certain extent, by virtue of their new economic roles, these people were divorced from the harsh realities of Somali life. Within the Somali context, salaried employment was very attractive. But on economic terms it had a fatal flaw: Salaried officials did not produce exportable surplus. By the time of independence, a hefty

percentage of Somalia's recurrent budget went to this new salaried class. As of 1976 it was estimated that approximately 72,000 Somalis, out of a paid work force of 167,000, worked for government salaries.⁸

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1960-1969

At the time of political independence, Somalia had four different economic sectors. The largest, involving about 65 percent of the population, was engaged in a pastoral or semipastoral life. The second group, which comprised the plantation economy, only employed a small percentage of the Somalis but accounted for nearly one-half of Somalia's export earnings in the early independence years. A significant but small commercial class made up the third group and owned shops in the towns or international trading companies. Finally, there was a growing sector of salaried officials—teachers, parliamentarians, soldiers, police, government ministers, ministry employees, other civil servants, teachers, and health officials.

The population was exuberant when independence came, but economic realities belied this exuberance. The new Somali government was handed the task of developing Somalia so that it could play a more substantial role in the twentieth-century world economy. Somalis were well aware from movies and from travel of the goods available to Europeans and North Americans. Radios, medicines, automobiles, books, plumbing—all those things that Europeans took for granted—became desired items for many Somalis. But Somalia would have to export more to earn more foreign exchange in order for its population to enjoy these consumer goods. Or Somalis would have to produce these manufactured items for themselves. Somalia's leaders didn't want to leave the European-dominated world economy—they wanted to join it on better terms. This became a goal of the newly independent Somali state.

The task of economic development—of changing a country's role in the world division of labor—is monumental. Early developers such as England, the United States, and France felt little pressure to push forward with economic development because they were in the vanguard of the world's industrial revolution. Later developers such as Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union recognized that to achieve the economies of scale necessary for successful competition with the economic leaders, vast governmental investment and direction were necessary. A disciplined work force, one that would be underpaid, had to be fashioned, and this inevitably led to the political repression of workers seeking a political voice. Successful late developers are

strong, coherent states willing and able to compel their societies to delay gratification until successful economic development is achieved.⁹

The Somali state in 1960 was hardly in a position to play any of these roles. It had almost no access to data specifying the structure of the economy, and it lacked technical personnel to interpret the data that were available. Nonetheless, the government, as was fashionable in Africa at that time, constructed economic plans. Its First Five Year Plan was for the years 1963–1967. But by 1967 only about one-half of the planned expenditures had been made, and foreign aid commitments were not put to the service of the plan. To remedy this, a Short Term Development Program for 1968–1970 was developed to fulfill the goals of the first plan.

It is therefore not surprising that the most significant change in the first nine years of independence was in the growth of public employment. In order to pay for the enormous growth in recurrent expenditure needed to employ so many people, Somali leaders engaged in an inventive strategy of playing the two superpowers against each other. Refusing either to be capitalist or communist, but pretending to be interested in both, Somali leaders procured more international aid per capita than anywhere else in Africa. In the 1960s Somalia received \$90 per capita in foreign economic assistance, about twice the average for sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁰ This helped to pay for a host of new ministers and parliamentarians, who lived ostentatious and opulent lives in Mogadishu, and for a 500 percent increase in the size of the Somali army.

To be sure, some of the foreign aid went into infrastructural investment and other projects consistent with the plans. In this period, new paved roads were constructed as were factories to produce milk, textiles, and tinned meat and fish. Many schools, a national theater, and a national airline also were built. But most Somalis—and the aid officials who were supposedly overseeing their investments—felt that these investments were for naught. Factory production barely got off the ground and was beset with endless delays. Medicines donated by the World Health Organization found their way into private pharmacies; foreign exchange for development projects was expended for vehicles that became private taxis owned by the families of parliamentarians; and customs duties were being privately expropriated. An aura of corruption—what the Somalis call *musuq maasuq*—pervaded all of Somali economic life. This subverted the ability of the state to lead Somalia out of the doldrums of economic peripheralization.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM, 1970 AND BEYOND

On October 20th, 1970, one year after his successful coup d'état, President Mahammad Siyaad Barre announced:

In our Revolution we believe that we have broken the chain of a consumer economy based on imports, and we are free to decide our destiny. And in order to realize the interests of the Somali people; their achievement of a better life, the full development of their potentialities and the fulfillment of their aspirations, we solemnly declare Somalia to be a Socialist State.¹¹

Siyaad was without doubt attempting to please the Russian advisers who had helped to make the coup a success. He knew virtually nothing about Marxism-Leninism before this time and often embarrassed himself in public when his ignorance became apparent. In a public meeting in which Siyaad attempted to court the young intellectuals of Mogadishu, one impertinent scholar asked the president if he knew that Marx was a Jew. Siyaad reportedly turned to his advisers and asked why he had not been told that.

Yet Siyaad had a number of indigenous resources available to him to help construct a socialist program. Many young Somali intellectuals, for example, Mahammad Aadan Sheikh, who was to become minister of health and later minister of information and national guidance, had received their higher education in Italy and were well acquainted with the philosophy of the Italian Communist party. Some of these intellectuals had organized a Somali political party in the early independence years, *Hawl iyo Hantiwadaag* (Work and Socialism), that espoused a socialist ideology. Furthermore, many other African states had already adopted the ideology of socialism as a critique of the world division of labor that had relegated Africa to the bottom rung. The teachings of Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, and Julius Nyerere were well known among the educated salariat of Somalia. The corruption of the civilian regime and the enthusiasm of the advocates of socialism made Siyaad's 1970 speech a very popular one.

Siyaad first had to promise the nomads that *hantiwadaag* (socialism, but literally, sharing of wealth) did not mean that nomads would have to share their camels with anyone. He then had to assure the *wadaads* that socialism posed no threat to Islam and then promise them a role in the building of socialism. "Our Islamic faith," Siyaad claimed, "teaches us that its inherent values are perennial and con-

tinually evolving as people progress. These basic tenets of our religion cannot be interpreted in a static sense, but rather as a dynamic force. . . . Hence the need for our religious leaders to probe within the social reality. . . ."12

Once his potential opposition was disarmed (or at least intimidated), Siyaad moved to the task of socialist construction. A new development plan for 1971–1973, this time with a radical socialist perspective, emphasized economic development objectives that centered on raising the standard of living for all Somalis, providing jobs to all who sought work, and eradicating the exploitation inherent in capitalism. Agricultural crash programs and vigilant attention to implementing manufacturing programs were the immediate results of this first plan. The subsequent plan, for the 1974–1978 period, emphasized equal distribution of the national product to all Somalis and the right of all Somalis to a job.¹³ As we shall see, Siyaad's early economic program, like his political program discussed earlier, yielded innovation and invention, but his socialism was never without a strong dose of pragmatism and a refusal to take abstract ideology too seriously.

Socialism and Public Ownership

Siyaad's first moves involved bringing a greater proportion of the Somali economy under state control. Thus, banks, insurance companies, petroleum distribution firms, schools, and the sugar-refining plant were nationalized, and national agencies were created for construction materials and foodstuffs.

Despite these highly visible moves toward socialism, Siyaad went out of his way to reassure small businesses that socialism did not mean the end of small private enterprise and that their investments would be protected. Similarly, camel owners were reassured that the government would not interfere in their sector either. They were considered workers rather than capitalists (even though camels are still the chief indicator of wealth in Somalia). In addition, Siyaad stated—primarily for Western consumption—that the banana plantations would remain in private hands "in so far as they continue to contribute to our national development."¹⁴ Thus, the two major export items—bananas and livestock—remained under private ownership.

In this matter Siyaad's regime conformed to the pattern set by most mixed economies in today's world. A year after he declared Somalia a socialist state, Siyaad made this statement at Mogadishu's annual trade fair:

Because the first year of the Revolution brought a period of change to the country's affairs, there was perhaps some justification for suspicion among [the businessmen]. But since that time the Revolution has made it clear that "clean business" had nothing to fear. In fact, we have made several appeals to businessmen to invest their money in this country.¹⁵

More than mere appeals have been made. As the journal *Africa* reported in 1973: "The present investment code restricts the right of transfer home of profits in any one year to 15 per cent of the capital initially invested in the business, while in case the profits do not reach that level the difference can be added to the remittance over a period of three years."¹⁶

Revolutionary socialist rhetoric aside, the Somali government's position on local capitalist enterprise and foreign direct investment seemed to be "reformist capitalist" with a few symbolic nationalizations. Furthermore, these nationalizations occurred at a time when the regime was intent on scoring propaganda points or when discoveries of unethical practices had been made—not as part of a planned development program.

Socialism and Cooperatives

The creation of cooperatives became a cornerstone of the program to build a socialist economy. In 1974 the government decreed a Law on Cooperative Development, which was initially aimed at the nomad. Under cooperatives, nomadic groups would learn to share scarce desert resources more efficiently and peacefully. The scientific management of rangeland—allowance for regeneration of grazing lands and the building of new water holes—would only be possible under a form of socialist cooperation. In each of the fourteen cooperatives that were subsequently created, each family is allocated an exclusive area of 500–750 acres of grazing land. In time of drought common land would be made available. Once these cooperatives were in place, the government committed itself to providing educational and health services as well as a marketing outlet for excess stock.

By the late 1970s the United Nations Development Program, the Kuwait Arab Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Food and Agriculture Organization had helped to fund more ambitious range cooperatives. The first was the Northern Rangelands Development Project in 1977; and then in 1979 a Central Rangelands Project got under way. In both projects the nomads have been asked to create grazing associations whose function is to work with technical personnel for the scientific management of grazing lands. These

associations are supposed to discuss the rotation of grazing areas, the use of reserves, and the creation of new boreholes.¹⁷ In practice, however, these associations have achieved little.

The unprecedented drought that culminated in 1974 had great implications for the development of Somali pastoralism in general and the cooperative movement in particular. Four successive years of poor rains brought near devastation to the pastoral economy. In the words of one pastoralist who returned to his family in nomadic country:

I encountered a shocking experience. By the time I got there, my family had lost 500 head of sheep. Those sheep died within a space of five weeks. My water reservoirs were depleted. My cattle died as well. But some of my camels escaped from the affliction of the famine and were taken to the wet areas. In addition to the severity of the famine, we were afraid that diseases might spread from the decomposing carcasses of all those dead animals. So we decided to take further precautions and burnt the carcasses. It was horrid, but there was no other way. . . . Other families whom I saw were also affected the same as we were.¹⁸

The Somali government reacted to this crisis by turning what had been planned as a rural prosperity campaign into a famine relief operation. On November 29, 1974, a state of emergency was declared, and the senior vice president of Somalia, General Hussein Kulmiye, headed the National Drought Relief Committee. By January 1975 as diverse a group of countries as can be imagined—China, the United States, the countries of the European Economic Community, the Soviet Union, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Sudan, Algeria, Yugoslavia, Yemen, and others—had pledged 66,229 tons of cereals, 1,155 tons of milk powder, and substantial quantities of other food products. But the Somali government did not only seek relief; it also sought to take advantage of adversity in order to promote its cooperative program. In 1975, with help from the Soviet Union, some ninety thousand nomads were transported from their nomadic hamlets to agricultural and fishing cooperatives in the south. Agricultural cooperatives were established at Djuuma (45,000 acres), Kurtun Waarey (15,000 acres), and Sablaale (15,000 acres). With further help from the Kuwait Arab Fund and the World Bank, large irrigation projects were constructed to open up new farming lands for these nomads turned agriculturalists. On these farms maize, beans, groundnuts, and rice have been planted. As of this writing, the government provides seeds, water, management, health facilities, and schools. It pays salaries to the workers and is

the sole purchaser of the farms' output. The farms are therefore in no sense cooperatives; rather, they are state-owned farms. They have become havens for women and children. By the end of the 1970s, with rain again bringing rich grass to the grazing fields, many men returned to their homes in the hope of restoring their flocks. Nevertheless, a foundation for agricultural cooperatives has been built.

Fishing cooperatives were created in a similar way. But these cooperatives had to overcome the nomads' abhorrence of eating fish. (Thus, there is no real fishing tradition on the Benaadir coast.) In the 1970s fishing accounted for less than 1 percent of Somalia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).¹⁹ But in 1975 new settlements along the coast were built for the resettled nomads at 'Eel Haamed, Eyl, 'Adale, and Baraawe. The Soviet Union provided modern trawlers to catch fish and spiny lobsters. When the Soviets left Somalia, so did their boats, and the Somali government has procured replacements from Australia and Italy. But the cooperatives have not been self-sustaining. When the Soviet advisers left, the annual catch was in the thousands of tons; by 1980 less than five hundred tons of fish and lobster were caught. These cooperatives have not been economically viable, in large part due to the poor quality of the industry, but they represent a significant potential for economic growth in Somalia. According to the Somali Unit for Research on Emergencies and Rural Development (a government agency):

Fishery development in Somalia, unlike the two other major economic sectors—livestock and agriculture—is hardly constrained by natural factors. Firstly, the resource base is large and almost untapped, with approximately 10,000 tons of fish being harvested annually of a total potential sustainable yield of 150,000 tons of all species of fish. Secondly, fishing, though seasonal, is not subject to the disastrous consequences of climatic variation like the periodic droughts, and thirdly, with only two per cent of the population or 90,000 people now dependent on fishing, the sector has almost unbounded capacity to absorb any new influx of families if matched by corresponding public investments and market demand for their catches.²⁰

Also mentioned by this research agency is the fact that fishing shares many features with herding—the like openness of the desert and the sea, for example—and that nomads seem to adjust to the life of the fisherman more easily than they do to the life of the farmer.

Socialism and Alienation

Perhaps more important for socialist construction than the source of ownership of production is the relationship of the worker to his



Photo 5.3 Boy with a fish.

or her environment. One of Marx's most stinging critiques of capitalism was that it alienated workers from each other, from the products they were making, and from society. The capitalist worker, in Marx's critique, has no direct or tangible connection with his or her work, no sense of pride in accomplishment, and no belief that what he or she has produced is important to others.

The colonial state is by its very nature deeply alienating, for it is interested in economic extraction rather than socioeconomic de-

velopment. Colonial subjects in Africa, as Nigerian sociologist Peter Ekeh has shown, feel no obligation to the inheritors of the colonial state because the state was a foreign (that is, alien) superstructure imposed on African societies.²¹ Thus, after African states received independence, the new leaders found a civil service with little interest in promoting the public good and a population with little incentive to make sacrifices for the good of the state. It is no wonder that Somali civil servants spent their hours in tea shops rather than in their offices, and why such little private initiative for economic progress took place in the colonial period. With virtually no state assault on the colonial economy during the first ten years of independence, it is not surprising that there was little change in individual economic motivation.

Siyaad's socialism mobilized the Somali people, and this helped them overcome colonially inspired alienation. Through his speeches and through the teachings at the orientation courses in military camps, Siyaad began to inculcate values of self-help and initiative. The most interesting project associated with the campaign to get Somalis to take an active part in the development of their country was the sand-dune stabilization project. Along the Benaadir coast sand dunes had been moving inexorably inland and had begun to encroach upon some of the better farmland near the banana plantations and, more ominously, onto the new road that was constructed to facilitate the export of plantation crops.

The government recruited a permanent work force to plant bushes in the dunes to prevent further erosion. Temporary workers were requested to help out on Fridays, the Islamic holiday. The project caught the imagination of Mogadishu's salariat, and soon many other Somalis—from the president to the civil servant to the nomad—could be seen, tool in hand, setting seedlings in the sand. As one Somali intellectual observed, "Here is the true fusion of socialist theory and practice."²² Indeed, the project helped the population see that collective action brings benefits that many Somalis, both today and in the future, can share. This is precisely the view of a nonalienated population.

The ideology of popular participation in socialist construction continued to facilitate collective action. The 1974 government efforts to resettle nomads in order to teach them farming skills could not, even with Soviet logistical support, have been accomplished without the "can do" philosophy instilled by the Somali revolution. What might have been a task beyond the administrative capacity of the civilian regime was done with efficiency and energy by the socialist state.

The ultimate battle to eradicate smallpox in the world also was organized in this period, and Somali government health workers cooperated vigorously with world health authorities to conquer smallpox. Any cursory examination of construction sites in Somalia in this period, or of government offices, would show the observer that from the Somali viewpoint, under socialism, hard work and collective action were worthwhile.

Socialism and Rapid Economic Growth

The regime claimed that Somalia was, because of its socialist policies, approaching "takeoff." This was, of course, farfetched, but for those people who had seen Somalia before the revolution and then again in the mid-1970s, progress was impressive (see Table 5.2). In the first five years under socialism the government helped to reorganize the milk factory to raise its production. The government also initiated a tomato canning factory, a cigarette and match factory, a packaging plant making cardboard boxes and polyethylene bags, a wheat flour and pasta factory, several grain mills, and a petroleum refinery. In addition, the state put the meat processing plant in Kismayu into operation as well as a fish processing factory in Laas-Qoray. It also began to expand sugar operations in Jowhar and build a new facility in Afgooye. To be sure, some of these plants, including a textile factory in Bal'ad, were under construction before the advent of socialism. What the socialist government did was to overcome the inertia that kept these plants from production. As the data in Table 5.2 demonstrate, in three of the four leading light industries (canned meats, bottled milk, and textiles), there were significant increases in output from the coup d'état to 1975.

But this progress was not universal, despite government propaganda. In the revolutionary pamphlet "Agriculture in the Service of the Nation," published by the Ministry of Information, it was stated, for example, that "agriculture was a thriving occupation for the Somali people even in the ancient times. . . . It was lamentable, however, that Somali agriculture should suffer a severe setback during the era of foreign domination."²³ The pamphlet is replete with accounts of successful cooperative schemes, irrigation schemes, land development projects, underground water utilization projects, and grain storage projects. But when the statistical data are examined, a different picture emerges.

In the production of bananas, for example—the country's second largest export—the Ministry of Agriculture claimed that the takeover of banana marketing in May 1970 by the National Banana Board was "a great leap forward for the Somali banana!" Furthermore, "con-

TABLE 5.2
Trends in Somalia's Production

	1969	1972	1975	1980
GRAINS: thousands of tons of maize and sorghum				
	297	263	238	240
LIVESTOCK: thousand head of camels				
	2250	3000	1900	5450
CANNED MEATS: exports in metric tons				
	1104	4359	4673	770
BANANAS: exports in metric tons				
	91,491	116,497	69,868	49,943
MILK: bottled, in million liters				
	.88	1.94*	2.16	2.00
TEXTILES: thousand yards				
	796	6385	5500	13,100
SUGAR: thousand tons				
	46.8	37.4*	30.6	29.1

* (author's estimate through extrapolation)

Sources: FAO Yearbooks; UN Statistical Yearbooks (various years)

siderable improvements" have been made "in the yield per [acre] due to the adoption of better irrigation application and drainage practices, fertilizer application and intensive spraying methods." New markets for Somali bananas were developed in the Middle East and in the German Democratic Republic, reducing the constricting effect of Italian monopsony.²⁴ In addition, the ministry reported, new roads for bringing the bananas to the ports were built as was a new banana packaging

plant to ensure better marketing with less waste. "The export of bananas has," the report concludes, "shown a tremendous rise from 1970 onward,"²⁵ but the complete figures (not the selected ones provided by the ministry) show otherwise. The data on Table 5.2 demonstrate that despite the boom year of 1972 (which the pamphlet heralded as the main evidence of progress), the export of bananas has been declining steeply.

The situation with respect to grains is similar. A governmental "crash program" in agriculture had as its primary goal "to increase national food production toward the attainment of sustained self-sufficiency with emphasis on import substituting crops." It was claimed that new acreage had been brought into production, that new schemes for making nomads into peasants had been developed, and that production levels had been raised. But the data on Table 5.2 show, if anything, stagnation in the production of food grains.

There is no doubt that the droughts, which lasted for several years and threatened the very existence of the Somali nation, added to Somalia's agricultural problems. But the problem is deeper. The figures suggest that the putative agricultural "progress" in Somalia, which was central to Siyaad's concerns, was a myth.

A recent study on poverty in Somalia reckons that by the mid-1970s the per capita income of Somali farmers was about half that of the nomads.²⁶ The likely reason: The socialist government taxed farmers by paying far less than the world market price for their output, thereby creating a disincentive to produce. Meanwhile, by pegging exchange rates so that the Somali shilling was overvalued, the government was subsidizing the importation of grain.²⁷ On the other hand, the government could not interfere as easily with the livestock sector, in large part because of the political power and traditional autonomy of the northern Isaaq traders, power that the president could not easily challenge. Therefore, the government was unable to prevent the nomads from getting close to the market price for their animals. This partly explains why the recovery of stocks was so fast in the wake of the disastrous drought of 1974. (Compare grain production and banana exports to the recovery of the herds of camels from 1975 to 1980 in Table 5.2.)

In summary: In the postrevolutionary period economic growth in Somalia was more apparent than real. Where available, the statistics have shown only limited gains and some losses in various economic sectors. In terms of economic output, there was only a marginal difference between Somalia under the socialist regime and under the previous civilian regime.

It would therefore be wrong to conclude that scientific socialism led Somalia out of economic poverty or changed Somalia's role in the world division of labor. Somalia remained an economically poor state that exported animals to Arabia and bananas to Europe. Yet in the period from 1969 to 1974 the socialist economic program had some success in demonstrating to the citizenry that collective action can yield productive results. But for a number of reasons—the Ogaadeen war and a political crisis within the Somali state—even the limited progress of the early 1970s could not be sustained. We shall now review the data demonstrating a clear economic decline in Somalia during the late 1970s and suggest the meaning of this decline for the future of Somalia. What is most important to keep in mind in regard to the socialist experiment, however, is that it instilled a clear sense in the Somali people that they are capable of shaping their economic destiny in ways commensurate with their egalitarian social values.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AFTER 1975

In the period from 1969 through 1974, as we have seen, some parts of the Somali economy were invigorated by the ideology of scientific socialism. Self-help schemes and crash programs demonstrated that vision and hard work could yield fruit. By the mid-1970s, and especially since the Ogaadeen debacle of 1978 when Somali forces were defeated in their attempt to aid the Western Somali Liberation Front (which was seeking autonomy from Addis Ababa), however, the government's control over the economy began to weaken, with some disastrous results. Mismanagement and corruption began to replace vision and enthusiasm. Two trends—which have ominous implications for the Somali people during the next decade—deserve special consideration.

Exponentially Increasing Foreign Debt

Somalia's foreign debt, as is the case with many other oil-importing countries, has gotten out of hand. Until 1971 foreign debt increased at a rate commensurate with increased earnings from exports. But then it took off. By 1979 Somalia owed more than 4,000 million shillings. This equals the earnings from the total export of bananas (based on 1978 exports) for seventy-five years. About one-third of this debt is owed to centrally planned economies, one-third to countries from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and one-third to members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). (See Table 5.3 and Figure 5.1)

TABLE 5.3

Magnitudes of Somali Dependence, 1979

(figures in million U.S. dollars, and unless noted, for 1979)

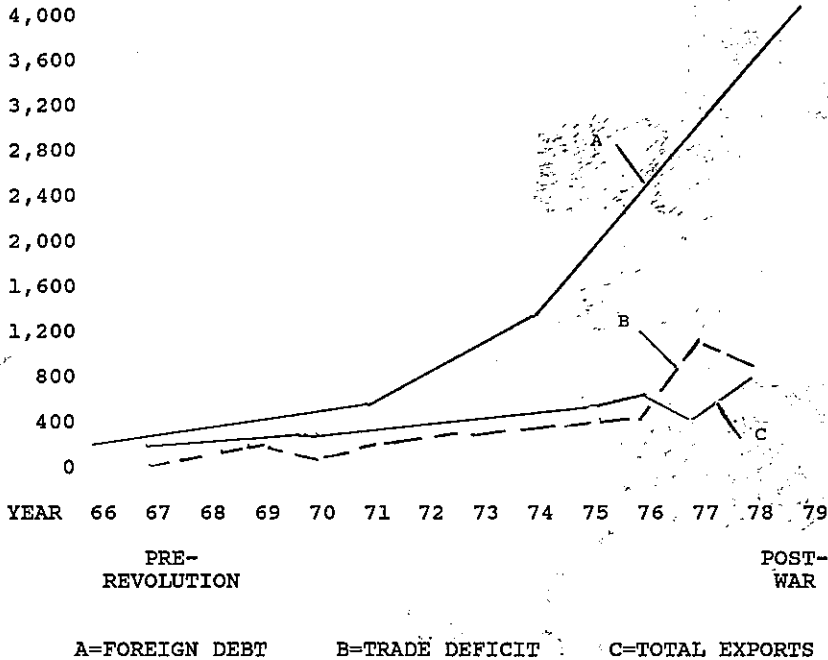
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (1978 AT MARKET PRICES):		1192.2
Outstanding Debt TOTAL:		545.7
BILATERAL LOANS--		
Abu Dhabi	67.0	
Algeria	1.0	
Iraq	14.5	
Kuwait	27.1	
Libya	3.0	
Qatar	10.0	
Saudi Arabia	81.9	
Bulgaria	4.9	
East Germany	1.1	
Soviet Union	110.0	
China	87.2	
United States	12.7	
MULTILATERAL LOANS--		
African Development Bank	2.9	
African Development Fund	7.1	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development	34.7	
International Development Association	62.5	
Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries special account	7.3	
OPEC Special Fund	2.0	
Nationalization Compensation (to Italy)	1.1	
Foreign Arms Transfers to Somalia 1975-79 / 5 (average year)		90.0
Total Government Revenue Internally Collected		269.5
Total Government Ordinary Expenditure		238.3
Total Export Earnings		106.0
Balance of Payments Deficits		-288.2

Sources: Somalia, ed. H. D. Nelson for the Department of the Army (Washington, D.C.: 1982); UN Statistical Yearbook (1982)

To be sure, many of these loans, especially from the Soviet Union, can be written off at this time (unless Somalia chooses to realign with the East). Furthermore, loans from the West are on the softest of terms, and few OECD countries really expect repayment. Most importantly, Somalia has not been saddled, as have other oil-importing countries, with a growing petroleum bill. Throughout 1982 and 1983 Somalia received free refined petroleum from Saudi Arabia. Given these facts, we see that Somalia has a debt burden for interest

FIGURE 5.1
Somalia: Trends in External Debt

MILLION SOMALI SHILLINGS



Sources: See Economic Commission for Africa Summaries of Economic Data, Somalia (Jan., 1975); OECD, Development Co-operation Review (1976); OECD "External Debt of Developing Countries" (Paris, 1981)

payments of about 6 percent of export earnings, which is not particularly bad under present conditions. Only the OPEC aid demands strict accountability and prompt repayments.

But if Somalia hasn't yet had to pay a heavy economic price for its rapidly escalating debt figures, it will indeed be forced to pay a high political price. If it ever attempts, as might be possible if General Samantar (presently minister of defense and the golden boy of the era when the Soviet Union and Somalia had a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation) were to come to power and exercise the political option of opening up new negotiations with the Soviet Union, Somali officials will be forced to face again their debt to the centrally planned economies. At present, Somali leaders have very little latitude in matters of economic management. They first must

consult with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

No government in Somalia, so long as it wishes to have open lines of credit in the world economy, can possibly regain the freedom of action that was available to the new revolutionary government in 1969. Just as Kofi Busia was shackled by the economic errors of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, so will any future government of Somalia be compelled to answer for the debts incurred by the present regime. Any leader who comes to power in Somalia will be watched carefully by Somalia's creditors, and this fact will constrain Somalia's freedom for at least a generation.

Regression in Somalia's Role in the World Economy

In the early years after the revolution of 1969 there was some indication of diversification in the Somali economy. But recent trends suggest that Somalia is regressing back to the role it played in the nineteenth-century world economy. In the late 1960s the export of live animals constituted less than 50 percent of Somalia's total export earnings; by 1978 those exports were nearly 90 percent of export earnings. In 1980 these exports were a significant 78 percent.

Manufacturing is the other side of the coin. As should be clear from Table 5.4, manufacturing employs only a negligible segment of the Somali population. Manufacturing constitutes an estimated 6 percent of the Somali estimated Gross Domestic Product and is among the least developed in the world.²⁸ The revolutionary government, to its credit, sought improvement here as a key part of its socialist strategy. By the mid-1970s manufactures hovered around 20 percent of total exports. But since the Ogaadeen war things indeed have fallen apart. By 1978 the figure approached nil (see Figure 5.2).

The same story is repeated when the data on the production (rather than export) of manufactured goods are examined. In 1969, 46.8 thousand tons of sugar were produced; in 1980 the figure was down to 29.1 thousand tons. This is a sad story for the Somali economy. Careless irrigation practices in the plantation at Jowhar increased the salinity of the surface soil; as a result, yield per acre is down to 22 tons of cane in the 1980s from 40 in the 1960s. A new sugar estate and mill, funded at a cost of \$201 million by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, began processing sugar in 1980. But only half the acreage has been planted. In addition, the lack of diesel fuel in the country means that the new pumps for the irrigation sprinkler system remain idle for long periods.²⁹

With other food manufactures, the story is similar. In 1975 Somalia produced 14.43 million tins of canned meat and 2.22 thousand

TABLE 5.4
Employment and Production by Industries, 1979

Industry	Employment Number	% of Total	No. of Establishments	Gross Output Millions of Shillings
Food				
Manufacturing	3,903	30.4%	70	168
Textiles	1,990	15.4	8	61
Printing and Publishing	1,042	8.1	1	37
Electric Power	852	6.6	10	24
Beverages	838	6.5	6	38
Leather and Footwear	629	4.9	19	23
Water Works	607	4.7	5	36
Furniture and Fixtures	500	3.9	28	16
Apparel	407	3.2	37	18
Chemicals	321	2.5	6	41
All Others	1,774	13.8	151	425
TOTAL	12,863	100.0	258	882

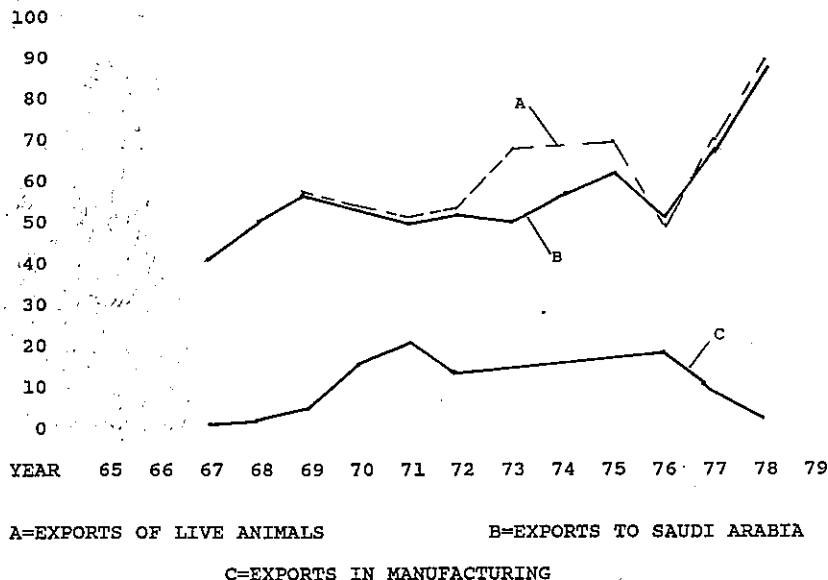
Source: Ministry of National Planning; *Statistical Abstract*, 1981. January 1983. Compiled by Albert L. Gray, Jr., "Economic Problems of the Somali Democratic Republic," paper presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, New Orleans (November, 1985). Gray's figures don't add up properly, but should be considered estimates.

tons of canned fish. In 1979 only 1.50 million tins of canned meat and a negligible amount of canned fish were produced; figures for the latter were insufficient for the Central Bank of Somalia to record. In textiles there was improvement but no promise of long-term growth. Output varies widely each year: up 36 percent from 1979 to 1980; down 28 percent in 1971; up 10 percent in 1982; and down 39 percent in 1983. In fact, "the major product is coarse cloth of grey fabric that is sold at less than cost to the rural people."³⁰ In milk, pasta, packaging materials, cigarettes, and matches, the trend has been downward since the mid-1970s. (See Table 5.2 for other figures and trends.)³¹

Somalia's regression in its position in the world division of labor has considerable consequences for political relations. The most important consequence is that Somalia is increasingly tied to the economy

FIGURE 5.2
Regression in Somalia's Role in the World Economy

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPORTS



Sources: UN Yearbooks of International Trade Statistics UN
ST/ESA/STAT/Ser.G/Add.1.

of the Arab world. Already, Somalia's economic and cultural connection with the Arab world is at least as strong as its connection with the dominant industrial states in the world economy. In overseas development assistance, bilateral aid from OPEC states has clearly outpaced the funds from the advanced industrial states that form the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. By 1979 OPEC development aid to Somalia was about twice as high as aid from OECD states (\$94.8 million versus \$49.8 million).³² Also, in 1978 nearly 90 percent of Somalia's exports went to Saudi Arabia (see Table 5.4). Even if exports and imports are combined, trade with Arab states is more substantial than with OECD states (in 1979, \$173.2 million with Arab League states; \$163.3 million with OECD states).

These new links raise the specter of a second imperialism, this time not with Europe but with Arabia. This relationship creates grave dangers for a dependent state, but it also has advantages: Somalia received two years of free petroleum imports. However, in the period

from June 1983 to June 1984 the Saudis decided unilaterally to stop importing Somali cattle, and this soon was expanded to sheep and goats. The Saudi government claimed that diseases were detected in Somali livestock, making them unsafe. Cynics pointed out that Saudi businessmen had recently invested in Australian ranches and were seeking to carve out an export market for their product.³³ This is a classic dependency situation. A clever business move for a small sector of the Saudi economy has devastating consequences for the Somali economy. Somali finance minister Mahammad Sheikh Usmaan had to rush to the IMF for a \$32.6 million compensatory finance outlay to cover the loss. Thus, Somalia, like so many other indebted countries, remains a pawn on the international chessboard.

FROM SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM TO IMF-ISM, 1981-

Its socialist program in disarray and its alliance with the Soviet Union lost in the wake of the 1977-1978 Ogaadeen war, Somalia once again turned to the West. In 1981, after protracted negotiations, the Somali government reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund that led to two consecutive stand-by agreements that allowed Somalia to meet its balance-of-payments deficits, which had reached a staggering \$333.1 million by 1980. These IMF funds also helped get Somalia out of arrears in its payment of interest on its foreign debt. To meet the IMF's demands, the Somali government was compelled to devalue the Somali shilling by 50 percent and to decrease state involvement in the economy. (The U.S. demand that Somalia decrease its military budget by 50 percent as a precondition for IMF support was rejected by the Somalis, and the United States permitted the stand-by loans to go through.)

With the IMF seal of approval Somalia could go to the World Bank in the search for economic aid. In preparation for an October 1983 meeting of a World Bank consultative group, Siyaad Barre lobbied for funds to construct the Baardeere Dam on the Jubba River, a \$600 million project that the Soviets planned but abandoned when their alliance with Somalia ended. This project, if completed, could make Somalia a net exporter of electrical power and self-sufficient in food. The OPEC development fund had already promised some support. But the United States, to the exasperation of President Siyaad, had been reluctant to move forward on this project. It encouraged the Somalis, instead, to seek smaller scale projects that would develop organizational skills within the Somali bureaucracy. At the 1983 meeting the United States sabotaged the Baardeere Dam. No funds were put forward; only a vaguely entrusted "steering committee"

was set up.³⁴ Siyaad joked that the only tangible result the Somali people saw of U.S. aid was the familiar sight of two U.S. planners sitting with a Somali in a Land Rover preparing a social impact statement.³⁵

IMFism (that is, the direction of the Somali economy under IMF guidance) will certainly correct the disastrous course of agricultural decline, and it might also decrease the costs of state manufacturing enterprises whose factor inputs—all imported—cost more than the price of their outputs. In this way, production efficiency will be encouraged. But IMFism is no panacea, and its prescriptions often have bizarre results. The free enterprise economy in the late 1970s unleashed creative energies in the northwest province in the production of *qaat*, the mild narcotic whose role in Somali society we described earlier. In Abdi I. Samatar's research in this region, he found rich new towns springing up around *qaat* farms. The government was in a quandary: How could it permit such energy to go into a sector that did not address the problem of malnutrition or disease or provide foreign exchange? (In 1983 the production of *qaat* was banned.)³⁶ Another unintended consequence of the IMF's requirement that the state relax its control of the economy was the escalation of land speculation in Mogadishu; much private investment went into the real estate market. These efforts increased private wealth, at least on paper, but had no effect on production. Getting the state out of inefficient enterprises does not mean that private entrepreneurs will do better with the released investment funds. In the Somali case, private entrepreneurs have invested in enterprises that do not benefit the general good.

The neoclassical economic theory that drives the IMF has yet another problem: The IMF sees factor endowments in a static way. Thus, Somalia will be encouraged to concentrate its attention on those sectors in which it presently has a comparative advantage. But this will mean a further move toward an economy that exports primary and plantation products to an industrial world. Siyaad Barre does not have the freedom today to abandon the IMF—Somalia's high level of imports keeps the urban population content, and this protects the president's popularity and tenure. But the longing of so many Somalis for a transformed and modern economy cannot be cured by the nostrums of the IMF.

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Somalia remains predominantly a pastoral economy. This means that the nomad will continue to follow an annual cycle as the camels

move from grassland to water in a recurrent pattern. However, Somali nomadic clans have long been able to adjust, politically and economically, to changing ecological circumstances. For a thousand years Somali clans moved northward from what is today northeastern Kenya in search of grazing land and water. After they reached the Red Sea coast, a second migration of a thousand years took Somali clans south again; the clans reached Lake Tana in the early twentieth century. Droughts brought death, migration, and the readjustment of clan attachments.

Just as it is absurd to assume that the past was without change, it is equally absurd to assume that the future will hold to the same patterns as the past. Two recent changes make this point. Somali nomadic clans can no longer migrate great distances because the boundaries of the modern state do not permit such penetration. Furthermore, Somali nomads need not necessarily suffer from a natural triage amid the worst droughts. There now exists a centralized Somali state that can truck water to destitute nomads and resettle them temporarily in camps. One important consequence of these two changes is the overgrazing of the Somali bush and the concomitant desertification of grazing lands. Famine and drought appear to reoccur at faster rates than in the past. In 1964 and again in 1966-1967, 1973-1974, and 1977-1979 droughts were particularly severe. What can this mean for the future viability of the Somali nomad? What might be done for the nomadic life? Should it be preserved so that the symbiotic relationship between Somali and camel can survive? Or should it be allowed to disappear in order to make way for industrial development? These are some of the questions that must be asked as any Somali government attempts to fashion Somalia's economic future.

It also is important to determine if there is a new role, other than supplying rich Arab states with camels, that might propel the Somali economy out of its peripheral position. Although we remain optimistic that under better management the agricultural sector can provide a good diet for all Somalis, we are less sure as to how Somalia could—and at what cost—play a more important role in the world division of labor. Social science lacks any theory that explains why some countries can compete successfully with the industrial core and why other countries, with similar endowments, languish on the periphery.

The success of Japan in the late nineteenth century or of the newly industrialized countries of Southeast Asia (for example, Korea and Taiwan) in the twentieth holds an important lesson for Somalia. Social, cultural, and political factors—not natural resources—seem to

determine economic success. Like Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, Somalia has few natural resources but a homogeneous population sharing a collective identity. The ecological crisis or the barrenness of the desert in some parts of the country cannot be used forever as an excuse for the Somali economy's lack of success. In our final chapter, we discuss a variety of resources, both agricultural and human, that can and should be exploited in Somalia. The negativist tone that pervades this chapter is not a statement of Somalia's potential; rather, it is an assessment of the performance of the independent Somali state in its first quarter century of sovereign rule. There have been periods of impressive success, but they have been counterbalanced by longer periods of inefficiency and misguided policy. The issue is not Somalia's lack of natural resources, but rather the political and social circumstances that support Somalia's marginality. It remains the task of the future generations of Somali leadership to solve the political and social questions that continue to keep Somalia on the lowest rung of the world division of labor.

6

Foreign Relations

Since independence virtually all of Somalia's foreign policy has centered around a single fact: that the entire Somali nation is not ruled by a single Somali state. This fact constitutes the Somali dilemma: Somalia remains a nation in search of a state.

THE POLITICS OF THE QUEST FOR UNITY

The relevance of this fact can best be comprehended by comparing Somalia to almost every other African state. Nearly all the people who live within the boundaries of Somalia share a common language, religion, social structure, and historical identity. A cursory look at any other African state shows that although all the people within the state may have a vague identification with Africa or with the nationalist aspirations of their leaders, they are different in regard to those very characteristics that Somalis share.

Thus, most African leaders, upon their country's independence, committed themselves to a policy of nation building. This meant that the leadership would try to develop a set of values and ideas—a culture—that all citizens of the new state would share. After achieving independence, the new nationalist elites focused primarily on the problem of cultural unity.

Somali leaders faced a problem of unity, but it was a reverse of the one faced by their counterparts elsewhere on the continent. Somali nationalists rode a wave of popular enthusiasm as Italian Somalia joined together with British Somaliland to form a single state. The first two lines of the most popular song in Somalia in July 1960 were, "Freedom and dignity have reached us/We have unified the two lands." Thus, Somali leaders did not have to create a common culture within their new boundaries because one already existed. The problem of unity they faced was different. There was deep popular support to unite all other Somali areas, in Ethiopia, in Kenya, and in Djibouti (then French Somaliland) under a single Somali flag.

The issue seemed clear to all Somalis. Many people who lived in countries bordering Somalia would rather live under the jurisdiction of the Somali state. The land they lived on was desert and had little exploitable wealth. The boundaries were arbitrarily created by colonial powers. Why should there not be boundary readjustments based on the popular will of the residents? To the Somalis the issue was simply one of the self-determination of subject peoples.¹

But the issue was not that clear to other Africans. In fact, the vision of a Greater Somalia in which all Somalis would live under a single flag has not been unequivocally accepted by any other country in the world. Somalia, by its unrelenting pressure on the issue in all international forums, has alienated many potential friends. Other African states have rejected Somalia's pleas in large part because of their own problems of unity; they tremble at the idea that all people who share a culture should live under a single flag. If such an idea were to be accepted, then many groups within their states could make valid claims for separation. The Nigerians have pointed out again and again that to accept Somali claims for unity would be to accept the principle that the Igbos had a right to their state of Biafra. Thus, the Somali ideal has ominous implications for other African states.²

To be sure, there was no unanimity on this point among these leaders. The Pan-African Congress in 1945 strongly criticized the colonial boundaries imposed on Somalia, and Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first head of state and one of the visionary leaders of the pan-African movement, lent his considerable prestige to the Somali cause by issuing a joint communiqué with President Aadan 'Abdullah 'Usmaan stating that African states should "restore . . . cultural . . . links arbitrarily destroyed by colonialism."³ It should also be noted that Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Felix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast supported the Biafran secession, thereby depreciating their general commitment to the sacredness of colonial boundaries.

But in the case of Somalia, African leaders have been heavily influenced by the diplomatic and historical power of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's high status is in large part a result of its having defeated a European army in 1896 and thereby escaping colonialism. African nationalists could not easily swallow the idea, argued by the Somalis, that the Ethiopians, in regard to the Somalis, were themselves colonialists. Because Ethiopia was instrumental in creating the Organization of African Unity (OAU), African states accepted the Ethiopian principle that the fundamental basis for continental unity lay in the recognition of the territorial integrity of all African states. This principle, enshrined in the charter of the OAU (Article III, paragraph 3), fundamentally

legitimated the colonially set boundaries. OAU members have refused to apply the other relevant principle in the Somali case (Article III, paragraph 6)—“absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent”—largely because that would expose the founding member state as an imperialist power.⁴ Ethiopia, both under Emperor Haile Selassie and under his revolutionary successors, has seen the problem of ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia not as one of the right to self-determination, but rather as one of the territorial integrity of the postcolonial state. Under no conditions, the Ethiopians have maintained, could their state be dismembered.⁵ In fact, Selassie was unequivocal on this issue. In his first postwar visit to the Ogaadeen region in 1956, he told his Somali audience that “all of you are by race, colour, blood and custom members of the great Ethiopian family.” He therefore advised the people to learn Amharic, for “lack of knowledge of the national language will be a barrier for the education we have in mind for you.”⁶ With Selassie’s view—that all peoples within colonially set boundaries had to adjust themselves to a new national culture, one surpassing tribe—as the dominant one in the OAU, the Somali call for a redrawing of boundaries therefore fell on deaf ears.

It fell on deaf ears elsewhere. In the United Nations, Ethiopia had heavy moral weight. Haile Selassie had appeared before the League of Nations after Ethiopia had been invaded by Italy in 1935, but his valiant appeal went unanswered by a world body unable to take action against fascist aggression. Many historians have argued that if the league had responded more forcefully to Selassie’s appeals, fascism in Europe might have met an earlier defeat.

The U.N.’s role after the war in regard to the Horn of Africa was a thorny one. Because Italy had been a guilty party in the war, its colonies (Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia) had to be disposed of by the world body. Britain effectively occupied the Horn, and its foreign office was intent on seeing Selassie restored to his throne. With the help of the British, Selassie occupied 40,000 square miles more of the Ogaadeen than even the most generous (to Ethiopia) interpretation of the Somali-Ethiopia boundary. Then, a four power commission of the victorious powers (the United States, the USSR, France, and Britain) established by the treaty of peace with Italy was charged with investigating the future of the former Italian colonies. The commission recommended that the former Italian Somalia be made a U.N. trust territory under Italian governance. Italy protested Selassie’s greed and the British ceding of territory in the Ogaadeen to Selassie. In response, the General Assembly encouraged direct negotiations and, eventually, arbitration. But Ethiopia got *de facto*

control of this new boundary before Italy received the trust, and the emperor remained intransigent throughout a decade of negotiations. Because the Italians never conceded to the Ethiopians their definition of the boundary, when Somalia became independent the boundary was, in the eyes of international law, "provisional." Although the U.N. sought a resolution of the problem in a fair way, it was unwilling to rule on the substance of the matter—either on the legal claim for Ethiopia's definition of the boundary or on the wishes of the region's population. To do so might have meant a direct conflict with Haile Selassie—a man whose reputation was built on the fact that he and his country had been wronged by the international community.⁷

In the United States as well, the Ethiopian version of the Somali problem had strong credibility. This is despite the fact that the legacy of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points made the United States more sympathetic than other countries to the idea of self-determination for all Somali peoples. But the United States had many other commitments; it had a military agreement with Ethiopia and had developed good relations with Kenya—and both of those states, hosting large Somali communities, were opposed to Somali territorial claims. Furthermore, the United States was the founding spirit of the United Nations, and that world body (inheritor of the League of Nations) owed a historical favor to the Ethiopian emperor.

Great Britain also had some sympathy and suffered some guilt in regard to the Somali dilemma. British diplomats knew that they had been guilty of double-dealing in the nineteenth century. They had signed treaties of protection with Somali leaders and then signed a treaty with Menelik II putting their "protected" peoples under the jurisdiction of the Ethiopian emperor. To expiate this British sin, Lord Bevin attempted to fashion a united Somali colony in the wake of World War II because the British military administration had control of virtually all Somali lands (with the exception of the small French colony, today's Djibouti). But his proposal failed amid considerable opposition in the U.N., especially by the Soviets, who saw in the plan another British attempt to expand its empire. Spurred on by field officers who wished to redeem the British reputation for fairness, the British government sought at first to offer Ethiopia the port of Zayla' in exchange for giving the grazing lands of the Ogaadeen to Somaliland. (The French subverted this proposal because they feared that their investment in a railroad to Djibouti would be threatened if Ethiopia were able to send its exports out through Zayla'.) Later on, the British simply sought to buy this land outright from Ethiopia, but the emperor rejected the idea summarily.⁸

Another generation of British diplomats promised the Somalis that the popular will in Kenya's Northern Frontier District would determine whether it became part of Kenya or of Somalia. A British team traveled to the NFD in order to discern the popular will. The team reported an overwhelming desire of the people to join with the Somali Republic. But British double-dealing resurfaced. In order to make peace with the Kenyan nationalists, which was essential for an orderly transition of agricultural ownership in the "white highlands," the British agreed to keep the NFD a part of Kenya. The Somali government was outraged. The British government made some attempts to mollify the Somalis, but basically it wished to wash its hands of the whole nasty affair.⁹

If the British made some attempt to remedy past injustices, the Soviet Union demonstrated virtually no interest in Somali unity. The Soviets had rejected the Bevin plan in the 1940s. They played no further role in the territorial dispute until the early 1970s when they became a close military ally of the Somalis. But even under these circumstances the Soviet view of a united Somalia did not change. The Soviet Union, a country with a multitude of nationalities, had little sympathy with the Somalis who felt that each nation should have its own state. Sovereignty for Armenians, for Uzbeks, or for Turks had ominous overtones for Soviet ears. To accept Somali claims for sovereignty over all Somali territories would be a dangerous precedent for the Soviets.

Although Somalia is a member of the Arab League and Ethiopia a bastion of Christian orthodoxy, Arab states have been reluctant to back Somali desires for national unification. Arab diplomats have been caught in a diplomatic double bind. Until the fall of the Ethiopian emperor in 1974, Ethiopia had been, as President Johnson once put it, "a faithful ally of America for forty years." Pro-U.S. Arabs, such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikhdoms, were consequently dissuaded by the United States from supporting the Somali cause in order not to antagonize faithful Ethiopia. Pro-Soviet Arabs, on the other hand, were discouraged by the Soviets from supporting the Somalis because actual political sovereignty for nationalities within socialist states is anathema to Soviet leadership. Now that the United States and the USSR have traded clients, similar pressures are put on the same Arab states. To be sure, some Arab states have given tacit support, arms, and aid to Somalia in its times of need. Yet no Arab state has publicly supported Somalia's deepest goal of national unity.

This is the Somali dilemma. The goal of political unity for all Somali people seems so plain and just to Somalis, yet Somalia can

get virtually no international support. Somalia's foreign policy has therefore embodied high goals but has achieved few victories.

THE HORN IN TURMOIL, 1964-1967

Somalia's flag holds a five-pointed star. Two of the star's points—British Somaliland and Italian Somalia—were already united before 1964. From 1964 through 1967 the Somali Republic attempted to redeem the other three points: the NFD in Kenya, the Ogaadeen desert of Ethiopia, and French Somaliland, later to become the Territory of 'Afars and 'Ises and now the independent Republic of Djibouti. The effect of these efforts was to isolate Somalia from its neighbors and from its potential allies.

The NFD Fiasco

The Northern Frontier District is indeed a part of the Somali nation. At least 60 percent of the district's population consider themselves Somalis, and most of the others are peoples, like the Oromo, who are cousins to the Somalis. However, although the NFD may be a part of the Somali nation, it is today administered as part of the Kenyan state (and Kenya's northeastern province is the heart of the old NFD).

Immediately after Somalia's independence, its diplomats felt that if they offered Kenya's nationalist leaders reason and hospitality, this would earn the people of the Northern Frontier District the right to self-determination. With Kenyan independence still under negotiation, Somali leaders felt that Kenyan frontiers were fluid. In fact, in 1962 the people in the NFD—both Oromos and Somalis—had made their wishes clear to a British-sponsored investigation team. They wanted to join a Greater Somalia. Kenya's nationalist leader, Jomo Kenyatta, and the leader of the opposition party, Ronald Ngala, were both invited to Mogadishu, and they were showered with Somali hospitality. The unity of the Somali people was emphasized to both Kenyan visitors, and their speeches, although discrete, suggested an understanding of the Somali dilemma.¹⁰

The Somalis were therefore let down when the Kenyan nationalists refused to entertain any territorial adjustments in their final negotiations with the British before independence; Somalis were outraged when the British gave in completely to Kenyan demands. When the British announced on Kenyan radio in March 1963 that the NFD would become an integral part of Kenya, this provoked riots in Somalia. Within days Somalia broke off diplomatic relations with Britain.

Riots broke out in the NFD as well. The Kenyan authorities dubbed the Somali nationalists *shifta*, or bandits. But their kin in the Somali Republic thought of them as freedom fighters. Their fight for freedom, however, was short. The Kenyan army, which was well trained in anti-insurgency warfare (training gained from the Mau Mau campaigns), captured the livestock of Somali guerrillas and guarded water holes, actions whose effects were devastating. The Somali Republic did not aggressively supply the fighters with weapons, and the rebellion was quickly put down. Leaders of the Somali resistance in Kenya felt embittered and abandoned by the Somali Republic's weak material support. Although sporadic insurrections occasionally challenged Kenyan authority during the next decade, the battles of 1964 were the last major attempt by Somalis in Kenya to unhook themselves from the Kenyan state.

The Ogaadeen Problem

The area popularly known as the Ogaadeen is in actuality two separate areas in eastern Ethiopia. The southeast comprises the upper Jubba and Shabeelle rivers. Here the large majority of the people are Somalis of the Ogaadeen clan-family. In the northeast an area known as the Haud is a key seasonal grazing area for Somalis of the Isaaq and Dir clan-families. The Oromos and other peoples are interspersed with Somali communities in these areas. As one approaches Harar, a city claimed by Somalia, one meets a diverse population, few of whom are Somalis. But in the areas south and east of Harar, the overwhelming majority of the people consider themselves Somalis.

Never have these people been given an opportunity to voice their political preferences. We do know that the Somalis were militarily defeated by Menelik's soldiers in the nineteenth century when the Ethiopian emperor invited his officers to enrich themselves by confiscating Somali livestock. The Ethiopians exploited the wealth of the land but put virtually nothing into it. It remained barren and ignored by the colonial powers well into the twentieth century.

Despite the apparent similarity between the Ogaadeen and the NFD, there were some crucial differences between the two from a Somali perspective. First, as we saw, the border between Ethiopia and Somalia had never been delineated clearly. Second, the Somalis in the NFD—the Dagoodiya, the trans-Jubba Harti, and other groups—were not of clans that were central in the Somali domestic power structure. (The Harti include segments of the Majeerteen, Dulbahante, and other Daarood clans, but the links between the Daaroods in the republic and those in the NFD have long been weak.) In contrast, the Ogaadeen, the Isaaq, and the Dir clan-families represent important

segments of Somali society. Furthermore, many members of these three clan-families live in the Somali Republic; they saw the incorporation of their clan kin as essential to their own quest for power in Somalia. The Somalis in the Ogaadeen are therefore of greater political importance to the Somalis in the republic than are the Somalis in the NFD.

Third, the Somalis of the northeastern province have not been subject to the same degree of humiliation as have the Somalis in the Ogaadeen. Many Somalis in Kenya feel that they can become Kenyan citizens and gain from their citizenship. In the Ogaadeen most Somalis feel that under Ethiopian suzerainty Somalis get little but retribution. Those Ogaadeenis who petitioned the Four Power Commission asking for the unity of the Somali lands were jailed under charges of high treason. Yet Ethiopian administration of the region provided almost no benefits. There was no government-run school in the Ogaadeen, for example, until 1957. In the early 1960s, when most African peoples were preparing for self-rule, the government of Haile Selassie was setting up a system of indirect rule in the Ogaadeen. The Ethiopian state appointed Ogaadeen chiefs and paid them salaries to mediate between their people and the Ethiopian administrator. This system worked primarily for tax collection and not for the distribution of benefits to the people.¹¹

For these three reasons the successive governments of the Somali Republic have exerted special energies to help liberate the Ogaadeen. In 1961 the new republic helped to organize and arm a guerrilla force that came to be known as the Western Somali Liberation Front. The Somalis held it as an axiom that the multinational empire of Ethiopia could not hold together in the age of nationalism. Upon each emperor's death in Ethiopia's past, there followed a period of intense civil war. After Haile Selassie, the Somalis reckoned, the center would no longer hold.

From the time Somalia achieved its independence, Ogaadeen Somalis (with support from the Somali Republic) put pressure on Ethiopia. Although further research is needed to sort out which side initiated the disturbances, in 1961 and 1964 encounters between Ethiopian and Somali troops brought violence to the Ogaadeen. On both occasions the result was the further consolidation of the boundary claimed by the emperor but contested by the Somalis. Despite these setbacks, it remained a Somali hope that when the Ethiopian emperor died (or was removed from office), the WSLF would be in a good strategic position to take advantage of the concomitant turmoil in the empire and thereby to liberate the Ogaadeen.

The Djibouti Question

Djibouti represents the fifth point on the Somali star. The population of this ministate comprises Somalis who belong to the 'Ise clan of the Dir clan-family and non-Somali 'Afars.

The French colonized this territory, first called French Somaliland, as a coaling station for its Suez-bound ships. A limited degree of inland penetration by colonial forces permitted the French to achieve security and a food supply. By 1916, however, French engineers completed a railway between Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and Djibouti, the French port on the Red Sea. This became the principal outlet for Ethiopian trade.

In 1958, when France initiated referenda throughout Africa in an attempt to keep its colonies within a French community, Somali nationalists in French Somaliland used the vote as an opportunity to press for union with Greater Somalia. These nationalists urged a "no" vote on the question of whether French Somaliland should become an overseas territory within the French community. Because a hefty proportion of the vote came from European technicians working in French Somaliland as well as from "loyal" 'Afars, the "yes's" eked out a victory. (The election was most probably rigged, as Lord Lytton has suggested.) Angered by Somali resistance, the French gave special privileges to the 'Afar loyalists.

Independent Somalia kept a watchful eye on political developments in French Somaliland. So did Ethiopia. This constituted a dilemma for the French. Ethiopia needed the Djibouti port, and Selassie would not countenance French Somaliland being ceded to enemy Somalia. Meanwhile, Somali leaders would be apoplectic should France cede the territory to Ethiopia. Yet the territory was apparently too small to survive alone and potentially was subject to the aggressive designs of both Somalia and Ethiopia. The French hardly wanted to hold on to the territory. It brought them little but deficits. But French officials feared the consequences of letting it go.¹²

In 1966 the issue began to reach a climax. President de Gaulle of France visited the territory, only to meet mass demonstrations and violent confrontations instigated by Somali nationalists who were pressing for a true test of self-determination. Insulted, French authorities began to round up all Somalis who did not have adequate papers to prove themselves citizens, and the French either sent them to detention camps or expelled them from the territory completely. Barbed wire fences closed off French Somaliland to "illegal aliens" who were more often nomads attempting to use watering holes that were part of their annual cycle. The French then took the word

"Somali" out of the name of their colony, and it became the French Territory of 'Afars and 'Ises. That done, they organized a plebiscite on the question of independence.

The Somali government fought a cold war in its press and radio, pointing out French atrocities and irregularities as well as propagandizing the residents in the French colony to vote for independence. In March 1967 the French announced that the people had voted against independence. The Somali Republic had done all it could to expose France's injustice to Somalis, but as in the cases of the NFD and the Ogaadeen, Somali efforts bore no fruit.

The OAU Arena

The Somali constitution of 1961 held that "the Somali Republic promotes by legal and peaceful means the union of Somali territories." In fact, the Somalis made every diplomatic effort they could in order to bring to the world's attention the complexities of their dilemma. But the battles in the NFD, the Ogaadeen, and Djibouti during the 1960s brought Somalia into diplomatic isolation. This was especially apparent in the OAU, which isolated Somalia in its own continent.

In the 1963 inauguration conference of the OAU, the Somali foreign minister called for the "self-determination of the inhabitants of the Somali areas adjacent to the Somali Republic." The OAU summarily rejected that resolution in light of Article III of the charter, which calls for respect for the territorial sovereignty of member states, and Article VI, which requires noninterference in their internal affairs.

Amid the hostilities with Ethiopia in 1964, the Somalis again sought remedy from the OAU. At an emergency council of ministers in Dar-es-Salaam, the OAU passed a resolution calling for mediation that was based on an acceptance of the colonial boundaries. Subsequent meetings reaffirmed more strongly the OAU opposition to Somali claims. In response to these OAU resolutions, the Somali National Assembly passed unanimously its own resolution declaring that the OAU stance "should not bind the Somali Government." The Somalis stood alone.

YEARS OF QUIET DIPLOMACY, 1968-1976

Principles cost! In breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain in 1963, the Somalis lost their claim to the £1.3 million per year that had already been negotiated for development aid. To make matters worse, the Somalis felt compelled to invest heavily in their military. In 1964 the average military expenditure as a percentage of GNP in Africa was 2.4; in Somalia it was 3.4. In a country with a per capita

GNP of about \$150, heavy military expenditures was especially hard to bear. Worse still, many avenues for economic cooperation between Somalia and its neighbors were closed off. Somalis were paying a high cost to uphold the principle of self-determination for Somalis in neighboring countries.

In 1967, when Mahammad H. I. 'Igaal became prime minister, a subtle change took place in Somalia's foreign policy. 'Igaal began to pursue a policy of detente. U.S. diplomats had convinced him that a wider economic community encompassing Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Somalia might provide a context in which Somalis from all countries could have enhanced political freedom.¹³ Receptive to the idea of an expanded East African common market, 'Igaal stopped the supply lines to Somali guerrilla forces in Ethiopia and Kenya, and later on in 1967, in a joint communiqué with Emperor Haile Selassie, 'Igaal agreed to a joint military commission to monitor the boundary. He also promised that Radio Mogadishu would cease its hostile propaganda inciting Somalis in Ethiopia to military action. Despite this changed tone, no progress was made on Somalia's application to the East African community.

The government of Major-General Siyaad Barre, victorious in its coup d'état in 1969, continued to pursue a policy of restraint. But detente would be a misnomer for Siyaad's policy, which differed in important respects from 'Igaal's. On the diplomatic front, Siyaad Barre and his well-respected foreign minister 'Umar 'Arteh built up a number of allies in the Organization of African Unity, especially among the (Muslim) North African states. In response to these diplomatic initiatives, the OAU set up a Good Offices Committee headed by Presidents Jaafar Nimeiry of the Sudan and General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria. The committee's plan called for a joint development of the Ogaadeen within the context of Ethiopian sovereignty. Although the proposal did not satisfy Siyaad, it did represent a more sympathetic view by the OAU. In 1974 Siyaad became chair of the OAU, and he used the Mogadishu heads of state conference to further charm fellow African leaders. That year Somalia joined the Arab League. This diplomatic maneuver earned Somalia considerable foreign aid from OPEC as well as greater diplomatic support in the Middle East for its foreign policy goals.

Besides a more vigorous and creative diplomatic effort, the Somali government of Siyaad Barre built up a substantial armed force that could stand up to any army in black Africa. Through an alliance that led to a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in 1974, Somalia upgraded its fighting potential. Some 1,725 Somali soldiers went to the Soviet Union for advanced training. The

Somali army boasted in its inventory 150 T-35 and 100 T-54 tanks, mostly fitted with 105-mm guns. Also, the Soviets supplied to the Somali army more than 300 armed personnel carriers, 200 coastal batteries, 50 MiG fighters, a squadron of Il-28 bombers, and an SA-2 ground-to-air missile complex. As many as 3,600 Soviet advisers in Somalia supported this effort. In Somalia itself, not counting foreign aid, per capita expenditures for the military doubled in U.S. constant dollars from \$5 in 1967 to \$10 in 1970 and \$11 in 1974.¹⁴ When and if war came, this time the Somalis would be better prepared.

In the early years of the Siyaad Barre revolution, foreign policy pronouncements emphasized the evils of U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia and Zionist imperialism in the Middle East. On the question of Ethiopian imperialism in the Ogaadeen, the regime was verbally restrained. The Somalis were like the French after they lost Alsace-Lorraine in the 1871 Franco-Prussian war. For a generation, in regard to those lost provinces, the French whispered: Always think about it, but never speak about it. Under Siyaad Barre, detente on Africa's Horn was clearly a calm before a storm.

RETURN TO TURMOIL, 1977-1979

For Siyaad Barre, the liberation of the Ogaadeen was the only point of the Somali star worth a continued fight. Not only was the Ogaadeen area more central to the Somali economy and society, but it also was crucial to the legitimacy of Siyaad's regime. Siyaad's mother was from the Ogaadeen clan, and the Ogaadeen people played a central role in the president's tribal coalition. Many of the officers promoted in the Somali Democratic Republic's army were from the Ogaadeen clan, and they saw the liberation of their home areas as the highest goal for any Somali government.

In light of the special importance of the Ogaadeen, Siyaad Barre attempted to lighten his load of enemies. In numerous statements he tried to assure the Kenyans that Somalia had no plans to support the dissident forces in the northeastern province. In regard to the Territory of 'Afars and 'Ises, Somali diplomats were also willing to compromise on their original goal of political unity for all Somali peoples. After the 1967 plebiscite in which the French orchestrated an anti-Somali victory, nationalist activity within the territory was effectively contained by the French administration. Suddenly in 1975, however, the government of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing changed course. With a report in hand that the Djibouti port had little use for French security, Giscard decided to make peace with the Somalis in order to better extricate France from the Horn. He showed himself willing

to allow the 'Ises to participate fairly in local politics (in a simple change of an electoral law, the number of 'Ises on the electoral role was substantially increased) and to negotiate a timetable for independence.

When the French promised Somali diplomats that the 'Ises would not be discriminated against in the formation of an independent republic, the Somalis agreed that they would not interfere in the process of decolonization.¹⁵ Although there were some incidents of anti-French violence, during the next two years the process of negotiating an independent Djibouti state proceeded calmly. The 'Ises won a bare majority against the divided 'Afars in the first elections, and an 'Ise leader, Hasan Gouled, became the first president of the republic. The new government, relying on the French troops that would remain in the republic, has demonstrated its independence from both Ethiopia and Somalia. Djibouti's politics are not the domain of this volume, but it is of concern here that the government of Somalia has used its role as peaceful observer of the decolonization of France's territory as evidence of the flexibility of its position. The Somali 'Ises, from the point of view of the Somali government, have exercised their right to self-determination. That they want independence in a common state along with the 'Afars, outside the framework of Somalia, is a perfectly acceptable outcome to the Somali government.

With the NFD and Djibouti off the foreign policy agenda, the Ogaadeen took on monumental importance. After Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974, Siyaad was pressured by his general staff to plan for the liberation of the Ogaadeen. The WSLF was reorganized so that its efforts would be coordinated with those of the Somali regular army. However, Siyaad himself was not truly enthusiastic about a war for a number of reasons. He was soon to be chair of the OAU, and it would be unseemly to be at war while hosting the continent's heads of state. Also, he was making some progress on the diplomatic front and wished to see if Somali goals could be realized by peaceful means. Finally, the Soviets warned him that they would abandon their alliance should Siyaad's forces make moves in the Ogaadeen.¹⁶

But Siyaad was not in complete control of the situation, and the guerrilla forces, already supplied with arms, began to penetrate Ethiopian strongholds in the Ogaadeen. By early 1977 the war began to heat up. Siyaad had little choice but to permit his regular troops to "resign" in order to join with the WSLF. In July, using that opportunity, thousands of Somali regular troops crossed the border. Under the leadership of General Mahammad 'Ali Samantar, some 35,000 regular and 15,000 guerrilla troops coordinated an attack on both the Ogaadeen and the Haud. By September 1977 Somali forces

controlled more than 90 percent of the disputed region.¹⁷ After many failed attempts, Somali troops captured Jigjiga, and Ethiopian troops mutinied and withdrew to Harar. A spectacular Somali victory was at hand.

Unfortunately for the Somalis, their Soviet allies were true to their word. They had not only counseled patience to Siyaad, but they also had attempted to fashion a socialist alliance among South Yemen, Ethiopia, and Somalia. With the increasingly socialist rhetoric and policies of the Ethiopian revolutionaries, the Soviets felt that they had a greater stake in friendship with the Ethiopians than with the Somalis. By August 1977 the Soviets halted all military aid to Somalia and began to supply arms to Ethiopia. Many Soviet military advisers went straight from Somalia to Ethiopia, even taking with them virtually all of the Somali maps of the region.¹⁸ From May 1977 through March 1978, by land and by sea, the Soviet Union supplied about \$1.5 billion in military equipment to Ethiopia. This represented more than seven times the military aid that the Soviets had supplied to Somalia during the previous three years. To help Ethiopia repel the Somalis, two leading Soviet generals, 11,000 Cuban troops, and 1,500 Soviet advisers were assigned to the Ogaadeen war.¹⁹

In a clever tactical maneuver, the Soviet-Cuban-Ethiopian army surrounded the Somali troops in Jigjiga. By early March 1978, with 8,000 Somali troops killed, three-fourths of the Somali tank force destroyed, and about one-half of the Somali aircraft out of commission, Siyaad Barre recalled Somali forces from the Ogaadeen. Although sporadic guerrilla warfare continues to this day, there is no question that Somalia suffered a severe setback.

Postmortems abound. Many of the Somali generals argued that Siyaad Barre tried to command Somali forces from Mogadishu and was not properly attuned to the situation on the front. Therefore, tactical errors were made. (Some of those generals were summarily executed; others attempted what was to be an unsuccessful coup d'état in April 1978.) Some Somali officials argued that they had been promised vast U.S. military aid if Siyaad Barre relinquished his alliance with the Soviet Union. These officials claimed that the United States double-crossed them by refusing to respond to the Soviet aid to Ethiopia. (Although the United States did make informal promises of aid if the Soviets were thrown out of Somalia, they hardly promised sufficient materiel to fight a war of liberation.²⁰)

The simpler explanation for the Somali setback is that Ethiopia, with a population of more than 26 million and with an important role in African affairs, is a bigger prize for the superpowers than is Somalia. Somalis fought well, and they almost won. It took an

enormous infusion of foreign aid to defeat them. But because of Somalia's small size and the unpopularity of its cause in the OAU, the odds were against it.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE OGAADEEN WAR, 1979-1983

After coming so close to victory, after affording Somalis in Jigjiga and other Ogaadeen towns a taste of freedom, the military defeat suffered by Somali forces was all the more bitter. Abandoned by the Soviets, Siyaad sought recovery from two sources—the cultivation of an alliance with the United States and a greater attention to Somali membership in the Arab League.

The Somali-U.S. Entente

In the final stages of the Ogaadeen war, Somalia's future appeared to be contingent on the outcome of another war: that between U.S. secretary of state Cyrus Vance and national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in the inner circles of Jimmy Carter's administration. Vance, attuned to the regionalist perspective of his Department of State, urged caution, fearing that "if we became too closely linked with Somalia while it was involved in a blatant invasion of the Ogaadeen, we would find ourselves inadvertently on the wrong side of one of Africa's most cherished principles—the territorial integrity of the postcolonial states." The U.S. position in Africa would surely be compromised, Vance argued, if the United States came too strongly to Somalia's aid.²¹

Brzezinski countered with a globalist perspective. He argued that the U.S. role is to counter Soviet power wherever it emerges in the world. If the United States abandons that role, the Soviets would think the United States weak and would further challenge other Western interests. No matter what the regionalist nuances, Brzezinski maintained, the United States should supply Somalia with arms equivalent to those provided to Ethiopia by the Soviets.²²

President Siyaad Barre tried to strengthen the Brzezinski position by pointing out that the United States was suffering from a post-Vietnam syndrome and that it was about time the United States assumed its proper role in world affairs. But he was largely unsuccessful. The Vance position won out, in large part because Andrew Young, a close Carter confidante and his U.N. ambassador, received his Africa cues from President Nyerere of Tanzania and from a variety of Nigerian diplomats, all of whom had little sympathy for the Somali cause. The United States agreed to provide defensive weapons, refugee relief, and economic aid under the condition that all regular Somali

troops leave the Ogaadeen. Once Somali troops did withdraw, however, the State Department, playing a sinister game of bureaucratic politics, cleverly held back virtually all the military materiel promised to Somalia. Carter's administration did provide substantial refugee aid, however, and this helped to save the lives of nearly 1 million destitute nomads.

The one card in Siyaad Barre's hand was the strategic value of the port of Berbera. The Soviets had built a facility there capable of handling large bombers. When the shah of Iran fell in 1979, the United States lost its closest ally in the Gulf, and U.S. strategic planners felt that the United States could no longer adequately protect Western oil interests. President Carter deemed it unwise to rely on any single country in that region. He therefore pledged to build up a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) capable of a quick response to any emergency situation in the Middle East. With the Soviet Union out of Somalia, Berbera became a possible facility for the RDF.

Siyaad Barre incorrectly thought that Berbera was his ace in the hole. He asked for \$2 billion in material in exchange for U.S. rights to use Berbera. But the United States also was pursuing negotiations in Oman and in Kenya and had the right to use the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Berbera would be nice, but it was not essential, and U.S. strategic planners were afraid that Siyaad was too fickle. To rely on Berbera too heavily might backfire. U.S. negotiators therefore responded with an offer of \$40 million. Siyaad had to eat his pride and accept that offer. During the next few years the United States gained access to Berbera, but Somalis saw virtually none of the equipment promised them.

With Ronald Reagan's presidential victory in 1980, Somalis were hopeful that the globalists would replace the regionalists in the making of Africa policy. They were encouraged when, in its first presentation of an aid package for Africa to the Congress, a State Department official emphasized that countering the Soviet Union was the primary U.S. objective in the Horn. Reagan officials seemed intent on providing abundant arms to all allies in a global battle against the evils of communism.²³

To a certain extent, Somali hopes have been fulfilled. In response to an alleged incursion of Ethiopian troops into Somalia in July 1982, the Reagan administration was able to overcome intrabureaucratic objections and provide military aid to the Somalis. Considerable materiel was quickly airlifted to Mogadishu. In the Reagan budget of 1983, military aid to Somalia from the United States was pegged at \$40 million, doubling the figure of each of the preceding two years. In 1986, U.S. aid to Somalia decreased to \$36 million.

However, Somali hopes also have been dashed by Somalia's new alliance with the United States. Berbera has not become a jewel in the RDF crown. In the first major RDF maneuvers in 1981, in an operation called Bright Star, a few U.S. paratroopers landed in Berbera, installed a small desalinization facility, and left. Real action was elsewhere. Pentagon planners refuse to make extensive investments in Somalia. They have accepted the view of the Bureau of African Affairs in the State Department and of the Africa Subcommittee of the House of Representatives that Somalia still has its eyes on the Ogaadeen. If Somalia used U.S. weapons to initiate yet another war, it is feared that the Ethiopians (with tacit Soviet acceptance) would counterattack and occupy Somalia. Prudence dictates an arms-length relationship with Somalia in the view of most U.S. officials. Many still hope for a reconciliation between Somalia and Ethiopia and therefore do not want to identify too closely with Somali foreign policy goals.²⁴

On balance, Somalia and the United States have become cautious allies. The United States has gotten a foothold in a strategic crossroads in the Middle East, and Somalia has gotten some defensive military aid. More importantly, Somalia has received from its new allies considerable refugee and development aid.

Somalia and the Arab World

When Somalia joined the Arab League in 1974, few Somalis took it seriously. Although Somalis are devout Muslims, their grossest epithets have usually been reserved for Arabs. "To be a trader's agent and a flunkey is business for Arabs," says a Somali poem.²⁵ Somalis trace their ancestry to Arabs, but since the era of nationalism they have insisted they were Africans.

Yet in 1974 Foreign Minister 'Umar 'Arteh waxed poetic on the cultural identity of the Arab and Somali peoples. "Somalia is ready," he declared, "to play its role fully . . . in the service of the great Arab cause."²⁶ Since that time more of Somalia's diplomatic energy has been expended on its Arab than on its African relations.

Somalia has gained considerably from its membership in the Arab League. From 1975 to 1978 Somalia received \$361.1 million in OPEC development aid, which constituted about 14 percent of the total Africa (south of the Sahara) outlay in the OPEC development program. Only Mauritania and Sudan, both of which also emphasize their Arab identities, received more during that period.²⁷ Furthermore, approximately two hundred fifty-thousand Somalis have migrated to the Arab peninsula since the end of the Ogaadeen war. These Somalis are eligible, by virtue of their country's designation as an Arab state,

for government jobs and are free to engage in trade. A great deal of the imported goods available in Somalia have been purchased by the foreign exchange earned by these migrants. Somalia's economy has been able to recover from the devastation of the war in large part because of its ties to the oil-exporting Arab world.

Somalia has paid a price for this alliance. First, the weakening of scientific socialism as the ideology governing Somali politics is not only a result of the termination of Somalia's alliance with the Soviet Union. It is in large part due to Saudi Arabia's insistence that a true Muslim state could not follow the dictates of Marxism-Leninism. Second, the Arab states have insisted that if Somalia is truly an Arab state, that it should place less emphasis on the development of the Somali language. In response, many officials in the Ministry of Education have been reassigned to enhance the curriculum in the Arabic language. In December 1983 the government began a six-month Arabic literacy campaign designed to mollify its new allies rather than to respond to the pedagogical needs of the population.²⁸ Thus, one of the major achievements of the Siyaad Barre regime—the full development of the national language—has been partially compromised.

Despite its alliance with the United States and despite its ties with Arab League members, Somalia has not as yet reached a post-Ogaadeen war equilibrium. This is largely due to the influx of refugees from the Ogaadeen war, a problem of enormous weight. It deserves special treatment here, if only because the refugee crisis has become the focal point of Somali foreign policy.

THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The aftermath of the Ogaadeen war of 1977–1978 brought in its wake a human tragedy of horrible proportions. Although the precise number of refugees will never be known—figures range from the government estimate of 2 million to the relief agencies' estimates of 650,000—it is generally accepted that Somalia accepted within its boundaries a higher percentage of refugees (based on its own population) than any other country in modern times. These refugees came to Somalia with virtually no resources, having lost their land and flocks. They faced only homelessness, starvation, thirst, and disease.

Although not all refugees were Somalis—many were Oromos—there was no question of their welcome in Somalia, even though the Somali government could hardly sustain them. The Somali president put all his attention onto this crisis—forty refugee camps were

constructed by 1981, and the government seconded ministers from every department to bring whatever services were possible to the destitute. Despite these efforts, Somalia had to turn to the international community for massive amounts of aid. In September 1979 the Somali government appealed for help to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, but it was six months before the U.N. responded—a delay that cost countless lives. Somali government appeals to international relief agencies became—and remain—a core component of today's foreign policy.

Eventually, the international community learned of the true depths of the tragedy. The U.S. Center for Disease Control, for example, reported that general malnutrition, a deadly epidemic of measles, and debilitating diarrhea had left many children dead. Massive aid began to flow in from U.N. agencies, from U.S. and Western European governments, and from private agencies. At first there was confusion as to who should play what role, but by 1981 the World Food Program, the Somali government, and CARE had established and institutionalized a tripartite agreement that brought to Somalia food to feed 950,000 refugees.

In a revealing survey of three refugee camps in 1981, sponsored by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Hanne Christensen reported that these camps were now more-or-less settled communities.²⁹ The camps cover from 4 to 7 square kilometers (1.6 to 2.8 sq. mi.) with houses averaging from 3 to 4 square meters (3.6 to 4.8 sq. yds.). Most refugee families have a compound with two houses, one for living and the other for cooking. The average household comprises eight or nine individuals, two or three of whom are adults. About two-thirds of the households are headed by women. Half are widows, and half have left their husbands behind in the Ogaadeen, either to tend flocks or to fight with the Western Somali Liberation Front. Around many compounds the refugees have constructed a traditional thorn tree fence, and many families have goats, donkeys, cattle, and even camels within their compounds. Also, the families have cooking utensils, decent clothing, and many women have jewelry. In the southern camps Christensen noted the presence of shops with a "surprisingly large supply of commodities." This is so far very similar to typical nonrefugee towns. The major difference is that these camps are totally cleared of trees and small vegetation because the area was cleared of all vegetation for farming in the early months of settlement. These areas, Christensen reports, "are slowly being transformed into stony, arid desert." Women now must often walk 4 to 5 miles to collect wood fuel.

The camps are directed by a commandant from the National Refugee Commission of Somalia. Each camp section has a refugee leader who reports both to the commandant and to the international agencies. Also, there are women's committees that work on a variety of family oriented programs and handicrafts. In two of the three camps, schools are in operation, both at the primary and adult education level. All of the camps have well-developed health care systems. The report noted that "dispensaries, T. B. clinics, antenatal and mother and child clinics function well." It is no wonder that these camps have become favored resting places for passing nonrefugee nomad families, and there are facilities to accommodate these short-term guests.

Food aid reaches the camps by government trucks. About 10-20 percent of it gets sold by the refugees to purchase items from the local shops, primarily sugar, but some for livestock. Christensen observed considerable stockpiling of food within the refugee homes. In the southern camps gardening projects have just begun, and irrigation ditches have been dug to support a maize crop. From sales of food and firewood, some refugees have entered their own businesses. An Associated Press reporter visited the Jalalaqsi camp in 1983 and reported that one refugee had opened up a profitable restaurant, with profits of up to \$20 per week. A proud Somali refugee official referred to it as the Refugee Hilton.³⁰ Despite the stockpiling, entrepreneurial efforts, and the moves toward self-sufficiency, Christensen's report emphasized that without the present level of international support, the system could unravel completely, with immediate mass starvation and disease.

The unfaced problem is the future. Will these refugees return to their home areas in the Ogaadeen, or will they become permanent settlers in the Somali Republic? No one has answered this question, and thus the people live in limbo. Somalia has no assurance from Ethiopia that these people can go back without facing reprisals, so government officials cannot make any recommendation to return. As long as the refugees live in the camps, there is no incentive for them to produce efficiently. If the refugees do begin to develop settled lives, the U.N. is likely to declare the refugee situation ended and will cease to support the massive food aid. The emergency crisis has been solved, but the future of these war refugees is as uncertain as ever. The continued collaboration of the Somali government with international relief agencies thus remains a central aspect of Somalia's foreign relations.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE OGAADEEN WAR

While Somalia has been looking inward to resolve its gargantuan refugee problem, other states have been active in consolidating their positions in the Horn. The Ethiopians, of course, have been the most interested in consolidating their victory. Since the 1977-1978 war they have been active on two fronts. Domestically, they are abandoning their scorched-earth policy (in effect in the Ogaadeen since 1977) in favor of one that may be described as a carrot-and-stick policy—the Ethiopian government provides assistance to those Somalis who prove their loyalty to the regime in order to help them recover from war and famine but continues to deal ruthlessly with those Somalis who refuse to pledge their loyalty. The policy extends into Somalia proper where Ethiopia not only provides bases and military support to Somali dissidents bent on toppling Siyaad Barre but intervenes actively to promote Somali factionalism. Ethiopia, our sources tell us, pumps money and arms into the war chest of the opposition clan-families of the Isaaq, the Majeerteen, and sections of the Hawiye, encouraging them to engage in punitive feuds with clans loyal to Siyaad Barre's regime (the Mareehaan, the Ogaadeen, and the Dulbahante). The alleged aim of Ethiopian scheming is to oust Siyaad Barre from power and to replace him with a puppet regime indebted to Ethiopia for its power and therefore amenable to renouncing publicly, once and for all, any Somali claims to the Ogaadeen. Failing that, Ethiopia at the very least hopes to create enough internal agitations in Somalia to sap Somali energies and divert Siyaad Barre's support for the Ogaadeen guerrillas. If this is a correct analysis of Ethiopian policy toward Somalia, then this policy nearly succeeded in 1983 when sporadic feuds broke out across a large area in Somalia between opposition and government clans, at the same time as Somali National Movement, Ethiopian-backed forces conducted daring commando operations that succeeded in releasing from prison ten SNM political detainees at the main jail at Mandeera between Berbera and Hargeisa. The episode set off widespread panic among Somali authorities and nearly toppled the government.

Externally, the Ethiopians are determined to isolate Somalia diplomatically, turn African opinion against the "menace of Somali irredentism," and frustrate Somali attempts to enter into friendly relations with any major power. Above all, Ethiopia spares no effort in lobbying against the provision of U.S. arms to Somalia. In the latter attempt Ethiopia is alleged to find useful the U.S. Jewish lobby, where the former still retains influential old friends. Despite Ethiopia's

move politically to the socialist camp, Israel fears that if Ethiopian unity collapses, not only will the Ogaadeen win autonomy, but so will Eritrea. An independent Eritrea, Israeli analysts believe, will emphasize its Muslim connection to differentiate itself from Christian Ethiopia. Israel does not want another Muslim state bordering on one of its critical sea-lanes.

Soviet policy toward Somalia meshes with that of Ethiopia insofar as both aim at overthrowing Siyaad Barre and at replacing him with a puppet regime. But here their community of interests ends. Where the Ethiopians want a weak, submissive Somalia, the Soviets want a Somalia with a Marxist regime that would accommodate the pet Soviet geopolitical project of linking together Ethiopia, Somalia, and Southern Yemen in a confederation of socialist republics under Soviet tutelage. This they tried to do, with Fidel Castro as intermediary, in March 1977. The Soviet strategy may come to fruition if power in Somalia were to devolve on General Samantar, who is powerful in Somalia and is the Soviet's strongest backer on the SRC.

Just as Soviet and Ethiopian policies toward Somalia coincide in some ways and diverge in others, so also do the policies of the three pro-Western countries in the region (Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) and their principal patron, the United States. Like Ethiopia—and for similar reasons—Kenya wants a weak Somalia but preferably one with a conservative, free-enterprise political philosophy like that of Kenya. Interestingly, a recent political development (ostensibly internal to Kenya) seems to have much improved Kenya-Somali relations: Major-General Mahamoud Mahammad, a Kenyan of Somali descent in the Kenyan armed forces, played a leading part in putting down an attempted coup in Kenya in August 1982 that nearly toppled Daniel Arap-Moi from power. Moi's gratitude to Mahammad and other Somalis in the ranks has reportedly generated a general goodwill toward the Somalis of Kenya, which in turn resulted in an improvement in Kenya-Somali relations.

The principal aim of Saudi Arabia and Egypt is to keep Somalia stable, conservative, Islamic, and pro-Western. As U.S. friends in the region, they will continue to protect Somalia (and the Sudan) from the "rascally designs" of what is popularly known as "the duo of loony colonels" backed by the Soviet Union—Colonel Muammar Qaddafi and Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam—as well as party chief Ali Nasser of Southern Yemen. All three have—for different reasons—a strong interest in destabilizing Siyaad Barre's regime. To judge by his actions and statements, Qaddafi's distaste for Siyaad Barre can only be matched by his antipathy for the former president of the Sudan, Jaafar Nimeiry. Libya channeled substantial funds into the

opposition activities of Somali dissident groups like the SNM and SSDF, as it did to those of Nimeiry's opponents. Secretary-General Ali presumably acts on orders from his Soviet patrons whose interest in undermining the stability of Siyaad Barre's regime we have mentioned already.

In dealing with Somalia, the United States is likely to continue running with the hare while hunting with the hounds, seeking to keep Somalia within the fold of pro-Western clients in the region while courting Ethiopia back from the Soviet camp. This involves giving the Somalis some economic and military support in order to keep the regime from collapsing (and to compensate the regime for U.S. use of the Somali port facilities at Berbera). The United States is, however, unlikely to send Somalia enough arms to enable the Somalis to threaten Ethiopia militarily as this would undermine the U.S. objective of disengaging the Ethiopians from Soviet embrace. While seeking to improve relations with Ethiopia, the United States must look over its shoulder lest the Soviet Union pull off, literally, a coup in Somalia and entrench itself in both countries. Thus, the United States must play a high-wire diplomatic act, and its success will depend on the willingness of the Somalis to cooperate and on the eagerness of the Ethiopians to restore good relations with the United States.

FOREIGN POLICY: A SUMMARY

British Somaliland and Italian Somalia achieved independence in 1960 in a wave of optimism. Two of the Somalilands were united. The possibility of bringing the NFD, French Somaliland, and the Ogaadeen into the fold appeared good. Somali leaders wished to pursue that goal peacefully, but they and their people were ready to go to war to fulfill the goal of a united Somalia.

That goal dominated the agenda of Somalia's foreign policy for twenty years. Somali diplomats were unable to convince their compatriots in the Organization of African Unity of the justice and uniqueness of their cause. Somali guerrillas were unable to wear down the military establishments in Kenya and Ethiopia. In a stunning effort to capture control of the Ogaadeen, the Somalis faced an unparalleled counterattack by Russian, Cuban, and Ethiopian forces. A united Somalia—in which all Somalis would live under the jurisdiction of a single Somali state—remains an elusive goal.

Somalia has a more elemental agenda in the 1980s. It must seek foreign support in order to feed and to care for nearly 1 million people made destitute by the war in the Ogaadeen. Approximately

25 percent of the people now in Somalia are refugees. Furthermore, Somalia faces an Ethiopian army that has the capacity to overrun Somalia itself. From a military standpoint Somalia cannot think at this point about liberating the Ogaadeen. It must concern itself with the security of its present territory. Since 1982 Ethiopian troops, along with some Somali dissident forces, have occupied two towns on the Somali side of the border. Regular forays by the Ethiopians across the Somali road from Beled Weyne to Hargeisa remind the Somalis how precarious their own position has become. Refugee problems, consequent economic and political disruptions, and military threats are the new realities facing the Somali Republic. Its new friendships with the United States and with the Arab states necessarily center on these concerns. Once the crisis has passed, however, Somalis must again consider how peace and justice might be brought to the region.

7

Into the 1990s: Problems and Possibilities of Social Transformation

Somalia entered the 1980s with a rather eventful past and an uncertain future. Ecological crisis, a fragile economy, internal political instability, festering disputes with its neighbors, and unreliable foreign friendships have haunted Somalia since its birth as an independent state a quarter century ago. Since 1969, the country has undergone a turbulent military revolution—and a few abortive coups—that put an end to the ancient democratic institutions that once formed the pride of Somalia's heritage; the nation suffered a jolting setback in a major contest with Ethiopia and, as a consequence, faced a massive influx of refugees, which placed numerous burdens on an already strained economy. In foreign relations Somalia has witnessed a diplomatic reshuffle in which the United States and the Soviet Union switched sides between Ethiopia and Somalia and in which Somalia appeared to emerge the bigger loser. In addition, one of the worst droughts in its history gripped Somalia in 1973–1974, resulting in a widespread loss of livestock and the near starvation of a large segment of the population.

To add to Somalia's trials, the unity and cohesiveness of the Somali people—traits that were once assumed to be the nation's greatest asset—have come under severe strains since 1980. Opposition groups have emerged and, denied the freedom to operate inside the country, have left to cast their lot with Ethiopia. Backed with the money, arms, and troops of Somalia's foreign antagonist, these opposition groups attempted to invade the country. The attempt failed, but the groups' action threatened to plunge the nation into a civil war.

Yet the Somalis have emerged from this period of crisis with remarkable verve. Indeed, a series of recent developments justifies cautious optimism. To begin with, after five years of recurring droughts, a break in the weather brought about a rainy season, which began in 1981 and continues right to the present, thereby replenishing the water supply and rangelands and thus ensuring a revival of the herds of livestock so vital to Somalia's economy. In foreign affairs the country seems to have recently broken out of the diplomatic doldrums in which it has languished since the Ogaadeen venture; it now joins the Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia as bona fide Western clients in the Red Sea region. Domestically, the refugee situation remains potentially an intractable problem, but at least for the time being it holds at a manageable level, thanks to a "tidal wave" of foreign aid, principally from Western nations. Most remarkably, since 1983 opposition groups have floundered in confusion, discredited in Somali eyes by their humiliating association with Ethiopia and crippled by clannish infighting. The current situation in Somalia probably is best described by the stoic Benaadiri expression *Waa la moodaa* (We will muddle through, somehow), an expression that points to a future for Somalia that is neither exceptionally bright nor unduly bleak.

THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL STABILITY

Political stability is the key to Somalia's future, as it is in most sub-Saharan African states. If the political history of Somalia since independence is any guide, there are reasons to have misgivings about the future. As we have seen, Somalia started with a vigorous participatory democracy, an elected National Assembly to which government was answerable, an independent judiciary, and an active set of newspapers, such as Yuusuf Duhul's *Dalka*, which were once hailed as the model of free press in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet by 1969 that parliamentary system, under the corrosive impact of clannish infighting, bureaucratic ineptness, and rampant nepotism, had degenerated into a civil anarchy; this explains the ease, indeed the enthusiasm, with which the traditionally democratic Somalis accepted General Mahammad Siyaad Barre's bloodless coup in October of that year. Although few Somalis knew at the time what the future held, their ready acquiescence to the wholesale suspension of their civil liberties by the new military regime was an eloquent indication of the extent of the public's disenchantment with democratic politics.

The military coup soon hardened into a socialist dictatorship, which came to be known as scientific socialism, and although the enthusiasm of the public with the new regime began in succeeding

years to turn into a growing cynicism, the revolution nevertheless continued to retain a considerable measure of popular support. This was due largely to the boldness and purposive vigor with which the revolution initially attended to the nation's economic and social ills. Whatever accusations critics may level at Siyaad Barre's rule of Somalia—and it deserves to be accused of many things—the fact remains that his leadership saw the nation through six years of remarkable progress from 1970 to 1976. Indeed by 1976 this former sergeant of the Italian Colonial Army, who now styled himself the father of the Somali people, could with justifiable pride point to a record of solid achievements including the sand-dune stabilization project, the construction of a new network of paved roads, slum clearance and urban planning accomplished largely through self-help schemes, and the introduction of mass literacy and the extension of primary and secondary education. To its enduring credit, Siyaad Barre's regime removed the national disgrace of an unwritten language by giving an official script to the Somali language.

The 1973–1974 drought, the loss of revolutionary momentum in 1975, and the 1977–1978 Ogaadeen debacle struck Somalia with considerable force, plunging the nation into a morass of purposelessness and inaction. Somalia slipped from a nation on the move to a nation adrift. Plagued by internal opposition, by lack of a reliable foreign patron, and by the threat of an Ethiopian-backed invasion, Siyaad Barre's chief preoccupation since 1978 seems to have been to hang on to power at whatever cost. It is therefore just to say that since then his regime has operated in a void.

For years the eminent European anthropologists Enrico Cerulli and I. M. Lewis have been telling us that to understand Somali politics, it is necessary to understand Somali clanship and kinship ties. Their thesis has come under persistent criticism, especially by nationalist historians and politicians anxious to foster a sense of national rather than tribal allegiance in the Somali body politic. The political history of independent Somalia, however, makes the relevance of Lewis and Cerulli's argument painfully clear. One can scarcely think of a significant domestic or foreign development in Somali politics since independence that was not influenced to a large degree by an underlying clan consideration. The formation of political coalitions, the selection of presidents and prime ministers, the distribution of the civil service (from minister down to the humblest office messenger), the allocation of national resources, the access to economic opportunities—these depend almost invariably on kinship patterns. Thus, although religious, regional, or class divisions may play a part in Somali politics, ethnicity remains the paramount factor.

What is baffling is that the Somalis' perception of their system of kinship ties borders on the schizophrenic. Unlike, say, the Luo or Kikuyu of Kenya who, without shame or embarrassment, openly acknowledge their commitment to their respective tribes, Somalis are squeamish about admitting their clan allegiance. On the one hand, it is hard to find a Somali politician who would feel free enough to declare openly and without qualms that his loyalty is, first and foremost, to clan. On the other hand, it is equally hard to find one who would act independently of clan affiliations. This would seem to suggest that although Somalis recognize clannishness to be pernicious to good or stable government, they are not prepared to act politically on any other basis.

To evaluate Somalia's prospects for a stable government, we need to examine the coalition of clans that rules the country now as well as the coalition of opposing clans. But first a necessary caveat: It may be conceptually inadequate to attribute power to a given clan or even to a combination of clans because any clan is too unwieldy to act corporately or to share privileges equally. Rather, prominent individuals from a series of clans band together to form a coalition of "big men" who dominate power. These big men cement their alliance further by entering into an extensive network of political marriages. Because they rise to power in the first place by reason of their clan ties, one can legitimately characterize their rule as clan rule.

Many analysts, and especially those who oppose the regime of General Siyaad, have described the ruling coalition in terms of a shifting alliance of three clans: the Mareehaan, the Ogaadeen, and the Dulbahante (represented by the acronym MOD). It is said (using the poet Hadraawi's metaphor) that the division of the nation's wealth can be likened to the meat of a slaughtered camel: The prime cuts are shared by members of the MOD alliance—the lion's share goes to the Mareehaan, the leopard's share to the Ogaadeen, and perhaps the hyena's share to the Dulbahante. An occasional bone is sent to the lean and hungry Hawiye clan-family and to the haughty but largely outmaneuvered Isaaq. No bone is thrown to the Majeerteen, especially to the once powerful 'Umar Mahamuud primary lineage, about whom the president is said to be particularly paranoid.

In actuality, Siyaad Barre's clan-based politics is far more subtle than that. Within the army and in high political office there are numerous Isaacs and Majeerteens, but they are almost always from primary lineages with little direct involvement in Isaaq and Majeerteen politics. Siyaad cleverly appoints people who are unknown within their clan-families and are delighted to get positions of power within

the national government. Another Siyaad tactic is to give letters of credit to prominent Isaacs and Majeerteens that allow them to amass great wealth as international traders. They know they can continue to prosper as long as they abjure political power. Yet another Siyaad tactic is to purge his government of prominent Mareehaans whenever he wants to jail threatening Isaacs or Majeerteens. In his 1982 mass arrest of government ministers, in which two prominent Isaacs ('Umar 'Arteh and Ismaa'il 'Ali Abokor) were arrested, Siyaad was careful to include two prominent Mareehaans ('Umar Haaaji and Mahammad Aadan Sheikh). Through these tactics, Siyaad Barre has been able to divide his potential enemies and to argue that his appointments and dismissals have nothing to do with clan thinking.

This is, perhaps, a convenient moment to make a few summary remarks on the opposition to Siyaad Barre's regime. At present two political parties—the Somali Salvation Democratic Front and the Somali National Movement—constitute the only organized opposition to President Barre's regime. Both parties are based in Addis Ababa, and both receive some assistance in the form of money, arms, and diplomatic support from their host, strongman Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, and from a variety of foreign sources including Libya, South Yemen, and the Soviet Union. Both parties have considerable popular support within Somalia, the SSDF from disaffected sections of the Majeerteen clan-family and the SNM from highly alienated clans in the northern region. Yet, as we have seen, despite their outside diplomatic backing and popular support inside Somalia, the SSDF and the SNM have been singularly ineffective in toppling Siyaad Barre from power.

It is not enough to attribute the failure of SNM and SSDF solely to their weak organization, ideological contradictions, or even to the image problem of their Ethiopian connection. These are important factors, but the real difficulties that render these movements impotent go deeper and have to be explained in terms of Somali kinship politics. It is not a well-kept secret that both parties are expressions of clan discontent rather than a supratribal national opposition. In the view of informed observers, the SNM is associated with the Isaac, which, both as a region and a clan-family, seem to be highly estranged from the regime. Similarly, the SSDF is seen as a Majeerteen party, in particular of the 'Umar Mahamuud who are anxious to reclaim their former position of primacy in Somali politics.

The segmentary nature of Somali clanship is relevant to the future fortunes of the opposition groups and to that of the ruling coalition. As social anthropologists have tirelessly pointed out (Lewis for the Somalis, Evans-Pritchard for the Nuer of the Sudan, and

Meyer Fortes for the Tallensi of northern Ghana), a fundamental characteristic of the segmentary system is structural instability.¹ Depending on the nature and context of, and participants in, a particular political matter, the segments of the clan unify temporarily to deal with an imminent emergency only to splinter off into antagonistic subsegments when the emergency abates.

In the Somali context, for example, the Isaaq constitute a unit vis-à-vis the Daarood and, as such, would theoretically be expected to act jointly as a group to assert their interests. In reality, however, they cannot do so because they are internally shackled by segmentation. Similarly, the 'Umar Mahamuud primary lineage, which forms the regime's second major opposition, is segmented into at least three main branches, the Reer Hirsi, the Reer Khalaf, and the Reer Mahad, each of which in turn breaks down into a bewildering welter of competitive splinter groups.

Indeed, we have learned—just as this book is about to go to press—of a bloody power struggle within the top leadership of the SSDF that resulted in the imprisonment by the Ethiopian authorities of Colonel 'Abdullaahi Yuusuf, former member of the Somali Army Officer Corps and, since 1978, leader of the SSDF, along with six of his lieutenants including the flamboyant and ruthless 'Abdullaahi Mahammad ("Fashiista"). The Ethiopians apparently decided to imprison Colonel Yuusuf and his cadres after he refused to comply with a majority decision of the SSDF's Central Committee that relieved him of "his leadership responsibilities."² In defiance of this decision, according to our source, Colonel Yuusuf's faction summarily executed four high-ranking members of his opponents in the party's Central Committee. Although it is too early to verify, the new leader of the SSDF is said to be Mahammad Abshir, a civilian from the Reer Mahad, and hitherto a lower echelon bureaucrat in the hierarchy of the party. His position is a rather difficult one, indeed, due not only to his low status, but to the fact that most guerrillas are of the Reer Khalaf.

What this suggests is that the inherent weakness and disunity of Siyaad's opponents, rather than his personal resourcefulness or political mastery, account for much of the general's success. This is not to suggest that he is politically inept or personally feckless. If anything, his years of rule prove him to be a shrewd politician—at least as Somali politics go—who is capable of backing his boundless appetite for power with a thoroughgoing consistency and determination. Siyaad Barre is very Somali in his intrigue and political guile, but very un-Somali in his discipline and persistence in realizing his plans. Intimately conversant with the clannish segmentation that

divides his opposition, Siyaad exploits it with consummate skill, playing one faction against another, only to discard them both when they have served his purpose. In this respect President Siyaad's flair for duplicity and underhanded dealing resemble the political deviousness of the highland Amharas more than it does the open and unstable politics of the lowland pastoralists. Although less ruthless than Mengistu Haile Mariam, Siyaad shares with the Ethiopian leader the capacity for political skullduggery and crafty scheming that seem to be second nature to both.

According to a rare confession breathed in the ear of an intimate political confidant, Jaalle Barre is alleged to have declared: "I believe neither in Islam, nor socialism, nor tribalism, nor Somali nationalism, nor pan-Africanism. The only ideology to which I am firmly committed," the president reportedly said, "is the ideology of political survival." In a similar vein, a wealthy Dulbahante businessman said of the president: "All he wants is power. He has no family life and no bank account."³ Judged on the basis of power, Siyaad Barre's is a success story. He has not only survived but actually thrived; he has managed to outmaneuver every challenge to his power and weather every political storm by dividing his opponents and eliminating them one at a time and, where he could not divide, detaining them en masse. In 1982, when the country was invaded by SSDF dissidents and their Ethiopian allies and the northern region was in open rebellion, observers confidently predicted his imminent fall. Yet Siyaad surprised friends and foes alike by turning both events to advantage. His army vigorously repulsed the invaders, and he personally paid a highly publicized visit to the north to show the flag. Rumor has it that he distributed bagfuls of cash to tribal notables, thanks to the \$90 million in U.S. aid he received in August 1982. The visit in and of itself does not prove that he won the hearts and minds of the northerners, but it does prove that he had acquired sufficient control of the situation to trust his person to what was thought to be an SNM stronghold and therefore enemy territory.

Given that the regime of Siyaad Barre, from all indications, is at least as entrenched in power as at any time before and that no credible opposition is in the offing, what is to be the shape of political events in the next few years? We envision two scenarios. The first holds that Siyaad Barre will die peacefully in office, and although the timing of that event is unknown to us, we hear that, despite his old age and his chain-smoking, he is vigorously healthy, still walks with a military swagger, and therefore can be expected to live on for a number of years, if not a decade.

When Siyaad Barre is finally summoned by death, he is likely to be succeeded by an improbable protégé—none other than Mahammad 'Ali Samantar, the senior vice president, minister of defense, and number two man in government now. General Samantar does not have a clan base (he comes from a small family) but in a rather ironic twist, we think power could devolve on him for that very reason. Because anyone from the three competing and numerically powerful clan-families—Daarood, Isaaq, and Hawiye—and their primary lineages is unlikely to be acceptable to the other two, General Samantar may well emerge, at least initially, as a compromise figure, the Daniel Arap-Moi of Somalia who will pose no threat to any of the various politico-clan factions. General Samantar, furthermore, has something else to enhance his chance as a successor: Although the clannish-minded may sneer at his lowly descent, he has established a reputation as an able military commander, an astute politician, a brilliant administrator, and a man of considerable integrity who commands the respect of many in the army and the civil service—in short, the only figure in authority capable of forming a government of national reconciliation.

Samantar may win power initially, but this does not mean he can hold it for long. To do that, he will need to move quickly to build a political constituency. The Somali proverb "Either be a mountain or lean against one" applies doubly to Samantar's political future. He will have two options, we think, in finding his political mountain. The first is that he could strike an alliance with the Majeerteen and bring back Majeerteen officials gradually and cautiously to the armed forces and civil service. He might do this in the name of national reconciliation, a gambit that, in our view, will succeed, for many neutral Somalis are disquieted by the way Siyaad Barre ruthlessly harried this clan-family.

Samantar's rehabilitation of the Majeerteen will, however, stem from clannish considerations, not from the desire for national reconciliation. Many observers of the Somali political scene perhaps are unaware that Samantar's immediate kin are, in local ethnography, neighbors of the 'Iise Mahamuud, a Majeerteen primary lineage. Like other members of his immediate family, General Samantar possesses the temper and traditions of the 'Iise Mahamuud, whose Somali dialect he speaks. In this way the Majeerteen, who have been for all intents and purposes dispossessed by Siyaad Barre, may slink back to power through General Samantar.

Samantar's other political mountain may prove to be the Soviet Union. It is common knowledge that of the original twenty-five members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council that overturned the

last civilian government, Samantar has been widely regarded as the leading advocate of scientific socialism as well as an architect of the policy of close association with the Soviet Union. For that reason he was often rumored to be the Soviets' political favorite in the SRC. Samantar is no closet Marxist, but he is a power contestant without a clan base, which is a precarious position in Somalia, and he may have seen in scientific socialism a convenient way to surmount the political handicap of clanlessness.

Samantar will face the same handicap in a succession struggle, and despite the fact that the United States has been courting him assiduously during the past few years, he may invite the USSR back as soon as he takes power. Having consolidated his grip on power with Soviet help, Samantar is likely to impose a doctrinaire socialism in order to undermine the primacy of clannish influence in Somali politics. For their part the Soviets probably will welcome such a development because a Somali regime under their complete hegemony could make possible their long-held geopolitical dream of conjoining Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, and Southern Yemen into a confederation of socialist republics under Soviet patronage.

Our second scenario for the immediate political future of Somalia is more ominous. Political assassination is often a principal ingredient of the struggle for power in a dictatorial system, and in the Somali pastoral ethos, feuding clans often resort to reciprocal assassination of one another's elders in order to deprive a rival clan of its able leadership. Assassination is a more leisurely form of warfare than pitched battles, which are difficult to organize in the harsh conditions of the desert.

Even though it is conducted in an urban setting, Somali politics is deeply imbued with the pastoral ethos. If the Somali regime is secure from the resistance of an organized opposition, it is not safe from the impulsive act of a lone gunman. If the president is suddenly cut down by an assassin's bullet, even from a disgruntled fellow Mareehaan—after all, the law of segmentary conflict is operative among the Mareehaan, too, as it was when President Shermaarke was assassinated by a disaffected fellow Majeerteen—the episode could set off a civil war among the contending clan-families. Indeed, there are already signs that a nascent civil war, and a potentially catastrophic one, is brewing in Somalia. In 1982, for example, the Habar Yoonis primary lineage of the Isaaq and the Ogaadeen Daarood had a shooting war of several months in which dozens of combatants were killed. Although we cannot verify it, we hear that the Habar Yoonis had the logistical, if not the direct, support of the Ethiopians, and the Ogaadeen that of the Somali government. If true, this is a

particularly alarming development from the Somali viewpoint and a welcome one from that of the Ethiopians.

In the beginning months of 1983 (January through March) and on the heels of the Habar Yoonis-Ogaadeen shootout, a similar clannish feud broke out between the Wagarda' sublineage of the Mareehaan and the Saleebaan Hawiye of the Mudug region (western-central Somalia). To its credit, the Somali regime is said to have restrained, with the threat of force, the Wagarda' warriors who were better armed than the Saleebaan and were therefore smarting for blood. But no sooner was the Mareehaan-Saleebaan feud contained than a new one burst out between the Habar Tol Ja'alo Isaaq and the Dulbahante in the Haud region. The latter feud is reported to have been particularly virulent, with scores of casualties in dead and wounded. The Dulbahante and Habar Tol Ja'alo have a long history of reciprocal vendetta, extending back at least two centuries, and there is a real possibility that their latest bout will revive old wounds.

What these events demonstrate is that a large portion of the border area between Somalia and Ethiopia (from the central to the northwest areas) has been affected by a sporadic eruption of clannish warfare and that in each case a member of the MOD alliance squared off with one of the opposition clans. If the MOD alliance holds together in a succession struggle, it can, we think, easily hold its own against any combination of contestants. The Ogaadeen and the Dulbahante have the requisite numbers, and the Mareehaan have the firearms—this potent combination of numerical strength and firepower will make it virtually impossible for any other group to dislodge them. A sudden death of the president, however, will not only create a dangerous power vacuum but may engender a free-for-all atmosphere that will place severe strains on the continued unity of the MOD coalition. If the MOD alliance falls apart, as each component faction is tempted to gain advantage in an unstable climate, and if outgroups such as the Isaaq, the Hawiye, and the Majeerteen join the fray, the succession will be up for grabs. No one can predict the outcome, as this will depend on the nature of the newly formed coalitions and the character of outside intervention.

Naturally, the armed forces will play a key role in a shooting war, but because the rank and file are more loyal to their kin than to their commanding officers, it is doubtful they will hold together as a fighting, disciplined force or turn, if ordered, their guns on their kin. External powers, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union, and the United States, would follow a Somali civil war with great interest and, if they do not directly intervene, would be certain to exert pressure from behind the scenes.

We briefly examine the question of the likely extent of their respective involvements in the final remarks on Somalia's external relations.

We propose to end this section with a few remarks on the president's kin, the Mareehaan, because they are destined to play a central role in Somalia's future. The Mareehaan are a tough lot who, even by the standards of Somali pastoral feud and vendetta, have a reputation as bellicose and warlike. According to Somali genealogical lore, when Sheikh Daarood, the progenitor of the Daarood clan-family, decided to banish his young and wayward son, Mareehaan, he condemned him and his posterity to a life of perpetual conflict. It is hard to imagine a prophetic curse that was fulfilled with greater vengeance. As far back as the sixteenth century, when Shihab ad-Din reports (in *Futuh al-Habash*) that Mareehaan warriors played an active part in Imam Ahmad Gurey's conquest of Abyssinia right to the eve of independence, rare was the period when the Mareehaan were not locked up in a feud, either among themselves or against neighboring clans. Significantly, it was a Mareehaan poet who sang gleefully in a 1941 poetic satire after a pernicious feud with a Majeerteen sublineage:

The dead and wounded are bound to multiply in an embittered conflict
between two noble lineages,
And many an aged warrior will be bereaved of his fighting youths,
Have we not taught the Khalaf people that we Mareehaans are a bitter
plant to browse?⁴

Having been excluded from power in civilian governments by the more urbanized clans, the Mareehaan bided their time, pinning their hopes quietly (and, as it turned out, astutely) on Siyaad Barre's military career. When one October morning Siyaad Barre came riding at the head of a tank column, the Mareehaan, not immediately, but during the course of the 1970s, rode with him to power. They have come to appreciate the authority, the wealth, and the prestige that are the fruits of power. They are well armed, and they will fight to retain these gains. Anyone who attempts to dispossess them will have a tough battle to fight.

THE QUEST FOR ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Our discussion on the Somali economy ended on a less than hopeful note. Somalia's debt, its regression in the world division of labor, its negative balance of payments, its nearly total reliance on foreign goodwill, and its abysmally low per capita GNP are all realities

that we have been obligated to report. Furthermore, Somalia's growing dependence on Saudi Arabia can create short-term shocks, and short-term shocks are unavoidable for the poor. In mid-1985, for example, a tanker loaded with poisonous chemicals spilled hundreds of thousands of gallons of deadly matter on Somali beaches. This has been devastating for the Somali fish industry, but it was almost impossible for the government (given its lack of technology and patrol boats) to determine the culprit. After extended negotiations, a consortium of European companies agreed to send to Somalia a team of experts to help in the salvage operation. But as of this writing, no reparations are forthcoming. Somalia has little maneuverability and next to no power in a rather cruel international environment.⁵

But we should remind ourselves of the resources on which the Somali people can draw. We should remember that Somalia enjoys a religious, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity (rare by sub-Saharan African standards) that enables the Somalis to coexist peacefully under the severest of crises and to be relatively free of the kind of ruinous tribal and religious antagonisms that engulf many African states.

A second advantage is the country's geographic location. At the confluence of the international waterways of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, Somalia lies in a zone of intercommunication that encourages trade and facilitates the flow of ideas and global trends. To be sure, this has sometimes proved more a curse than a blessing. Somalia's strategic location, for example (especially its nearness to the turbulent oil region of the Middle East), tends to prompt foreign involvement in Somali domestic affairs, often to the ruin of Somali interests. Even so, the proximity of international trade routes is undoubtedly of great potential value to the Somali economy and, given the proper conditions, will serve as a commercial impetus to domestic productivity, growth, and exchange. Third, we understand (from confidential sources) that recent discoveries of oil in South Yemen suggest to geologists that there could well be commercially viable reserves in northwestern Somalia. Major oil companies remain reluctant to sign long-term contracts for exploration only because of the precarious political situation in Siyaad's Somalia.

Most importantly, Somalia has ample agricultural resources to feed its people comfortably. Contrary to its image as a barren desert, Somalia possesses adequate farmable land, notably in the extensive stretch of land between the Shabeelle and Jubba rivers. Even the dry *wadis* of the north, due to the low salinity of the soil, have agricultural possibilities, as was demonstrated by the *qaat*-growing entrepreneurs of the early 1980s in the northwestern part of the country. We need

to reassert this point not only to correct a mistaken image but also to reemphasize the United Nations Development Program's informed estimate that, of the 20 million acres available for cultivation in Somalia, only a minuscule 950,000 are under regular cultivation. One Somali official told us that when a Chinese aid team examined the interriverine area, the team leader opined that the area could feed 50 million people. This points to the existence of a considerable potential for food production, not to mention for the economic possibilities of Somalia's vast herds for which a lively market exists in the Middle East.

Of course, the existence of ample agricultural possibilities is of small consolation at the moment to the hungry, poverty-stricken Somalis. The same is true of the perennially starving Ethiopians and the economically impoverished Sudanese. The illness of the Somali economy, like that of Ethiopia and the Sudan, and indeed much of Africa, does not result from scarcity of natural resources but rather from a failure to mobilize, harness, and direct purposefully the human resources essential to economic growth and national self-sufficiency. In this respect David Lamb's despairing observation on African agriculture applies with painful relevance to the Somali economy: "Wandering through those empty [African] spaces," Mr. Lamb lamented, "you realize that 10,000 American farmers turned loose on African soil could transform the face—and the future—of the continent as surely as they did their own land."⁶

To transform the face of their economy, the Somalis will need to create a national climate that rewards honest, hard work, fosters a new ethic and attitude of labor worthiness and worker incentives, insists on a minimum level of managerial efficiency, and holds government officials publicly accountable so as to curb the graft, nepotism, and rampant corruption in high places. Only when government cleans its own house and brings the "big men" in its household to public accountability can it hope to turn the average Somali worker from apathy and petty theft into a productive member of society and to transform Somalia into a nation capable of feeding itself from its own resources. We must remember that underdevelopment is a social and political problem as much as an economic one. Serious action by both government and society, with commitment and hard work, is at minimum a requisite to development. Without this, all the elaborate development plans and massive flow of international donations into the country will have served the same end as previous ones: to plough the sea. In the meantime Somalia will continue to deserve the name "graveyard of foreign aid."

NEIGHBORS AND MEDDLERS IN THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Any Somali government during the next decade will face its greatest challenges in foreign affairs. In the wake of the 1977-1978 war, Somalis no longer have the luxury of thinking merely about political reunification. They also must think deeply about the threat to the sovereignty of their own state posed by Ethiopian troops—backed by Soviets, Cubans, and Somali dissidents—that now occupy two Somali border towns. The Ethiopian army has already made forays across the Chinese-built road that connects the northern and southern regions. In January 1984 a squadron of Ethiopian MiG fighters bombed the northwestern Somali border town of Boorama, striking a boarding school and killing twenty-four students. (This was in supposed retaliation for the WSLF sabotage of a rail line that was being used to transport highland Christians into zones abandoned by Somali and Oromo refugees.) In early 1985 Ethiopia gave technical support to the hijacking of a Somali military transport plane perpetrated by dissident officers.⁷ In deep despair, the president told one of the authors of this volume, "My country is being invaded every day and there is nothing I can do about it."

Siyaad's Somalia has not been without initiative. To help break its diplomatic isolation in Africa, Somalia hosted in 1981, 1983, and 1985 successful pan-African film festivals. More importantly, it has joined with Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and the Sudan to form a new regional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), which met for the first time in February 1985. Working with the United Nations, the IGADD is committed to combat drought and related environmental stresses, to rehabilitate and repatriate refugees, and to coordinate cooperative development—all on a regional basis.⁸

These moves are but a limited step in the direction of regional peace. It must be remembered how central the question of self-determination is in Somali politics: that is, the abiding, sometimes obsessive, commitment by government and populace alike to the elusive goal of reunifying what the Somalis regard as their dismembered nation. We have already discussed this problem in some detail, but perhaps without a proper sense of this issue's importance for world peace. It seems clear to both authors of this volume that the Horn of Africa will never be at peace until a regional framework based on justice and dignity for all its peoples is reached.

There is no easy answer to how this framework can be attained. It could occur in the context of the present boundaries if Somalis

(and other oppressed nationalities) are given full rights of citizenship in Ethiopia. It also could be reached through the adjustment of boundaries. Or it could be reached through some supranational organization that encompasses all the states in the region. A combination of these frameworks also is possible. To reach any solution will test the political will of the superpowers and the leaders of the regional states as well. Without concerted effort by many parties, however, we can foresee the regional conflict lasting for generations and possibly creating such instability as to draw the superpowers into military conflict. It is not only because we care for the fate of the Somali people, but also because we see in the Horn of Africa the potential for superpower confrontation that we think a solution to the Somali dilemma—one that brings justice and dignity to all Somalis—merits a place on the agenda of world politics.

CONCLUSION

Somalia's political decision in the mid-1970s to mobilize for the ultimate liberation of the Ogaadeen changed the course of its revolution. It was a popular decision at the time, as most Somalis felt that with the demise of Haile Selassie the Somali army would be able to capitalize on the ensuing anarchy to "recapture" control of the Ogaadeen. Substantial military progress in 1977 suggested that the Somali army was indeed well trained and that the war was well managed. It took massive infusions of foreign expertise, troops, and materiel to defeat the Somali armies.

The costs of that war have not been fully reckoned. They go far beyond how many soldiers were killed and how many nomads were turned into refugees. In the wake of the military defeat, the socialist revolution changed its course. Saddled with enormous debts to the socialist world, the capitalist world, and the Arab states, Somalia's maneuverability was severely constrained. Somalia's early attempts at industrialization foundered, and Somalia again found itself a supplier of live animals for rich pastoralists and hungry mouths in Arabia. Increasingly, Somalia has become culturally and economically dependent on the Arab world. Although Siyaad's hold on power remains strong, in no sense has he laid the foundation for a stable political order. Perhaps the greatest cost of the lost war is that now Somalia is militarily vulnerable to attack and must hook its wagon (and ideology) to a superpower in order to feel secure. President Siyaad is fond of saying that Somalis "are a poor people in a rich country." It remains the task of future generations to bring justice, wealth, and security to the Somali nation.

8

Postscript

On the evening of May 23, 1986, shortly after the manuscript had gone to the publisher, the president of Somalia, Gen. Mahammad Siyaad Barre, had a serious automobile accident. The accident occurred in heavy rain on the outskirts of Mogadishu on the road to Afgooye when the president's car, driven by the mayor of Mogadishu, Hasan Faarah Abshir, collided head-on with an oncoming bus. A following carload of security officers immediately plowed into the rear of the president's car, almost flattening it to the ground. Five of the passengers and three bodyguards were instantly killed in the mishap.

The president suffered three broken ribs, a severe head concussion, heavy abdominal injuries, and an acute nervous shock. He was immediately flown to a military hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he lapsed into a coma for three days. Miraculously, Mr. Barre, who suffers from diabetes and is rumored to be well over 70 (his exact age is a state secret), recovered sufficiently to return to Somalia after a month's recuperation in the Riyadh hospital and to resume leadership.

The accident set off a power struggle among senior army officers, members of the president's Mareehaan clan and assorted factions, whose infighting brought the country to the brink of civil war. In the main, two factions emerged to vie for power during Mr. Barre's incapacitation: a "constitutional" faction and a tribal one. The "constitutional" faction includes the first vice president, Brig. Gen. Mahammad 'Ali Samantar, the second vice president, Maj. Gen. Hussein Kulmiye, and Gens. Ahmad Sulaymaan ("Dafle") and Ahmad Mahamuud Faarah ("Ina-Lah-was"). The four, together with the president, make up the politburo of the sole political party in the country, the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party (SRSP). (Somalia's constitution empowers the vice president to become acting president in the event of the president's incapacitation or death. After an interim period the politburo and central committee of the party would choose

a new president.) This explains why Samantar and fellow politburo members stuck to the constitution as the sole means for picking up a successor during the crisis.

Opposed to the "constitutional" group were elements from the president's Mareehaan clan, especially members of his immediate family including his brother, Abdirahmaan Jaama Barre (foreign minister), the president's son, Col. Masleh (the wealthy head of the army's supply department), and the formidable Mama Khadiija (his senior wife, who is nicknamed "The Empress" owing to her singularly influential role in her husband's government). Mama Khadiija has evidently more than her husband's ear. By some accounts, she runs her own intelligence network, has well-placed political contacts, and oversees a large cadre of hangers-on who have greatly prospered under her patronage. That a woman should rise to such a position of power and influence in a basically conservative Muslim society is a subject of animated speculation in Somali political circles. According to one rumor current in the tea-shop banter of the Somali capital, the lady's unprecedented influence emanates from her being privy to "some skeletons of a peculiarly scandalous nature in the Old Man's political closet, the knowledge of which gives her a virtual blackmail leverage over his decisions."¹

Samantar's faction seems to have gained the upper hand during Barre's absence, largely due to the first vice president's reputation as an able administrator, his popularity within the armed forces, his image as the only figure in power now capable of forming a government of national reconciliation, and, last but not least, the force of the constitution and the state apparatus behind him. In addition, he was aided by the fact that the Mareehaan, though united in their wish to retain power, could not agree on a single candidate for president. Mama Khadiija, for example, wanted her son, Col. Masleh, for the top job. Other family members put forward Barre's brother, Abdirahmaan, while the vast majority of the clan preferred one of three individuals: Gen. Omar Haaji Masala and Dr. Mahammad Aadan Sheikh (both in prison) or Mahammad Said Samantar, the exiled ambassador to Paris.

Barre's moves, after his return, were as intriguing as they were ambiguous. On the one hand he publicly humiliated Samantar at a gathering of the military high command in the Officers' Club in Mogadishu by accusing him of "incompetence" and of wanting to "grab power with unseemly haste." On the other hand he resisted Mama Khadiija's and brother Abdirahmaan's pressure to sack Samantar and appoint a Mareehaan as vice president in his place. In effect, instead of strengthening either faction, Barre weakened both. This

seems consistent with his long-standing strategy of undermining at all costs the emergence of an heir apparent as long as he is alive and in command. Judging by his action, Barre is threatened by the very idea of a successor. Thus, in the words of Sheila Rule of the *New York Times*, "[the Somali] leader's health is uncertain, and so is a successor."² This is all but certain to spell trouble for the future stability of the nation.

Notes

Notes to the Introduction

1. See David Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); and David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

2. An exemplary work in this mode is that of John Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

3. Crawford Young, in his justly influential *Politics in the Congo* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965) and in much of his subsequent writings, discusses tribal groups more in terms of their resources and political goals than their traditional culture.

4. Here we are referring to the highly acclaimed "Ibadan History Series." We do not want to claim that Ibadan history has been irrelevant to national political debate, only that its findings are not the stuff of high politics in Lagos.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Basil Davidson, *Africa in History: Themes and Outlines* (New York: Collier Books, 1968), p. 51.

2. Bernd Heine, "Linguistic Evidence on the Early History of the Somali People," Hussein M. Adam, ed., *Somalia and the World: Proceedings of the International Symposium* (Mogadishu: National Printing Press, 1979), p. 29.

3. H. S. Lewis, "The Origins of the Galla and Somali," *Journal of African History* 7, no. 1 (1966):27-46.

4. A version of this work is published in Enrico Cerulli, *Somali, scritti vari editi ed inediti* (Somalia, Various Edited and Unedited Papers), vol. 1 (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1957), pp. 231-357.

5. See Heine, "Linguistic Evidence"; I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, rev. ed. (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 18-24, 27-32; H. S. Lewis, "The Origins of the Galla"; R. Turton, "Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Re-assessment of the Jubba/Tana Area," *Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975):519-537; and N. Chittick, "Observations on Early Bantu People in the Horn of Africa"

(Staff seminar paper no. 12, 1976-1977, Department of History, University of Nairobi).

6. Turton, *ibid.*, ably summarizes the varied, often contradictory, oral traditions relating to mythical Shungwaya.

7. I. M. Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," *Journal of African History* 5, no. 1 (1964):213-229.

8. The most substantive source of the Abyssinian/Muslim wars of this period is J. S. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

9. Quoted in E. Starkie, *Arthur Rimbaud in Abyssinia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 38.

10. The best description of Zayla' and surrounding country in the mid-nineteenth century is given by Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, abridged ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 55-120.

11. Muhammad Muhamadein, "Somalia in Ibn Battuta's Travel Account" (Paper submitted in absentia at the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, Hamburg, Germany, August 1-6, 1983), pp. 6-7.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

13. Lee Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 3-83.

14. Cerulli, *Somali*, vol. 2, pp. 250-254.

15. Quoted in Davidson, *Africa in History*, p. 168.

16. *Ibid.*

17. For the Geledi sultanate and its influence in Mogadishu, see Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, pp. 131-176.

18. See Burton, *First Footsteps*.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. For the Masai, see D. A. Low, "The Northern Interior," R. Oliver and G. Mathew, eds., *History of East Africa*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 301-305; for the Nuer, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), pp. 16-50.

2. B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, *Somali Poetry: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 3.

3. Lee Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 165.

4. For an elaboration of the Geledi 'urad principle, see *ibid.*

5. Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 16.

6. Poem quoted in John Darnton, "A Barren Ethiopian Desert Is Promised Land to Somalis," *New York Times*, September 14, 1978, pp. 1, 7.

7. Richard Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa* (London: Tylson and Edwards, 1894), 2 volumes. Edited by Gordon Waterfield and republished (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1966).

8. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 82.
9. M. Maino, *La lingua Somala—strumento d'insegnamento professionale* (The Somali Language—Instrument for Professional Teaching) (Alessandra: Ferrari, Occella and Co., 1954); M. Laurence, *A Tree for Poverty* (Nairobi: Eagle Press, 1954); B. W. Andrzejewski, *Somali Poetry*; J. W. Johnson, *Heellooy Heelleellooy: The Development of the Genre Heello in Modern Somali Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974).
10. Somali Government, *The Somali Peninsula: New Light on Imperial Motives* (London: Staples Printers, 1962), p. v.
11. David Laitin, *Politics, Language and Thought: The Somali Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
12. Ahmad F. 'Ali Idaajaa in an interview with S. S. Samatar, Hamburg, Germany, August 3, 1983.
13. Cited in S. S. Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 55.
14. See M. Laurence, *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (London: Macmillan, 1963).
15. This rather impressive collection of Somali visual art has been displayed at Indiana University and elsewhere in the United States.
16. B. W. Andrzejewski and M. Galaal, "A Somali Poetic Combat," *Journal of African Languages* 2, pt. 1 (1963):191.
17. *Heerbeegti* is also the name for the panel of elders who arbitrate interclan conflicts.
18. Part of this paragraph and the following ones were taken from S. S. Samatar, "Gabay-Hayir: A Somali Mock Heroic Song," *Research in African Literatures* 2, no. 4 (1980):457-458. We are grateful to the editor for permission to reuse them.
19. I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 198.
20. Ralph E. Drake-Brockman, *British Somaliland* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1912), p. 102.
21. Richard Burton, *First Footsteps*, see note 8, from F. Praeger reissue, New York, 1966, p. 60.
22. Edourd Duchenet, *Histoires Somalies* (Paris: Larose, 1936), p. 73.
23. Somali Government, *The Somali Peninsula*, p. 3.
24. I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*, p. 241.
25. Virginia Luling, "The Social Structure of Southern Somali Tribes" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1971), pp. 180-191.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Material on this and following pages are taken from Said Samatar's essay "The Somali Dilemma: Nation in Search of State," in the forthcoming work *Partitioned Africans: Studies in Human Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries*, edited by A. Asiawaju (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1985), pp. 179-180. We thank the editor for permission to reuse it.

2. A. H. M. Jones and Elizabeth Monroe, *A History of Abyssinia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 137.
3. Quoted in Lord Lytton, *The Stolen Desert* (London: MacDonald and Co., 1966), pp. 236-237.
4. See E. Starkie, *Arthur Rimbaud in Abyssinia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 38.
5. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (London: Macmillan, 1961), Chapter 15.
6. Quoted in Sir Gerald Reece, *The British Survey*, Main Series no. 98 (London: Colonial Office, 1952).
7. Quoted in B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis, *Somali Poetry: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 57.
8. Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 161.
9. Said Samatar, interview with Sheikh Isahaaq M. Daadi, Mogadishu, April 24, 1977. Daadi, seventy-nine, is brother of the late sultan Nuuh M. Daadi and currently the hereditary chief of the princely house of the Arsi Oromo in southern Ethiopia. He is active in the Oromo Liberation Front, at present fighting to gain autonomy from the central Ethiopian government. For the history of the Ethiopian occupation of the Somali Ogaadeen, a valuable oral source is Sheikh 'Aaqib 'Abdullaahi Jaama' of the Bartire Daarood around Jigjiga.
10. Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, p. 163.
11. *L'esplorazione del Giuba: Viaggio di scoperta nel cuore dell' Africa* (The Exploration of the Jubba: A Voyage of Discovery in the Heart of Africa) (Rome: n.p., 1925), p. 24.
12. Ibid.
13. Sadler to Salisbury, *Correspondence Respecting the Rising of the Mullah Muhammad Abd al-Allah Hassan in Somaliland and Consequent Military Operations*, no. 1, April 12, 1899, Cmd. 597, 1901.
14. Quoted in Said S. Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 112.
15. I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, rev. ed. (London: Longmans, 1980), Chapter 4; Samatar, *Oral Poetry*, Chapter 3.
16. Douglas Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1923), p. 139.
17. Quoted in Samatar, *Oral Poetry*, pp. 124-125.
18. Quoted in Somali Government, *The Somali Peninsula: New Light on Imperial Motives* (London: Staples Printers, 1962), p. xiii.
19. I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History*, p. 112.
20. Samatar, "The Somali Dilemma," p. 161.
21. John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Pall Mall, 1964).
22. The subsequent discussion draws entirely from A. A. Castagno's "The Political Party System in the Somali Republic," in J. S. Coleman and

C. G. Rosberg, Jr., eds., *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964).

23. Paolo Contini, *The Somali Republic: An Experiment in Legal Integration* (London: Frank Cass, 1969), p. 11.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. A. A. Castagno, "The Political Party System in the Somali Republic: A Balancing-Coalitional Approach," J. S. Coleman and C. G. Rosberg, Jr., eds., *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964). We changed one of Professor Castagno's figures. In his kinship categorization, the Hawaadle are Hawiyes.

2. See Irving Kaplan et al., *Area Handbook for Somalia* (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1977), pp. 37-38.

3. Donald Rothchild and Robert L. Curry, Jr., *Scarcity, Choice, and Public Policy in Middle Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), Chapter 6, are perhaps too optimistic, but their discussion does highlight the obstacles to the integration of separate territories into a single state.

4. Paolo Contini, *The Somali Republic: An Experiment in Legal Integration* (London: Frank Cass, 1969), p. 12.

5. David Laitin, *Politics, Language and Thought: The Somali Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), chapters 4 and 5.

6. *Somali News*, September 16, 1966.

7. Lord Rennell of Rodd, "British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-7." London: His Majesty's Stationery Office. Quoted in E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), pp. 158-159.

8. Harold D. Nelson, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: American University for the Department of the Army, 1982), Chapter 5.

9. See G. D. Payton, "The Somali Coup of 1969—The Case for Soviet Complicity," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (1980).

10. Mahammad Siyaad Barre, *My Country and My People* (Mogadishu: Ministry of Information, 1974).

11. David Laitin, *Politics, Language and Thought*, Part 1, discusses the political implications of language choice.

12. *Maxaynu Hantiwadaag U Qaadanay* (Why We Choose Scientific Socialism) (Mogadishu: Ministry of Information, 1975), p. 30.

13. Barre, *My Country and My People*, from a speech on July 29, 1972.

14. *Ibid.*, from a speech on October 21, 1973.

15. Ministry of Information and National Guidance, *The Role of Our Socialist Women* (Mogadishu: Government of Somalia, 1974), p. 8.

16. "On African Women's Equality, Role in National Liberation, Development and Peace," *Report and Proceedings of the Regional Seminar for Africa*, Mogadishu, April 3-5, 1975, p. 44; unpublished.

17. Ministry of Information, *The Role of Our Socialist Women*, p. 17.

18. See, for example, Nuuruddiin Faarah's bitter novel entitled *Sweet and Sour Milk* (London: Allison & Busby, 1979; reprinted in Exeter, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, African Writers Series, no. 226, 1980).

19. Interview with Siyaad in *U.S. News and World Report*, July 21, 1975, p. 32; also see interview with A. A. Castagno, *Africa Report* (December 1971):24.
20. Barre, *My Country and My People*, from speech on May 1, 1971.
21. Ibid., October 22, 1970.
22. See *Africa Confidential* 25, no. 24 (November 28, 1984); 26, no. 7 (March 27, 1985); and 26, no. 14 (July 3, 1985).
23. See *Africa Confidential* 25, no. 10 (May 9, 1984); and 25, no. 24 (November 28, 1984).
24. See *Africa Confidential* 25, no. 10 (May 9, 1984).
25. Nelson, *Somalia*, pp. 183-210.
26. Osman Mohamoud, "Somalia: Crisis and Decay in an Authoritarian Regime," *Horn of Africa* 4, no. 3 (1981):7-11.
27. See *Africa Confidential* 25, no. 10 (May 9, 1984).
28. See *Horn of Africa* 3, no. 2 (1980):34-43.
29. Mohamoud Hasan, "Status of Human Rights in Somalia," in *ibid.*, 3, no. 2 (1980):3-11.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Data from the World Bank, *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1981), Table I, p. 143.
2. For this perspective on movements from the periphery to the semi-periphery and the core of the world economy, see Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* (September 1974):387-415.
3. On trade with Aden, see A. M. Brockett, "The British Somaliland Protectorate to 1905" (Ph.D. diss., Lincoln College, Oxford University, 1969). On class formation among Somali middlemen in this trade, see Charles Gesheker, "Anti-Colonialism and Class Formation—The Eastern Horn of Africa Before 1950," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985):1-32.
4. Perceptive analysis of the *franco valuta* system and other aspects of Somalia's underground economy can be found in Norman N. Miller, "The Other Somalia," Part 1 and Part 2, *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, nos. 29 and 30 (1981).
5. Two good sources on the effects of Italian colonialism on Somalia are Robert L. Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); and Virginia Luling, "The Social Structure of Southern Somali Tribes" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1971).
6. I. M. Lewis, *The Modern History of Somaliland* (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 104.
7. The material presented here on the plantation economy is a summary of the discussion in Mark Karp, *The Economics of Trusteeship in Somalia* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1960), Chapter 5.

8. Harold D. Nelson, ed., *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: American University for the Department of the Army, 1982).

9. This perspective on the dynamics of catch-up in the world economy has been adapted from Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962).

10. On economic aid in the early independence years, see O. Mehmet, "Effectiveness of Foreign Aid: The Case of Somalia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 1 (May 1971):31-47.

11. Mahammad Siyaad Barre, *My Country and My People* (Mogadishu, 1974), speech delivered on October 20, 1970.

12. Ibid., speech on February 17, 1970.

13. Nelson, *Somalia*, pp. 136-138; International Labor Office, Jobs and Skills Program for Africa, *Economic Transformation in a Socialist Framework: An Employment and Basic Needs Oriented Development Strategy for Somalia* (Addis Ababa: ILO, 1977); and Abdi I. Samatar, "The Predatory State and the Peasantry: Reflections on Rural Development Policy in Somalia," *Africa Today* 32, no. 3 (1985):41-56.

14. Interview with A. A. Castagno, *Africa Report* (December 1971):24.

15. Barre, *My Country and My People*, from speech on September 28, 1971.

16. *Africa* (London), November 1973.

17. There has been little systematic research on the changes in the pastoral sector in the wake of these cooperative reforms. See B. V. Baillou, "History and Future of the Livestock Sector in Somalia" (Paper presented in absentia at the Second Congress of the Somali Studies International Association, Hamburg, Germany, August 1-6, 1983).

18. See I. M. Lewis, ed., *Abaar: The Somali Drought* (London: International Africa Institute, 1975), p. 12, for the quote of a witness, and pp. 1-2 for our subsequent discussion on the drought.

19. See Nelson, *Somalia*, p. 284.

20. Briefing paper by SURERD, presented at the Second International Congress of the Somali Studies International Association, Hamburg, Germany, August 1-6, 1983.

21. Peter Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (January 1975).

22. Mahammad Jibrill, personal communication to David Laitin, October 1975.

23. Ministry of Information and National Guidance, *Agriculture in the Service of the Nation* (Mogadishu, 1974), p. 1.

24. See Mark Karp, *The Economics of Trusteeship*, fn. 7, for a description of the constricting effects of Italian monopsony on the overall economy of Somalia.

25. Ministry of Information, "Agriculture in the Service of the Nation," pp. 21-22.

26. Gunnar Haaland and Willem Keddeman, "Poverty Analysis: The Case of Rural Somalia," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 32, no. 4 (1984):850.

27. Robert Bates makes this a general argument about Africa in his *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). In an interview with a high government official in Somalia (August 1980), David Laitin was informed that the logic as described by Bates held true in Somalia.

28. Albert L. Gray, Jr., "Economic Problems of the Somali Democratic Republic" (Paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Nov. 23-27, 1985), p. 12.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

31. Nelson, *Somalia*, p. 286. These data were culled from the Central Bank of Somalia, *Statement of Accounts*, 1979.

32. Data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Co-operation Review* (Paris: OECD, various years).

33. Gray, "Economic Problems," p. 23.

34. *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* (Paris), May 12, 1984.

35. David Laitin, interview with President Siyaad Barre, August 1983.

36. Gray, "Economic Problems," p. 10.

37. Samatar, "The Predatory State," p. 13ff.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. A fine statement of the Somali position has been published by the Somali Government, *The Somali Peninsula: New Light on Imperial Motives* (London: Staples Printers, 1962).

2. See D. Laitin and O. Ojo, "The OAU and the Ogaadeen Question: Towards a Solution" (Paper presented at the First Congress of the Somali Studies International Association, July 6-13, Mogadishu, 1980).

3. I. M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, rev. ed. (London: Longman, 1980), p. 197.

4. The Somalis in many of their official statements argue that only racism prevents the world from seeing Ethiopia as yet another imperialist power. For examples of the official Somali line, see *The Portion of Somali Territory Under Ethiopian Colonization* (Mogadishu: National Printing Press, 1974); and *Consequences of Abyssinian Colonialism* (Mogadishu: National Printing Press, 1979).

5. The present leader of the Ethiopian government, Mengistu Haile Mariam, speaks about territorial unity in a voice not very different from his imperial predecessors. A typical phrase from his speeches: "Inviolable unity of our Motherland is a sacred duty of all Ethiopians." Quoted in Colin Legum, *Ethiopia: The Fall of Haile Selassie's Empire* (London: Rex Collings, 1975), p. 61.

6. John Markakis, "The 1963 Rebellion in the [Ogaadeen]" (Paper presented at the Second Congress of the Somali Studies International Association, Hamburg, Germany, August 1-6, 1983).

7. The authoritative source on this period is George Henry Becker, Jr., "The Disposition of the Italian Colonies 1941-1951" (Ph.D. diss., University of Geneva, 1952).

8. Tom J. Farer, *War Clouds on the Horn of Africa* (New York: Carnegie Endowment, 1979), p. 85.

9. The disappointing tale, from the point of view of knowledgeable British colonial officers, is brilliantly and passionately told by John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Pall Mall, 1964).

10. Somali Republic, *The Somali Republic and African Unity* (Mogadishu, Government Publication, 1962).

11. Markakis, "The 1963 Rebellion," pp. 7-8.

12. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968).

13. Raymond Thurston, "Detente in the Horn," *Africa Report* (February 1969).

14. Brian Crozier, "The Soviet Presence in Somalia," *Conflict Studies* 54 (February 1975):4-8; and Paul Henze, "Arming the Horn: 1960-1980" (Working paper no. 43, The Wilson Center, Washington, D.C., 1982, Table XVII, p. 19).

15. David Laitin, interview with the then Somali ambassador to France, Mahammad Said Samantar, Mogadishu, 1980.

16. David Laitin, interview with Colonel Ibrahim Aadan Doolaal, Mogadishu, 1983.

17. The 1977-1978 Ogaadeen war is chronicled in Farer, *War Clouds*, pp. 120ff.

18. David Laitin, interviews on the Somali frontier with Ethiopia, near Balambale, August 1983.

19. Paul B. Henze, *Russians and the Horn: Opportunism and the Long View* (European American Institute for Security Research, paper no. 5, Summer 1983), p. 42.

20. Elizabeth Drew, "A Reporter at Large: Brzezinski," *The New Yorker*, May 1, 1978.

21. Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 73, for the quote and pp. 85-88 for a general discussion of U.S.-Somali relations.

22. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983), pp. 178-190.

23. "We have two overriding objectives in the Horn. One has to do with Soviet-Cuban presence and the other with our own access to facilities." Statement by Lannon Walker, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1982 (Part 8), Hearings

and Markup, before the Subcommittee on Africa (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 347. This was the first statement by the Reagan administration on the Horn.

24. Paul Henze, "Communist Ethiopia—Is It Succeeding?" (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand paper series, P-7054, January 1985), pp. 49–53, reflects a widespread official hope in the United States for the reestablishment of an Ethiopian-U.S. alliance.

25. See B. W. Andrzejewski and Muuse Galaal, "A Somali Poetic Combat," *Journal of African Languages* 2, no. 1 (1963):94.

26. See Ministry of Information and National Guidance, *Our Foreign Relations—A Review of our Revolutionary Policies* (Mogadishu: National Printing Press, June 1974), p. 46.

27. See Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Cooperation, 1979 Review* (Paris: OECD, 1979), Table G.9, pp. 278–279.

28. See Abdi I. Samatar, "The Predatory State and the Peasantry: Reflections on Rural Development Policy in Somalia," *Africa Today* 32, no. 3 (1985):fn. 31.

29. Hanne Christensen, "Survival Strategies for the Camp Refugees in Somalia," *Horn of Africa* 5, no. 4 (1982-1983).

30. *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1983: 3–20, report by James R. Peipert.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940); and Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship Among the Tallensi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945).

2. Interview by Said Samatar with Dr. 'Ali Khaliif Galayd, a former minister of commerce and industry and long-time civil servant in the Somali government, on November 8, 1985, in South Orange, New Jersey. Now a private citizen working for the World Bank, Dr. Galayd lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Through his academic studies and service experience with the Somali government, Dr. Galayd has come to acquire an intimate knowledge of contemporary Somali politics.

3. Mahammad Nuur 'Ade, a prominent Marxist intellectual, who served as Siyaad Barre's close adviser between 1969 and 1974, provided the quotation on power to Said Samatar in Mogadishu on April 10, 1977. David Laitin interviewed the businessman in Mogadishu in August 1983.

4. This poem is by the Mareehaan poet Haaji Ilka-Dahab and is part of the oral tradition. The Somali lines of the excerpt are *Geeridu xisaab maleh haday goba coloobaane / Gablan wiil la'aaneed rag waa wada galaysaaye / Garansiinay Reer Khalaf inaän geed xaraar nahaye*.

5. Interview by Said Samatar with Richard Greenfield, adviser to the Somali government on foreign policy matters, New Orleans, November 1985.

6. David Lamb, *The Africans* (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 6.
7. Interview by Said Samatar with Richard Greenfield, *ibid.*
8. Interview by Said Samatar with Hussein Adam, Somali government official and member of the U.N. consultative team to the IGADD group, New Orleans, November 1985.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Larceny? Treason? Bigamy? Perhaps it is more interesting not to enquire.
2. Sheila Rule, *New York Times*, July 20, 1986.

Further Readings

This list, arranged by subject, is meant to provide the reader with the names of a few important books and articles. Readers who want a comprehensive bibliography should refer to Mohamed Khalief Salad, *Somalia: A Bibliographical Survey* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977). An excellent source for information and bibliographic detail is H. D. Nelson, ed. *Somalia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: American University for the Department of the Army, 1982).

History

- L. V. Cassanelli. *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- I. M. Lewis. *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. London: Longman, 1980.
- S. S. Samatar. *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayyid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Culture

- B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewis. *Somali Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.
- J. Johnson. *Heellooy Heelleellooy: The Development of the Genre Heello in Modern Somali Poetry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974.
- M. Laurence. *New Wind in a Dry Land*. New York: Knopf, 1964.
- I. M. Lewis. *A Pastoral Democracy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Government and Politics

- A. A. Castagno. "The Political Party System in the Somali Republic." In J. Coleman and C. Rosberg, Jr., eds. *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.
- D. Laitin. *Politics, Language and Thought: The Somali Experience*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Economics

- M. Karp. *The Economics of Trusteeship in Somalia*. Boston: Boston University Press, 1960.
- D. Laitin. "The Political Economy of Military Rule in Africa." In *Journal of Modern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1976).
- N. Miller. "The Other Somalia," Part 1 and Part 2. *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, nos. 29 and 30 (1981).

Foreign Policy

- John Drysdale. *The Somali Dispute*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1964.
- T. Farer. *War Clouds in the Horn of Africa*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, revised edition, 1979.
- S. S. Samatar. "The Somali Dilemma: Nation in Search of State." In A. I. Asiwaju. *Partitioned Africans: Studies in Human Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1985). An American edition is published by St. Martin's Press, N.Y.
- S. Touval. *Somali Nationalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

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