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ANTI-COLONIALISM AND CLASS FORMATION: THE EASTERN HORN OF AFRICA, I920 - I950

Nowhere have the consequences of African adjustment to the postcolonial age been more destructive than in the Horn of Africa where Ethiopia and Somalia have waged fratricidal war to determine whether the Ogaden should be part of Ethiopian or Somali territory. This complex dispute derives from the basic incompatibility between territorial integrity of the state and the political limits of self-determination on the one hand, and a contradiction over the juridical vs. empirical bases for statehood on the other. As a sporadic, sometimes devastating, military confrontation, the Ogaden War has invited intervention from abroad by other powers and the enormous introduction of sophisticated weapons to the region, shifted scarce resources and personnel to military purposes, torn asunder domestic economies, and spawned the "wretched of the Horn" - a refugee population in excess of one million. The Somali-Ethiopian conflict has become much more than a boundary conflict. To the Somalis, it is a matter of the connection between territoriality and survival. Ironically, that is precisely how the Ethiopians also have come to regard it.[I]

The first half of this paper attempts to explain why Somalis persistently refuse to accept Ethiopian claims to the Ogaden, an extensive inland area between the Ethiopian mountains and the rangelands of Somalia. While a comprehensive periodization of a century of Somali nationalist development from the I880s to the I980s merits careful investigation in terms of breaks, transitions, and continuities, my research on the period I920-I950 in the British Somaliland Protectorate (now northern Somalia) and the adjacent Ogaden suggests ecological, commer-

cial, and cultural reasons why Somalis considered political independence and the reunification of their lands as fundamental for their social and economic improvement. The anti-colonial dimension of Somali nationalism reflected intense dissatisfaction over the partition of Somali rangelands by multiple colonizing powers and the intimidation, coercion, and conquest of its primarily nomadic inhabitants.
During the three decades before I950, the tactics, methods, and organization of Somali resistance shifted from a religious-military basis to secular political forms. The second part of the paper, therefore, highlights salient economic and commercial conditions in the eastern Horn, drawing attention to Somali entrepreneurship exemplified by a petit-bourgeoisie comprised of trade truck drivers, coffee shop owners, livestock dealers, teachers, and colonial clerks and interpretors. This embryonic class did not control the means of production but it did play a key role in helping to establish political organizations that appealed to the concerns of urban und rural Somalis by the late I940s, notably a broad-based Somali opposition to the continued presence of Ethiopian state forces in the Ogaden. There have been few efforts made to study Somali class structure and explaining class formation in a pastoralist economy presents special challenges.[2] Since documentary sources are either inadequate or cover a variety of unrelated issues, the latter sections of the paper draw heavily from orally transmitted materials for historical reconstruction.

The advent, spread, and triumph of nationalist organizations across 20th century Africa hastened the liquidation of European colonial regimes. African decolonization demands were contained within the boundaries of individual colonial units where nationalists denied self-determination for ethnic groups within the existing state while militantly demanding its application to eliminate European colonial rule.[3] The retention of the colonial territorial legacy in post-colonial

Africa critically reinforced the legitimacy of inherited frontiers in the definition and distinctiveness of one national state from another. Territorial integrity synonymous with the sanctity of present boundaries assures international juridical recognition to the geographical sovereignty of post-colonial states, thereby providing otherwise empirically weak states with a measure of stability and continuity.[4]
In the eastern Horn, where the empirical properties of the state are highly variable and boundaries are as rigid as they are artificial, "frontier fetishism" (Lewis I980:250) has brought no stability at all, only continued Somali opposition over the Ogaden where the correlation of ethnicity and class has helped sustain the oldest irredentist movement in Africa. African states are justiably reluctant to consider postcolonial boundary adjustments anywhere, fearing the dire consequences from a multiplicity of claims stimulated by such a precedent. Such changes in the Horn, however, (their implicit "demonstration effect" aside) would fundamentally alter - some would say "dismember" - the empire-state of Ethiopia, the polity at the heart of this volatile region and yet one which enjoys a mystique unique among African states.
With its ancient written languages, Solomon and Sheba mythology, early state systems beginning at Aksum (250 B.C.), conversion to Christianity after A.D. 350, victory over Italian imperialists in I896, invasion by fascist forces in I935, the triumphant restoration of Emperor Haile Selassie in I94I as "the first to be freed from fascism", and headquarters of the Organization of African Unity since I963, Ethiopia was long considered a progressive symbol of African independence, "a prestige and recognition which gives Ethiopia a special place in the contemporary African scene" (Asante I977:2I5). Recent scholarship, however, has delineated a dialectic of modern Ethiopian history to explain how the state's expansive policies and colonial practices towards various nationalities including the Ogaden Somalis have provoked the furious internal struggles

which constitute the central paradox of contemporary Ethiopia: that both its most underdeveloped, unintegrated, and unincorporated territorial sector (Ogaden) and its most politically advantaged and economically integrated province (Eritrea) are simultaneously seeking self-determination.[5]

Until the early I950s, at least in the minds and writings of many politically conscious Caribbeans, black Americans, and Africans living far from the Horn, Ethiopia enjoyed symbolic significance as "a solid island of freedom in the stormy waters of colonial aggression" (Asante I977:I7). Daniel Thwaite rhapsodized that Ethiopia was the "shrine enclosing the last sacred spark of African political freedom, the impregnable rock of black resistance against white invasion, a living symbol, an incarnation of African independence."[6] West Indians saw its invasion by Italian fascists and their eventual expulsion in apocalyptic terms, another indication that the world was divided into good and bad, black and white, in which a black state had survived the onslaught of evil. Wallace Johnson attributed "the long resistance of the Ethiopians to Italian imperialism (as) a source of inspiration and hope for a West African struggle for emancipation."[7]

Edward Roux (I964:302) recalled that

> "the war in Ethiopia had a remarkable effect in South Africa ... Many realized for the first time that there existed still in Africa, an independent country where the black man was master and had his own king. They were inspired by the idea of black men defending their own country against white aggressors."

Traditional Ethiopian chroniclers also depicted wars of attempted conquest as struggles between good and evil, light and darkness, attributing their victories to the might of God and describing Ethiopia's enemies as guided by Satan. Although the image of Ethiopia as "the only oasis in a desert of rank subjugation from the avaricious hands of foreign domination" contributed to anti-colonialist, nationalist, and Pan-Africanist sentiments, there is little indication that Africans

on the continent or throughout the diaspora actually knew (or perhaps even cared) much about the inner workings of the Ethiopian state.[8]

Yet understanding Somali nationalism and its anti-colonialist component involves an examination of the manner whereby Somalis objectively experienced Ethiopian state institutions since the late I9th century. Somalis in the Ogaden and neighboring British Somaliland had no illusion about a symbolic or abstract Ethiopia. As will be shown, to them identification of Ethiopia as a "bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans" was appallingly absurd, contradicted by their adversarial relations with "real" Ethiopians.

The historiography of northeast Africa has long reflected a "kings and things" orientation which emphasized the development of centralized polities in the Ethiopian highlands while ignoring the political economies of transhumant pastoralists to the southeast. The taxonomy of pre-colonial states in the Horn rests on elusive, often vague, definitions, making it difficult to give historically precise answers to the questions, what exactly was "Ethiopia" before I900, and what was "Abyssinia"? A severely compressed, entirely derivative, answer must suffice for the purposes of this paper.[9]

"Abyssinia" refers to a physical entity in the normally well-watered northern and central highlands, dominated culturally and politically by the Orthodox Christian, Semitic-speaking Amhara and Tigre, and ruled nominally by an aristocratic and eccelesiastical hierarchy based at Gondar after the I7th century. More a spatial jigsaw of landholdings and an association of semi-autonomous principalities connected to a political center through sporadic payment of tribute and the reciprocal provision of occasional defenses rather than a compact political unit, Abyssinia was a "class-divided society presenting the classic trinity of peasant, warrior-ruler, and priest".[IO]

From I876 to I9I6, a conjuction of political, diplomatic, military, and strategic circumstances enabled Abyssinia to sur-

vive as an independent entity at the time of the imperialist partition of Africa. During his reign, Emperor Menelik II (I889-I9I3) vastly expanded the frontiers of Abyssinia and laid the basis for the modern Ethiopian state through a combination of local conquests and international diplomatic maneuvers with European powers. The military successes and socio-political dominance of this expansive state by the Amhara-Tigre feudal class depended significantly on their unrestricted access to modern weaponry guaranteed to Ethiopia by its exemption from the Brussels General Act of I890, which otherwise prohibited the sale of firearms to Africans.[II]

By I9I6, with its nucleus located in the feudal ruling houses of Gojjam, Tigre, and Shoa (Amhara), "Ethiopia" consisted of a number of loosely federated ethnic groups in the highlands ruled by the Abyssinian landed aristocracy through a shifting web of connections, tacit alliances, and collaborative mechanisms. This core was surrounded by subject nationalities on its southern, southwestern, and southeastern peripheries. As an internationally-recognized polity, 20th century Ethiopia represented the consolidation, expansion, and transformation of a feudal-military principality (Abyssinia) into a veritable multi-ethnic African empire-state, "the only African state below the Sahara whose boundaries have been determined by an internally induced process of expansion."[I2]

The survival of Ethiopian independence remains an important theme in African historiography, but "Ethiopia's existence as a 'modern state' does not ...extend beyond the early I900s into a limitless and ever-remote millenium" (Addis Hiwet I975:I). Essentially, it survived the imperialist partition of Africa by becoming one of its participants, for as Menelik warned in his I89I circular letter to the European powers, "Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries a Christian island in a sea of pagans. If the Powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to remain an indifferent spectator."

On the southeastern frontiers of Ethiopia lived the Somalis, a national community within culturally and ecologically constructed boundaries. Although they lacked a centralized, hierarchically-organized political structure, the self-consciously unifying factors of a common language and ethnic origins, Islam, egalitarian social and political institutions to resolve disputes, and nomadic husbandry as their dominant pattern of existence helped distinguish the Somali way of life and ethos from that of the feudal, agricultural, Christian state of the Ethiopian highlands. The political entities of the highlands were larger and stronger than any political structure the Somalis had produced, but the Somalis were a distinct social category, an ethnic nationality. From the late I9th century, the expansive and intrusive Ethiopian state and several European administrations provided a colonial framework, historical agents, and a political style which Somali culture never accommodated to and against which Somalis reacted.

Enclosed within Ethiopia as a result of the colonial partition in the I890s the Ogaden was overrun by well-armed Ethiopian soldiers before the turn of the century. In I892, the British Consul in northern Somaliland reported that:

> "a large Abyssinian expedition has returned from the Ogaden bringing with them as booty some thousands of camels and cattle and property of all descriptions. I hear from other sources that they have devastated the people ... Many people are dying of starvation and epidemic said to be cholera , but which may be 'starvation fever' has broken out, and carried off numerous victims daily ... This state of affairs is attributed entirely to the conduct of the Abyssinian soldiery who eat up everything."[I3]

In I90I, Captain R. B. Cobbold accompanied an Abyssinian expeditionary force across the Ogaden. The following selections from Cobbold's diary suggest what he witnessed throughout his three month sojourn:

> "May 28th. Along the Tug Fafan. Yesterday the Commander sent some mounted men to loot a

village of the Sheikh Asha; they returned today with much plunder. Fortunately, however, the villagers had fled and managed to drive away their camels, but much grain and household utensils besides many sheep and goats had been captured. The Somalis were very indignant about it, and it certainly is a great shame the way in which the Abyssinians loot the villages lying within 20 miles on either side of the line of march. It matters not whether these tribes are friendly to the Abyssinians or have behaved themselves and paid the tribute due from them to the King, they are none the less subject to plunder as the army has to live on the country through which it passes, whether the tribes be friendly or hostile.

May 3Ist. (Sassamini) "In front," the Abyssinian interpretor explained, "everyone is our enemy and when we have passed from her all these people also will be our enemies." This I observed was hardly matter for surprise seeing how persistently and indiscriminately the army looted all the villages on the line of march.

June 5th. (Warandad) The soil of the country we passed through today seemed of unusual richness, being of the ruddy colour so prevalent in Harar and the Ogaden. There was much cultivation of dhourra and traces of a large population but now not a village or a sign of humanity was to be seen. All had fled at the approach of the army, knowing from bitter experience that to stay behind was to be robbed and possibly killed, certainly ill-treated.

June 22nd. (Gerlogubi) Singing their hateful songs of murder and rapine and bearing aloft the trophies taken from the bodies of the unfortunate Somalis they had killed. How hateful and disgusting it is to think of these brutes with their rifles, shooting down these poor villagers who cannot defend themselves ... We cannot help thinking that H.M. Government will hardly wish us to continue passive spectators of this horrible carnage going on before our eyes.

June 24th. (Gerlogubi) Halted. The camp here now resembles a gigantic farmyard after the late raiding expedition. Dotted about are small herds of camels in zaribas ... numberless cows and sheep and goats ... Strings of raw meat hanging

on lines, stretched between the tents and handy trees show that the men have now got plenty of food."

Cobbold's sense of outrage rose markedly day by day until July II, I90I, while at Hanemleh in the central Ogaden, he made the following entry in his diary:

"The horrible looting of the friendly villages goes on. Today for some three hours a constant stream of camels, cows, sheep, and goats passed. The Abyssinians estimate the number of camels at 2000 and probably half the Rer Augaz tribe is now completely destitute. It makes one's blood boil to see such a crime perpetrated by these Abyssinians who set themselves up as being on a par with European nations and fit to treat with them. What will be done with all these camels, goodness only knows, for they are of no use in Abyssinia, the King and Ras already possessing thousands for which they have little use.
All this cruel and barbarous treatment which the Somalis undergo at the hands of the Abyssinians and which, being unarmed (thanks to the British Government) they have no endur without a murmur, will some day react on the heads of the Abyssinians. Some day a reckoning up will come, and with the Somalis armed the possibility of the downfall of Abyssinia would be within the range of practical politics. For the Moslems who would rush eagerly to arms to exterminate their hated enemies would run into huge figures. And if ever a war was popular, this one would be so; I think even women and children would, if permitted, gladly risk their lives in so righteous a struggle."[14]

From the I890s until the late I940s, Ethiopian troops seldom ventured far from their Ogaden garrisons except to conduct haphazard raids to capture Somali livestock as tribute. "The sovereignty of the Ethiopians over the Somalis was expressed chiefly by means of intermittent expeditions, not far removed from raids," wrote Margery Perham (I969:338). "Stock was taken as tribute from the more accessible groups, who thereupon raided their nearest Somali enemies in order to recoup their losses. Only in I934, when the Ethiopians took the neighboring Gerlogubi water holes ... could the Ethiopian government be

said to have occupied the Ogaden, though hardly to be administering it."

In the early I930s, Colonel (then Major) A. T. Curle served alternately as a British Consular official and a Political Officer with the Somaliland Camel Corps. "The Ethiopians have always had an acute inferiority complex regarding the Ogaden," he recalled in an interview shortly before his death in I98I. "They didn't tax the Ogaden normally; The Governor-General of Harar would go down with a large force every three of four years and collect tribute, which meant seizing camels and cattle. But they've always suffered losses because the Somalis would lead them on to lousy water and then let them die in the desert. So they always went down there with a very strong escort."[I5]

Curle's private correspondence makes it clear that Ethiopian authorities were unwilling even to discuss with him Somali grievances about animal seizures in the Ogaden and within British Somaliland. "Last week, the Abyssinian Government sent a punitive patrol against some people over the west end of our Somaliland border - they killed and burnt everything, III men, women, and children were shot regardless of who or what they were." [I6] In a similar incident nine months later (in September I930), the Ethiopian commander denied any wrongdoing or responsibility for the death of eighteen Somalis. Curle expressed his frustrations in a letter to his father:

> "If you could possibly see the vile rabble which composes the Ethiopian army without discipline or control one realizes how foolish this contention is - we have some empty cases of their rifles which prove that they did fire. The more I have to do with them the more hopeless and rotten crowd they seem to be. We have been trying to fix up some agreement with them to respect a certain frontier line but it is hopeless - they are each afraid of being accused of giving away Ethiopia."[I7]

The history of Ethiopian attempts to establish superior-subordinate social relations with Somalis suggests a wide range from "indifference to bursts of violence" sometimes difficult to distinguish from "official terror" (Reisman I978:I5). The following incident took place in the northwestern Ogaden in mid-I954, witnessed by a Somali psychologist who was a youngster at the time:

> "An Ethiopian tax collector was killed in the environs of Jigjiga, my home town. The killer was neither known nor apprehended. But for revenge and mass intimidation, the Ethiopian authorities decided to execute ten innocent Somali men. On the day of the execution, every Somali in town - child or adult - was forced to watch the terrifying spectacle. Each victim was made to stand on a pick-up truck with hands tied behind his back. A noose of rope, suspended from a horizontal pole, was then placed around each victim. After a speech of intimidation and warnings to disgusted observers, the driver was ordered to quickly move the truck leaving behind a writhing humanity in mid-air, gasping and sometimes urinating in death." (Hussein Abdi-lahi Bulhan I98I:I6)

Like European colonial systems in Africa, the Ethiopian state sought to legitimize its presence in the Ogaden. But its attempts at non-coercive control over its "subject population" were preceded by a much longer period of sheer intimidation as Ethiopian rulers hardly bothered to fashion an ideological defense of their claims to the Ogaden. Ethiopian efforts to dominate the Somali-inhabited rangelands never implied the conversion or assimilation of Somalis, only their segregation, and not until the mid-I950s did Ethiopian hegemony become bound up with ideas about assimilating Somalis into the Ethiopian state. Emperor Haile Selassie, after complaining about his need to use an interpretor, spoke to Somalis at Gabredarre (central Ogaden) on 25 August I956:

> "Difference in language often creates misunderstanding and can seriously affect the responsibilities that are being bestowed on

> you ... Our police whom we have sent among you have come to assist you in keeping order and security ... It is our desire that schools will not only impart education, but also will foster understanding and co-operation among the military, the police and the civilian population ... Acquire the necessary education whereby you will be able to take over the various positions and responsibilities that await you in the Central Government Administration ... lack of knowledge of the national language will be a barrier. You will now have a good chance to learn to read and write Amharic."[18]

European colonial infrastructures in Africa included school systems, common language usage, and the transportation and communications which ultimately provided nationalist political organizations with a territorial focus and orientation. This facilitated horizontal linkages for an inter-ethnic class of nationalists which sought to amalgamate class forces across a variety of cultural and political mosaics in their struggle to seize state control from Europeans after 1945. Europeans tried to maintain their control in Africa through political, military, judicial, and non-coercive means. Colonialist domination based on racial or cultural stereotypes, the alleged superiority of aliens over materially inferior indigenous groups - what Fanon called "race and economics" - helped legitimize subordination, "reinforced by the 'separateness' of the invaders from the invaded, since their language, culture, and forms of social organization were widely divergent." (Goody 1982:8)

The Ogaden Somalis neither sought nor received support services from Ethiopian authorities who considered that their own interity and continuity (and that of the state represented) depended on safeguarding the center's culture from submersion under culturally inferior but numerically superior groups. With the veneer of imperial power went a chauvinist vocabulary of supercillious, condescending terms used by highland residents to contrast the lowlands and its people with their own cool,

mountainous homeland. Somalis were called barias (slaves), shiftas (bandits), or shiretam (from shiret - loin cloth) which inferred a characteristic cowardice or feebleness among men (Somalis) who wore long cotton garments from their waists. The Somalis were seen as simple despoilers, as unruly, disobedient children.[19]

Under the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974), Ethiopia never supplied Somalis with an embryonic state system as the basis for political identification. For Somalis dealing with Ethiopians, there was only the wound of conquest, a sense of cultural disparagement, and deep anger over patronizing attitudes. Scarcely integrated into the Ethiopian state, never considered as equals by their Amhara colonizers, Somalis developed no loyalty whatsoever towards Ethiopia. Amidst a disastrous drought in 1973-1974, a provincial medical officer again demonstrated Ethiopian disregard for Somali victims when he reasoned that "people have always starved down in the desert and help has never reached them before."[20] Captain Keseteberhan Ghebre Hiwet, the chief Ethiopian desk officer for Somali affairs in the government of Haile Selassie and a military intelligence officer in the subsequent revolutionary regime, summed it up in a candid interview:

> "The day-to-day lives of the Ogaden Somalis are so attached to Somalia that even if they get primary education in Ethiopia they then go for higher education to Somalia and get jobs there. Some even hold very high government posts. They observe rules and regulations made for the Somali public. They normally cross the border when they need legal help to settle disputes - or else mediators are sent from Somalia. They do not believe themselves Ethiopians, in fact the hatred they have for the Amhara is monumental. During the many operations that Ethiopia conducted to suppress popular revolts in the Ogaden, there was such inhuman treatment of the population that children grow up with a deeply imbedded hatred of the Amhara."[21]

Or as the Somali ambassador to the United Nations remarked in 1978: "Colonialism is not a phenomenon solely identifiable

by the accident of geography or the color of a man's skin."[22]

The Somalis were not, of course, the only Africans divided by colonialist boundaries. But since their determination to reunify their partitioned lands reflected cultural, economic, and ecological necessity, it is important to describe this region in terms of human habitation. Shallow soils, poor drainage, alkalinity, and rockiness render the gypsum and limestone rangelands of the eastern Horn largely unusable for agriculture and offer few alternatives to animal husbandry. The Somali lands contain a series of environmental zones, each with its own properties, and each contributing to the success of nomadic pastoralism. A functional adaptation to these variable lands, Somali nomadic pastoralism historically relied upon a system of regional mobility through the adjacent vegetational zones as Somalis developed ways to use the existing resources.[23]

The erratic spacing and timing of rainfall produced the ecological conditions for periodic movements, while the particular mixture of plant species established the range of herding options. In the dry seasons, pastoralists concentrated near their home wells, while in the wet seasons they scattered widely over the rangelands allowing pasturage near water to regenerate. By means of this rotating or oscillating pattern the Somalis adjusted to the rangeland's seasonal ecology through a series of intricate interactions. The Report of the General Survey of Somaliland (I944) linkned these migrations "to the pumping of a heart - diastole when it rains and the tribes spread till their grazing needs are satisfied - systole when they contract back to their permanent water holes in dry seasons. The movement is not really irregular, though measured by dates on the calendar it may seem so."[24]

The Somali nomadic pastoralist economy required adherence to a generally north-south axis, a fluidity of kinship links, and rural - town connections in a mode of production whose coherence required Somalis to rely on trans-border pastures, water

resources, feeder roads, small grain-producing areas (in the northwest Ogaden around Jigjiga), and marketing facilities on both sides of the British Somaliland - Ethiopia border in order to sustain themselves. The phrase "ecological integrity of the rangelands" aptly describes the salience between forage, plants, water, livestock, and people upon which Somali life characteristically depends.

Journalists can dismiss the Ogaden as a "wasteland" or an "endless expanse of sand and bush ... a dead contry where nothing happens", and Ethiopians may routinely scorn it as a "pigpen fit only for hyenas, infidels, and Somalis."[25] Even Somalis seem ambivalent about their land. Sometimes they allege that when "the Prophet, angry and without shoes, passed through our land, he cursed it; hence the scourges of drought, stones, and thistles." Other times, Somalis wistfully refer to it as a "blessed land teeming with mystic herds of camel attended by benevolent genies who lavish gifts of stock on the impoverished." (Said S. Samatar I982:I2, 204) Such extravagent prose aside, Somali self-confidence - even haughtiness - springs from a belief that no matter how desolate and forlorn it may appear to outsiders, this is their land including the wells, pastures, and intermittent streams of the Ogaden which form an integral part of it. "British Somaliland tribes must graze over in Abyssinia," wrote Curle in I940, "and nothing short of a wire fence will keep them out."[26] A Somali elder explained to me simply that "the wells of the Ogaden provide the 'petrol' for our animals."[27]

Maintaining a usable plant cover was always a feat of environmental manipulation. Camels, sheep, and goats have different biological needs, so conditions appropriate to one species may be quite disadvantageous to another. Europeans facetiously described the Somalis as a "parasite living on the camel from which he gets his milk and transport when it is alive and his meat when it dies," although in fact the camels, sheep, and goats were dependent upon the herders' expertise, endurance,

and skills.[28] "The Habr Yunis of the Burao District," according to the General Survey Report (I944), "have been known to have watered not less than II6.000 camels in a given I4 days, and the figure of 220.000 is not unlikely."[29] Camels can retrieve water from vegetation directly and store it for several months but the realization of this capacity required a mixed diet of trees, shrubs, and grasses without which camels simply ceased to thrive. The Somali herders by virtue of their strategic treks over hundreds of miles annually were able to achieve the diverse seasonal forage conditions necessary for their animals' survival. After a rain, scouts (sahan) would go out and note the distribution and amounts of the new rainfall along with the positions of unfriendly lineages. "These scouts lie scientifically to obtain the best grazing first for their own sections; it is not unusual for a whole village to move IOO miles in 60 hours." (Hunt I944:8) About 25% of a camel's food intake should be from a species of plant which takes up salt occurring in the soil, and in northern Somalia these small shrubs are called daraan. When daraan was not abundant in the Ogaden, Somalis carried salt-laden soil called carro to the camels; nomads can identify (and in fact prefer) the saltier taste of meat from a camel which has eaten a quantity of carro soil."[30] "Life in Somaliland is balanced on a knife's edge," acknowledged a British veterinarian who spent twenty-five years there, "and how many of the Somalis' advisors could take livestock into the bush and bring them (and himself) back alive and have lush stock to peddle in the markets of Aden to boot?"[3I]

At the end of the I9th century, while Menelik expanded his claims to Somali-occupied territory southeast of the Ethiopian highlands, British suzerainty was extended over the northern Somali coast ostensibly, as Lord Curzon (I907:4I) put it, "to safeguard the food-supply of Aden, just as the Roman Protectorate was extended over Egypt to safeguard the corn-supply of

Rome." Somaliland was no Nile Delta. The country provided no "corn". What Somaliland offered the merchants, soldiers, seamen, and functionaries at the vital imperial entrepot of Aden was livestock, the sheep, goats, and camels that had been shipped across the Gulf of Aden since ancient times.[32] The inland boundaries of the British Somaliland Protectorate were defined by agreements with Italy in I894 and Abyssinia in I897 when Britain surrendered to Menelik (without Somali consent) "the most fertile grain producing regions in the west of the Protectorate and the important spring and autumn pastures in the south."[33]

Farah Nur composed a memorable poem warning Somalis about the implications of this partition:

> "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 of the world."[34]

Another Somali who understood the meaning of colonialism was Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hasan (the so-called "Mad Mullah"); from I899 to I920, his religious-military movement to expel alien rulers dominated events in the eastern Horn. A militant member of the Salihyya brotherhood and a staunch opponent of Christian colonialism, he sought to overcome northern clan affiliations (and southern Somali ones as well) through a novel political structure to unite Somalis using Islam as the cementing force. Sayyid Muhammad fought to create a secure enclave where his followers (Dervishes) could practice Islam and safeguard their culture. His activities initially were in self-defense against Ethiopian attacks, but after I900, Britain and Italy mobilized large forces to defeat him.

In an "open letter" to the English people in I903, Sayyid Muhammad explained his motivations, simply but firmly:

> "I wish to rule my own country and protect my own religion ... We have both suffered considerably in battle with one another ... I have with me camels and goats and sheep in plenty ... I will not take your country. I have no forts, no houses ... no cultivated fields, no silver or gold for you to take. If the country was cultivated or contained houses or property, it would be worth your while to fight ... If you want wood and stone you can get them in plenty. There are also many antheaps. The sun is very hot. All you can get from me is war, nothing else ... if you wish peace I am also content. But if you wish peace, go away from my country to your own." (Jardine I923:I22)

An independent entity organized to provide Somalis with an alternative political identification within the confines of a colonial state was certainly intolerable to imperial powers. Britain subsequently launched a series of costly campaigns against the Dervishes including a policy of wide-spread distribution of firearms to "friendly" Somalis which, in turn, ignited a massive civil war of cruel inter-clan reprisals among northern clans. Sayyid Muhammad and his supporters managed to hold off the colonialist armies until I920 when an unprecedented assault operation that combined a Royal Navy unit and the Somaliland Camel Corps with a flight of RAF airplanes annihilated his forces and destroyed his movement.[35]

When it was over, Great Britain had spent £ 6.5 million to defeat the Dervishes, an estimated 200.000 lives had been lost, livestock devastated, "all available Government funds (had) been expended on the maintenance of military forces (and) nothing (had) been left for education, for the encouragement of agriculture, for the development, or even a survey, of the country's mineral resources ... It was Somaliland's misfortune that her twenty-one years' war left her with nothing but a few ramshackle Ford cars that have seen better days." (Jardine I923:3I5-3I6) Although Sayyid Muhammad left behind a vital legacy of national resistance to colonialism, the northern Somalis were unable to offer physical opposition to the British after I920, as clans struggled for the next twenty years to

replenish their herds and human population.

The "Dervish legacy" on the colonial administration has been summed up by I. M. Lewis (I977:229):

> "The expatriate administration subsequently received stern admonitions from London that nothing was ever to be done again that could possibly provoke the Somalis. The spectre of another "Mad Mullah" rising in Somaliland haunted the Colonial Office ... Caution and appeasement were now the administrative watchwords in Somaliland. Modern developments were thus introduced with tact and patience, and soft-pedaled if the pricly Muslim nomads responded unfavourably. No attempt was made to impose direct taxes on the turbulent nomads, for fear of a very strong reaction, and Christian missionary activity was henceforth strictly prohibited. It was firmly and repeatedly dinned into all who served in Somaliland that nothing must ever be done that might seriously antagonize the local population. It was bad enough trying to regulate their endless and often bloody clan feuds without risking wider embroilment. The Somaliland Protectorate, consequently, was ruled with a light, sympathetic touch befitting its situation as a territory with no European population."[36]

Somali informants who watched the British government allow the Protectorate stagnate through lack of financial aid labelled the administration "a deaf government" whose only policy was "to have no ideas and spend no money".[37] Somalis complained even in the I950s that "for seventy-five years you have been in this land and there is not a chimney or a rail to show for it".[38] "The British really did nothing for our country," recalled Sheikh Hasan Gheele in I979, "except to give portions of it away."[39] British colonial policy in Somaliland during the interwar years was guided by a belief that retrenchment and stern frugality were also ways to counteract the effects of financial collapse that spread over the world in the I930s. Although the political administration in Somaliland numbered less than fifty officers and civil servants - one of the smallest in the Empire - annual military expenditures represented 25 - 33% of the total Protectorate budget.

It was the nature of capitalist colonialism to absorb non-capitalist systems into the international market economy and in the process to modify the "penetrated" systems by gradually removing control over the means of production from most members of the colonized society. The diversity of pre-capitalist social formations, organizations of production, and environments obliged colonial powers to try various methods of accomplishing this incorporation.[40] In British Somaliland, however, there was little experimentation. The scorched plains, erratic rainfall, and general dessication of the region precluded the population density needed for the production of export cash crops as the basis for tax collections, customs revenues, or capital accumulation. Somaliland was barren of mineral wealth. Its commercial value lay in the production of livestock and their by-products. Until the mid-20th century, pastoralist productivity remained under the control of herders who, for the most part, were free to maintain the mobility required for their social and biological reproduction.

To gain access to Somaliland's internally-generated surplus livestock and to assure its perpetuation for export, Somali traders and livestock brokers (dilaals) learned to co-exist with both capitalist and non-capitalist social formations. The commodities trade and most livestock shipments were controlled by Parsi family firms (Cowasji Dinshaw, Premji Brothers, K. Pitamber) and a few European companies, notably Antoine Besse Company.[41] The raising, droving, and procuring of the animals themselves remained a traditional Somali enterprise that operated through a network of intermediaries who travelled between coastal markets and interior villages where they secured goats, sheep, and camels from pastoralists. Somalis who capitalized on lineage connections, overseas experiences, and knowledge of stock routes, pasturelands, and water resources became guides and protector (abbaan) for non-Somali firms.

In terms of the overseas experience just mentioned, it is important to note that Somalis have been parties to a far-flung

monetary trading network for centuries, with ancient commercial ties to Asia. Livestock was raised for sale and the trees of Somaliland, which produced scented gums and resins (frankincense and myrrh), were exploited for export long enough ago that the region was known to the Romans as terra aromatica.[42] With the development of shipping from India through the Suez Canal during the 19th century and the expansion of the bunkering business at Aden, Somalis travelled abroad in search of seasonal or short-term employment, heaving coal on the wharves at Aden or working as stokers and seamen aboard ships trading between Europe and the subcontinent. By the 20th century, Somalis formed small immigrant communities in Aden, Liverpool, Manchester, and Cardiff. Ali Mirreh and Ali Noor, for example, opened boarding houses and restaurants which catered to black American soldiers stationed in England during the Second World War.[43] Hersi Egeh and his family from Berbera, participants in the 1895 Crystal Palace Exposition on "Somaliland in London", were subsequently employed by the Hagenbeck Family Circus of Hamburg. They accumulated considerable wealth in Germany, and then returned to Somaliland in the 1920s and 1930s where they invested heavily in town properties.[44]

These are but a few examples of individuals whom the Somalis call the tacabbir (the crosser of the sea), the intrepid migrant who ventures abroad. Some tacabbir were never heard from again of course, but others managed to accumulate money which they remitted through insured money orders to relatives in Somaliland. Some returned home wealthy, as prestigious entrepreneurs, and others resumed the pastoralist life. Somalis were renowned for their ability to pursue advantages wherever they found them and for a willingness to respond to incentives that demonstrated pragmatic or survival-directed qualities. It may have been the precarious nature of nomadic pastoralist life - the intense competition for pastureland, prevalence of animal predators, uncertainties of rainfall - which encouraged their independence of action, aggressiveness, bravery, and mobility.[45]

Forty years ago, Gordon Waterfield (I944:57-58) offered a caricature of the returned tacabbir with a poignancy that applies even to this day:

> "The Somali is a great traveller and a good trader; his savoir-faire enables him to fit easily into the life of the west ... Having earned good money abroad and tasted the pleasures of the west, the Somali returns to Somaliland in his western finery, and after entertaining his friends handsomely he puts on the native tobe and goes back to his native village, investing his capital in camels and sheep and takes up again the life that his people have lived in the desert and bush for many centuries ... The man who goes striding through the bush with his camels and armed with a spear may know the slang of British sailors, or the jargon of Chicago, and play an excellent game of football."

We still know little about the mechanics and decision-making processes that motivated the tacabbir and lack ethnographic details on the creation of a Somali trading class. This is a fruitful area of inquiry since the shifting between desert and sea played an important part in the evolution of modern Somali political expression.

It is difficult to trace in thorough detail all the trade connections among pastoralist production, the trekking to market for exchanges, the exchanges themselves, and the eventual export from coastal towns.[46] Among the Somalis the procedures for exchanging animals involved an intricate bargaining process that sometimes was hidden (literally and figuratively) from nomadic producers.[47] Animals available for trade were collected from nomadic herding groups and moved to a market town by hired drovers known as sawaagi. These hardy drovers - "the Somali equivalent of a cowboy" [48] - were experts at herding upwards of 300 to 400 animals over one hundred miles to market within a week. The best of them enjoyed a widespread reputation among nomads and traders alike. The sawaagi was usually employed by a coastal merchant or livestock broker (dilaal) who paid him a percentage of the final price received for all animals satisfactorily trekked to their coastal destinations. Agreements made in advance stipulated how many sheep a sawaagi and his assistants were permitted to slaughter en route for their subsistence and the value of any additional "missing animals" was deducted from the sawaagi's payment.

The dilaals who moved between interior market towns and the coastal ports kept track of available cargoes of rice, dates, sugar, cotton cloth, and assorted imports from Aden, giving them an advantageous position as intermediaries between livestock export firms and the nomadic producers in the determination of import-export prices. In times of drought, which are reckoned to occur at approximately seven-year intervals (Lewis I975:26-29), the nomads would readily exchange hides and skins at lower prices for essential supplementary foods like dates and rice. Somali dilaals and merchants would speculatively buy skins and hides at depressed prices, hold them off the market for up to a year, and then attempt to sell them at higher prices.

The sale of sheep, goats, and camels between dilaals generally took place at primary wells near the towns of Burao, Ainabo, Odweina, and Hargeisa. To commence the exchange, the dilaals would grasp hands under a small cloth and conduct a series of offers and counter-offers involving the assignment of monetary values to each digit. The top digit equalled I00, the middle one 200, and the third digit was worth 300. The prices were established by alternatively grasping each other's digits until an agreement was reached and the two brokers then shook hands. The seller received cash and commodities which he disbursed to the nomadic producers after deducting his share. The buyer, in turn, relinquished the animals to his sawaagi who proceeded to drove them to the coast for export.

Somali informants insisted that before the I950s, dilaals and sawaagi could amass considerable profits through their respective functions as brokers and drovers, a claim substantiated in a report written by Dr. M. H. French of the Imperial

Institute after his inquiry in Somaliland in I948.[49] Although the livestock export business was by no means vertically integrated, by the late I930s dilaals were found throughout the Protectorate and in the Ogaden conducting sales transactions in rural trade settlements, channelling individual herds into their own ones under the care of abbaans and sawaagi. Since the British colonial authorities customarily collected a sariibad grazing tax on animals while at market, it was not unusual for the dilaal to advance this money on credit to pastoralists.

In the I930s and I940s, following a court conviction for a criminal offense and the levying of a fine, the District Commissioner frequently took two dozen armed irregular troops (illaloes) and would seize camels from the guilty party. The animals were collected at the district headquarters where the owners were required to arrange for payment of the fine in cash (rupees). Usually there would be available a handful of wealthy lineage patrons who, as "bank loan officers", would lend their kinfolk the currency to pay the fine. The animals would be returned and immediately sold through the normal channels to recoup the "loan".[50]

Except for the provision of a few dressing stations, sporadic veterinary services, and irregular subsidies for antrypol and pleuro-pneumonia vaccines, British colonial rule in Somaliland brought no transformation of pastoralist productive techniques. In the inter-war years, roads were improved and maintained through the use of convict labor and paupers, enabling at least one District Commissioner to drive over 4500 miles a year across the "reasonably well-maintained" tracks.[5I]

The meat from Somali black-headed Persian sheep "compared favorably to the best Welsh mutton"[52] and thanks to shade drying and quicker transport by trucks, Somali kidskins were particularly prized in Switzerland, England, and America where they were made into fashionable women's gloves and luxury leather goods.[53]

The following table gives some idea of the extent and value of this trade:

	Sheep & Goats "On the hoof"		Sheep & Goats "Skins"	
	Number	Declared value	Number	Declared value
I937	85.000	45.000	I.5 mill.	I50.000
I942	I60.000	I30.000	I.6 mill.	I22.500
I947	I50.000	I40.000	I.9 mill.	236.000
I950	II9.000	I86.000	I.5 mill.	463.000

Table I: Livestock and Skins Exported from British Somaliland Ports, compiled from Somaliland Protectorate, Annual Colonial Reports

By the Second World War, the Somaliland Protectorate depended on pastoralist products for over 72% of its annual customs revenue and its status as an adjunct to Aden was firmly established.

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in I935 and the subsequent war provided Somalis with opportunities for trans-frontier trade when the "general shortages of foodstuffs in the territories occupied by the Italians encouraged a number of retail traders - Arabs, Indians, and Somalis - to take supplies to those areas from British territory."[54] In February I937, the Anglo-Italian Transit Trade and Grazing Rights Agreement was concluded by which Somaliland clans continued to enjoy grazing and watering rights in the Ogaden in return for which the Italians acquired trading rights and facilities in and through British Somaliland. The agreement was for two years and would then be up for review and renewal. Somalis were so eager to share in this trade that "when Jigjiga was first occupied by the Italians every small trader who could obtain goods and the

wherewithal to transport them, rushed to Jigjiga and sold them to the troops at enormous profits." Within a year, many small traders who were poor had become comparatively rich, and "many people who never thought of trading previously were taking caravans across the border and doing very well. A sign of the prosperity was a brisk demand for building plots in Hargeisa town."[55] By I940, an entire street in Hargeisa was lined with substantial houses and shops built of stone, a strip known today as the segeta liira, "the street of the lira".[56]
In I933, six private cars and forty-nine commercial vehicles had been imported into the Protectorate; in I937, the figures jumped to sixteen and two hundred thirty when a total of 5I private and 3I6 commercial vehicles were licensed to operate, and the number of Somalis directly engaged in the "conduct and maintenance of these vehicles cannot number less than 600."[57] Although they faced stiff competition from experienced Parsi firms, at least I50 Somali-owned trucks (primarily Bedfords, Dodges, and Chevrolets) were operating throughout British Somaliland before I940, and there were "many instances of stockowners having sold the bulk of their livestock to invest in motor vehicles."[58] Ahmed Haji Abdullahi "Hashish", Haji Jamaa Mohamed "Miateyn", and Yusuf Odowa Armiye were among the more prominent owners who ran profitable enterprises which transported skins, sheep, and goats to Berbera and then returned carrying mail, merchandise, foodstuffs, and passengers.[59]
Somalis who had taken advantage of employment opportunities and occupational alternatives emanating from Aden took jobs as government clerks, interpretors, butchers, teachers, and petition-writers at the garrison-entrepot. For younger males, these enterprises offered escape from the hardships and subordination in the pastoralist sector. Others became coffee shop owners in Somaliland, the so-clled geedeeye (one who puts up trees, i. e. a bush restaurant), and by I942, itinerant Somali traders could be found in virtually every village and in the vicinity of livestock where they bartered tea, cloth,

dates, rice, and sugar to pastoralists grazing herds in the Haud and Ogaden.[60] Although some goods still moved by camel caravans from the lands of one clan to another under the guarantees of the protectors (abbaan), the substantial increase in trade truck traffic was evident throughout the eastern Horn.

During the Italian occupation of Somaliland (August I940 - March I94I), Somali truck owners cleverly avoided confiscation by dismantling their vehicles, separately burying the engine, wheels, and other parts in the sand. When British forces reoccupied the Protectorate, the Somalis dug up the parts, reassembled them, and the so-called "out-of-the-earth" trucks resumed operation. An eye-witness likened the spectacle to "seeing a dusty corpse get out of the grave and drive off!"[6I] With spare parts and garages non-existent in the Protectorate "the Somalis had to tie their old trucks together with bits of rope," reminisced a District Commissioner, "and plugged radiator leaks with dates."[62]
Traders, truck owners and drivers, and town-dwellers generally welcomed the British return to Somaliland since the Protectorate had suffered destruction, devastation, and insecurity under the Italians. Somalis recalled the fascist occupation as a time of livestock confiscations, arbitrary beatings, the burning of several tarigas, and severe food shortages due to a British coastal blockade. The nomadic producers evidently experienced less privation since I940 and I94I were years of above-average rainfall, although some nomads insisted that when the Italians ruled the Protectorate, "there was not even enough cloth available to wrap the dead."[63] The Italian "interlude" created additional opportunities in the retail trade for an emergent Somali petit-bourgeoisie when several Parsi and Banyan traders abandoned their shops and fled the Protectorate for good.[64]
As Somalis moved to township before I940, they formed social clubs and welfare societies to assist themselves and destitute

people without regard for clan attachments. Known as the Nadi Hadiyat ar-Rahman (Gift of God Club) in Berbera and Burao and the Khayriya (Blessed Association) in Hargeisa, these clubs whose members included a number of tacabbir were not uniformly antagonistic to colonialism but did criticize the British for their meager support of social services, confronting the Colonial Secretary with a petition for redress of grievances when he visited the Protectorate in I936.[65] Club members actively promoted an interest in secular education while they simultaneously supported Koranic schools and exhorted Somalis to overcome clan divisiveness in the name of Islamic unity. Yet with several club members drawn from the administrative salariat, there are suggestions that they were beginning to see themselves as a class apart. "We were anxious to erect better meeting places than the geedeeye," recalled a prominent Nadi member, "and insisted on appropriate privileges as government civil servants such as better allowances, shorter time in rank, and provision of better lighting for our buildings. We were also concerned to find suitable servants to serve us tea at our club functions."[66]

In the towns, traders, coffee shop owners, personal servants of British government officials, truck drivers, and tacabbir demonstrated new interests and aspirations. Young townsmen began chewing gaad (catha edulis), a shrub whose leaves and shoots contain weak d-amphetamines (cathine and cathinone) which produce a euphoric, stimulating, exciting but finally depressing effect when chewed.[67] Truck drivers carrying goods and passengers to and from towns as far west as Jigjiga (adjacent to a major gaad-growing district in eastern Ethiopia) began to rely on gaad-chewing to keep them awake during the long trips, so fresh sprigs were more readily available to town-dwellers. In I928, approximately 750 bundles were identifiably imported into the Protectorate and by I936 the "known" amount had increased five-fold to 4000.[68]

Chewing gaad became especially popular among small groups of poets known alternatively as the buugaan buug or garaami who emphasized social solidarity and community of purpose through their poems (often recited with instrumental music) whose themes included romance, extra-marital flirtations, consumer expectations, and political matters. Chewing gaad for hours became an important ritual of friendship and mutual trust which engendered social cohesion through the custom of chewing together from a common bundle of twigs. Before the war, nomads sometimes referred to these residents collectively as the kabacad (white shoes, i. e. their European shoes and trousers), or occasionally, more pejoratively, as nasraani (Christians). By the late I940s, when Governor Gerald Reece tried to proscribe gaad-chewing his efforts instead simply stimulated its consumption as "chewing" became symbolic of one's refusal to accept colonialist authority.[69]

Conditions in British Somaliland began to change dramatically in the I940s. The allied powers expelled the Italians from northeast Africa and placed Italian Somalia, the British Somaliland Protectorate, and Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia (the Haud and Ogaden) under a loosely-unified military administration. In the Protectorate, nearly all documents from the pre-war period had been destroyed either before the British evacuation or during the Italian occupation, so when military officials interviewed civil servants and officers who had worked in Somaliland before I940, they were forcefully reminded about an essential fact of Somali life: livestock grazing in or exported from the Somaliland Protectorate were raised, sustained, and herded through ecological zones far across the Protectorate's southern and southwestern boundaries, the lands under Ethiopian jurisdiction since the late I9th century.

Throughout an extensive tour of the Protectorate shortly after his arrival in I943, Governor G. T. Fisher appreciated the links between open boundaries, access to wells and

pastures, and the livelihood of the pastoralists. "Somali products, if freely exchanged throughout the region," he observed, "go far to meet the people's food requirements ... and from a social and economic point of view the only hope of improving the living standards of the nomads is to create a united Somalia."[70] A comprehensive study of grazing area deterioration (The Glover-Gilliland Report) substantiated that grazing facilities in the British Somaliland Protectorate were insufficient for the people's needs for the greater part of the year," and that without assured access to other areas, pastoralist life was threatened whenever herding groups were compelled to use during the rainy season the dry season reserves of other groups.[71] "To anyone versed in desert pasturage," warned another official, "that is economic suicide."

Fisher admitted that British Somaliland "was never either an economic, ethnological, or administrative entity, merely a geographical expression which it would be a mistake to revive," and advised that "the pressing need for improvement of land use by controlled grazing will only be possible if it embraces the other trans-border areas."[72] There was already evidence that animals were destroying the young grass as soon as it appeared, allowing "no respite from grazing (which) accounts for the extensive denudation in the vicinity of the wells."[73] When John Hunt conducted an exhaustive survey of the geomorphology, stock wealth, place names, grazing areas, and clan positions in the Protectorate in the mid-I940s, he acknowledged that while rising livestock numbers might be considered a sign of prosperity in a colony whose major exports were animals, the concomittant deterioration in grazing conditions threatened to approach the point of diminishing returns. (Hunt I95I:I7I-I77) A pasture officer reported that "sheep in droving herds are among the main causes of surface pulverization, especially on gypsum soils which can lead so quickly to soil erosion." (Gilliland I947:52) The Agricultural Department's

Annual Report for I947 was explicit and prescient: "it cannot be stressed too strongly or repeated too often that pastures in the widest sense form the crux of these problems in a country whose soil and vegetation are on the brink of irretrievable ruin"(emphasis added, Ch. G.).[74]

The British had re-invested very little state revenue into Somaliland so that "after fifty years of colonial rule there (were) no great commercial undertakings, few expansive installations, no concentrations of capital, and remarkably little except sun, sand, and Somalis." The Civil Affairs Branch of the Military Administration doubted "whether any British territory has benefited so little in the provision of social services as Somaliland has under British rule: educational, medical, agricultural, and veterinary services exist merely on a token basis."[75] The British had made a token attempt to develop Somali collaborators in indirect rule through a system of stipendiary elders called cugaal (singular: caagil). Until the early I930s, the qualities of "bravery, hospitality, and verbal eloquence" usually distinguished an caagil among Somalis, but by the Second World War they were being selected simply on hereditary lines, exerted little influence in towns, and lacked credibility among the nomads.[76] Most administrative posts were monopolized by immigrant Indians in a Protectorate whose entire budget for education never exceeded £I800 before I94I and where, by I949, there were only 306 Somali bank deposits in a Protectorate whose economy was still largely based on livestock, not money.[77]

The anti-colonialist agitation in British Somaliland after I945 was not a spontaneous expression of shared grievances by a homogeneous group. "Community of language and culture does not necessarily give rise to political unity," reasoned Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (I940:23), "any more than linguistic and cultural dissimilarity prevents political unity;" it was more important to find out "what is the relation of political structure to the whole social structure?" Effective political

mobilization depends upon the solidarity and consciousness of a group with shared interests and concerns. If inequalities exist between individuals who interpret this inequality as part of a pattern of collective discrimination, if the group maintains an adequate communications network, and if it also possesses a social awareness that leads them to define the situation as illegitimate, then that is the stratum most likely to contemplate collective political action.

In British Somaliland, it was a town-based petit-bourgeoisie, the beneficiaries of inter-territorial commercial expansion who had made the most of the opportunities that did exist, who came to understand that the threatened re-partition of the Somali lands (instead of the proposed re-unification) could reduce material resources from their control. Relatively speaking, they were Somalis with higher incomes, status occupations, a better education, and wider ranges of experiences, and yet whose lineage connections obliged them to maintain a stake in livestock production and in the prosperity of the pastoralist society. They were a diverse occupational set - neither bourgeois, proletarian, nor nomadic - with petty productive property which they worked alone or with assistance from family members, or hired laborers (geeljire) for their livestock.[78]

The Second World War provided them with a more favorable milieu for broadening their concerns and exchanging political ideas through a network of inter-territorial linkages sustained by the truck drivers whose comaraderie and rapport with Somali policemen facilitated their movement throughout the eastern Horn. Impatient, aggressive, "well organized and disciplined to an unexpected degree," the new breed of Somali political leaders was a far cry from the effete, ineffectual cugaal of the pre-war era.[79] Drawing financial support from traders, merchants, truck owners, a small number of Sudanese-trained Somali teachers, and social and political action groups of

tacabbir in England and Aden, they soon demanded a leading part in the transfer of power.

Initially calling themselves the Somaliland National Society (SNS) after their takeover of buildings abandoned by the moribund Khayriya and Hadiyat ar-Rahman in I944-I945, they changed their names three years later to the Somaliland National League. In I946, they merged with the truck drivers from the two-year old Somali Transport Company (STC), a self-help organization led by Mohamed Jamaa "Urdoox", a boisterous ex-customs official with a reputation for intimidation tactics that included constant demands to administration officials that they make full disclosures to explain their annual expenditure of Portectorate funds. The appeal of the STC accelerated at the end of the war owing to the disbandment of Somaliland military units and reduced requests for movement of troops and provisions. "There are now some 2000 drivers without regular employment," read one report, "and they are in a political body modelled along lines similar to the SNS."[80]

Local British officials in the Horn vigorously supported post-war boundary rectifications to create a "United Somalilands", but the Foreign Office encountered stiff opposition to such plans. France and the Soviet Union denounced it as a simple scheme to expand the British Empire. Ethiopia demanded restoration of its authority over the Ogaden and drew decisive American support for its "territorial integrity" after Sinclair Oil Company signed an exclusive concessionary agreement with Haile Selassie in I946 that permitted oil drilling in the Ogaden. Fisher was resigned thereafter to the demise of a "United Somalilands" since "the mere suspicion of the presence of oil in the Ogaden must make it unlikely that the Emperor will agree to any exchange of territory until he is quite certain that he is not giving away any potential source of revenue."[8I]

The fears and alarms about the possible return of Ethiopian rule to Somali territory spread throughout the eastern Horn.

"Under the Ethiopian government influence we are still suffering the worst enslavement," said a group of Ogaden Somali elders in a petition to the Civil Affairs Officer. "We are fed up with the Ethiopians and want to be rid of them," they added. "We mean them to leave our country. If the powerful nation Great Britain does not take necessary steps in subject (sic), it means we shall be compelled to lay our souls for peril in purpose of self-defense."[82] In southern Somalia too, the Central Council of the Somali Youth League considered the matter very seriously, and warned "in case you decide that Ogaden returns to Abyssinia the people in that province are ready to fight until the last man."[83]

With Britain's financial status reversed from creditor nation in I939 to debtor in I946, Parliament had another good reason not to allocate funds for an expanded colonial commitment.[84]

In I947-I948, when the most militant members of the Somaliland National League became convinced that Britain would capitulate and allow the Somali lands to revert to their status quo ante-bellum they formed an underground faction called the Anti-Partition Party which was prepared, if necessary, to assassinate British officials to make their anger and frustrations most emphatic and unambiguous. Their concern over the future status of all Somali territories, including the historical grazing (and now putatively mineral-endowed) lands of the Ogaden and Haud claimed by Ethiopia convinced them that any form of alien rule was unacceptable, unjust, and perpetuated through duplicitous means.[85]

British officials disliked these activists whose sworn oaths not to reveal their clan affiliations caused "worry to Civil Affairs Officers in their capacity as Judicial Officers as it is necessary in court cases to record the tribe (sic) of the accused and witnesses. When asked for their tribe (sic), members now state simply that they are Somalis."[86] The Protectorate administration tried unsuccessfully to undermine the spread of

nationalist consciousness through subsidies to rump political "parties" based exclusively on narrow clan affiliations.[87] In I947, Major E. H. Halse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, alarmed at the rapid growth of the SNS whose Berbera chapter already boasted IOOO members and "intended to open a banking account", reiterated that the Society sought "to stamp out all tribal influence and amalgamate all Somalis." Some members promised Halse that someday they would take over the government although one member, a Haji Yassin Mohamed, reassured him that "perhaps our children's children will be the government." Unconvinced, Halse warned (darkly) that "other elements consider it will be much sooner than that."[88]

The historical context from which a politically-conscious stratum developed in British Somaliland suggests an emergent class linked to international demands for livestock and its by-products, and inter-territorial transportation opportunities in the eastern Horn. Born in the pastoralist nomadic sector (for the most part), but with subsequent commercial, urban, and overseas experiences, the Somali petit-bourgeoisie was an amalgam of truck owners, traders, clerks, teachers, drivers, and livestock brokers. Living in the still puritanical atmosphere of British Somaliland, this stratum has been alternatively called "the new intelligentsia", "the urban sophisticates", or "the transitional generation".[89] They were another example that "the petit-bourgeoisie is like a chameleon, taking its colour from its environment." (Bechhofer/Elliott I98I:I87) The small size of the Somali proletariat and the predominance of the urban petit-bourgeoisie with its relative - never absolute - isolation from pastoralist production created the circumstances in which the tradition of class struggle in Somaliland was much weaker than nationalist politics. By I950, this northern Somali petit-bourgeoisie was not a dominant class, i. e., one whose members owned and controlled the means of economic production. At least, not yet.

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FOOTNOTES

Note: The names of Somalis and Somali place names mentioned in this paper are written in their anglicized forms, according to the convention used by Somalis when they write in English. Ordinary words are written in the Somali orthography introduced in I972. For readers who would like to have some idea how such words are pronounced, with some degree of approximation, the following points should be observed: the letter x corresponds roughly to the English h, but is rather emphatically pronounced. The letter c which is a sound pronounced in the pharynx and which normally evades the perception of English-speakers should simply be ignored. The vowels have stable pronunciations resembling those of Spanish or Italian, and the doubling of vowel letters represents

their length. I am grateful to Prof. B. W. Andrzejewski for his advice and guidance on Somali orthography and language use.

I Thorough historical studies of the Ethiopian-Somalia conflict include: Tom Farer (I979); Bereket Habte Selassie (I980); I. M. Lewis (I980); Mesfin Wolde Mariam (I964) and Marina Ottaway (I982).

2 Recent works include: Jeremy Swift (I979); Dan Aronson (I980) and Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (I980).

3 A collection of superb essays is: Rotchild / Olorunsola (eds.) (I983).

4 Jackson / Rosberg (I982:I-24) develops this argument further.

5 Markakis / Nega Ayele (I978); D. and M. Ottaway (I978); Cliffe / Davidson / Bereket Habte Selassie (eds.) (I980); Halliday / Molyneux (I98I) and Markakis (I98I).

6 Daniel Thwaite: The Seething African Pot, London I936, p. 207, cited in Asante (I977:I6).

7 cited in Asante (I977:2I4).

8 At least one exception was George Padmore: Ethiopia Today: The Making of a Modern State, in Nancy Cunard (ed.): Negro Anthology, I93I-I933 (New York I969 - reprint of I934 original), pp. 6I2-6I8. My thanks to Franklin Knight for this helpful discussion of Caribbean distinctions between symbolic and factual Ethiopia.

9 For extensive historical treatments see chapters by Tadesse Tamrat, Mordechai Abir, and Sven Rubenson in The Cambridge History of Africa, Vols. 3, 4, and 5 (Cambridge I975-I977), respectively. An important review article is H. Fleming (I976:248-278).

10 Markakis /Ayele (1978:21); see also Donald Crummey (1981:227-249).

11 Harold Marcus (1975:chapter VI)

12 Markakis / Ayele (1978:30). For an exhaustive analysis of the diplomatic negotiations behind the establishment of Ethiopia's borders, see: David Napier Hamilton (1974).

13 Public Record Office, London (hereafter, P.R.O.), FO 403/177, Stace to Baring, 12 April 1892.

14 Captain R. B. Cobbold's Diary of the Anglo-Abyssinian Campaign, 1901, London, Ministry of Defense, Whitehall Library.

15 Lieutenant-Colonel A. T. Curle Interview, Imperial War Museum (London), Department of Sound Recards, Accession 4414/07.

16 Private papers of Lieutenant-Colonel A. T. Curle, (Jedburgh, Scotland), Box 8, A. T. Curle to A. O. Curle, 30 January. My deep appreciation to Mrs. Cecil Curle for permission to examine her late husband's papers, February 1982.

17 Curle Papers, Box 9, A. T. Curle to A. O. Curle, 10 September 1930.

18 Quoted in: Ethiopian Observer, Vol. I, 1 (December 1956), p. 7.

19 One Ethiopian pamphlet on the conflict with Somalia was written by a leading Ethiopian geographer, Dr. Mesfin Wolde Mariam, and titled Somalia: The Problem Child of Africa (1977).

20 Quoted in Jack Shepard (1975:51).

21 Quoted in Richard Greenfield (1977:2447).

22 This line of reasoning puts Somali spokesmen "in the unenviable position of having to stand up in world assemblies to proclaim that blacks too can be imperialists," wrote David Laitin (1979:109). On the other hand, "Ali Mazrui asserts that the only meaning self-determinantion has ever had for African nationalists is what he calls 'pigmentational self-determination'. The implications of this view are that self-determination claims are seen as legitimate only when there is interracial domination. This might explain why Amhara colonialism in Ethiopia and Americo-Liberian colonialism in Liberia escaped the mandate of the OAU", Edmond J. Keller (1983:276).

23 I. M. Lewis (1965:319-360); Z. A. Konczacki (1978:71-107); Robert C. Mares (1954:411-423 and 470-480); this point is made especially well in H. B. Gilliland (1952:91-124), and in C. F. Hemming (1966:173-250).

24 John A. Hunt (1945:8).

25 For example, compare Newsweek (30 August 1982) with The Daily Telegraph (15 November 1935).

26 Curle Papers, Box 19, A. T. Curle to A. O. Curle, 14 June 1940.

27 Interview with Sultan Biixi Fooley, 24 January 1979 (Mogadishu).

28 A. C. A. Wright (1943:63). David Laitin who served with the Peace Corps in Somalia in the late 1960s adds that there is another reason why nomads don't feel parasitic on the camels: "The camel is so defunct, they told me," Laitin writes, "that the Somalis must help the males to mount the females." Personal communication, 9 February 1982.

29 John A. Hunt (1945:8).

30 Said Salah Ahmed, personal communication, 25 February I983. For a complete discussion of camels' feeding habits, see Hilde Gauthier-Pilters / Anne Innis Dagg (I98I: chapter 3).

3I Edward F. Peck: The Veterinary History of the Somaliland Protectorate, I924-I960, unpublished manuscript, SS. Afr. s. I4I, Rhodes House Library (Oxford).

32 Ali Abdirahman Hersi: The Arab Factor in Somali History: The Origins and the Development of Arab Enterprise and Cultural Influences in the Somali Peninsula, unpublished dissertation, UCLA I977, contains a thorough examination of this early trade.

33 Drysdale (I9 :28). For a detailed analysis of the negotiations over this "vexed Somali frontier", see: Leo Silberman (I96I:37-83).

34 Cited in B. W. Andrzejewski / I. M. Lewis (I964:57).

35 A critically important study is: Said S. Samatar (I982). Some equally important new material on the dervish movement in southern Somalia is found in: Lee V. Cassanelli (I982: 240-25I). Other reliable studies include: Robert Hess (I968:65-I08); B. G. Martin (I976:chapter 7) and I. M. Lewis (I980:chapter 4).

36 I. M. Lewis (I977:229). For an administrative history of the Somaliland Protectorate in the inter-war years, see Patrick Kakwenzire: The Somaliland Protectorate from I905 to I939, unpublished dissertation, University of London I976.

37 Interview with Mohamed Ismail Siad "Jama Telephone", 20 August I978 (London).

38 Quoted in Leo Silberman (I959:56I).

39 Interview with Sheikh Hasan Gheele, I7 January I979 (Burao, Somalia).

40 For a brilliant historical synthesis, see: Frederick Cooper: Africa and the World Economy, paper commissioned by the Social Science Research Council for presentation to the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Bloomington, Indiana, October I98I. See also: John Lonsdale / Bruce Berman (I979:487-505).

4I These trading firms are discussed in: R. J. Gavin (I975); and Richard Pankhurst (I974:453-497).

42 Hersi: The Arab Factor in Somali History, chapter 3.

43 Ras Makonnen (I973:I82-I87).

44 Interview with Abdirahman Haji Jamaa Mohamed, 27 October I982 (Burao, Somalia). Additional information about Hersi Egeh in Germany may be found in Lorenz Hagenbeck: Animals Are My Life (London I956).

45 Robert Edgerton (I97I) argues along similar lines.

46 Some information may be found in the following: I. M. Lewis (I962:365-385); Gavin Kitching (I980:2I2-2I7) and Swift (I979:447-465).

47 The following four paragraphs are based on extensive interviews with Mohamed Musa Awalleh, 8 August I980 (Mogadishu) and Musa Haji Ismail Galaal, I9-2I July I980 (Mogadishu). Musa Haji Galaal was a "living Somali encyclopedia" whose knowledge of the past encompassed the experiences and careers of many generations. I am deeply indebted to him for his generosity, encouragement, wisdom, and friendship without which this research would not have been possible. Musa's death in December I980 left an enormous void in Somali studies.
Hagenbeck: Animals Are My Life, contains a brief reference

to the Somalis' so-called "secret finger-language", p. 69.

48 A phrase often used by Musa Haji Ismail Galaal during our conversations.

49 P.R.O., AY 4/907, Dr. M. H. Rench: The Skin Industry in British Somaliland, I948 with comments by members of the Hide and Skin Shippers and Agents Association.

50 Interview with Philip Carrel and Geoffrey Lawrence, 8 March I982 (Liphook, England).

5I Personal diary of Mr. Dudley Walsh, consulted with the kind permission of his son (Nigel Walsh) and daughter (Mrs. Sheila Knox) in Dalry, Scotland, 4 January I98I.

52 Peck: Veterinary History of the Somaliland Protectorate

53 Interview with Sir Gerald Reece, I6 January I98I (East Lothian, Scotland); P.R.O., AY 4/907, French: Skin Industry in Somaliland, passim.

54 Somaliland Protectorate Annual Report, I936 (London: HMSO, I937), p. 27.

55 Ibid., p. 28

56 Interview with Mahamoud Ahmed Ali, 30 October I982 (Burao, Somalia).

57 Somaliland Protectorate Annual Report, I937, (London:HMSO, I939), p. I3.

58 Ibid., p. 29.

59 Interview with Mohamed Shirre Mohamed, I9 July I980 (Mogadishu); and Interview with Deria Faarah Abdi "Haji Balbal", 3I July I980 (Mogadishu).

60 D. C. Edwards (I942), supplement by E. F. Peck, p. 29. The word geedeeye is derived from geed (a tree) since many of the coffee shops were situated under a tree, or were constructed from tree branches, where the owners would offer seats to their patrons.

6I Interview with Gordon Waterfield, 27 May I980 (London); and P.R.O., WO 230/5a, Report by General Arthur Chater, 24 June I94I.

62 Interview with F. J. Chambers, 24 February I982 (Aymesbury, England).

63 Interview with Sheikh Ali Haji Ibrahim, 8 January I979 (Hargeisa, Somalia).

64 This paragraph summarizes a vast amount of detailed recollections obtained in interviews with the following: Sheikh Umar Askar, 4 January I979 (Hargeisa); Ahmed Hasan, 7 January I979 (Hargeisa); and Sheikh Mahamoud Ahmed Dhibleh, I3 January I979 (Burao).

65 Interviews with Mohamed Shirreh Mohamed, 24 December I978 (Mogadishu); Sheikh Ali Haji Ibrahim and Sheikh Abdirahman Kaarie Mohamoud, 8 January I979 (Hargeisa).

66 Interview with Mahamoud Ahmed Ali, 30 October I982 (Burao); and Interview with Sheikh Mahamoud Abdi Samad, II-I2 January I979 (Burao).

67 Qat or khat are anglicized versions of gaad as written in the Somali orthography. For information on gat (catha edulis) see: A. S. Affara: The Medical, Social, and Economic Implications of Qat Chewing in the Middle East, unpublished dissertation, University of Edinburgh I962; Derek W. A. Peters (I952:I7-I8 and 36-37).

68 Somaliland Protectorate Annual Report, I930 (London: HMSO I93I), p. I7; and Somaliland Protectorate Annual Report, I936 (London: HMSO I937), p. I3.

69 Interviews with Umar Mahamoud Abdurahman "Dheere", 22 January I979 (Mogadishu); Musa Haji Ismail Galaal, 24 July I980 (Mogadishu); and Mohamed Shirre Mohamed and Musa Haji Ismail Galaal, I9 July I980 (Mogadishu). Examples of the

new poetic genres and their significance may be found in the following: John W. Johnson (I974:47-69); and Mohamed Farah Abdillahi and B. W. Andrzejewski (I967:I9I-206).

70 P.R.O., WO 230/5a, Gerald Fisher, "Draft Memorandum", 26 May I943.

7I Quoted in P.R.O., CO 830/5, British Somaliland Protectorate, Agricultural Department Report, I947; and Gerald Fisher: The Pastures of British Somaliland with special reference to the Glover Report and Future Policy (Hargeisa I947).

72 P.R.O., WO 230/96, Fisher to Jameson, 6 August I943; and Fisher to Jameson, 26 August I943.

73 Edwards, Survey of Grazing Areas, p. I2.

74 P.R.O., CO 830/5, British Somaliland Protectorate, Agricultural Department Report, I947.

75 P.R.O., WO 230/96, Fisher to Jameson, 6 August I943; and WO 230/5a, Civil Affairs Branch to War Office, 27 May I943.

76 Interview with Mahamoud Ahmed Ali, 30 October I982 (Burao, Somalia). In the Somali orthography, cugaal corresponds to the anglicized agils or akhils.

77 P.R.O., WO 230/5a, Fisher to Arundell, I May I943; see also: Interview by A. M. Kirk-Greene of F. D. Hibbard and Randall Erskine Ellison, MSS. Afr. s. I332, 4 July I969, Rhodes House Library (Oxford).

78 The term geeljire (pl. geeljirayaal) also means "camel herder" of any kind, not necessarily a hired one.

79 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, Fisher to Chief Civil Affairs Officer, I April I947.

80 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, "A Note on Native Societies in the Somalilands", Secret, 27 June I947.

8I P.R.O., CO 537/364I, Brigadier G. T. Fisher, "Somali National Societies", Secret Report 82/S/500, IO July I947.

82 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, Somali Youth League Central Committee to Civil Affairs Officer, Jigjiga (Reserved Areas), I6 June I947.

83 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, R. H. Smith to Headquarters, Civil Affairs Bureau, 6 August I947.

84 As early as September I945, however, Prime Minister Clement Attlee considered turning over responsability for Somaliland to another European power altogether: "British Somaliland has always been a dead loss and a nuisance to us. We only occupied it as part of the scramble for Africa ... The French are on the spot in French Somaliland. Why not let them have it if they like? It will be a sop to their pride, and may help them to put up with the loss of their position in the Levant. There would, of course, be sentimental objection to giving up a piece of the Empire, but otherwise it would be to our advantage to get rid of this incubus." P.R.O., CAB I29/I, Memorandum by Attlee, I September I945, C.P. (45) I44, cited in William Roger Louis: Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, I94I-I945, (New York I978), p. 557-558.

85 Interview with Yusuf Haji Adan, 28 August I980 (Mogadishu).

86 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, "Memorandum on Native Clubs in Somalia", no date (February-March I947 ?).

87 Interviews with Sheikh Ali Haji Ibrahim, 8 January I979 (Hargeisa) and Sheikh Mahamoud Abdi Samad, II January I979 (Burao). Both men referred to these so-called "clan house" parties identified as "Awaliyya", "Hawayiyya", "Gerhajiyya" and "Zubayriyya" (a sub-branch of the Habr Awal).

88 P.R.O., CO 537/364I, Major E. H. Halse, "Somali National Society" (Secret Memorandum), no dater (March I947 ?).

89 Prof. B. W. Andrzejewski suggested the first two terms; the third one was coined by Said S. Samatar.

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