
THE CAPTIVE INTELLIGENTSIA OF SOMALIA

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The contemporary, ruling intelligentsia in Africa is essentially a product of colonial history. Colonial origin has influenced its development and shaped its historical function. A number of scholars provide frameworks for assessing the character of this intelligentsia. Most notable among these scholars are Fanon (1968), Dumont (1968), and Cabral (1973). Fanon castigated it for "precocious senility"; Dumont deplored its utter decadence; Cabral unveiled its pathetic indecision during the period of armed struggle for national liberation. Fanon's castigation is of course integral to his overall indictment of the "native bourgeoisie" in underdeveloped countries.

A bourgeoisie similar to that which developed in Europe is able to elaborate an ideology and at the same time strengthen its own power. Such a bourgeoisie, dynamic, educated, and secular, has fully succeeded in its undertaking of the accumulation of capital and has given to the nation a minimum of prosperity. In underdeveloped countries . . . no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividend that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or invention. It remembers what it has

read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.¹

In two previous articles, I discussed a conceptual formulation for studying the psychology of contemporary black intelligentsia.² Two other articles summarized my empirical studies of Somali college students at home and abroad.³ This article examines the development and conflicts of Somali intelligentsia within a broad historical and social panorama. It begins with delineation of a conceptual framework and definition of key concepts and an outline of indigenous society and its indigenous intelligentsia. The making of what I call "captive intelligentsia" in a neo-colonial history is then highlighted. The article then concludes with an exploration of central conflicts among the captive intelligentsia.

This work is actually an initial effort to summarize and integrate data from various sources — namely, empirical studies, historical accounts, subjective reports, participant-observations, and tentative speculations. The aim is to unravel collective failings and shared conflicts whose open discussion has hitherto been considered somewhat taboo. All too often, our vision is so blurred by the meteoric rise or fall of personalities that we lose sight of the more enduring and fundamental problems of society. We are obsessed with a few details of the painful present, knowing not whence we came nor where indeed we are going.

The ebb and flow of history cannot, of course, be understood, much less be influenced, by obsession with selective details, however painful or exhilarating. Its contours, dialectic, and trends must be explored and a given group's contributions, through action and inaction, carefully evaluated. The intent of this article is to provoke thought and further studies — two necessary preludes for transformative, constructive action.

Intellectual And Intelligentsia

The Euro-centric view of African "intellectuals" and "intelligentsia" recognizes only individuals who have acquired a modicum of education under *colonial* and *neo-colonial* tutelage. Membership in this social category thus assumes prior adoption of

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Western world-view, values and behaviors. At least a degree of fluency and literacy in a European language is considered essential. But this Euro-centric view deliberately neglects two very basic facts: (1) people in all cultures use their intellect, and (2) most societies designate some of their members to carry out the social function of "intelligentsia." Thus long before the violent scramble for colonies, indigenous African societies had their own indigenous intelligentsia. The degree of elaboration and specialization of this intelligentsia may be a matter of debate. But to deny their existence is to fall prey to Euro-centric and even racist stereotypes.

That the Euro-centric view fails to recognize the indigenous intelligentsia is hardly an accident. As a general rule, alien forces cannot dominate a society without first destroying, neutralizing, or co-opting the indigenous intelligentsia. Colonialism in fact entailed a dual process — namely, the imposition of a new type of intelligentsia and, concurrently, the dislocation of the pre-existing, indigenous intelligentsia. The effect of this has been far-reaching. This phasing out and neutralizing of the indigenous intelligentsia made it easier to colonize and subjugate. Equally, the introduction of a new intelligentsia, emulating and obedient to its European mentors, made it possible to effectively administer the colonies and later gave reality to neo-colonialism. In some societies, this double process has resulted in the unbridled imposition of an alien culture and the total dismantling of the indigenous culture.

I make a distinction between "intellectuals" and "intelligentsia," even though the two concepts are commonly used interchangeably. *Intellectuals* generate new ideas, reinterpret the old with a new insight, and seek to advance the current state of knowledge. Their primary concern is not so much with established truths as it is rather with delineating areas of ignorance and struggling for their elucidation. The *intelligentsia* in contrast are the implementers and conveyor-belts of given ideas, discoveries, and traditions. They transform the academic, maybe even esoteric, knowledge of the intellectual into common, practical knowledge, and change abstract discoveries or thoughts into simple prescriptions for behavior. At their worst, lacking vision and ethic of their own, they are tyrants of bureaucratic red-tape and stubborn gate-keepers. In

contrast, critical thought characterizes the work of intellectuals. Intellectuals are the sowers of ideas; intelligentsia their harvesters and guardians.⁴ The dominant proclivity of the former is transformative and critique of an imperfect present; whereas that of the latter is maintenance of the status quo and preservation of tradition.

Two other sets of distinctions are also crucial. I distinguish *academic* from *organic* intellectuals and *indigenous* from *captive* intelligentsia. The academic intellectual is first and foremost committed to the advancement and propagation of a given discipline or line of inquiry. His engagement par excellence is basic science. Even when involved in the social sciences, his dominant concerns are steps removed from the mundane preoccupations of his contemporaries in society. He typically stands apart from the travails and experiences of the masses, all the while perhaps claiming ideological neutrality. When he advocates a particular ideology, he does not consciously permit this ideology to inform his practice.

This is a contrast to the organic intellectual who invariably immerses himself in the experience of his people and commits himself to their service. His identification with these masses is unmistakable, though he is critical of their accustomed lethargy and tendency to settle for the least. He advocates on their behalf, interprets their experience, and articulates new options for them. Like his academic counterpart, the organic intellectual makes use of all available, useful knowledge within and without his society. Maintaining his critical outlook and nexus with the masses, he becomes the awakener of his people.

The indigenous intelligentsia are mainly products of indigenous history and local conditions. Their knowledge is relatively parochial and in many cases least secular. Their world-view is founded on the indigenous culture and relies on the method of authority, not of science. They are the repository of tradition (oral or written) and see their duty to pass on this tradition to younger generations, often by means of rote learning. In many colonized societies, indigenous intelligentsia spearheaded resistance to colonial occupation. Their open hostility toward Westernization, perhaps now weakened and mollified, remains in the form of passive resistance.

This is particularly so in many Muslim countries where their passive resistance is only marking time, awaiting the kind of cataclysmic turn of events we are today witnessing in Iran.

The captive intelligentsia in contrast are mainly a product of neo-colonial history. They are typically captives of Euro-American culture. Their minds are dominated by Western thought and values, inculcating its negative qualities through the mechanism of identification with the aggressor. In their ethic of skinning others before being skinned, they elevate to a virtue the hoarding of consumer goods produced in Europe or America. This pathological equation between having and being is compounded by a fragmented outlook and a mind seldom raising original problems, let alone posing original solutions.⁵ Constantly in search of an alien model and a Big Brother, the captive intelligentsia feel no satisfaction without tutelage and no sense of security without the assurances of a more powerful, alien entity. In the African context, this intelligentsia is found in various walks of life including the bureaucracy, the teaching profession, business, and the military.

This article focuses mainly on the captive intelligentsia in Somalia. The indigenous intelligentsia are discussed only secondarily and by way of clarifying historical antecedents. The organic intellectual in Somalia will be given detailed discussion in one of my forthcoming articles. It is important to recognize here that the organic intellectuals and the indigenous intelligentsia are alike and different in crucial respects. That neither is alienated from the masses of people and the indigenous culture is a significant characteristic they have in common. Their differences are more striking, however. The indigenous intelligentsia are essentially parochial in their outlook. They see their duty to be largely the preservation and transfer of tradition in the very form passed on to them by earlier generations. Their orientation to established beliefs is generally uncritical; their method of teaching, rote learning. Even when teaching the Holy Quran, it matters little to them if Arabic and the meaning of what is read is actually understood. Their commitment is to return to the old ways, deriving inspiration from the past. Their outlook is fatalistic.

The organic intellectuals in contrast adopt a criti-

cal outlook and believe in the potency of human intervention. They are aware of developments in their society and have an articulated vision of where society ought to be. They in addition keep abreast of developments in the international community, interpret the import of these to their people, and define a sense of collective destiny from shared experiences. Their mission is not to preserve a fossilized tradition, but to forge a dynamic culture. The following poem, which I translated from the contributions of a noted Somali poet, illustrates quite vividly the qualities of an organic intellectual in the Somali context:

... Poetry is my wealth,
 song my nourishment.
 My brain is prosperity,
 dedicated to you, my people.
 I am the blazing fire
 lighting your way,
 even as I burn to ashes.
 Every day and every night,
 vigilant always I am,
 never sleeping a moment.
 My bleeding heart I squeeze,
 for you to grasp its contents.
 In concert I sing,
 with wild beasts,
 flying birds too.
 With waves of the ocean,
 I synchronize my rhythm.

* * *

Repository of culture they call me,
 preserving all entrusted to him.
 The blind I lead,
 the confused I counsel.
 By the courageous I stand,
 the weak I defend.
 In times of scorching Summer heat,
 a mellow respite I offer.
 In times of war,
 a devastating bomb I become.
 In times of peace,
 a soothing shade I present.
 During long, endless treks,
 the tireless camel I am.

When you are dying of thirst,
the replenishing pond I become.

* * *

The richness of human history,
dearly I cherish.

The struggles waged hitherto,
in the din of battle,
my duties I fulfilled.

The battle of Dien Bien Phu
in the Algerian revolution too,
the French I defeated.

The relentless attack of Hanoi,
the blazing flame I embodied.

The African revolution,
in the era of national liberation,
the decisive arrow I had been.

* * *

In the sky I am a beacon,
in the earth a firm anchor,
I am the brilliant lightning.

With the sun I share origin,
the same mother too.

Enquiring the eternal stars,
I learn we are cousins indeed.

The clouds await my lyrics,
never raining a drop without my song.

* * *

SUSPICION itself I prevent,
reassuring all it afflicts.

LOVE also I nurture,
transforming HATE itself.

PAIN I earnestly mollify,
with sweet words,
and flowers I extend.

* * *

As dawn succeeds night,
I usher the daybreak.
At night I appear in dreams,
without anxiety or nightmares.
When captured by your enemies,

risking an execution,
to your defense I come.

I am the rainbow,
the embodiment of the universe.

I am the throbbing beat,
the essence of the drum.

I am the humming vibration,
secrets hidden in guitars.

I am the music of opulence,
the authenticity of the heart.

Indigenous Society, Indigenous Intelligentsia

All Somalis speak the same language, share the same tradition, religion (Islam) and trace a common ancestry. Moreover, the colonial dismemberment of the Somali people and their relentless quest for reunification are well-documented (Drysdale, 1963; Touval, 1963; Lewis, 1965; Jama, 1978; Farar, 1979). But the emphasis on Somali homogeneity has also tended to obscure significant intra-Somali dynamics. Every society has of course its own internal dialectic. In Somali society, this dialectic takes on a *clan* and *class* character.⁶ A silence of convenience cannot forever mute this fact and no amount of wishful thinking can conjure up easy solutions.

Traditionally, Somalis are mostly nomadic people, traveling seasonally in search of pasture and water. Traditionally Somali society had no stable and hierarchical center of authority. It was thoroughly egalitarian. Decision-making powers were relegated to the *shir* — an ad hoc council in which all adult males had an equal say (Lewis, 1961). Property and social relations were distinctly communal. Personal resilience, resourcefulness, and collective orientation were inculcated. Such qualities of character and the extended social nexus have been largely adaptive responses to a harsh and unyielding ecology.

Much of the Somali ecology is marked by a relatively scanty rainfall. This limited annual rainfall in an otherwise rich soil leaves the Somali with a narrow margin of survival. In addition, like many underdeveloped areas of the world, parasitic and infectious diseases are rife. Overall mortality rates and the rate of infant mortality in particular are appalling (Abbas, 1978). But these ecological and

health hazards are compounded by equally harsh and unyielding de facto borders. What these borders deny the Somali nomad is his right to eke out an existence in his own land. At the same time, the efforts to eliminate these border problems have thus far been fraught with massive suffering and diversion of sorely needed resources. Even when he is no longer a nomad, death from the ravages of drought or injury from the bullets of his Ethiopian neighbor are probable events influencing his psychology. This was best illustrated by a study of dreams I once conducted among elementary and secondary students. Reports of nightmares involving an attack by a lion, snake, or an Ethiopian were very frequent.⁷

Any description of Somali society is of course incomplete without a discussion of Somali lineage system which permeates Somali psychology and social relations. Every Somali child begins language with a memorized retort to the question: "What is your name? . . . and your father's name? . . . and your father's father's name?" For the traditional Somali, knowledge of his lineage is most critical. It is at once his identity, social security, and a cognitive map in an extended social network. Individuals trace descent to a common male ancestor. The levels of segmentation and agnatic relations in the geneological tree more or less determine the individual's right, responsibilities, and political affiliations. In the traditional society, implicit bonds of kinship were sometimes reinforced by an explicit contract (*xeer*). Competition for access to grazing lands and water, two essential but rare commodities, had often precipitated clan wars. Colonialists of course encouraged these internecine conflicts whenever this served their scheme of "divide and conquer."

These agnatic relations, memorized so early in life, have critical and formative influences on Somali psychology. The internecine, clan conflicts of the past have also left deep scars in the collective psyche. Some of these clan wars, which erupted generations ago, are still remembered and recited in poetry — the primary vehicle for historical documentation, socialization, and propaganda in Somali society. But even when old conflicts are long forgotten, their emotional vestiges are often preserved in clan stereotypes and proverbs. These historical residues are powerful legacies that make

the Somali an easy prey for inter-clan manipulation. Colonial administrators knew well this aspect of Somali psychology. Their Somali successors have likewise exploited these volatile clan tendencies. For in their struggle to usurp power and settle internal strife for leadership, they have been effectively employing the same ploys.

Historically, embryonic class formations were exhibited at the level of *wareneleh* ("warriors") and *wadaads* ("men of religion"). The indigenous intelligentsia is formed primarily by the *wadaads* who propagate an amalgam of Somali and Arab-Islamic traditions. Although they do not hold secular positions of authority in the egalitarian social structure, they have the crucial functions of: (1) settling disputes between clans and between individuals, (2) appeasing spiritual forces on behalf of the masses, and (3) transmitting Somali tradition and Islamic world-view. Also included in the indigenous intelligentsia are many established poets who served as social commentators, mediators, and propagandists of clan conflicts. The colonization of the Somali was effected first by disarming the fierce *warenelehs*, subsequently co-opting key members of the indigenous intelligentsia, and intensifying clan conflicts.

It was indeed from the ranks of the indigenous intelligentsia that Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan (1864–1921), the father of Somali nationalism, had emerged. The Sayyid was both a formidable poet and a religious scholar. The Sayyid formed and led the famous "Dervish Movement" against British occupation of Somaliland. The long guerrilla war he waged baffled the British and kept them at bay for twenty years. In 1920, he was defeated by joint colonial forces and by the first air bombardment in a colonial war of occupation.

The significance of the Sayyid's movement is not only that it was a heroic resistance to colonialism, but also marked the first collision in the world-view of the indigenous intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the nascent colonial intelligentsia, on the other. In about 1891, the Sayyid settled in Berbera, a booming coastal port in the North. He soon started to denounce with messianic zeal the increasing colonial occupation of Somaliland, the obvious missionary attempts to convert young Somalis, and the growing degeneration of tradition in the city. But

his outrage particularly crystallized when he met a group of Somali boys from a small mission school. These boys claimed to belong to "the clan of the Fathers" (i.e. the European missionaries), and one of them introduced himself as "John Abdilahi."⁸ Soon after this encounter, the enraged Sayyid resumed his armed assault against colonialism.

The defeat of the Sayyid gave unfettered development of colonialism in Somali society. The "pacification" of the fierce *wareleh* was soon completed. The dismemberment of the land was subsequently effected. A new intelligentsia, styled according to European image and taste, were gradually imposed. Efforts to annihilate the indigenous intelligentsia had proven unsuccessful. Programs of neutralization and co-optations were instead launched. Some were hired as tribal chiefs and experts of Islamic jurisprudence. But most of them remained peripheral to the colonial system and continued to exert a significant measure of influence on traditional society. Yet their historic and open resistance to alien domination became blunted into ritualistic and passive resistance. Gradually, as in the rest of Africa, the Euro-centric view took hold — that there is only one legitimate intelligentsia — namely, those who have acquired a modicum of education under colonial and neo-colonial tutelage. These are the new breed who, given birth to and pampered by colonialism, see their right to hoard the most and the best in society.

The Making of Captive Intelligentsia

The beginnings of captive intelligentsia in Somalia can be traced to the 1920s. Two historical events were crucial. The first was the defeat of the Sayyid and his anti-colonial movement. His defeat in 1920 paved the way for disarming of the Somali, allowed consolidation of the British colony, and led to gradual development of a colonial intelligentsia. The second important event was the effective colonization and administration of the Italian colony during the Fascist period (1922–41). Italian rule began in 1885 but effective colonial education began with the Fascist government. Although some innovations were attempted during the U.N. Trusteeship Period (1950–1960), the content and method of education remained true to its early colo-

onial, even Fascist beginnings. Educational development was very much retarded in both colonies. Much of the developmental momentum in both colonies came only in the 1950s.

In British Somaliland, colonial education was never extensive. This was due to: (1) the intense local opposition, and (2) the hardened mentality of British administrators. A Catholic mission was opened in 1891 but was soon closed due to opposition by religious leaders. The first government schools, opened between 1898 and 1908, were also closed down for the same reason. Efforts in 1937 and 1939, though mediocre, were again unsuccessful. Pervasive resistance to colonial education was not the only barrier. The British themselves viewed the colony as the least significant in the British Empire. They therefore made little effort to develop and expand an educational system as they were doing elsewhere in their colonies. The 1939 expenditure on education for the whole colony was only 500 pounds (Castagno, 1962:96). By 1942, there were only sixteen Somalis under formal, colonial education.

However World War II brought about a significant change of attitude both in British administrators and Somalis in urban centers. The British administrators, frustrated by limited manpower, appealed to the Colonial Office to increase the budget for training Somalis. They complained that their time was taken up by routine and boring duties which trained Somalis could perform well. Meanwhile, the urbanized Somalis who were in direct contact with the occupying power began to express interest in acquiring Western education. They found that, without such education, they could not qualify for the same kind of pay and positions as other Africans, mainly of the Kenyan African Rifles. Moreover, the 1944 appointment of C.R. Bell as the Superintendent of Education led to an increase in budget and accelerated the weakening of popular resistance to colonial education.

This change of heart was prompted by new colonial demands and the tactics of the new Superintendent. C.R. Bell spoke Somali and even wrote a book on Somali language. He toured the country and recruited some religious leaders for his own staff. In addition, he began to fund some of the Koranic schools. The common fear that government schools

TABLE 1
Number of Schools and Students in the British Colony, 1955(1960)

Level of Education	Number of Schools	STUDENTS		
		Male	Female	Total
Elementary	20(38)	1,107(2,020)	64(319)	1,171(2,339)
Intermediate	3(12)	368(1,039)	—	368(1,039)
Trade/vocational	2	87(100)	—	87(100)
Secondary	1(2)	47(70)	—	47(70)

Source: Figures derived from Castagno (1962).

were an "instrument of Christianization" was thus gradually assuaged. At the same time, Bell was determined to expand the educational system only within the bounds of colonial, administrative needs. Only eight elementary schools and one intermediate school were deemed sufficient. To add more schools would, in Bell's view, only lead to the development of "an unemployed class of semi-educated men" who, in the long run, could be subversive to colonial interests.⁹

This circumscribed approach to education remained in effect until the mid-fifties. It became clear then that the increasing needs for staff could not be met without an expanded educational system. Moreover, pressure by the small nucleus of Somali officials for more schools had already mounted. This prompted a Three-Year Educational Plan in 1957. The Somali officials were already indignant. Out of 350 senior positions in the colonial administration, only three were occupied by Somalis. The rest were filled by British and Indian employees. One Somali official is reported to have argued that only one Somali was trained during each of the seventy years of British rule.¹⁰

But this mounting pressure by the emergent intelligentsia had weight only because their demands coincided with wide-spread nationalist stirrings in the country. These developments had taken the British by surprise. They admitted there were too few schools and a "very serious bottleneck" between elementary and intermediate schools. Due to insufficient number of schools, sixty per cent of elementary graduates were being denied entry into the intermediate schools. The British thus argued that Somalization of the administration would not be possible until 1968. Nationalist feelings had by then spread like wild fire, and the British had to give

in. Thus in February 1959, the Foreign Office announced that independence would be granted by December, 1960. Educational development was thus to be hurried. But what had been achieved was nowhere close to satisfying growing Somali demands. Table 1 provides the number of schools and students for 1955 and 1960. Even though the 1960 figures (in brackets) show improvement, they were very small when compared to educational development in other British colonies.

The development of education in the former Italian colony was more complicated. There were three significant periods: Italian Fascist rule (1922–41), British rule (1941–50), and U.N. Trusteeship Period (1950–60). From 1885–1922, educational service was rendered by state-supported Catholic missions. But Somali suspicion of missionary and government intentions was so strong that few Muslims enrolled in these schools. By 1922, the Fascist government attempted to improve educational facilities and encouraged Somalis to enroll. Initially, both Somali and Italian children attended the same classes. This practice was soon halted because it was found incompatible with the Fascist ideology of racial supremacy. Ten government schools were opened by 1935. There were 1,776 students enrolled in elementary schools by 1939. Formal training ended with the first five years of primary school. Only Italian children were allowed to continue. The Fascist administrators were convinced that education for Africans was largely inappropriate beyond the requirements of colonial administration. A secret document explained the Fascist logic:

... We should reserve the strictly necessary education for the sons of chiefs and more important

nobilities only, because these later on can succeed to the duties of their fathers, serve as interpreters and hold modest positions in offices . . . It is a mistaken policy to establish orphanages because there, in the end, you will give them habits that do not belong to their race or social class.¹¹

The defeat of Italy led to the British occupation of the former Italian colony from 1941–50. Because of their own designs, the British gave new impetus to educational development in their newly acquired colony. Moreover, the emergent intelligentsia was demanding more and better schools. The Somali Youth League itself took on certain educational functions as it sponsored English and Arabic classes. By 1950, twenty-nine elementary schools were opened with a total enrollment of 1,600 students. The first girls' school and the first secondary school were established in 1949. The latter was set up by a Somali trader. Thus under the British, there was a degree of liberalization in colonial education and more students were given the opportunity to pursue their studies up to the secondary level.

But the main impetus to education in the former Italian colony did not come until the U.N. Trusteeship Period (1950–60). The top echelon of the Italian administration that returned to administer the colony was very conscious of the U.N. watchdog set up under the Trusteeship Agreement. It was of course to meet a deadline for independence and, at the same time, had access to United Nations resources, those of UNESCO in particular. The goal of education had by then shifted drastically. The Five-Year Educational Plan of 1952 stated thus: "It was not enough to form a restricted ruling class. We must create in the minds of the masses a consciousness of citizenship, and we must establish that cul-

tural basis which constitutes a fundamental prerequisite to progress."¹¹ Whether that goal was attained is a matter for debate. But it is quite clear that major advances were made in student enrollment within the ten-year period. Table 2 below shows the number of students at various levels for 1952 and 1959–60.

As Table 2 indicates, there was a striking reduction in number of students from Primary to Secondary during each period. This high dropout rate was partly due to parental resistance to send their children away to boarding schools in Mogadiscio and partly because the foreign teachers (mostly Italian and Egyptian) were unable to adapt their lessons to Somali needs and cultural orientation. In spite of these problems, however, the educational system greatly expanded under the Trusteeship Period. Progress was also made in the areas of mass literacy and professional education. For instance, of the 13,557 students enrolled in primary schools in 1952, about 8,700 were adults. In 1959–62, there were 15,987 adults out of 29,739 students in primary schools. Members of the national police and army who took courses in elementary and secondary schools were given promotion in rank and pay. Efforts were made to provide mass literacy to rural communities, but without success. A number of professional schools were also established. The School of Politics and Administration started in 1950–51, the School of Islamic Studies opened in 1952, the Teacher Training Institute resumed classes in 1953, and the Higher Institute of Economics and Law began in 1954. The latter became the University Institute of Somalia in January, 1960. Five months later, on July 1, 1960, independence was granted and the long-awaited unification with the former British colony was consummated.

TABLE 2
Number of Students in Somalia During U.N.
Trusteeship, 1952, 1959–60

Level of Education	1952		1959–1960	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary schools	13,557	986	29,739	6,123
Lower secondary	164	24	971	60
Higher secondary	331	—	427	53

Source: Figures derived from a more detailed table in Castagno (1962).

TABLE 3
Number of Schools and Students
at Different Levels, 1966–1967

Level of Education	Number of Schools	STUDENTS		
		Male	Female	Total
Elementary	201	16,114	4,934	21,050
Intermediate	39	4,966	988	5,950
Secondary	13	1,657	179	1,836

Source: *Statistical Trends*, Ministry of Education, Mogadishu, Somalia, 1968.

With independence came a national surge of enthusiasm for education. The previous suspicion and fears were no longer the problem. It was now thought that the benefits of independence could be enjoyed only by those with education. Because of wide interest, the available number of schools and teachers could not keep up with the public demand. The status of a student itself held many promises of wealth and power. Relatives, however distant, were often supportive and encouraging. The students indeed took these promises and deference to heart, acting with conceit and an air of importance long before having "arrived."

A unified educational system for the two former colonies was introduced in 1965. Table 3 presents the number of schools and students in 1966–67.

As the table indicates, the number of schools and students increased substantially. But it was nowhere close to meeting the public demand. The problems in curriculum and method of education were even more serious. Little had changed in the content of education. Still inculcated was a denigration of the indigenous culture and the simultaneous idealization of the Euro-American world. The student whose school fees and general expense entailed great family sacrifice often came home despising their living conditions and wisdom. True to its colonial character, the school system continued to undermine, not enrich, the family, its members, and the general society. This parasitic but also conceited outlook has had far-reaching implications for national *underdevelopment*.

There were two significant post-independence developments. The first had to do with the increasing number of available scholarships to study abroad. A large contingent of students were annually sent to various countries. But there was neither a program to guide these students abroad nor an over-

all plan targeting their acquired skills toward national development. Students were sent to any country that accepted them. In 1963, for instance, there were, for degree courses, 135 students in Italy, 100 students in the U.S.S.R., 72 in the United States, 66 in Egypt, 46 in Britain, 27 in Czechoslovakia, 12 in France, and 11 in Poland. West Germany, Australia, Sudan, Cyprus, and Lebanon were other countries to which students were sent for higher learning. This haphazard dispersal of students was to prove quite detrimental. It intensified the competition for legitimacy and privileges among the intelligentsia. It also exacerbated the prevailing chaos in society.

The other important, post-independence development was the introduction of written Somali into the educational system. By 1972, Somali was introduced as the medium of instruction in elementary schools (Adam, 1979). All intermediate and first-year secondary schools were conducted in Somali by 1975 and 1977, respectively. Neighborhood classes for urban adults and the literacy campaigns of 1974–75 were impressive. The creative energies of the nation were thus revitalized and education became partially de-mystified. Meanwhile, the National University has rapidly expanded. There are now nine faculties with a total enrollment of 3,500 students (Adam, 1979). The rapid increase in number of students is most impressive for the pre-college levels. Table 4 presents the number of schools and students for 1969–70, 1973–74, and 1977–78. Whether this expansion sacrificed quality or was complemented with genuine de-colonization of education is a matter of heated controversy among educators.

From the above review of developments, it is clear that both the British and Italians had attempted to develop schools of their liking with the help of

TABLE 4
Number of Schools and Students for 1969-70,
1973-74, and 1977-78

Schools and Students	1969-70	1973-74	1977-78
Primary			
Schools	292	407	1,085
Male Students	39,033	69,504	145,435
Female	9,576	27,399	83,109
Total	48,609	96,903	228,544
Secondary			
Schools	26	42	48
Male Students	5,675	8,727	10,650
Female	737	1,773	3,528
Total	6,412	10,500	14,178

Source: Ministry of Education, Mogadishu, Somalia, 1979.

missionaries. However, these early efforts were repeatedly aborted. The Sayyid quickly realized the danger of a foreign education to Somali religion, culture, and identity. He therefore took up arms to fight against colonial occupation — occupation not only of land but of psyches as well. His defeat cleared the way for the birth and eventual ascendancy of the captive intelligentsia. Men like C.R. Bell accomplished through co-optation of religious leaders what whole armies had been unable to achieve: weakening the indigenous intelligentsia and reducing the people's resistance.

The early intent of colonial educators was to produce half-literate auxiliaries. Their job was to perform routine clerical duties, serve as interpreters, and function as adamant gate-keepers. Gradual sophistication and growing numerical strength of these auxiliaries prompted them to ask for greater share of salary and power within the colonial system. World War II gave particular impetus to nationalism. The various classes in society subsequently joined forces. By the time of independence, a vicious competition for dominance surfaced among the captive intelligentsia. Meanwhile, public resistance to neocolonial education markedly dissipated. Education became a status symbol, a reason for traveling to strange lands, a promise to a bright future, and certainly a costly venture for the family as well as for the nation. But the return to them: a captive intelligentsia committed to exploit both or run from them as if they were the plague.

Core Conflicts And Dilemmas

Some of the internal contradictions of Somali society are similar to those of any other colonized country. Others are endemic to Somalia. First, there have been two colonial experiences — one British, the other Italian. Vestiges of these two colonial legacies are still discernible in certain psyches and institutions. Secondly, a growing urban-rural inequity is painfully evident. One or two cities flourish while the rest of the country is increasingly impoverished. And of course there are the haves, living in the urban hub, and the have-nots who are everywhere, mostly in the rural areas. What gives Somalia a peculiarity of its own is the way the colonial legacy, urban-rural inequity, and class structure become enmeshed with clan politics.

It is hardly surprising that these contradictions of the society find their most intense crystallization in the psyche and social behavior of the captive intelligentsia. Though colonialism is a thing of the past, its vestiges are discernible in the functioning of the bureaucracy, the lethargy of its agents, and the overall bankruptcy of the captive intelligentsia. Indeed from independence and unification in 1960, there has been a silent competition for dominance among the two types of intelligentsia — namely, the one trained under Italian and the other under British tutelage. The competition was also a conflict of allegiance to colonial mentors as well as to acculturated languages and alien world-views.

What further complicated the debilitating effects of these competing allegiances has been the coincidence of clan configurations with different types of colonial experience. The British neo-colonial connection was soon severed due to the diplomatic break with Britain when the latter reneged on the results of the referendum in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya (Drysdale, 1963; Lytton, 1966). But the umbilical cord with Italy has remained intact as ever. The symbiosis is obvious in the area of higher education where the medium of instruction in most faculties of the university is Italian. A large number of Italian instructors are still recruited to teach college students. Indeed this Italian tutelage has even outlived the once powerful Soviet influences which were suddenly aborted in November 1978. Peculiar turns of events have now led to the

resurgence of the erstwhile short-lived Somali-American connection of the late 1960's. It is certainly too early to predict what this rapprochement of convenience will mean for Somali education.

Far more significant than any type of colonial experience is the dynamics of clan politics. Clan politics is most pervasive in Somali society. The captive intelligentsia publicly denounces it, all the while relishing the fruits of its practice. Regimes and leaders conspicuously deplore it, sometimes contriving symbolic burials of it. What has become clear since independence is that clan politics makes or breaks a regime. Yet clan politics works in curious ways. Those who most benefit from it are the loudest in its public denunciations. They are also the quickest to suspect it in others and most threatened when some resort to similar tactics. In fact, clan politics is hazardous and unpredictable. Changes in clan conflict and collaboration are rampant. If a border conflict erupts with Ethiopia, however, all clans stand united, singing in unison the national anthem with a fervor and piety never anticipated.

The captive intelligentsia are actually the instigators rather than the victims of clan politics. They are indeed the vanguard of clan nepotism and of bureaucratic corruption. And if clan affiliations were once adaptive social responses to a harsh ecology, the captive intelligentsia have harnessed them ruthlessly and for their own selfish ends. By skillfully fanning inter-clan suspicion and conflict, they have taken unfair advantage of the common Somali. By means of the same machinations, they have also settled their own internal struggles for dominance. What makes the clan politics of the captive intelligentsia most dangerous is their characteristic hypocrisy.

On the one hand, national solidarity, equality, and Somaliness are loudly affirmed for everyone to hear. Clan nepotism and internecine conflicts are ostensibly decried. Competence on what (not who) one knows is hailed as the measure of deserved employment. On the other hand, the captive intelligentsia engages in cut-throat practices which are incompatible with the ideals loudly affirmed. Some of its members are indeed masters of cloak-and-dagger tactics. At daytime and in public, they piously preach Somali unity. Their patriotic zeal and concern for suffering humanity are unmistakable in

their public pronouncements. But at night and among the privacy of their kin, they vindictively conspire and methodically share the loot.

Meanwhile, the ordinary Somali is relegated to oblivion once his relentless support has achieved its intended purpose. His clan sentiments may still be manipulated to win even greater shares of wealth and power. He is told: "Watch out for Clan A and particularly Clan B. They are *our* enemies seeking *our* destruction." The ordinary Somali then puts all his weight and faith behind these charges. The traditional ethic of trusting and working for the collective good of the clan makes him an easy prey to the captive intelligentsia's politics of duplicity. But, in the hour of victory, all he has left is a false belief that he too has a stake in the new status quo. Notwithstanding a grinding poverty, he may relish the fantasy of being rich and powerful only because a few of his kinsmen are rich and powerful.

In stark contrast with the hypocrisy of the captive intelligentsia is the rustic candor of the traditional Somali. The latter asserts his clan without complex. When he meets a stranger, he readily exchanges information on clan affiliations. He asks and answers in non-threatening, matter-of-fact approach. It soon becomes clear that this exchange permits him to establish a boundary and a bond with the stranger. Knowledge of the other's clan prescribes for him a course of interaction and permissible set of expectations. All is well if the stranger happens to share a common lineage, however remote in the agnatic segmentation. If clan affiliations cannot be discerned, attempts are made to conjure up some remembered marriages or good neighborliness. The motivation here is thus *inclusionary*.

A member of the captive intelligentsia, in contrast, conceals his clan identification as well as his gnawing urge to inquire. The newly acquired sensibilities dictate pan-Somali outlook, not clan orientation. But still intact is the clan identification inculcated early in life and reinforced by current social arrangements. This conflict is rarely resolved either by frank inquiries or total disregard of clan affiliations. Avoidance patterns and delay tactics are instead adopted. Patterns of association with others of known identity may be used to develop hypotheses. Some would even resort to the awkward question: "What, by the way, is your ex-

tribe?" This question best reveals the hypocrisy: one seeks a piece of information while implying disinterest in the answer. The underlying orientation in these devious inquiries is often defensive. Most dominant is the anxiety about clan dominance, real or anticipated. Even as basis for trust is explored, the overriding motivation is nonetheless individualistic and *exclusionary*.

This individualistic, exclusionary orientation and the long internalized collective orientation exacerbate their characteristic afflictions. They acutely feel the social pressure to amass wealth at all costs. But the goal of amassing wealth at once tantalizes and eludes many of them. Their elitist outlook and belief that they deserve the best and most in society only aggravates their despair. They see the meteoric rise of some illiterate *nouveau-riches* whose only asset is birth to the right clan or a lucrative employment in Saudi Arabia. These stresses find expression in behaviors that are counter-productive. Hedonistic behaviors are most common routes to the search for relief. Sexual orgies and drinking escapades are monotonously rampant. Feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement are highly prevalent (Bulhan, 1978, 1980). Rates of alcoholism, addiction to *chat*, and psychiatric disorders seem appalling. Very frequent among them are also various psychosomatic complaints, most commonly ulcer, gastritis, and chronic constipation.

A particularly striking anomaly is the high incidence of alcoholism among the captive intelligentsia. Somali society is generally a devout Muslim society. It is a society that has neither a tradition of condoning alcohol drinking nor has a system of treating alcoholism. But the captive intelligentsia, alienated both from their religion and culture, attempt to alleviate their underlying depression and anxiety often by drinking to oblivion. This defensive maneuver however creates its own vicious cycle, psychologically and socially. For instance, it is now established that alcohol, though a psychic relaxant in small amounts, is indeed a central nervous system pharmacologic depressant in moderate and high amounts. A heavy, prolonged drinking is also known to produce brain damage. The social repercussions are no less debilitating. The alcoholic scandalizes society while forcing it to pay the cost

through corruption, mismanagement, and absenteeism. This desire to mitigate symptoms of depression and anxiety with alcohol has in addition destroyed many a promising, young intellectual. The most tragic illustration is the recent case of a Somali student in Italy. As the student was lying drunk on a deserted street, two Italian hoodlums poured petrol all over his body and gleefully lit a match. The screaming, terrified ball of flame turned to a charred, gruesome body before the stunned pedestrians could mobilize themselves to help.

In short, the dominant intelligentsia in Somalia is a captive intelligentsia whose genesis is colonial. The last six decades have been a period of expansion and consolidation of its membership. But the more its membership grew, the more they scandalized the ordinary Somali and his cultural legacy. Thus Fanon's characterization is relevant here as well: "There is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster. . . . This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or invention."

Whether abroad or at home, members of the captive intelligentsia have yet to confront their captivity and the determinants of their afflictions. As individuals, they are nothing but objects to an alien, historical inertia. Their approach to life and to society has thus far been self-defeating. Some continually get obsessed with a few personalities. There is no social analysis, no historical perspective. *The result: petty gossip*. Others seek to discuss all aspects of society in a single, brilliant swoop. They pose as experts in all fields but never subject a single idea to rigorous examination. *The result: personal frustration turned to interpersonal strife*. Still others, bold and conceited, take a step further. They attempt to conjure up, in a single evening and over a drink, the long-awaited blueprint for transforming society. *The result: a hangover the next morning, following a night's intoxication with alcohol or self-conceit*. Most choose to avoid any rehabilitating, collective stand. *The result: guilt for inaction or opportunistic action*.

Notes

1. Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 1968, p. 175.
2. Bulhan, Hussein A., "Black Psyches in Captivity and Crisis," *Race & Class*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1979, 243-61. "Dialectics of Reactive Identification and the Formation of African Intelligentsia," *The International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1977, 149-64.

3. Bulhan, Hussein A., "Identification, Locus of Control, and Alienation among Somali Students," *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 104, No. 1, 1978, 69-80. "Dynamics of Cultural In-Betweenness: An Empirical Study," appearing in *International Journal of Psychology*, 1980, second issue.

4. For similar distinction between "intellectuals" and "intelligentsia," see Alvin W. Gouldner's "Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals," *Telos*, No. 26, Winter 1975-76, 3-36.

5. For discussion of the "captive mind" in an Asian social context, see Syed H. Alatas, "The Captive Mind and Creative Development," *The International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1974, 691-700.

6. A careful study of class structure and conflict in Somali society is yet to be conducted. Throughout, this article uses the concept of "clan" rather than the popular but ambiguous concept of "tribe." If in fact one were to follow the common practice of calling the Hausa and Mashona by the latter label, then the whole Somali people would constitute one single "tribe."

7. This dream study is reported in a forthcoming article.

8. Castagno, A., "Somali Republic" in Helen Kitchen (ed.), *The Educated African*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1962, p. 97.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

10. Quoted by H.A. Adam, "An Overview of Somali Policies Towards Education, Training and Manpower," a paper presented for The Eastern African Universities Research Project (EAURP), 1979, p. 3.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

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