

The Betrayal of the Somalis

LOUIS FITZGIBBON

REX COLLINGS LONDON 1982

LOUIS FITZGIBBON was born in 1925, is married and has three children. A submarine officer during the war, he later studied law and in 1972 led a United Nations refugee relief programme in South Sudan. From 1970 until 1977 he worked with the late Airey Neave on the Katyn memorial project and he has published a number of books on that subject. He twice visited Somalia in 1978 and after his third trip in 1981 he was awarded the first Airey Neave Memorial Scholarship. This book is the result. He is a firm believer in the concept of Justice and in the causes of oppressed or 'forgotten' people about which he has consistently spoken his mind in the public press and elsewhere.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Airey Neave DSO
MC MP and to the concept of Freedom under the Law which he so
wholeheartedly embraced.

*For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.*

Byron. *The Giaour.*

It is dedicated also to the peoples of Somalia and their valiant
struggle for unity in freedom to which they are justly entitled but of
which they have been deprived.

*Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been
wronged: and ALLAH is indeed able to give them victory.*

The Holy Koran

Surrah XXII

The Pilgrimage. Verse 39

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَتِّلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

First published in the United Kingdom
by Rex Collings Ltd
6 Paddington Street, London W1

© Louis FitzGibbon 1982

ISBN 086036 194 2

Typesetting by Malvern Printers Ltd
Printed in Great Britain by
A. Wheaton and Company Limited, Exeter

Contents

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

by Baroness Airey of Abingdon

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTERS

1	Somalia and the Somalis	1
2	Somalia in History	6
3	Partition in the Making	10
4	The Betrayal	15
5	Resistance	34
6	After the Wars	40
7	The Ogaden War	52
8	Refugees	62
9	Ethiopian Aggression	72
10	Strategic Considerations	77
11	Freedom under the Law—Somalia	85

APPENDICES

1	Petition of the Somalis to the Four Power Commission	92
2	Resolution of the All Somalia Conference	96
3	Resolution of the All African Peoples Conference 1958 and 1960	98
4	In the British Press and Parliament 1978–81	100
5	A working chronology	107

BIBLIOGRAPHY	109
--------------	-----

INDEX	111
-------	-----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his deep gratitude to the Chairman and Members of the AIREY NEAVE MEMORIAL TRUST whose generous grant of a scholarship has made this book possible.

He is greatly indebted to Baroness Airey of Abingdon for so kindly providing a Foreword, and thus not only introducing this work, but continuing the contact which the author was privileged to enjoy through working with the late Airey Neave MP from 1970 until his untimely and tragic death.

He thanks the Somali Ambassador, HE Mohamed Jama Elmi, and his predecessor, HE Ahmed Mohamed Adan, for their spontaneous friendship and encouragement which enabled him to visit Somalia, where he is also most grateful to the Government of the Somali Democratic Republic for all its hospitality and help. In particular, he wishes to acknowledge the unstinted assistance of the Ministry of Information and National Guidance as well as of the National Security Service.

To Lord Ailsa, the late Lord Barnby, and other Parliamentarians, the author extends further thanks for the part they have played in raising the Somali issue with the Government in public.

He is most grateful, also, to Sir John Tilney, Professor I. M. Lewis, and others who found the time to look through the manuscript and to make many valuable suggestions which have been incorporated in the text.

Gratitude is also due to his publishers who have given life to this work, and finally he wants to thank his wife Joan, whose constant support and encouragement gave him energy at those moments when the will to write temporarily falters.

FREEDOM UNDER THE LAW

This book is movingly dedicated to the concept which motivated my husband's life, and possibly led to his death.

When that which is known, and taken for granted is lost, its loss is more poignant than that which has never been known.

Such is FREEDOM.

Airey knew freedom. When he was a boy the map of the world was largely coloured red, and vast areas—if not colonies of the British Empire, enjoyed British protection. As a schoolboy he must have felt that sense of stability familiar to many of his generation.

At the outbreak of war, as did many others, he went to fight for the concept of freedom. Shortly afterwards, in 1940, at the Battle of Calais he lost this precious possession, and became a prisoner.

Personally, he regained this prize when he escaped from Colditz.

But where Nations are concerned freedom is also a jewel, which in these perilous days, once stolen, is very rarely regained. To achieve this world opinion must be influenced.

In writing this book which won the first Airey Neave Memorial Award, and which I strongly commend, Louis FitzGibbon has told of the history and sufferings of the Somalis. This sturdy and ancient people love their country of hardship, and long to regain their total freedom, to pursue their pastoral rôle and practise the religion of their forefathers. I hope this book may be widely read, and that it will influence those who care for Justice, and who oppose the might of Nations seeking strategic power.

Airey of Abingdon
1982

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

From the first settlement of the city in 1630 to the present time. The city of Boston was founded by a group of Puritan settlers who came to the New World in search of religious freedom. The city grew rapidly and became one of the most important centers of commerce and industry in the colonies. The city was the site of the Boston Tea Party in 1773, a key event in the American Revolution. The city was also the site of the Boston Massacre in 1770, another key event in the Revolution. The city was the first to be incorporated as a city in 1822. The city has a rich history and is one of the most important cities in the United States.

Introduction

Much of the evil and misery which befall mankind stems from ignorance and misunderstanding, and this applies not only to individuals but also to nations. Despite the advances in modern communications and information media, there remain several countries about which there is little general knowledge. One such is Somalia, and whereas there is an awareness of its crushing refugee problem, few know why this tragedy exists. Unless and until there is greater understanding, the Horn of Africa will continue to be riven by strife with resulting suffering, loss of life, and an exodus of refugees.

A refugee is one who flees from upheaval and oppression; one who seeks freedom, and indeed the whole history of Somalia has been a struggle to achieve freedom—that inalienable right of all as recognized by international authority. Many of those who think about Somalia at all consider it a free country, for they recall that the Europeans left over twenty years ago. But they forget that there was an African co-colonialist—Abyssinia. The Ethiopians have not only remained on what is rightly Somali soil; they have bolstered their occupation with Russians, Cubans and others. Now it is no secret that at the end of the last century, Britain (with Italy and France) promised to protect certain lands for the Somalis. Not only did they not do so; they gave those very territories away to Abyssinia, the traditional enemy of the Somalis. *This was betrayal*; it can be known by no other name. It is not a chapter of history of which the European Powers can be proud. Nor is it possible to relegate it to the pages of history as an ever-fading event which time will obliterate. The results are with us today as Western Somali women, children and old men trek across the burning desert to find asylum inside Somalia, while the able-bodied stay behind and fight to protect the meagre wells upon which their nomadic existence solely depends. There has been a grave injustice which has brought a hundred years of torment and death, and yet somehow the Ethiopian colonialists have escaped the universal censure which they deserve, not only for past misdeeds but for the aggression

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the
the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the
the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the
the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the
the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the
the twentieth is the fact that the
the twenty-first is the fact that the
the twenty-second is the fact that the
the twenty-third is the fact that the
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the
the twenty-fifth is the fact that the
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the
the twenty-eighth is the fact that the
the twenty-ninth is the fact that the
the thirtieth is the fact that the
the thirty-first is the fact that the
the thirty-second is the fact that the
the thirty-third is the fact that the
the thirty-fourth is the fact that the
the thirty-fifth is the fact that the
the thirty-sixth is the fact that the
the thirty-seventh is the fact that the
the thirty-eighth is the fact that the
the thirty-ninth is the fact that the
the fortieth is the fact that the
the forty-first is the fact that the
the forty-second is the fact that the
the forty-third is the fact that the
the forty-fourth is the fact that the
the forty-fifth is the fact that the
the forty-sixth is the fact that the
the forty-seventh is the fact that the
the forty-eighth is the fact that the
the forty-ninth is the fact that the
the fiftieth is the fact that the
the fifty-first is the fact that the
the fifty-second is the fact that the
the fifty-third is the fact that the
the fifty-fourth is the fact that the
the fifty-fifth is the fact that the
the fifty-sixth is the fact that the
the fifty-seventh is the fact that the
the fifty-eighth is the fact that the
the fifty-ninth is the fact that the
the sixtieth is the fact that the
the sixty-first is the fact that the
the sixty-second is the fact that the
the sixty-third is the fact that the
the sixty-fourth is the fact that the
the sixty-fifth is the fact that the
the sixty-sixth is the fact that the
the sixty-seventh is the fact that the
the sixty-eighth is the fact that the
the sixty-ninth is the fact that the
the seventieth is the fact that the
the seventy-first is the fact that the
the seventy-second is the fact that the
the seventy-third is the fact that the
the seventy-fourth is the fact that the
the seventy-fifth is the fact that the
the seventy-sixth is the fact that the
the seventy-seventh is the fact that the
the seventy-eighth is the fact that the
the seventy-ninth is the fact that the
the eightieth is the fact that the
the eighty-first is the fact that the
the eighty-second is the fact that the
the eighty-third is the fact that the
the eighty-fourth is the fact that the
the eighty-fifth is the fact that the
the eighty-sixth is the fact that the
the eighty-seventh is the fact that the
the eighty-eighth is the fact that the
the eighty-ninth is the fact that the
the ninetieth is the fact that the
the ninety-first is the fact that the
the ninety-second is the fact that the
the ninety-third is the fact that the
the ninety-fourth is the fact that the
the ninety-fifth is the fact that the
the ninety-sixth is the fact that the
the ninety-seventh is the fact that the
the ninety-eighth is the fact that the
the ninety-ninth is the fact that the
the hundredth is the fact that the

CHAPTER 1

Somalia and The Somalis

The North-Eastern tip of Africa, where it juts out into the Indian Ocean, is known as 'The Horn of Africa' and most of it is occupied by Somalia or Somali people. The 3200 kilometers of coast run from the Bab-el-Mendeb (known as the 'Southern Gate' of the Red Sea) eastwards along the gulf of Aden to Cape Guardafui, and then south-westwards along the Indian Ocean to Ras Kiamboni at the border with Kenya. Inland, Somalia is bordered by Ethiopia to the West, by Kenya to the South-West and by Djibouti to the North-West; the total area being some 640,000 sq km or roughly the size of France and Italy put together. Latitudinally, Somalia extends from 1°39' South to 12° North so that the equator passes through the Southern tip of the country (a pillar erected on the Jillib to Kismayu road is inscribed in Latin with the words: 'Equinoctiala Circulus'). Mountainous to the North, the majority of the country consists of a plateau which rises gently from the southern shores to the Golis range (so-called from the Somali word 'Ogo' meaning highland). This range, which contains mountain peaks up to 8,000 ft, runs parallel to the north coast from the Harar highlands in Ethiopia to Cape Guardafui, where it ends in a 1,000 ft precipice. Separating this range from the north coast is a maritime plain which is extremely hot and dry and is known as 'Guban' from the word 'Gub' meaning 'to burn'. The range itself is dissected by north-south running river beds and mountain passes. An arm of the Great African Rift Valley extends, in the West, from the Hawash Valley to Kirin near Cape Khanzira east of Berbera. Southwards, the range slopes easily to the Haud plateau and the Nogal valley. The Haud (to the North-East of Ogaden) is a vast waterless savannah and is part of the great Somali plateau which forms most of the country. Eastwards of the Haud lies the Nogal valley drained by the flash river of that name. The Mudugh is the dry central region of Somali bordered by the Shebelle (meaning 'Leopard') river to the south and the coastal plain and Indian Ocean to the east.

Somalia has but two 'permanent' rivers, the Shebelle and the Juba, both of which rise in Ethiopia, the former losing itself in

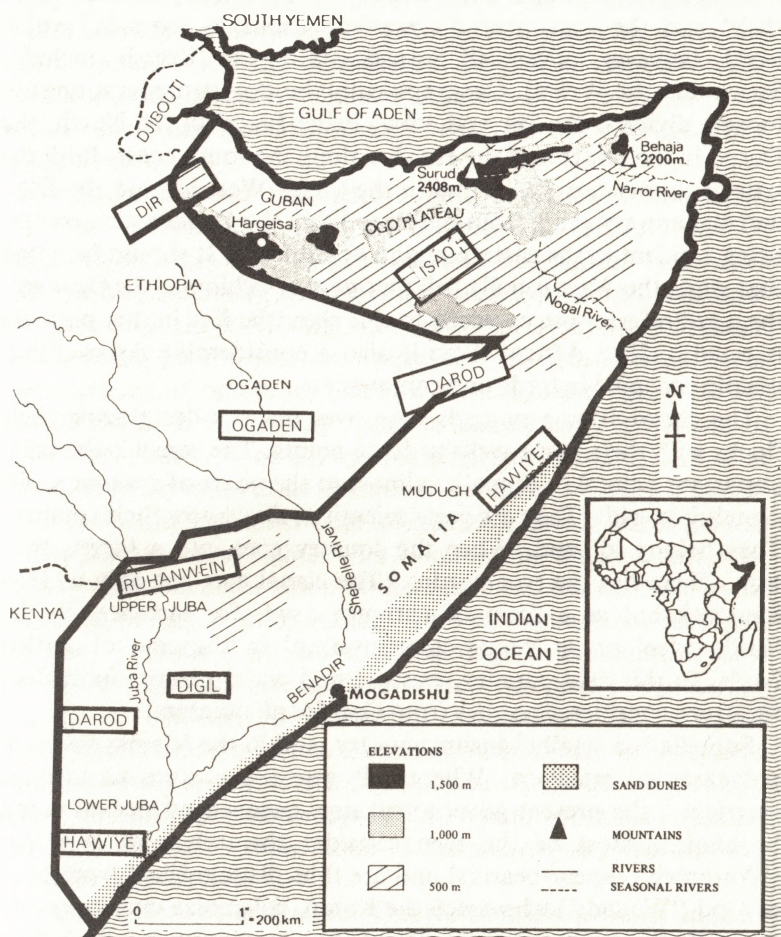
sand near Mogadishu while the latter runs into the sea at Kismayu. Between them lies the fertile Jubaland Plain.

The climate of Somalia is determined by the sun, the direction of the wind and the altitude, the country being subject to both the SW and the NE monsoons which bring alternatively hot and cooler weather. Temperatures vary considerably, and can rise to as much as 40°C at Berbera and Bosaso in the North. Predominantly, Somalia is a hot dry country with a short rainy season in May/June which is reflected in the vegetation which provides the extensive range-lands in the North East and centre (Nogal and Mudugh). Savannah covers the Haud and Jubaland Plain, an outstanding feature being the flat-topped tree. Between the rivers there is much cultivation while in the South-West wildlife abounds in forests. But it is the general savannah which accounts for the pastoral nomadic life of the Somalis, who move about with their flocks of camels and sheep from one grazing area to another. Depending upon the eye of the observer, Somalia is a beautiful country with an awe-inspiring sense of space and openness. Its long sea coasts provide sea breezes and distant horizons which complement the vast stretches of empty land which mirror the hugeness of the continent. There is an impression of timelessness beneath the endless blue dome of the African sky; above all is an aura of nature and peace; of an earth throbbing under the sun, almost to infinity. One can touch God's creation unadulterated by man's progress. But Somalia is a 'hard' country which has bred a tough people, proud of their independence and prepared to fight for it to the death. They seem as one with their uncompromising land and, warrior-like, they appear as the rock-strewn ground upon which they roam.

It is important here to realize that the Somali people are a nation rather than a State; an ethnic group unified in religion, language and outlook belonging to the Cushitic-speaking family. The four million Somalis thus occupy lands well outside their present-day political boundaries, and they are to be found from the Hawash Valley in the North to beyond the Tana River in Northern Kenya. Essentially some 70 per cent nomad, the remaining 30 per cent are either cultivators or town-dwellers in a country which is amongst the 25 poorest on earth. The nation is divided into six main confederations of clans: the Digil and Rahanweyn who are the cultivators between the Shebelle and Juba rivers, while the nomads are the Dir, Ishaq, Hawiye and Darod.

Distinguished by his tall stature and thin bone structure, the Somali has facial features exhibiting his long-standing links with

Physical Features



Arabia. In the South-West there are visible connections with the Galla and Bantu people of that region, so that Somalis vary from near-black to pale coffee colour. Although the Digil and Rahanweyn have a dialect of their own, the Somali language of the North is universally used and understood. The cultivators are known as 'Sab' and the four nomadic confederations as 'Samale' which word, however, covers all Somalis (rather as 'British' includes Scots, and the Welsh). Geographically the clan confederations are loosely divided, the Dir and Ishaq being found in the North, the Darod in the centre and the Hawiye along the south coast. Both the latter however are also found in the South-West beyond the Digil and Rahanweyn. It is from the Darod that the Ogaden clan comes, being resident in the eastern region of Ethiopia. It should be noted that while the West usually call that part of Ethiopia 'the Ogaden', the word refers more correctly to this clan who live in that part. As is usual in East Africa, there is also a considerable Asian group mainly occupied in trade and commerce.

The camel-driving nomads rove over many miles grazing their flocks with their home-wells as focal points. The camel is the most important animal to Somalis, almost to the point of reverence. Of camels it is said: 'They are great scientists; they know their country. They belong to sand. When the country goes into a forest, they stop. There lies the true border.' The camel acts not only as vital life-stock but as a form of currency used, for instance, in the 'Bride-price' or as 'blood-compensation' in the case of settled feuds. In this arid country, pasture and water (except individual wells) are considered as gifts from God for all mankind.

Somalia is a totally Muslim country, and in the Islamic tradition polygamy is practised. Whereas it was the custom to arrange marriages, the present government now encourages marital union by choice. Most of the men consider themselves as Warriors ('Waranleh'—spear-bearers) and are thus distinguished from Men of God ('Wadads') who teach the Koran, solemnize marriages and generally direct the religious life of the community in which they live. They are the mediators. All, whether pastoral nomads, land cultivators or town-dwellers, observe the Five Pillars of Islam: Belief in God and His Prophet; Daily Prayers; Fasting (Ramadan), Alms-giving (Zakat) and the Pilgrimage to Mecca (Haj). Islam is the mainspring of Somali culture, and it is this which is so much in contrast with the Christian Ethiopians to the West. Thus Islam acts as a cohesive element which, coupled with fierce nationalism, binds all Somalis together in their fervent desire for unification, including

those territories outside present-day nationally recognized frontiers. The concept of 'Greater Somalia' is a driving force with all Somalis, pervading every stratum of society, and it greatly affects the national outlook and basic policy. It is reflected in the profound oral and poetic tradition which, before the advent of written language, was the root of self-expression and the method of both communication and propaganda. Despite all opposition and much argument, Somalis will never abandon this concept of unity, lack of which they see as the cause of the millions of refugees now amongst them.

Somalis are proud and enjoy great self-esteem. Sometimes suspicious by reason of inter-clan disputes and jealousy of their meagre rights, they are yet generous and hospitable. Their open welcome is immediately felt upon arrival on Somali soil, and however poor they will share what they have with a travelling stranger. Hardened by their precarious existence, the nomad tends to be contemptuous of others who cannot withstand the rigours of the desert, and he is in no way ready to countenance any form of domination. But most of all, the Somali prizes freedom, such as he has traditionally enjoyed as he came and went at will with his herds over shimmering horizons. That inhospitable terrain has made him a brave and tenacious fighter who would rather die than surrender his birth-right: a combination of these qualities has earned him the nick-name of 'the Irish of Africa'. Past wrongs are not forgotten and were symbolized in their national flag—a five-pointed white star on a pale-blue background. The five points represented Somalis in Djibouti, in ex-British Somaliland, in ex-Italian Somaliland, in Kenya and in Ethiopia. Today there is no quarrel about Djibouti, nor are there any residual territorial claims upon Kenya, but the Ethiopian occupation of Western Somalia (so-called 'Ogaden') remains a bitter bone of contention—an unacceptable point amongst the five.

It can therefore be understood that the Somalis are most unlikely to renounce their ambition for unity, and they have the hardy determination to fight on until that ambition is achieved. They feel for their 'Brothers' imprisoned in an alien land to a burning degree and suggestions of compromise are of little interest.

Somalis feel also that the flow of history is on their side, even if slow running, and they trust in God, one day, to bring all of them together. Political world opinion, even in Africa, is against the idea, but that is no deterrent to a striving for what all Somalis believe to be right and just.

CHAPTER 2

Somalia in History

Whence came the frankincense which one of the Magi took to Bethlehem? Probably from the 'Land of Punt' as Somalia was known in Pharaonic times (fifteenth century BC) for a close commercial relationship existed with the Egyptians which reached its height during the reign of Queen Hatsep-Sut, the fourth monarch of the 18th dynasty (about 1500 BC). This part of Africa was also known to the Phoenicians, and their navigators called it 'The Region of Incense'. To the Romans it was not so well known, and they termed it 'Terra Incognita' or 'The Unknown Land'. Greek sailors and traders had contact with the Somalis along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean coasts where they benefited from local advice on the periodic changes of the monsoons in the region. Many ancient Greek and Roman chronicles describe this coast, and particularly the ports and trading centres, the best known work being *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* written about the year AD40 which attests to the independence of the cities visited by its author, and the democratic nature of Somali institutions. A century later Ptolemy supported those views in his *Geography*, and there is ample evidence to show that the ports of Somalia had early contact with the Orient—China, Persia and Arabia.

The advent of Islam brought greatly increased interest in the Somali coast, and the knowledge gained spread throughout the Arab world. This resulted in a rapid growth of trade with neighbouring Muslim countries, and the arrival of settlers particularly in the cities of Mogadishu, Warsheikh, Merca and Brava in the south, as well as in Zeila, Berbera and Bender Abbas in the north. These Arab immigrants brought with them the Islamic fiath, and it is for this reason that Somalia is a Muslim nation today. Zeila in the north became the first capital of the Somali State of Adal, and it attracted the writings of many Arab scholars amongst them are Al-Masudi (AD935), Al-Bakri (AD1067), Al-Idrissa (AD1154), Ibna-Battuta (AD1331) and Ibna Khaldun (Late fourteenth century). All gave witness to a vigorous Somali culture; in particular Ibna Said (AD 1344), Ibna Battuta and Al Idrissi all stressed that the Somalis

were completely independent of foreign rule, and described their country as extending throughout the length of the Horn of Africa. These scholarly Arab reports are further borne out by *The Annals of Oman*, the *Chronicles of Lamu and Pate*, the anonymous authors of *The Book of Zanj* (Kitab al Zanj) and the Portuguese writer Joao de Barros. The significance of the commercial relations and other contacts which the Somalis maintained with the outside world can be measured by numerous Chinese manuscripts in which this trade is mentioned. The Chinese Empire, at that time certainly one of the most developed culturally and the most endowed maintained, not without some justification, that it had no need for the goods of other nations, yet it recognized an interest in importing from Somalia such items as tradestock, Ivory, cloths and spices. These activities are confirmed by the evidence of that famous traveller, Ibna Battuta who, in 1331, reported seeing cloth being exported from Mogadishu to places as far off as Egypt, and further corroboration comes from sixteenth and seventeenth century Portuguese accounts. Supportive evidence comes from the scientific missions of the nineteenth century. These facts are reinforced by Somali oral tradition, archeological remains and similar, so that little doubt exists as to conditions obtaining in the Somali peninsular from the earliest times. We thus get a clear image of an independent and prosperous Somali nation, commercially linked with most of the known world within which cities like Harar, Zeila, Berbera, Mogadishu, Merca and Brava all flourished as centres of trade and culture to a relatively unparalleled degree for those times. The symbol of Somali independence was the northern State of Adal which, for centuries, acted as a bulwark against foreign intervention, and this independence reached its peak in the sixteenth century under the leadership of Ahmed Ibrahim Al Ghazi (better known as 'Ahmed Gurey'—'the left handed' and to the Abyssinians as 'Ahmed Gran') when his forces repulsed numerous attacks launched by the Abyssinians and by Portuguese marauders. Such was his prowess that by 1533 Ahmed Gurey was in complete control of south and central Abyssinia. In the following years he penetrated to the north and effectively occupied the whole of Abyssinia for two decades. His exploits and feats of valour were recorded at the time and live on in the traditions of both Abyssinians and Somalis, to the latter of whom he has, ever since, been a great national hero and an inspiration.

At this point it is important to note that all available documents and other evidence prove that Somali territory, subsequently

acquired by Abyssinia, had never been part of that country before the 'Scramble for Africa'; the records and maps of early travellers confirm that 'Somalia' covered the area from the coast to well inland and including all that now claimed by present day Somalia from Ethiopia. It is true that the situation could have been said to be fluid in that raiding parties from both sides advanced hither and thither almost at will, but basically 'Somalia' comprised the whole of the Horn up to the mountainous regions of then Abyssinia. Abyssinian imperial forces of those days were allied to the first generation of Portuguese imperialists who sought to control the trade of the Indian Ocean and adjacent Gulfs, and although indeed the Portuguese laid siege to various points, sometimes with temporary success, they never overcame the Somalis. It should also be noted that neither Harar, nor any Somali city included Abyssinians amongst their citizens, and it was none other than the Emir Nur bin Mijahid, the nephew of 'Ahmed Gurey', who built the famous walls round Harar to protect it from attack.

Throughout all of Somalia in those times, the inhabitants were freely able to roam with their herds of camels, secure in their own land and amongst their own people. Somalia was an ethnic 'nation', independent of others and universally known to be so, albeit that no specific geographical boundaries existed.

In 1854, the celebrated British explorer, Sir Richard Burton, travelled in Somalia as it then was, making maps for trade and geographical purposes. In his famous book: *First Footsteps in East Africa* he accurately recorded the results of his journeys and especially that from Zeila to Harar—he described the then unknown Somali country as 'occupying the whole of the Eastern Horn'. Of Harar he said: '... an ancient metropolis of a once mighty race, the only permanent settlement in East Africa, the reputed seat of Muslim learning, a walled city of stone houses, possessing its independent chief, its peculiar population, its unknown language and its coinage, the emporium of the coffee trade ... the great manufactory of cotton cloths etc.' He went on to describe the wider 'country of the Somal' as 'by no means destitute of capabilities. Though partially desert and thinly populated ... it possesses valuable articles of traffic and its harbours export the produce of the Gurage, Abyssinian, Galla and other inland races.' Burton had his own views on the structure of the Somali nation; for example he described the Issa as 'probably the most powerful branch ...' Nowhere in his writings did he mention Abyssinians living in any part of Somalia. Such, however,

was the ignorance of Somalia that when Burton announced his intention of going there, the British officials in Aden warned him: 'The human head, once struck off, does not re-grow like a rose' (a poetic if grim expression). By his return, Burton proved them wrong and the evidence he brought back cannot be gainsaid. Burton was a man of reputation and stature: his opinion of the independence of the Somalis thus carries great authority.

CHAPTER 3

Partition in the Making

The destruction of the centuries-old independence of the Somalis began in 1866, when the Khedive of Egypt obtained a 'firman' empowering him to establish control over the ports of the Red Sea for his sovereign, the Sultan of Turkey and the 'Sublime Porte'. The Turks had conquered Arabia in the sixteenth century, and despite the fact that their direct sovereignty was only nominally exercised, they regarded the Red Sea ports as dependencies of their province of Yemen. Now the Khedive of Egypt was of an expansionist turn of mind, and he at once recognized the importance of these ports after the opening of the Suez Canal. He lost no time, and despatched the Egyptian Governor of the Sudan personally to visit the ports and evaluate them both commercially and strategically—the inspection included both Zeila and Berbera. So conclusive were the Governor's reports that the Khedive took a wide view of his mandate and, in 1870, he appointed an Egyptian governor for the whole coast from Suez to Cape Guardafui; and he sent agents to Berbera and Bulhar. It can thus be said that the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was the signal for the partition of Somalia.

However, it was not the Turks and Egyptians alone who coveted the north Somali coast: Britain was also interested in view of her station at Aden which was a vital link in the chain to India. From 1870 to 1874 the British strenuously opposed Turkish claims to suzerainty over the Somali northern coast by sponsoring the opposing claims of the Sultan of Zanzibar to that part of the southern coast between Ras Hafun and the Juba river (known as 'Benadir'). In 1875 the Egyptians seized the north coast and, having consolidated their hold on Zeila, Berbera and Bulhar, marched inland and occupied Harar where they killed the ruling Emir, Sheikh Muhamed Abdelshakur, and replaced him with their own governor. Negotiations between Egypt and Britain started in 1877 and concluded with a convention which recognized Egyptian jurisdiction over the Somali coast from Zeila to Ras Hafun. However, the Egyptians were never really able to subdue their

holding and serious outbreaks occurred, especially around Harar in 1880.

But events were moving elsewhere and the successful uprising of the Mahdi in the Sudan posed a direct threat to Egypt, so that when the Mahdi's dervishes started massing along the southern borders of Egypt the Khedive, in 1882, felt obliged to withdraw his forces from Somalia. Harar was restored to independence, and the Egyptian governor was replaced by a direct descendant of the deposed Emir.

For a considerable time the European powers had taken a keen interest in the affairs of Abyssinia, which they regarded as a 'Christian Island in a sea of Pagans', and for centuries Abyssinia had exploited this claim to Christianity for political reasons. She capitalized fully on this religious factor in order to obtain the active support of Europe and further her colonialist plans against the Somalis and other peoples. In short, the Abyssinians sought to separate themselves from Africa and place themselves firmly in the 'European camp'. This psychological ruse worked, and European countries established embassies in Abyssinia and sent representatives of various churches and societies to solidify political and cultural links. It was along this artery of communication that Abyssinia was able to send to Europe requests for aid, and most particularly, arms. Here it is interesting to observe that for centuries Abyssinia has carried out expansionist policies, and those were assisted by a confusion of nomenclature whereby it had been the Greek habit to refer to all North Africa as 'Libya' and to the rest of the continent as 'Ethiopia'. Ethiopians have never been slow to use this chance to bolster their various claims over the years. Before the rise of Islam, the effective rule of the kings of Abyssinia was limited to the highland areas of central Ethiopia, but by the second half of the ninth century, Abyssinian frontiers began to be pushed further south until they reached the northern part of the Shoa plateau. Shoa was, in fact, once a Muslim sultanate which fell to the Abyssinians who then continued to advance southwards and eastwards. Until the eleventh century, the Abyssinian kingdom of Aksum, with the city of Aksum as its capital, was confined to the north of present-day Ethiopia, after which it spread south, the capital moving in that direction as advances were made—for a while it was at Gondar, and was only established in Addis Ababa in 1890.

From the Middle Ages up to the latter part of the nineteenth century the Abyssinian kingdom proper was limited to the central highlands, that is to say Amhara, Gojam, Northern Shoa and

Southern Tigre. Thus, before the 1880s, Shoa was the southernmost province, and an illustration of this is contained in a letter dated 17 December 1878 from Johannes Meyer and Jacob Greiner, two German missionaries asked by King Menelik to solicit support for him amongst European Heads of State. Addressing their letter to the British Foreign Secretary, they wrote as follows:

King Menelik of Shoa has delivered to us a letter to Her Majesty, Queen of England and Empress of India, with direction to translate it. In order to comply with the said King's wish, it is necessary to give Your Excellency some particulars respecting it. Shoa is the southernmost extent: about 5,000,000 inhabitants, Christians, Mohamedans and Heathens.

In her major work: *The Government of Ethiopia*, the late Margery Perham observes that:

While the fluctuating power and ward of the Shoan outpost of Ethiopia make it impossible for a clear line to be drawn upon a map, it would be roughly true, up to about 1880, to regard the country for about a hundred miles round the modern capital as the southernmost projection of the power of Ethiopia. East and West, as well as South of this were peoples who lay outside the Government of the Kingdom.

Yet a further corroboration comes from the French poet and arms dealer, Arthur Rimbaud who, arriving at Ankobar on 6 February 1887 discovered that: 'from Harar, it was . . . eight or nine days journey to the Hawash river, the boundary of Menelik's kingdom.' It can therefore be taken that *no part of Somali territory was ever part of Abyssinia before the arrival of the European colonialists.*

The various European traders, missionaries and other agents who set up in Ethiopia persuaded the Abyssinian king to write to the European powers asking for arms with which to extend his frontiers (and it will later appear that the whole subject of arms imported into Ethiopia has been the very pivot about which Ethiopian expansionism revolved). In 1878, two missionaries forwarded a letter from King Menelik to the British Anti-Slavery Society, in which Menelik concluded thus:

My country is far from your country. My road to the coast, to Zeila, Tadjoura and Aden is at present closed to me by the Musulmans, to wit, the Egyptian Government. They prevent my receiving into my country either provisions, arms . . . Will you

kindly raise your powerful voice in order that I may have this opened for me . . .

The British Anti-Slavery Society then wrote to the British Prime Minister as follows:

In conclusion, we would respectfully submit to your Lordship's consideration whether amongst other changes, political and territorial, which may be awaiting Egypt, it may not be a wise policy on the part of Her Majesty's Government to promote a cession of the ports of Massowah, Zeila and Tadjoura to Northern and Southern Abyssinia, as being a measure which, on the one hand, will remove from those countries a perennial incentive to wars and bloodshed, and on the other will powerfully conduce to the extension of European commerce and civilization to those most productive but now isolated regions.

As was usual in those days, commercial advantages outweighed the value of life for the population of places considered expendable.

In 1879 King John of Abyssinia wrote to Queen Victoria:

With God's power, I became strong by Your Majesty's cannons and guns, and sat in the throne of my fathers. After I was crowned, there were Heathens who worship idols, and I went to submit them and bring them to Christianity.

Here was a most blatant use of the 'Christian card', such as must have appealed greatly to Victorian England.

The whole impetus of Abyssinian expansion revolved about the supply of firearms, and after the arrival of the European powers in 1884, following the Berlin Act of that year, the flow of such weapons into Abyssinia greatly increased. In the course of the next 20 years this supply of firearms enabled the tiny Abyssinian kingdom to grow into a rambling empire, during all of which time the Abyssinians constantly maintained that they needed arms to subject 'savage heathen people' and prevent them from battering their 'outpost of Christianity'. There can be no doubt that this concept of valiant Christians fighting off hordes of savages appealed to the Europeans, reminiscent as it must have been, of the Crusades, and British wars elsewhere in the world.

On 16 December 1890 Abyssinia acceded to the Brussels Act, the ostensible purpose of which was to counter the slave trade, but which also provided for the prevention of firearms falling into the hands of most Africans. However, through her accession to this Act, Abyssinia was entitled to unrestricted importation and

possession of such weapons, and she gained this most exceptional privilege through the goodwill of Britain, France and other European countries, with the special sponsorship and recommendation of Italy. It will immediately be seen that Abyssinia thus obtained an advantage over her neighbours of enormous magnitude, such as completely tipped the balance of power in her favour at the expense of poor and somewhat primitive tribes. The threat to Somalis vastly increased. In his report to the British Political Resident in Aden of 27 November 1882, F. M. C. Hunter, the First Assistant Resident, stated:

As soon as the port of Assab was opened the Italians began to pour arms through it in a steady flow into Shoa; the French did the same through their protectorate, first at Obok and next at Tadjoura.

CHAPTER 4

The Betrayal

The year 1884 can be said to be the beginning of the betrayal of the Somalis; the year when the Berlin Conference parcelled out Africa between various interested parties to what later became known as the 'Scramble for Africa', and this coincided with the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from the Somali coast to counter the threat from the Mahdi. It is important here to note that whereas the 'scramble' is generally thought of as being a wholly European operation, Abyssinia also joined in the rush to create larger empires through having signed an alliance treaty with Britain against the Mahdi, upon whom international attention was then focussed. It is ironic to reflect that the Muslim onslaught against Christianity in the Sudan left other Muslims defenceless against Christianity in the Horn. By allying herself with the Europeans against the Mahdi, Abyssinia greatly reinforced her standing of equality with the Europeans, who thenceforth regarded her as an ally and partner.

Always having in mind her outpost at Aden, and seeking to create a coastal protectorate across the Gulf of Aden, Britain now entered into treaties with the Somalis, as represented by individual clans as a result of the impending departure of the Egyptians in 1885. These treaties basically formed the crux of the betrayal and thus it is necessary to discuss them in detail. The preamble to the treaties referred to the impending withdrawal of the Egyptians ('Troops of His Highness the Khedive') and the texts are of the essence in that they promised *protection*, a promise that was broken. These treaties were dated 1884-5, and read as follows:

We, the undersigned Elders of (Clan inserted here) are desirous of entering into an Agreement with the British Government for the maintenance of our independence, the preservation of order and other good and sufficient reasons.

Now it is hereby agreed and covenanted as follows:

Article I

The (Clan inserted here) do hereby declare that they are pledged and bound never to cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for

occupation save to the British Government, any portion of the territory presently inhabited by them or being under their control.

Article II

All vessels under the British flag shall have free permission to trade at all ports and places within the territories of the (Clan inserted here).

Article III

All British subjects, residing in or visiting the territories of the (Clan inserted here) shall enjoy perfect safety and protection and shall be entitled to travel all over the said limits under safe conduct of the Elders of the (Clan).

Article IV

The traffic in slaves throughout the territories of the (Clan inserted here) shall cease for ever, and the Commander of any of Her Majesty's vessels, or any other British officer duly authorised, shall have the power of requiring the surrender of any slave and of supporting the demand by force by land and sea.

Article V

The British Government shall have the power to appoint an agent or agents to reside in the Territories of the (Clan inserted here) and every such agent shall be treated with respect and consideration and be entitled to have for his protection such guard as the British Government deem sufficient.

The above written treaty shall come into force and have effect from the date of signing this Agreement.

In token of the conclusion of this lawful and honourable bond (Names of Elders inserted here).

and

(Name of Assistant Political Resident inserted here together with witnesses) and the latter on behalf of the British Government to each and all in the presence of the witnesses affix their signature, marks, or seals at (Place inserted here) on the (Date inserted here).

Thus the agreement of 1884 specifically states that the Somalis, as represented by their Clan elders, wished to enter into an agreement with the British Government for the *maintenance of their independence*; that they would not cede etc any part of their territories *save* to the British Government and that the agreement was to be considered by both sides as a *lawful and honourable bond*. Furthermore, the Somalis themselves solemnly undertook to protect such British agents as might appear amongst them. The meaning is perfectly clear: the Somalis trusted the British, and the

British pledged themselves to 'Maintain their independence' in return for considerable territorial jurisdiction and other rights. It may seem to the reader with a legal turn of mind that the recital of the agreement was one-sided, for whereas the Somalis promised much in detail, the British made little definitive statement. Nonetheless the paragraph preceding Article I was within the body of the Agreement and thus entirely binding. Article I is of great interest in itself in that the Somalis promised 'never to cede . . .' except to Britain and this must also impose a duty on Britain also 'never to cede . . .'.

Nor was that all; in 1886 there were supplementary treaties between Britain and the Somalis (as represented by their Clans) the texts of which are as follows:

Supplementary General Treaty 1886 (between Britain and Somali Clans)

The British Government and the Elders of (Clan inserted here) who have signed this Agreement being desirous of maintaining and strengthening the relations of peace and friendship existing between them:

The British Government have named and appointed Major Frederick Mercer Hunter C.S.I., Political Agent for the Somali Coast, to conclude a treaty for this purpose.

The said Major Frederick Mercer Hunter and the said Elders of the (Clan inserted here) have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:

Article I

The British Government, in compliance with the wish of the undersigned Elders (Clan inserted here) hereby undertake to extend to them and to the territories under their authority and jurisdiction the gracious favour and protection of Her Majesty the Queen Empress

Article II

The said Elders of (Clan inserted here) agree and promise to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement or treaty with any foreign nation, or power, except with the knowledge and sanction of Her Majesty's Government

Article III

This treaty shall come into operation upon the first day of February One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-Six

(signed) F. M. Hunter. Major.
Political Agent, Somali Coast.

(The names of the Elders here).

Once again, in unmistakable terms, the British, in the name of the Queen, extended *protection* to the Somalis and their territories, and in that the 1886 treaty was 'supplementary' the protection specifically mentioned referred back to the treaties of 1884-5. Taken together all these treaties constituted a bounden duty upon Britain to protect Somali interests and independence. The Somalis must have thought they had nothing further to worry about on any account, and thus did the British ensure their coastal protectorate. Supplies to Aden were assured.

Nevertheless Britain felt it necessary to extend her hold on the Somalis and a further agreement was produced in 1896, the text of which reads as follows:

I, Ahmed Murgan, Chief of the Ogaden Somalis, do hereby place myself, my people, and country, with its dependence, under the protection of Her Britannic Majesty the Queen, and do hereby declare and I will not, nor shall my successors or any of my people, cede or alienate any portion of my territories or dependencies, or make any treaties with any foreign state or person, without the previous knowledge and sanction of Her Majesty's Government.

Commercial arrangements between me and the non-natives shall be subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Representative, who shall regulate all disputes, and by whose advice I will be guided in all my relations with non-natives.

(Signature in Arabic)

Witness:

(Signature in Arabic)

It must be said that whereas the Agreement cites Ahmed Murgan as 'Chief of the Ogaden Somalis' he was, in fact chief of only a branch of the Ogaden clan—the Mohamed Zubier branch. Thus it is true that the agreement refers only to part of the Ogaden area and not to the whole. Nevertheless it was a further example of 'British protection'; 81 years later, in 1977, the Ogaden Somalis were fighting for their lives against Ethiopia and in 1978, against Russians and Cubans as well. Some of them may have wondered what that British 'protection' afforded them then.

The French were also anxious to cover their 'protectorates' with a legal agreement:

Treaty of Friendship and Protection between France and the Chiefs of the Issa Somalis, OBOCK, 26 March 1885.

Between M. Lagarde (AMJL) Governor of the Colony of

Obock, acting in the name of the French Government and the Issa Chiefs hereinafter defined:

Absi Handet, Robbe Tonk, Bare Ali, Beder Guedi, Guedi Dagah, Dirane Dedis, Roble Guele, Hassen Guedi, Guedi Roble, Moussa Seid, Maherame Egue, Ouais Gardadoub, Guedi Hersi, Chere Djilebour, Allale Ouais, Assobi Bonis, Oure Bare, Ouais Gouled, Bouhe Derrer, who control the territory extending from Gubbet Kharak and beyond Ambaddo near Zeylah, the following treaty is signed:

Article I

There shall henceforth be eternal friendship between France and the Chiefs of the Issa

Article II

The Chiefs of the Issa hand over their country to France that she may protect it against all foreigners

Article III

The French Government undertakes to facilitate commerce on the coast and especially at Ambaddo

Article IV

The Issa Chiefs undertake to assist France at all times and to sign no treaty nor conclude any agreement under penalty of nullity without the consent of the Governor of Obock.

Done at Obock, the 26th March 1885

(Signed) Lagarde

(Marks of the Issa Chiefs)

So here was another treaty, this time with the French, which expressly promised *protection* for a Somali clan. Like the treaty with the British, the Somalis were forbidden to treat with any other party, the implication being that the French would refrain likewise in respect of the territory to be protected.

Nor did the Italians neglect to bind the Somalis to them in legal fashion.

Treaty of Protection between Italy and the Sultan of the Migertini (Majertayn Somalis) signed at Bender Alula, 7th April 1889.

On this 6th day of the month of Shaban 1306 corresponding to the 7th day of April 1889.

We, Sultan Osman Mohamoud Yusuf, Sultan of all the Migertini, have of our own free will put to this Act our hand and seal.

We have placed our country and all our possessions, from Ras

Auad to Ral-el-Kyle (Uadi-Nogal being the furthest limit) under the protection and government of His Majesty's Ship RAPIDO; and Captain Porcelli, Commanding His Majesty's Ship STAFFETA.

We declare that we will not make treaties or contracts with any other Government or Persons.

We declare besides, that we will prevent as far as we are able, all acts directed against Italian subjects and their friends in all our possessions.

We have signed this Act of our own free will and full understanding, and this which we have signed will remain binding upon us, our heirs, brothers, subjects and their descendants.

We adopted our signatures and seals to this Act in full possession of our faculties of mind and body.

Given at Bender Alula, this 6th of the month of Shaban 1306 (7th April 1889)

V. FILONDARI

His Italian Majesty's Consul

(L.S.) OSMAN MOHAMOUD YUSUF

Sultan of the Migertini

CARLO AMORETTI, *Capt of Frigate*

GUISEPPE PORCELLI, *Capt of Frigate*

Soon afterwards Italy acquired the Benadir coast (previously governed by the Sultan of Zanzibar and including Mogadishu) and thereby extended her authority (and 'protection') from the Gulf of Aden to Kismayu in the far South-West. She extended her influence inland, and in 1891 concluded a treaty with the Somalis of Western Somalia (Ogaden).

By all these treaties, referring as they did to European Governments, the Somalis felt they were fully protected. To the Somali elders of those days, the Queen of England, the King of Italy and the President of France must have seemed mighty personages indeed, powerful monarchs who, between them, owned much of the world. To have all this majesty on their side must be a sure bulwark against marauding Abyssinians who so hated them and so coveted their simple territory. Those Somali chieftains may even have congratulated themselves upon securing such champions, and it cannot have occurred to them that their promises would ever be broken. In short, the Somalis handed over their land with full trust—trust which was to be betrayed!

As has been said, Abyssinia was at this time busy importing arms and ammunition as fast as she could. Records show that in one journey on 27 June 1885 the famous French trader, Savoure, sold

to Abyssinia 30,000 cartridges, 600,000 percussion caps, 3,000 muskets and 24 cannon. In the same year even distant Russia contributed by furnishing 50,000 rifles, 50,000 carbines, 5,000 revolvers, 40 cannon, 5,000 swords and ample ammunition. On 21 January 1886 the French arms dealer, Labatut, transshipped at Aden '2,230 rifles, 194,200 cartridges, 80,000 percussion caps followed, ten days later, by 360 rifles and 4,000 cartridges.' Further large consignments arrived from Italy in 1887 under the Treaty of Alliance between Italy and Shoa. It cannot have been unknown to these European merchants that this growing arsenal would be used against neighbouring Africans, themselves precluded from possessing such weapons. All of this was a prelude to the fall of Harar, whence the Egyptians withdrew in 1885, and immediately both Italy and Abyssinia cast covetous eyes upon this important centre. In his book: *Ethiopia* Robert L. Hess stated: 'North, East and South of Harar are located the Somali, a nomadic people who for four hundred years have looked to Harar for religious inspiration.' Plans for the seizure of Harar emanate from the year 1885 when, in April, King Menelik proposed to the Head of the Italian Mission, Count Antonelli:

If the Government of Italy occupied Zeila and Berbera and gives me Harar then we shall certainly have a good channel of commerce.

In 1887 a joint Italo-Abyssinian force descended on Harar and captured the city after fierce resistance, and this operation resulted in the formal alliance treaty of 20 October 1887 (referred to above). With the taking of Harar Abyssinia managed to bring part of Somalia under her control, and it is interesting to note that the first Abyssinian governor of the city was the father of Emperor Haile Selassie I (which explains his birth at Harar). This capture also revenged Menelik for the sixteenth century conquest of Abyssinia by the Somali State of Adal under Ahmed Ibrahim 'Gurey', and a letter sent by Menelik to the British Resident states:

From Menelik, King of Shoa and all the Gallas, good and bad! How are you? By the grace of God I am well! Amir Abdulla would suffer no Christian in his country. He was another Gurme (Gurey). But by the help of God I fought him, destroyed him, and he escaped on horseback. I hoisted my flag in his capital and my troops occupied his city. Gurme died. Abdalla, in our day was his successor.

Harar fell to Menelik on 8 January 1887, and he also wrote to the

Italian Commissioner of Assab, Mr De Simone, stating:

Amir Abdalla who murdered our Italians escaped from me on horseback, but thank God I murdered all his men . . . and have avenged with many dead the tragic death of the Italians in order to please you.

It is shameful to observe that although Britain was informed of the impending attack upon Harar, she signally failed to honour her treaty of protection and made no protest against the joint Italo-Abyssinian operation. The information consisted of a memorandum dated 12 January 1887 and signed by Major F. M. Hunter, Consul for the Somali coast (the same who had signed the 1886 treaty) which read:

Hersi Ali, a Mijertain Somal, whom I formerly employed as an Arabic writer in Harar, and who came with me to Aden, has visisted me on behalf of the Amir of Harar.

This man was imprisoned by the Amir on suspicion of being an English spy, and he has now only been released and sent on this mission. He states that the Amir expects to be attacked by Menelik's lieutenant, Waldagabri, about 15th February, and he wants to know if the British are inimical to him, for should this be the case he will fly to the interior. A battle took place near the river Burka, on the Shoa side, in October 1886 . . . on that occasion the Amir had 500 men with firearms, besides 3,000 other Somalis and Gallas under Bakri Saleh . . . (the report states the attack was started by the Abyssinians and lists the forces and firearms available to the two sides) . . . It cannot now be stated how many men Menelik can put into the field but certainly their number will exceed that of the Amir's available forces. The latter is afraid that if he does not make his peace with us we may attack him in the rear. I have merely replied that the 18 rifles must be sent back with the Indians now in Harar who were formerly at Gildessa.

The Abyssinian capture of Harar was indeed a signal victory, for Menelik wrote to his Italian ally: 'My occupation of Harar augurs well for the commercial relations between Italy and Shoa.' And, anticipating yet further victories, he added: '. . . but more important is the question of Zeila, if your Majesty will see to its cession to me, the port will be open to trade.' (Letter to King Umberto dated May 1887).

Harar immediately became the springboard for further expansion into Somali territory, and a raid by the Abyssinians on 15 December 1887 was reported by Colonel E. V. Stace, British

Consul for the Somali coast, in a letter addressed to the British Agent and Consul General in Cairo, dated 4 January 1888: 'Makonnen, Dejajmaj or Governor of the Province of Harar, lately made a raid on the Somali to the east of Harar, advanced as far as Darimi and captured a large number of women and children and animals. It is asserted that his forces on their return towards Harar were assailed by the Somali and cut up, and many rifles taken . . .' Other Abyssinian raids followed. In her book, *The Government of Ethiopia* Margery Perham stated: 'In 1889 an Ethiopian expedition penetrated far to the South of Harar and stripped the country bare of stock and horses.' Returning from a reconnaissance trip in 1891, the Swayne brothers reported that the Somalis had been raided on a number of occasions and that 'great anxiety is felt' at Hargeisa at the time of their visit because of an imminent Abyssinian attack. In a memorandum prepared for the British Foreign Office by Mr P. Bertie in 1893, it is stated:

The Abyssinians of Harar are constantly raiding the Ogaden country and the Somalis under our protection. Colonel Stace has several times written to Ras Makonnen on the subject; and Captain Swayne who, in the course of his shooting expedition, went to Harar on a visit to Makonnen, was told to represent unofficially to the Ras the injury inflicted on British interests by Abyssinian aggressions on Somali territory; but our latest information shows that they are encroaching more and more into territories occupied by the Somalis under our protection, and oppressing the people.

Once again, it should be noted that this report mentions 'protection' in a context which includes Somalis round about Harar, thus not limiting that protection merely to the immediate coastal area.

The Abyssinians used their firearms mercilessly against the Somalis who, apart from what they were able occasionally to capture, were armed only with spears. They destroyed villages, burned homes, stole livestock and other possessions, killed those who resisted and took many into slavery (and it will be recalled that Article IV of the 1884-5 treaties with the Somalis expressly forbade slavery). Little imagination is required to picture the torment, misery and anguish which ensued.

Dr Donaldson Smith, an American, who visited a village called Sesabene, south of Milmil in 1894, and who addressed the Royal-Geographical Society on 6 January 1896, said:

You may imagine my chagrin when I heard, a few days after-

wards, that they have just been raided by the Abyssinians under Makonnen. Their animals have all been driven off, the boys and girls taken as slaves, and the elder people killed or mutilated.

Dr Smith also reported that the Gallas were subjected to the same inhuman treatment as the Somalis, and he indignantly exclaimed:

We earnestly wish they (the Abyssinians) as savages bearing arms against other poor defenceless Africans, should have such a drubbing that they could not forget it and try to extend their sway further. Let these good people who take an interest in uncivilised nations cast a thought on the black neighbours of the Abyssinians who are in the worst plight.

There are other similar reports, amongst which it is important to note that of Sir Alfred Pease, who visited Somalia in 1897, and who said:

We (British) have prevented them (Somalis) from acquiring arms and ammunition and having deprived them of all means of self-defence . . . have left them at the mercy of raiding Abyssinians who have no other employment than that of making raids on Gallas and Somalis.

Thus one result of the General Act of Brussels (in so far as it concerned a ban on firearms to Africans, or some of them) allowed the Abyssinians to start a reign of terror within areas which the British were supposed to protect and to seize lands which they then claimed as an integral part of the Abyssinian empire. All this oppression was carried out with great cruelty, but the Europeans stood back and made only feeble protests (viz the 'unofficial' mention Captain Swayne was asked to make when visiting Ras Makonnen). No wonder the Somalis in the Ogaden today feel that history is repeating itself (and see later chapter on Ethiopian aggression in the present day).

In 1889 Italy tried to establish a protectorate over Abyssinia, but this was thwarted (see later) and the Abyssinians decided to state their territorial claims. In 1891 Emperor Menelik addressed a letter to the European States, in these terms:

Being desirous to make known to our friends the Powers (Sovereigns) of Europe the boundaries of Ethiopia, we have addressed also to you (Your Majesty) the present letter.

These are the boundaries of Ethiopia:

Starting from the Italian boundary of Arafale, which is

situated on the sea, the line goes westwards over the plain (Meda) of Gegra towards Mahio, Halai, Digsu and Gura up to Adibaro. From Adibaro to the junction of the rivers Mareb and Arated.

From this point the line runs southward to the junction of the Atbara and Setit rivers, where is situated the town known as Tomat.

From Tomat the frontier embraces the province of Gedaref up to Karkoj on the Blue Nile.

From Karkoj the line passes to the junction of the Sobat River with the White Nile. From thence the frontier follows the river Sobat, including the country of the Arbore, Gallas, and reaches Lake Samburu. Towards the East are included within the frontier the country of the Borana Gallas and the Arussi country up to the limits of the Somalis, including also the Province of Ogaden.

To the northward the line of frontier includes the Habr Awaz, the Gadabursi, and the Esa Somalis and reaches Ambos.

Leaving Ambos the line includes Lake Assal, the province of our ancient vassal Mohamed Anfari, skirts the coast of the sea and rejoins Arafale. While tracing today the actual boundaries of my Empire, I shall endeavour, if God gives me life and strength, to re-establish the ancient frontiers (tributaries) of Ethiopia up to Khartoum, and as far as Lake Nyanza with all the Gallas.

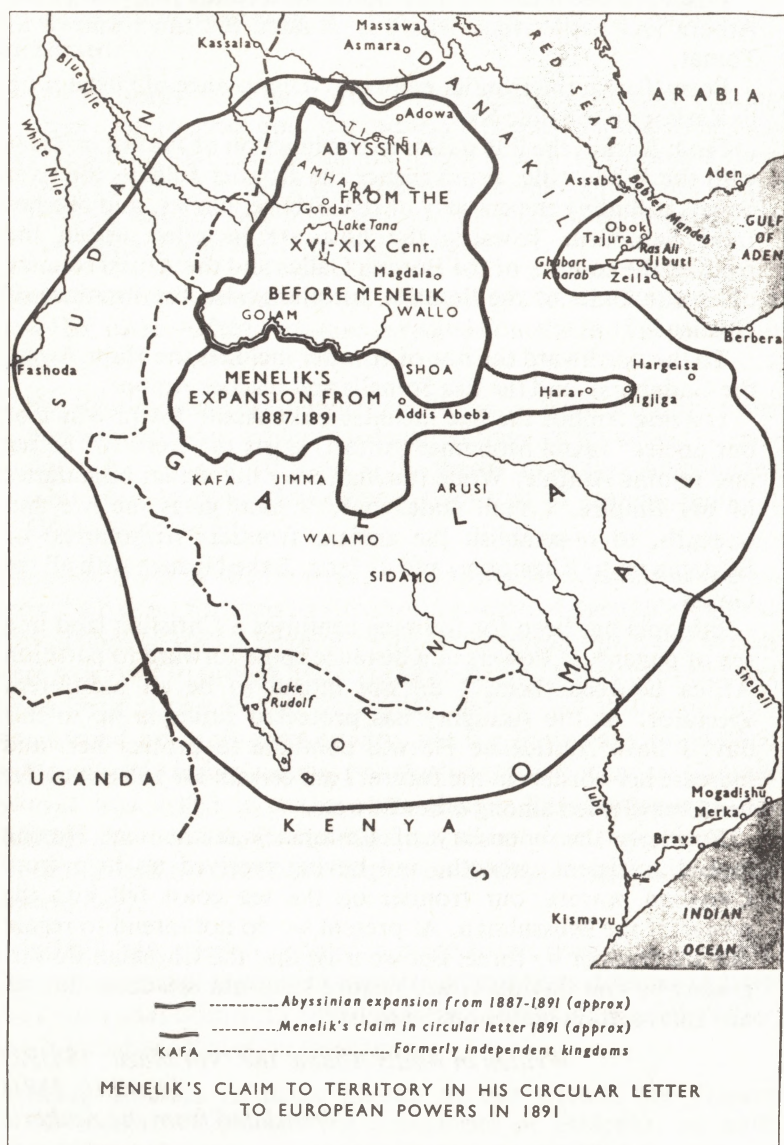
Ethiopia has been for fourteen centuries a Christian land in a sea of pagans. If Powers at a distance come forward to partition Africa between them, I do not intend to be an indifferent spectator. As the Almighty has protected Ethiopia up to this day, I have confidence He will continue to protect her, and increase her borders in the future. I am certain He will not suffer her to be divided among other Powers.

Formerly the boundary of Ethiopia was the sea. Having lacked sufficient strength, and having received no help from Christian powers, our frontier on the sea coast fell into the power of the Mussulman. At present we do not intend to regain our sea frontier by force, but we trust that the Christian Power, guided by Our Saviours, will restore to us our sea-coast line, at any rate, certain points on the coast.

*Written in Addis Ababa, the 14th Mazir, 1883EC
(April 10, 1891)*

Translated from the Amharic

This letter was addressed to Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia, and constitutes a grandiose claim breathtaking in its ef-



frontier. The area envisaged by Menelik embraces not only enormous parts of Somalia, but great tracts of the Sudan and Kenya as well (see Map). It was a cunning move to take advantage of favourable political circumstances, and by its stress on Christianity, it sought to place Abyssinia even more firmly on the side of the European colonialists and to involve them in Menelik's plans. This involvement is amply proved when it is realized that Menelik wrote his circular letter at the direct instigation of the Italians, for on 18 July 1890 the Italian Prime Minister, Signor Crispi, instructed the Italian ambassador in Addis Ababa that Menelik should be informed of the imminent plan to divide East Africa into spheres of influence. Menelik was therefore advised to set out his prior claims and underline them with a reminder that Abyssinia was an ancient Christian kingdom. He was expressly advised to lay down the frontier with the Danakils and the Somalis. In a letter dated 20 August 1890, Count Antonelli wrote from Rome to Menelik:

The countries that Your Majesty should put in the list are specially all the tribes of Adal and Somalis, those of Ogaden, the countries beyond Kaffa and always insist on Gildessa, Harar and Lake Assal.

It should be remembered that at that time Adal, Ogaden, Gildessa and the area of Harar were all part of Somali territory (except for the city of Harar itself—seized in 1887) and were all outside Abyssinian influence. This circular letter of 1891 has been enshrined by Ethiopians as a corner-stone of their colonial arguments, and it has been used, ever since, as some form of mandate or authority. In fact, it is no more than a figment of Menelik's imagination and a projection of his greed.

At this point it is useful to list, by date, some of the individual acquisitions of Abyssinia:

- 1881 Kaffa and Jima
- 1882-5 Arussi
- 1886 Wallaga
- 1887 Harar (city) and Illubbabur
- 1889 Gurage (Kontad Kulo attacked)
- 1891 Bale and Sidamo
- 1894 Gofa and Walamo
- 1897 Borana attacked. Ogaden handed over by Britain and Italy
- 1898 Boni—Shangul taken from Sudan.

In all this blatant expansion based upon entirely non-existent and imaginery claims, Britain and Italy stood silently by (and in Italy's case even offered encouragement) and completely failed to honour any of the so-called 'treaties of protection' made with the Somalis as then represented by their various chieftains and clan leaders. Not only did they do nothing but worse, they did not see fit to inform the Somalis of what was taking place or what was being done with the lands the Somalis had entrusted to their custody. This last 'sin of omission' is a part of the betrayal.

In 1888 Britain and France concluded an agreement designed to define the boundaries of their respective protectorates as between Zeila and Djibouti, in these terms: 'The line dividing the coast between Zeila and Djibouti runs by Habasweyn, Biyo-Kaboba, Gildessa and then towards Harar.' The effect of this was to separate Somali territory between two non-African powers, and in 1892 France established Djibouti as capital of French Somalia—a port which always remained a goal of Abyssinia due to its strategic location.

In 1891 Britain and Italy signed a further agreement which placed large areas of Somali land within the Italian sphere, and this was further defined in 1894.

At this period there were serious difficulties in the Sudan both before and after the death of General Gordon, and Britain was most anxious to secure an early settlement with Ethiopia. Accordingly, in 1897, the European powers embarked upon a new set of 'understandings' with Abyssinia which enabled the latter to acquire, illegally, a large part of Somali territory in addition to Harar. In the same year the French commenced negotiations with Addis Ababa, having in mind the necessity for a port on the Red Sea and therefore a naval foothold to safeguard her imperial interests in the Far East. She was further interested in friendly relations with Abyssinia as regards aspirations on the Nile, as well as the control of rail transport from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, with the enormous trading advantages that would bring. Thus the Franco-Abyssinian Treaty of 1897 greatly reduced the extent of Somali territory under French protection, and it abandoned the provisions of the French-British arrangements of 1888 (see before). The inland depth of the French line was reduced to Jalelo instead of to Gildessa.

On 14 May 1897 Britain also concluded an agreement with Abyssinia, despite the treaties of protection signed in 1884-5 and 1886, thus effectively 'giving away' parts of Somalia which had

never hitherto been under Abyssinian control. Aside from the considerations in the Sudan, the main preoccupation of the British with Somaliland was to secure fresh supplies for the garrison at Aden, and to ensure the safety of their ships en route to India and the Far East. It was for this reason that British concern was always for the coast and not for the hinterland. This policy was succinctly expressed by Lord Hamilton, Viceroy of India, when he said: 'Her Majesty's Government consider that the imperial interests in the Somaliland Protectorate are insufficient to justify their contributing towards its defence.' It is a plain statement and is reflected in the instructions given to those negotiating with Menelik in 1897: 'You are authorized, if absolutely necessary, to make concessions in regard to the frontiers of the Somaliland Protectorate as defined in the Anglo-Italian Protocol of 1894 provided such concessions are not of a nature to interfere with the main object for which the protectorate was assumed, namely the securing of adequate supplies for the port of Aden.'

So there it was, in black and white; it could almost be said that Britain was prepared to trade people for meat—and without telling them.

The other objectives of Britain were:

- (a) Obtaining assurances from Menelik not to allow the passage of arms to the Mahdi in the Sudan.
- (b) Persuading Ethiopia not to allow France, which was engaged in furthering her colonial interests on the Nile, to penetrate through Ethiopia.

Thus territories belonging to the Somali (and the lives of the Somalis who lived in them) were used by all parties as pawns in an international chess-game from which Abyssinia made huge profits at everyone else's expense. The reasons may have seemed expedient to the Europeans at the time, but all must have known very well that they were bartering with that which did not belong to them in the first place. There were some pangs of conscience.

The British negotiations were carried out by Mr Rodd (later Lord Rennel of Rodd) as Head of the British Mission to Menelik, and his report contains the following:

Looking at the way the frontier was traced, Menelik exclaimed: But you are advancing right up to the gates of Harar. I pointed out that it was Abyssinia which had advanced up to us; that we were the revisionaries of Egypt in those districts, and had established ourselves there by treaties with the Somalis before

the Abyssinians had come to Harar. The Emperor then again referred to the ancient limits of Ethiopia. I asked him how Somalis, who had been established in these regions for so many centuries, could possibly be looked down upon as included within the ancient limits of Ethiopia.

At this point Menelik propounded the extraordinary idea that the Somalis had, from time immemorial until the Muslim invasion, been herdsmen of the Ethiopians who could not, themselves, live in low countries.

In the same report, Mr Rodd said:

I . . . interpreting the spirit of my instruction to be in the first place the conciliation of Ethiopia during the last phase of the Khartoum campaign, made certain concessions which were criticized by travellers who penetrated Somaliland.

As 1897 is the crucial year in the betrayal of the Somalis, further evidence of what then transpired is essential to a proper perspective. On 13 May 1897, Mr Rodd sent a confidential letter to the Marquess of Salisbury:

Finally, we reopened the question of the definition of the frontiers of the Somali Coast Protectorate. I recapitulated the whole situation, the misunderstandings which had arisen owing to our not realizing each other's point of departure, and once more urged on him (Menelik) a line based on tribal divisions, on which, indeed, the line we had drawn in the Anglo-Italian Protocol of May 1891 was based. His Majesty's attitude was distinctly oriental. England was a great power; could we not cede these small parcels of territory, which meant so little to us and so much to him? He had gained Harar by conquest, and looked on all these regions as part and parcel of the Harar province. I assured him that this was not so; we were established in these countries long before the expedition which resulted in his annexation of Harar, and though he had conquered Harar, he had not conquered us. I showed him on the map the pastures frequented by the tribes under our protection, demonstrating that the line I proposed to draw, with Captain Swayne's concurrence, was a reasonable and just division. But His Majesty replied that he could not understand maps sufficiently to judge . . . I therefore suggested that he should empower Ras Makonnen to come to an agreement with me at Harar, which should be annexed to any Treaty we might sign, in the form of an exchange of notes. To this proposition he eventually consented, on condition that the arrangement was submitted to him

for approval. I claimed reciprocity in this respect, and an Article was accordingly framed in that sense. I would submit that this appeared to be the only way out of the 'impasse', for although my instructions on this point are large and liberal, I could not see my way to accepting the arbitrary line proposed by the Emperor without endangering the main interest for which the Protectorate is maintained, and from our experience of the treatment which the Abyssinians mete out to their subject tribes, to which I have alluded elsewhere, I do not think anything but the most urgent political necessity should justify handing over tribes to the tender mercies of this marauding race.

Mr Rodd also assured Lord Salisbury that whereas a limit to 'British' territory was defined, none of the wording used recognized any Abyssinian 'rights' to any of the Somali lands beyond it.

This report is interesting in that it recognizes the protection Britain had promised, and also noted the barbarous behaviour of the Abyssinians. It has been later said that the British were largely ignorant of the precise conditions in the Horn in those days, but Mr Rodd's reports indicate otherwise.

But not everyone at the time agreed with what was going on, and Sir Alfred Pease, who visited Somalia in 1896-7 commented on the Agreement as follows:

. . . To the consternation of all interested in Somaliland, Mr Rodd handed over to Abyssinia a large area of Somaliland including some of the tribes with whom we had entered into solemn obligations for their protection . . . The supposed *quid pro quo* was that portion of the Rodd treaty by which Emperor Menelik bound himself to prevent arms from reaching the Dervishes, etc. . . .

Again, in 1904, Mr H. R. Fox Bourne, author of *Civilisation of Congoland*, in a pamphlet entitled: *The Story of Somaliland* referred to the 1897 Anglo-Abyssinian treaty as: 'the scandalous betrayal of the Somalis who, having accepted British protection, were left to be mercilessly dealt with by their Abyssinian enemies.'

Apart from the flagrant treachery displayed, one vital factor renders the agreement illegal: the Somalis themselves were never a party to arrangements which concerned not only their grazing lands but also the lives of the tribesmen who lived and had their livelihood in them. Perhaps the only real comparison which can be made is with the Treaty of Yalta, another infamous agreement whereby thousands were committed to oppression simply because

they had been our friends—for it will be recalled that the Poles were not consulted when their homeland was donated to the Soviets.

A final aspect of the British negotiations is the comment made to Mr Rodd by the Abyssinian governor of Harar, who assured him that: ' . . . anything I have discussed with him would remain between ourselves . . . ' Thus both parties were aware that secrecy was a necessary adjunct to the whole deplorable business. Now it could be said that all this happened in a remote corner of the world when Britain was greatly distracted elsewhere (in the Sudan) but that excuse does not apply to 1954, when the rest of the Haud area of Somalia was also handed over to Ethiopia. It was less than thirty years ago and nearly ten years after the end of World War II. In February 1955 the British Minister of State for the Colonies admitted in the House of Commons:

I think that in many ways the 1897 Treaty with Ethiopia was unfortunate, but it suffered from our limited knowledge of Somaliland at the time and we must see it against a background of that knowledge and the expansionist tendencies of Ethiopia in 1897.

In this context the word 'unfortunate' is entirely inappropriate—for the Somalis, the 1897 Treaty was a disaster, and has remained so ever since. It is perhaps as well for the Somalis that the Europeans are no longer in the Horn of Africa as, by now, all of Somalia might have been given away!

As this account is concerned with Somalia and Somali rights, it is not necessary to deal in detail with other aspects of local history, such as Napier's expedition against Emperor Tewodros (Theodore) of Ethiopia in 1867 which led to the astonishing victory at Amba Magdala, nor to trace the events which led up to the dispute between Abyssinia and Italy 30 years later. However, this last led to the Italian defeat at the battle of Adowa in 1896, as a result of which the Italians were extremely eager to come to terms with Menelik. In 1897 therefore, the Italians also came to an agreement with him whereby further large slices of Somali territory were handed over, including that part known as the 'Ogaden'.

But that was not all. The Europeans hurried to cement their ties with Ethiopia: Britain, France and Italy signed an agreement in the preamble of which they pledged to 'maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia, to provide for every kind of disturbance in the political considerations of the Ethiopian Empire . . . '. Article I of this

Agreement also provided: 'To co-operate in maintaining the political and territorial status quo in Ethiopia . . .' and Article IV consolidates this by agreeing as follows: '. . . in the event of the status quo laid down in Article I being disturbed, France, Britain and Italy shall make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia.' In this manner the Europeans bound themselves yet more firmly to their African fellow-colonialist, even to the point of guaranteeing that they would intervene if any disturbance arose such as could threaten the extended limits of empire which had been given to Ethiopia at the expense of the Somalis.

This then is a brief outline of how the Somalis placed their trust in Britain, France and Italy, as world powers, and of how those three took Abyssinia into their cartel, albeit that she was the traditional enemy of Somalis, as an equal but not un-greedy partner. It shows how political expediency overcame any scruples the Europeans might have had so that, well knowing the nature of Abyssinian occupation, they were yet ready to hand over simple and trusting people to secure other considerations. It is, in short, a despicable tale of betrayal—and betrayal by underhand secret means. The Europeans embraced the Somalis for what could be had of them, and in return gave back the Kiss of Judas. The deadly imprint of that kiss can be seen in the faces of the refugees who, today, face starvation in waterless camps or wander about in Somalia begging for a livelihood. But if questioned, the Europeans shrug off the matter as African and therefore 'not appropriate'—they rinse their hands, just as did a certain Roman nearly twenty centuries ago.

CHAPTER 5

Resistance

As so often happens when injustice and oppression scourge a nation, a man appears to lead the struggle of resistance. On 7 April 1864, Mohamed Abdille Hassan was born in a small watering place between Wudwud and Buhotle in the Dolbahante country in the eastern part of the British Somaliland Protectorate. His grandfather was Sheikh Hassan Nur of the Ogaden clan—part of the Darod.

Mohamed studied the Koran at the age of seven, and when he was 15 he set up as a teacher in his own right. His learning and piety earned him the title of 'sheikh' by the time he was only 19, and he started travelling to enrich his knowledge, visiting Harar, Mogadishu and proceeding as far as the Sudan and Kenya. He returned home in 1891 to marry a woman of his own clan—the Ogaden. Later he undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca (the Haj) and embraced the message of the Salihiya Order of Islam which he preached on his return to Somalia, that is to say a strict following of the path and the denunciation of all forms of laxity. As he pursued his work, Sheikh Mohamed became convinced that the Europeans were eroding the Muslim faith, and inwardly he turned his face against them, as he did against the Abyssinians whose cruelties he observed during his vocational wanderings. It was not long therefore before he became not only a zealous defender of his faith, but also a patriot of the utmost conviction. A fire was lit within him which was to last the rest of his life, and which illuminated the way for all Somali freedom fighters who came after him. He drew inspiration from the Mahdi in the Sudan and, by 1895, he decided to try to right the wrongs he witnessed. His sense of justice had, meanwhile, established him as a mediator within the tribes and indeed the British authorities regarded him as something of an asset. His standing amongst his countrymen was enhanced by his poetic prowess, a prized attribute amongst Somalis.

His first conflict with the British came in 1899 when, after a small party of the Administration's constabulary had visited him, one of them reported on his return that the Sheikh had stolen his

rifle. On 23 March the Vice-Consul at Berbera sent him a note demanding the return of this item. Now it is a Somali custom always to reply immediately on the back of any missive; Sheikh Mohamed did just that, saying: 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohamed is his Messenger. Nought have I stolen from you or from any other. Seek what you want from him who robbed you. Serve him whom you have chosen to serve. This and Salaams' (Signed: Mohamed bin Abdalla). This brief method of replying was considered to be 'abrasive' by the Vice Consul, whereas it was both polite and correct. The constable had sold his rifle for four camels. At about this time Mohamed called together a large meeting of the Dulbahante clan and initiated his crusade against the 'infidel'; by April 1899 he was reported to have some 3,000 men under his command, a number which rose to about 5,000 by August, at which time he formally declared a holy war (jihad) against the Christian colonisers. It was reported that he had assumed the title of 'mahdi', but actually he adopted the style of 'Sayyid', by which he is known in Somalia today. The British, however, denigrated him as the 'Mad Mullah', although he was neither mad nor mullah, being instead a shrewd tactician who well knew how to use the arid hinterland of Somalia to his best advantage. He continued to recruit support and, having in mind how scattered and diverse the tribes were, it can only be something of a wonder that with minimal communications so large an army could have been brought together. On 1 September 1899 Sayyid Mohamed wrote to the British Consul-General for the coast, and categorically accused the British of oppressing Islam, denouncing those who co-operated with the administration as liars and slanderers. Mohamed was promptly classified as a 'rebel' and the long-drawn out war against him started in earnest.

Mohamed had great difficulties of his own by reason of the jealousies and feuds amongst the clans, but he overcame many of these by diplomacy, suitable 'political' marriages and the prestige he gained through importing firearms. He became a kind of 'Scarlet Pimpernel'—now here, now there—and he had a ready and instinctive appreciation of enemy movements. In March 1900 he stormed the Ethiopian outpost at Jigjiga, recovered a great quantity of looted stock, and soon became the virtual master of the whole Ogaden region. His reputation grew, and everywhere he went he inspired Somalis with the will and determination to oppose the Colonialists—an inspiration which lives long after his death.

By May 1901 the British and the Abyssinians had started co-

operating to oppose Sayyid Mohamed, and within three years no less than four major expeditions had been mounted against him. But Mohamed seemed literally to vanish into the sands, so elusive did he prove. In his book on the subject, Douglas Jardine says:

'The third and fourth expeditions had cost us much. In treasure, no less than five million sterling; in blood, the lives of many valuable British officers whom our small professional army could ill-afford to lose.' A typical entry in the official British Army field diary for 20 March 1904 reads: 'No sign of enemy. No fresh tracks.' Once again Sayyid Mohamed had faded into the background, his presence only lingering amongst the ant-hills, stones and thorny scrub. Of the combined colonial forces, an observer wrote:

They are united in an imperial adventure the like of which had seldom if ever been essayed before, in a campaign against an inscrutable enemy, whose range of movements extended from Cape Guardafui to the Equator, from the sea into Abyssinia, who offered no target for attack, no city, no fort, no land, and no possessions save those of others which, if lost, could be replaced as easily as they had been acquired. In short there was no tangible military objective but only an outlaw who would know how to fight when the odds were in his favour and how to scuttle across waterless barren deserts when the odds were against him.

But these appearances and disappearances did not deter him from stressing his message, as witness an open letter addressed to the British people dated June 1904:

I wish to rule my country and protect my religion. We have both suffered considerably in battle with one another. I have no forts, no houses. I have 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. The country is all bush and that is no use to you. If you want wood and stone you can get them in plenty. There are also many anthills. The sun is very hot. All you can get from me is war, nothing else.

Mohamed regarded the Europeans as interlopers, and all he wanted was for them to go. Hence perhaps his most famous lines, also written in 1904:

If you want peace I also am content. But if you want peace, go from my country to your own!

That is the Somali message to all who seek to occupy Somali lands or to subdue Somali people. It is the very epitome of Somali patriotism, and it remains the same today as it was when spoken by Sayyid Mohamed.

The long campaigns with only stolen weapons and a loose command had weakened Mohamed's forces, and in 1905 a treaty was signed with Chevalier Pestalozza, the Italian Consul for Aden whereby the Sayyid could enjoy peace and security in the Italian part of Somaliland. The British and the Italians felt a sense of relief and hastened to put distance between them and their Abyssinian co-colonialists by a mutual Anglo-Italian agreement in 1907. The treaty with the Italians had been signed by Mohamed at Illig, but within a year he was restive, the more so as certain Somalis were persuaded that his various actions were no longer consistent with his totally Islamic stance. However he continued to recruit tribes to his cause. Uneasy, the British felt that a fresh appraisal was necessary and accordingly General Sir Reginald Wingate, Governor-General of the Sudan, was asked to visit Somaliland. Whatever he may have concluded (and his report was never published) the British decided to withdraw to the coast, and leave the hinterland to look after itself. The result was not what had been hoped, that is that clans friendly to the British would deal with Sayyid Mohamed. Instead conflicting loyalties aroused by support or antagonism to the Sayyid led only to internicine strife, and it was not long before chaos reigned. The 'dervishes', as Mohamed's followers were called, used this turmoil to regroup, and once again they were on the move. A camel constabulary was raised, and whereas at first this produced some order in the West and centre of the British Protectorate, Mohamed had freedom of movement in the East. Skirmishing continued, and in 1913 there was a battle at Dulmadobe where both sides lost heavily.

The advent of World War I gave a new dimension to the conflict in that both Turkish and German efforts were made to take advantage of the situation in Somalia—a German armourer called Kirsch was sent to help Mohamed at his newly-built fortress at Taleh, and this man's efforts greatly improved the Dervish repair of captured firearms. Sayyid Mohamed again expressed himself in his usual robust terms. In March 1917 he wrote to the British Commissioner at Berbera:

And as you know, and I know, what the Turks have done to you and what the Germans have done to you, you of the British

Government. The suggestion is that I am weak and had to look outside for friends; and if, indeed, this were true and I had to look for assistance, it is only because of the British, and the trouble they have given me. It is you who have joined with all the peoples of the world, with harlots, with wastrels, and with slaves, because you are weak. But if you were strong you would have stood by yourselves as we do, independent and free. It is a sign of your weakness, this alliance of yours with Somali, menials, and Arabs, and Sudanese, and Kaffirs, and Perverts, and Yemenis, and Nubians, and Indians, and Baluchis, and French, and Russians, and Americans, and Italians, and Serbians, and Portuguese, and Japanese, and Greeks and cannibals and Sikhs, and Banyans, and Moors, and Afghans, and Egyptians. They are strong, and it is because of your weakness that you have to solicit as does a prostitute.

But although the world war diminished the British effort, a blockade of the ports prevented Sayyid Mohamed from replenishing his arsenal to a point when it was felt that a further and final onslaught against the Dervishes could be mounted. On 4 February 1920 a combined sea, land and air attack was launched, and the fortress at Taleh was bombed. The Somalis had never seen aircraft before, but that did not stop them from trying to shoot down the attacking force with rifles. Mohamed was forced to flee to the Ogaden.

A mission was sent to treat with Mohamed but returned with no tangible result. However punitive expeditions led by Mohamed aroused enmity amongst the Isaq clans, and they counter-attacked with success. Mohamed himself escaped to Imi on the upper reaches of the Shebelle river in October 1920, and started once again to organize resistance. He had, however, run his course and on 21 December of that year he died peacefully at the age of 56. Before departing this life he left one last poetic message:

This is a message for those who follow the Prophet's Faith
And it is against those with the (alien) government!

Behold how the infidel lays traps for you as you become less wary!

The coins he dispenses so freely now will prove your undoing,

First he will disarm you as though you were defenceless women,

He will then deceive you and rob you of your lands

And then burden you with onerous loads as though you were donkeys.

But do you still need warning now that I have been forced
beyond Harar and Imi

And the enemy could reach you even here before long
With the speed of his diabolical telegraph?

Such was Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan; a man of fire, unquenchable in his fervour and patriotism, inspired by his religion and endowed with a military cunning which brought him through 20 years of intermittent warfare against massive odds. It is no wonder that in Somali minds he ranks with Ahmed Gurey, as a great national hero and an inspiration to the continuing fight for freedom and independence. His words: 'Go from my country' are echoed today by the Liberation Fronts in Ethiopia as they, in their turn, strive to free their homelands from colonialists whether they be Ethiopians or Russians or Cubans. Sayyid Mohamed is dead these 60 years, but his example lives in the Ogaden as Somalis struggle as he did against another oppressive alliance.

An impressive monument in Mogadishu is a constant reminder of the freedom struggle.

CHAPTER 6

After the Wars

The death of Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan brought a period of relative quiet to Somalia, although Ethiopian aggression and 'frightfulness' in Western Somalia became worse, where such government as there was consisted of the military. Undisciplined raiding parties robbed and pillaged at will, and the ethnic Somalis had no one to whom to turn for protection. Nor indeed did they know of the partition of their grazing lands since no information had been broadcast, and no boundaries had been fixed. However, as a result of the Anglo-Abyssinian agreement of 1897 an attempt was made in 1931-4 to demarcate the areas on the ground and delineate an actual frontier. It was the arrival of a joint Boundary Commission which alerted the nomads as to what was going on, and they reacted violently, even to killing the officer-in-charge. As to the Italo-Abyssinian colonial possessions, no boundary was fixed due to the irreconcilable positions and interpretations adopted by the two sides in regard to the agreements of 1897 and 1908. This led to the Wal-Wal incident which sparked off the Italo-Abyssinian war. Wal-Wal is an important watering centre for livestock, and it was occupied by the Italians in 1930; it is situated in the Haud. The Anglo-Abyssinian Boundary Commission crossed into this area to pinpoint the wells and grazing areas to which the Somalis under British 'protection' were entitled, and although the British component of the Commission had retired earlier, the Abyssinian party came into conflict with the Italians. In 1935 the Italians occupied Abyssinia, and their use of poison gas and other measures brought great European sympathy to the defeated Ethiopians. In England especially, the exiled Emperor Haile Selassie caught the popular imagination with the lion's mane plume to his topee and his title of 'Lion of Judah'. This image lingers on and many Englishmen regard the memory of Selassie with affection to a point where their judgement of present-day Ethiopia is confused.

In 1940 Italy also occupied British Somaliland and thus, with the exception of Djibouti, all Somalia came under Italian domination.

This, however, was short-lived as in 1941 the British mounted an offensive and recaptured all the territories so recently taken by Italy. On 31 January 1942 Britain restored to Abyssinia her full sovereignty and concluded with her an agreement which provided for the continuation of British Administration in the two Somali areas of the Haud and 'reserved Area' as well as Ogadenia in order to 'retain the shape of Somalia, as taken over from the Italians, and for the convenience of the administration of Somalia'. However, Haile Selassie and his government were not satisfied, and he immediately laid claim to all of that part of Somalia once occupied by Italy, and also to Eritrea which he showered with leaflets, proclaiming:

I have come to restore the independence of my country, including Eritrea and Benadir (south coast of Somalia) whose people will henceforth dwell under the shade of the Ethiopian flag. In this struggle we are neither alone or without arms; we have the help of Great Britain, therefore I summon you to strive to deliver yourself from the alien slavery.

This opportunist *démarche* had no effect upon the Eritreans or the Somalis.

Previously, the Somalis, alerted by the efforts of the boundary commissions, had redoubled their opposition to the occupation of their land, and in the 1930s formed clubs and associations as a means of furthering their political agitation against colonialism; they drew inspiration from their heroes, Ahmed 'Gurey' and Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan. In 1943 the Somali Youth League appeared, with headquarters in Mogadishu, and its ideal spread throughout Somalia. Soon another political party emerged, the Somali National League, and both had but one idea: the reunification of all Somalis in one nation/country.

As the world war drew to a close, the great powers conferred again with Abyssinia, and this resulted in 1944 in a new agreement whereby Abyssinia gained further Somali territory including part of the 'reserved' area. However, the remainder of that area, the Haud and the Ogaden continued under British administration. But this temporary measure did not solve the problems, and in 1946 Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, proposed to the Council of Ministers of the Four Power Conference (which had been set up to investigate and adjudicate in the matter) that all the Somalilands, including 'Ethiopian Somaliland' should be 'lumped together as a trust Territory'.

Organization of African Unity (OAU) which, through its Council of Foreign Ministers, called for a cease-fire and a settlement during its meetings at Dar es Salaam and Lagos. It has been said that it was the Somalis who attacked in 1964, but the Somali Republic was then only four years old and with the many internal problems with which it was trying to cope, it seems hardly likely that it would take on what could have been a full-scale war. Eventually the President of The Sudan negotiated a cease-fire and the fighting stopped.

Now 1964 is a focal point in the Somali-Ethiopian dispute, for in this year an important meeting was held in Cairo when the whole question of African boundaries was discussed and when the doctrine of inviolability came into being—a doctrine which is the cornerstone to most boundary disputes in Africa to this day. It is an argument continuously used by Ethiopia, but Somalia argues that in her case it does not apply.

At that meeting of Foreign Ministers, the representative of the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (who introduced the item) said:

Existing disputes are something different, they are disputes presently being discussed and negotiated. In order to avoid disputes in the future—not the past but the future—it is desirable that the Heads of State establish principles which could be incorporated . . . may be it is different in French, but its very clear in English . . . I believe we should use the expression 'guiding principles in relation to boundaries', indeed I feel, Mr Chairman, if the idea is agreed, it may be possible for me to put forward a written formula later.

I believe that my proposal has no relation whatsoever to the negotiations which are now going on between Somalis and other states which have a boundary dispute with her.

The Somali case lies in the fact that her dispute with Ethiopia was not only previous to 1964, it had been going on for years and even centuries, albeit that it was still a subject for negotiation at the date of the Conference.

At the meeting of Heads of State, The Hon Sekou Touré, President of the People's Republic of Guinea, said:

. . . the 15th item concerns the means by which it is intended to contribute to the resolution of disputes over boundaries between African States.

In reply, The Hon Julius Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, said:

The proposal which I wish to put before you—it is necessary to accept it in the form of a resolution and I have asked that this resolution be distributed, and I am not certain whether it has been so distributed. But it is the spirit of the resolution to do two things: Firstly, after drawing up a suitable preamble this Conference should re-affirm its adherence to the principles which are contained in Article 3 (of the OAU Charter) and Secondly: make provision that all new States undertake to accept boundary lines current on the attainment of their national independence. Re-affirmation should not affect current discussions between two or three countries to reach agreement on a long-standing problem.

This is abundantly clear: all the proposals were aimed at *future* new States; they did not concern the past or matters previously under negotiation. Somalia at once publicly expressed her categorical non-acceptance for the reason that her dispute was historical and in no way 'new' for she attained independence four years previously and even then the so-called 'border' was only *de facto* and not *de jure*. The principle of non-interference of previous colonial boundaries does not, therefore, apply to Somalia, albeit that ever since Ethiopia has always quoted that principle to combat Somali arguments.

In the Spring of 1965 Ethiopia again massed troops along the *de facto* Somali border and reimposed repressive measures against her Somali population. Continuing her efforts to find a peaceful solution, Somalia sent notes to the OAU asking for a fact-finding mission to be sent, and, at the same time, seeking a further mission to visit the refugees who continued to pour into Somalia after fleeing the terror imposed by the Ethiopians in the Ogaden and elsewhere. But nothing came of this, possibly for the reason that earlier Ethiopia had influence with the OAU. For it was Ethiopia which hurried to offer the new OAU a headquarters in Addis Ababa, and had, from the start, done all possible to sway OAU members to her way of thinking. Despite the non-arrival of the commissions requested of the OAU, Somalia attempted to arrange direct negotiations with Ethiopia at a meeting to be held in Khartoum for May 1965. The venue was, apparently unacceptable, and Ethiopia made no alternative suggestion. In other words, while Somalia made every effort to arrive at a civilized solution, Ethiopia obstructed it at every turn and resolutely set her face against all discussion. There is a reason for this Ethiopian intransigence: Ethiopia realizes that any consideration of her territorial dispute

with Somalia will automatically bring to light the colonialist role which she so shamefully played in the Horn of Africa at the turn of the century and will, thereby, expose the true image of Ethiopia to other Africans and the world at large. This also is the reason for the continuous barrage of propaganda against Somalia which has gone on so long and which continues today. This propaganda includes repetition of the threadbare and fantastic claims which sprang from Menelik's extraordinary letter of 1891. Thus, at the end of World War II, Ethiopia declared:

'Prior to the race of the European Powers to divide up the continent of Africa, Ethiopia included an extensive coastline along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.' But it has already been shown that prior to the 1880s Abyssinia was a small inland highland state, after which she rushed to join in 'the Scramble'—from which she made such vast and fortuitous profits. There could be no question of Amhara and Shoa having an 'extensive coastline along . . . the Indian Ocean'. But it is an age-old gambit to accuse others of one's own faults, and thus Ethiopia has always continued to accuse Somalia of aggression whereas facts show that it is Ethiopia who is the aggressor (See Chapter 10). It must always be recalled that Somalia is one of the 25 least developed in the world, with a cruel terrain, droughts and flash floods and other natural disadvantages. Add to those a tiny population of 4 million (Ethiopia has 25 million), continual refugee commitments and an emerging national programme, and it will seem hardly likely that the Somalis would embark upon the hazards of an international war.

It has been argued that Somalia attacked Ethiopia in 1977, but in fact the WSLF (See Chapter 8) acted on its own under dire provocation being assisted by volunteers on leave from the Somali army who were of Ogaden origin. It was only in 1978 after the appearance of huge Soviet and Cuban forces in the Ogaden that units of the Somali army took to the field.

In her further effort to discredit Somalia's just claims to unity, Ethiopia always tried to downgrade the Somalis to a mere tribe without any rights to nationhood, and this is a counter to justified Somali claims to the right of 'self-determination'. A study of all the facts must show that Ethiopia does not merely 'disagree' with Somalia, she is motivated by a distinct and vicious animus towards her neighbour.

Not only does Ethiopia refuse even to consider allowing the Somalis to unite, she has even tried to 'assimilate' them by stamping out their native culture—rather as the Soviets behave in

the Baltic States. Thus, in 1956, Haile Selassie, speaking in Western Somalia, said:

Differences in language often create misunderstandings and can seriously affect the responsibilities that are being bestowed upon you. We wish to commend the police posted in the Ogaden, who in execution of Our orders, left their homes and the comforts of life . . . for the maintenance of the security and the public order of the area . . . 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 have a good chance to learn and write Amharic.

Ethiopia, a member of the United Nations Organization, has clearly violated that Organization's own principles (UN Charter. Chapter XI, Article 73—San Francisco 26 June 1945):

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for administration of territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these Territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories and, to this end:

- (a) to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment and their protection against abuses:
- (b) to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in progressive development in their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement; etc.

By no stretch of the imagination can Ethiopia be said to have ever tried to do any of those things; rather, her treatment of her Somali population finds a parallel in what Solzhenitsyn calls the 'Gulag Archipelago'. To quote from an article appearing in the June 1981

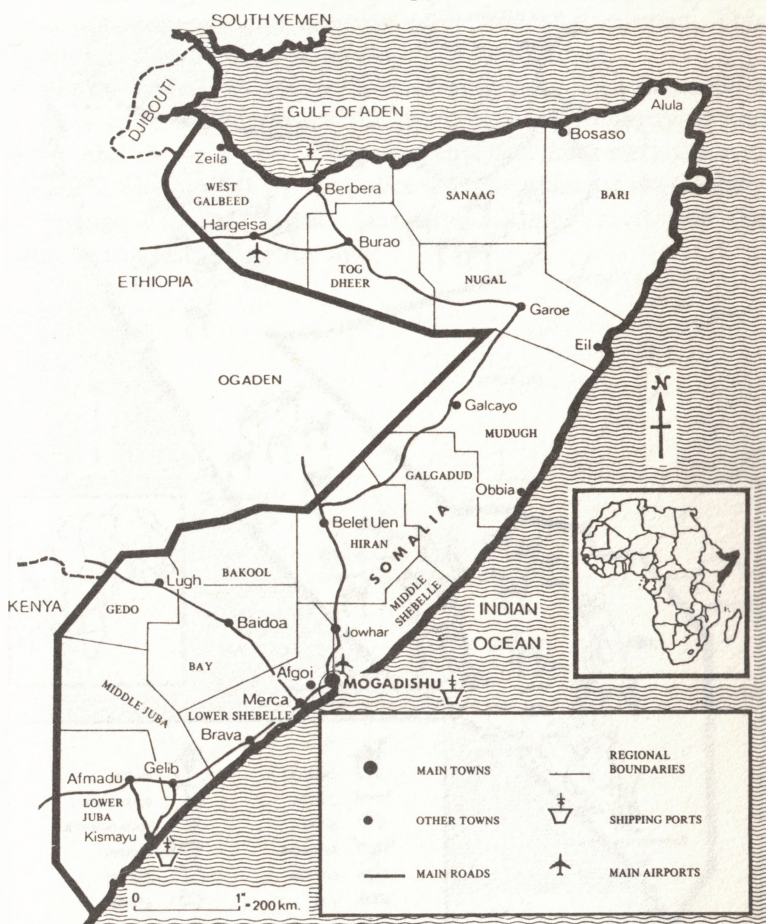
issue of the 'National Geographic' magazine, written by an American questioning a Somali refugee at the Tug Wajale transit camp (North-West Somalia), and who received this reply from one, Abdi Hassan: 'We walked three nights from near Jigjiga, and hid by day. Ethiopian soldiers came. They took my animals, 30 head, and my property, and forced me to be a soldier. I escaped, went home, got my wife, my children.' This happened, not years ago, but in March 1981.

The Somali Republic tried again. At the OAU Summit held in Kinshasa in 1967 the Somali and Ethiopian governments agreed to enter into direct negotiations on their dispute within the spirit of the OAU charter, and although the two delegations actually went to Addis Ababa, the discussion never arrived at the vital question of territorial boundaries.

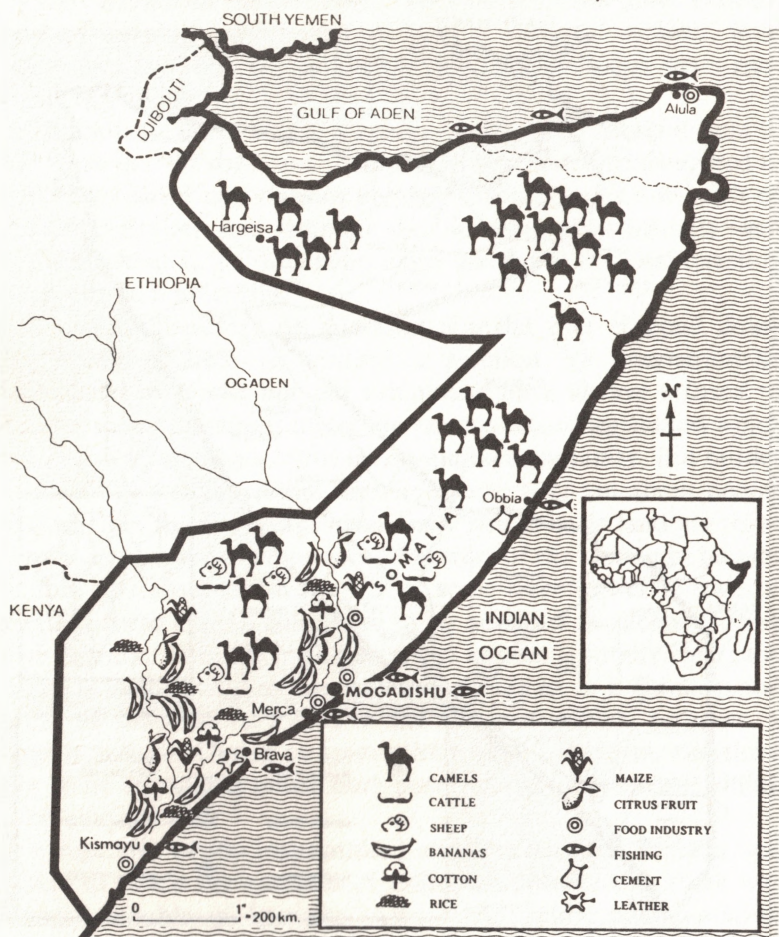
It cannot therefore be said that Somalia ever stopped doing everything possible to achieve a solution by internationally recognized methods; but the Ethiopians have always refused to honour their obligations under the various acts of legislation which bind them as members of the international community. But border disputes are not just about lines on maps, they are about people and whether human beings historically tied to their land are to be viewed as no more than the rocks and trees of the land to be bought or sold or transferred at the will of some more powerful state or whether these human beings are to be accepted as agents of their own destiny. The universally accepted answer is totally clear: the right of decolonization and self-determination is a fundamental norm of contemporary law. In the Horn of Africa, however, a large power has chosen to ignore these basic principles, and there can be no agreement unless both parties to any dispute are willing to try to reach one.

Irrespective of the international attempts between Somalia and others to tackle the question of Ethiopian colonialism, there was internal trouble in Somalia. After 1960 public administration suffered from corruption and inefficiency. Law and order partially broke down; tribalism, that scourge of African countries, was rife; industry was allowed to run down and all progress became stagnant. The morale of the people sank as their dreams of independence appeared to be vanishing in the quicksands of lethargy and abuse. The people did not like their Russian 'friends' who had arrived in 1963, and they resented the unsmiling and harsh measures they brought with them. There was general unhappiness and much despair. But some were watching—the army and police

Main Towns and Regional Boundaries



Agriculture and Industry



officers were vigilant and they noted the effects of nepotism and how the politicians were manipulating the rights of the people. Obviously something had to be done to save the nation.

On 15 October 1969, the Head of State, on a visit to the northern regions, was assassinated by his own guard in what can only have been a last desperate and ultimate expression of discontent. This incident acted as the flash-point—and the Army acted.

On 21 October 1969 Major General Mohamed Siad Barre led a bloodless coup supported by the overwhelming majority of the people, and in the name of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC). He was backed by the police and the name of the country was changed to the Somali Democratic Republic. It was the beginning to present-day Somalia.

CHAPTER 7

The Ogaden War

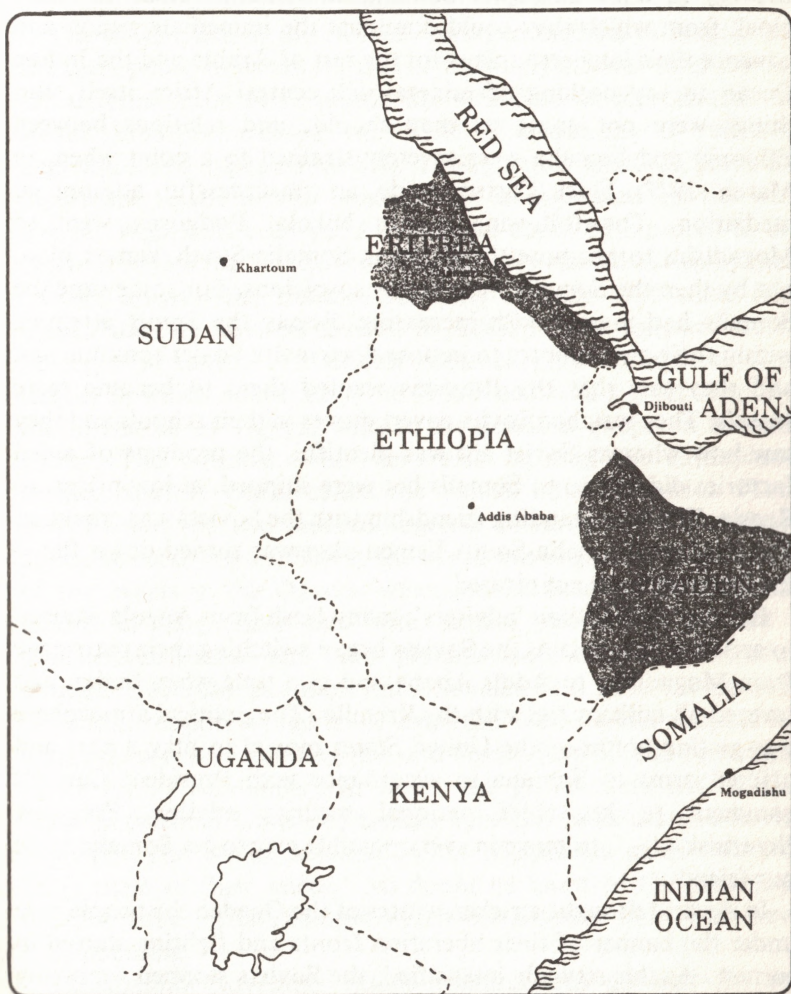
*My brother is there
I can hear the bells of his camels
When they graze down in the valley
And the leaves of the bushes they
Browse at, have the same sweetness
As the bushes near my 'aqal', because the rain which
Makes them grow comes from the same sky.
When I pray, he prays and my Allah is his
Allah. My brother is there and he
Cannot come to me.*

This poignant Somali verse contains the very essence of that longing for unity which possesses the Somali soul. Somalis do not accept the provisional administrative line drawn by the British, for by it they feel betrayed, and they feel for their 'brothers' who suffer persecution in those parts of real Somalia (Western Somalia) which were given as a gift to Ethiopia by those who had no right to do so. 'Greater Somalia' is no dream to Somalis—it is a reality as yet not realized; it is a goal they have every intention of achieving. It has already been shown that every attempt has been made to solve the dispute by legitimate and peaceful means, and that on every occasion these overtures have been scornfully rejected by Ethiopia. But there is a limit to human patience and endurance.

The drought which so severely affected Somalia and the Sahel was as badly felt in the Ogaden and southern parts of Ethiopia. Not only did the Ethiopians do nothing at all to alleviate the sufferings of the Somalis in their territory; they attempted to suppress all news of the situation. Driven to the extreme, the Western Somalis in Ethiopia sent a pathetic message to Mogadishu: 'If we are to die, we wish to die as free Somalis.' The Somali government had already been doing all possible to help the starving Somalis in Ethiopia even to the extent of flying in food and other aid; but this last plea could not be ignored.

Earlier, in 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie had been overthrown by the Dergue and as a result oppression in the Ogaden and other

HORN OF AFRICA



* Shaded areas represent regions under dispute and where armed conflict is currently occurring.

regions increased and exacerbated the sufferings caused by drought. The new Marxist regime in Addis Ababa immediately attracted the interest of Soviet Russia for here was a prize indeed: a large country with sea ports on the Red Sea, a strategic position in North-East Africa second to none and even possession of the main source of the Nile. The Russians therefore attempted a grand strategy to unite Ethiopia, Somalia and South Yemen into one block from which they could dominate the immediate region and advance their long-term plans for the rest of Arabia and the Indian Ocean to say nothing of mineral-rich central Africa itself. But things were not going as they should, and relations between Ethiopia and Somalia were severely strained to a point when, in March 1977, Fidel Castro made an unsuccessful attempt at mediation. The following month Nikolai Podgorny went to Mogadishu to promote the Ethiopia-Somalia-South Yemen plan, but by then the Somalis were highly suspicious. For some time the Somalis had viewed with increasing dismay the Soviet attempts within their own country to impose doctrinaire Soviet communism, and they saw that the Russians wanted them to become mere vassals. They watched Soviet covert moves in their schools and they saw how whereas Soviet aid was plentiful, the products of aided factories did not go to Somalis but were shipped, at low prices, to Russia. The long-standing friendship with the Soviets was cracking. The Ethiopia-Somalia-South Yemen plan was turned down flat—the Russians were not pleased.

By May 1977 Cuban 'advisers', many fresh from Angola, started to arrive in Ethiopia as the Soviets began switching their patronage from Mogadishu to Addis Ababa and at a time when Sudan had severed all military ties with the Kremlin. The political atmosphere was getting hotter as the United States moved to play a part and offered arms to Somalia in accordance with President Carter's comment to his chief national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski: '... to move in every possible way to get Somalia to be our friend'.

In the arid drought-stricken wastes of the Ogaden the people rose under the banner of their liberation fronts and fighting started in earnest. As this struggle intensified, the Soviets stopped supplying Somalia with arms in August. Meanwhile, in June, a US emissary had told the Somali leaders that whereas the supply of US military equipment must be for defensive purposes only, and were on no account to be used against Kenya or Djibouti, there would be no objection to indirect support for the Liberation Front guerillas

operating in the Ogaden. This must have seemed to be the 'nod of approval' for which the Somalis had waited so long—a kind of encouragement to re-conquer Somali territories in Ethiopia. Thus Somalia moved to help the liberation fronts and volunteers were allowed to proceed to the Ogaden. At this point Washington grew alarmed—and rescinded its arms supply agreement.

Another promise broken—another betrayal!

The OAU tried, at the eleventh hour, to mediate in August but the Ethiopians, as usual, refused to allow any discussion on Somali self-determination or to permit the WSLF to be represented. Instead, Ethiopia accused the SDR of mounting a full-scale aggression and appealed for help. In September Ethiopia broke off diplomatic relations with Somalia, but strengthened her ties with Kenya. What had been good in Angola could be repeated in the Horn of Africa the Soviets thought, and they started to deploy their 'Afrika korps'—the Cubans. As early as May 1977 some fifty Cuban military advisers arrived in Addis Ababa followed by 30 Soviet T.34 tanks. The Cuban presence grew throughout September in which month also, the WSLF achieved a great victory—the liberation of Jigjiga, whence the guerillas swept on towards Harar. The Oromos, who were also fighting the Ethiopians, formed another front, called the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF) and the two worked together towards what must have appeared total victory. Slowly the world was beginning to take note of the events in the Ogaden when, on 18 October the Germans landed in Mogadishu and, with Somali permission, rescued a hijacked Lufthansa jet. This, perhaps more than the liberation struggle, focussed attention onto Somalia and gave the Somalis hope that support would come from the West. Soviet support for Mengistu was now growing fast and Soviet-Somali relations at last broke on 13 November. In short, the gloves were off: it was Somalia (without US arms) against Ethiopia (with massive Soviet support). The Soviet ambassador in Mogadishu said: 'We will bring them to their knees.' No doubt he knew of the enormous military build-up in Ethiopia which the Kremlin must then have been planning.

Throughout November things continued to go well for the liberation fronts and the Afar Liberation Front, which was by now also waging war against the Ethiopians, cut the road from the port of Assab through which sea-borne Ethiopians had to come.

Irrespective of a general agreement at the first summit conference of Independent African States, held in Addis Ababa, to

discourage and decrease foreign military involvement in the affairs of the continent, meetings were now held to plan the destruction of the liberation fronts. Those taking part included Marshal Dimitri Ustinov and Raoul Castro, the Soviet and Cuban war ministers, Admiral Gorshkov, C-in-C of the Soviet fleet, General Kaliyakov, the Soviet Chief of Staff in Libya, and Major-General Arnado Ochoa of Cuba. Command on the ground in the Horn was given jointly to Generals Petrov and Borisov as well as to General Ochoa. Previously, in July 1977 para 3 of the resolution on 'Interference in the Internal Affairs of African States' was unanimously passed at the 14th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State held in Libreville, Gabon. The resolution specifically called upon non-African powers to refrain from such interference. But such resolutions as these are of no interest to the USSR and her satellites and on the night of Saturday 26 November 1977 US aerial spy stations recorded a sudden massive movement of Soviet aircraft heading for the Horn of Africa. Meantime the supply of Cuban troops and arms had prevented the liberation fronts from capturing Harar, and their tide of advance was halted. As the Soviet build-up increased President Siad appealed for help, but when these received condemnation from Kenya, the NATO countries decided to keep out of the conflict at any price. All they did was to offer advice that the Somalis negotiate from a position of strength while they still held the Ogaden. Everyone was persuaded that Somalia was the aggressor whereas the initiative had certainly come from the WSLF, backed later by SALF. Again much was made of the doctrine of 'inviolability of frontiers' and world opinion veered away from the Somalis.

More than 250 heavy military transport aircraft (Antonov 22s and Tupolev 76s) brazenly violated the airspace of a number of non-communist nations as the gigantic airlift got under way. Further arms were ferried in from South Yemen while Somalia had only the support of a handful of Arab states. The supplies which the Soviets provided included ground-to-ground missiles, howitzer batteries of 'Stalin Organs' (122 BM-21 rocket launchers on Ural 375 trucks), T 55 and T 62 tanks together with numerous aircraft, both fighters and transport helicopters. The total value of this gigantic arsenal is put at £500 million, and the hardware was followed by some 15,000 Cuban troops. The Soviet build-up went on all through December 1977 and January 1978, and still no sign of support came from the West. There were some indeed who would have liked to help the Somalis, but they did not do so as they

failed to attract any approval from the United States.

In February 1978 General Petrov ordered the offensive to begin. Cuban manned artillery and Cuban piloted aircraft poured tons of bombs and shells on the Somalis who were quickly pushed back with great loss of life despite most valiant resistance. The Somalis retreated back from Harar to Jigjiga when the retreating Ethiopians had previously taken all the local leaders as hostages. As an indication of Ethiopian methods it must be added that these hostages were all massacred at Hadu, six miles west of the Marda Pass, and they included the greatly respected Sultan Heban and Sheikh Ali Hussein. In the face of these staggering reverses, the Somali government announced a general mobilization and entered the war. By 5 March Jigjiga was under attack, an attack memorable for the air-lifting of Cuban-manned tanks to behind the Somali lines. Addis Ababa announced that the city had been taken: '... the invading forces of the Mogadishu regime have been defeated and crushed with catastrophic losses of great magnitude.' The report went on to say: 'Its (Somalia's) troops are being mowed down while other troops are fleeing in all directions or surrendering.' It was estimated that the Cuban military involvement at this time was no less than 10,000 and the Somalis were forced to abandon Jigjiga. The United States and others were calling for the belligerents to stop fighting, and on 9 March President Siad Barre announced that Somali regular forces were being withdrawn. The WSLF, however, ignored the call to cease hostilities, stating that the Ethiopians were already embarked upon cruel reprisals against the population. The Ethiopian comment was: 'The call to cease fire by some Western powers who kept tightlipped when Ethiopia was the victim of unprovoked naked aggression is not only hypocritical but meaningless and therefore unacceptable to Ethiopia.' On 13 March reports reached the West of thousands of refugees pouring out of the Ogaden while the Ethiopians were said to be massacring the remaining civilians. Ethiopia resisted any attempt to instal impartial observers, and described this as interference in Ethiopia's internal affairs. The Secretary-General of WSLF, Abdullahi Hassan Mahmoud, accused the Ethiopians of 'killing thousands and thousands of people . . . they are bombing every moving thing they can see . . . buildings are being destroyed; livestock is being destroyed; human beings are being destroyed. They are leaving nothing.' The Somalis fell back before the Soviet-Cuban-Ethiopian war machine, but despite this the guerillas kept up their struggle and continued to inflict losses on the Ethiopians. Fears grew in

international circles that Somalia itself would be invaded and by the end of March the Arab League offered help if such an invasion took place. Britain joined America and France in naval exercises off the Horn as a warning to the Soviets. When the Somali government affirmed that it would continue to support the WSLF in April, two Ethiopian MiG fighters attacked a village in northern Somalia; President Carter expressed great concern over Russian and Cuban intervention in Africa when he visited Nigeria. At the same time American officials confirmed that Cuban troops were continuing to pour into the Horn despite the withdrawal of Somali troops, and it was estimated that Cuban strength had risen to about 17,000 men. The situation remained fluid, and on 2 April Ethiopia promised to aid Kenya if she was attacked by Somalia, this pledge being made to Mr Munyua Waiyaki, the Kenyan Foreign Minister. Four days later, Captain Selassie Woderess, a key member of Ethiopia's ruling military committee, also threatened to break off relations with America, Britain and West Germany as a result of Western condemnation of the Cuban presence, and when Dr Owen, the British Foreign Secretary made further critical comment, the Soviet ambassador in London said:

We do not seek any advantages or privileges in Africa. Our policy is to build normal peaceful relations with all states, based on complete equality, inviolability of frontiers, and non-interference in internal affairs . . . No one can deny that the Soviet Union has done its best to persuade the Somali leadership not to commit aggression against Ethiopia. Unfortunately the Soviet efforts have not met with support in the West. The Somali leadership was in effect pushed down the path of aggression by those trying to cast a shadow over the policies of the Soviet Union.

As was to be expected after the withdrawal from the Ogaden, some in Somalia were discontented. On 9 April 1978 there was an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow President Siad Barre, who hinted that those behind it favoured 'the new imperialists' (meaning Russia and Cuba). On a visit to Peking on 14 April President Barre again avowed that there could be no peaceful settlement between Somalia and Ethiopia 'unless the right of self-determination is exercised by the people of Western Somalia and the other peoples under Ethiopian colonialism, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League and the United Nations.' On the same day, the Ethiopian ambassador in Nairobi, Mr Mengiste Desta, warned: 'If (Somali) aggression

continued, Addis Ababa would deal a severe blow so that they (the Somalis) will never rear their ugly heads again.' Although there had been an assurance that the Somali border would not be crossed, Mr Desta said: 'Ethiopia reserves the right to take appropriate action to safeguard its unity and territorial integrity.' Onlookers were beginning to learn the lessons of the 'Ogaden War' and the US recognized that the Soviets had gained further valuable military experience in moving large quantities of men and material to far places in a short time. On 24 April the Ethiopian ambassador in China, Mr Fantaye Biftu, tried to recruit Chinese aid in re-building the Ogaden and denied that Ethiopia would invade Somalia, but in the meantime the Cubans in Ethiopia were building up for a massive onslaught against Eritrea. Britain also took note of Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa, and Mrs Margaret Thatcher, addressing the Irano-British Chamber of Commerce in Teheran on 30 April, said:

Coming so soon after their victory in Angola, the appearance of Cuban troops in the Horn of Africa is a dangerous development. It is bound to be especially disturbing to Saudi Arabia, Oman and all our friends in the Persian Gulf . . . the cost of this dangerous adventure cannot possibly be borne by the fragile Cuban economy. Their intervention has been planned and financed by others who are not concerned with the welfare of the Africans in Angola or Ethiopia . . . Their aim is to spread world Communism, not by persuasion, but by force. Angola gave us due warning.

Further sabre-rattling by Colonel Mengistu took place in May at the time when a joint Ethiopian-Cuban and Soviet drive was launched against Eritrea. And there was trouble elsewhere in Africa: May also saw trouble in the Shaba province of Zaire which was interpreted in the US as a Soviet-Cuban attempt to create a Marxist belt across Africa, and a meeting was planned for Paris at which France, America, Britain and West Germany would discuss the formation of a European 'fire-brigade' force to withstand further Soviet-inspired expansionism. By June trouble also broke out in Chad, and this was seen as another part of a Marxist plot.

The Western Somali liberation forces continued their guerilla tactics against the Ethiopian military regime, and with considerable success; on 7 June it was claimed that more than 500 Ethiopians had been killed and 12 Russian-built tanks had been knocked out; but it was also reported that the Ethiopians were carrying out massacres in the Ogaden as reprisals for WSLF activity. The

'Ogaden War' had, of course, greatly depleted Somalia's stock of armaments, and on 28 June 1978 President Siad Barre went to Britain to seek military aid. The British attitude was expressed by the then Prime Minister, Mr James Callaghan, to the effect that no arms could be supplied until Somalia resolved its difficulties with Ethiopia and Kenya. There was a rumour in diplomatic circles that Britain had 'done a deal' with Moscow guaranteeing freedom of movement in South Africa for the West in exchange for Soviet freedom of action in the Horn of Africa—this has since been specifically denied by the British Foreign Office.

Others were becoming increasingly nervous of Soviet intentions: Oman started talks with China and with President Colonel Ahmed Al-Ghasmi of North Yemen about the Soviet threat to the Gulf, and the situation was being carefully watched by Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopian air-raids on Somali territory continued, and on 30 June President Barre appealed to the OAU to condemn these provocative attacks, and later, on 20 July, the President warned that an invasion of Somalia was being prepared (OAU summit meeting in Khartoum). Somalia also spearheaded a boycott move against the 1979 'Non-aligned' summit being held in Havana, saying that there were between 25,000 and 30,000 Cuban troops in Ethiopia alone. Obviously these were now being used in Eritrea where the loyal liberation fronts were being driven into a corner. But in Europe and in America especially the underlying situation seems not to have been understood which must account for the extraordinary idea, then fashionable, that the presence of Cuban troops in Africa were a 'stabilizing influence'. President Siad Barre made a tour of EEC countries in September where he was at pains to try to explain the Soviet menace as he saw it. Stressing that the threat was not to Somalia alone he said: '... undoubtedly jeopardize the stability and security in the vital regions of the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and particularly the Gulf Area where close friends of the West are exposed to immediate Soviet menace.' He went on to say that Western countries did not appreciate the gravity of the situation: 'This rather passive attitude and the fact that some high officials of the present American Administration who publicly state that the presence of Cuban troops in Africa is a stabilizing factor in the continent provides a golden opportunity for the Soviet Union to satisfy strategic ambitions ...'. His views were echoed by President Numeiry of Sudan.

Unfortunately the Somali effort in the Ogaden was seen as a failure by the world powers, and although President Siad Barre was

at pains to explain what it was about, he recruited no real support for his cause. As Professor I. M. Lewis says in *A Modern History of Somalia*: 'If the government had spent a minute fraction of its military budget on a professional public relations campaign it might have been easier to convince outsiders of the justice of the Somali case for self-government in the Ogaden.' The Somalis failed properly to explain that the so-called 'Map of Africa' in the Horn was far from settled at the time of Somalia's independence, and that it was this which had caused the 1977-8 conflict. Semantics in the press contributed to the impression that Somalia was the aggressor, whereas it was a case of Somali settlements being restored to independence. Irrespective of all this, the two liberation fronts continued and continue their struggle, and although the Ethiopian military occupy the main towns, it is the WSLF which controls the countryside. Repression against the Somali nomads in the Ogaden was stepped up, and the result is the 2 million refugees discussed in the next chapter. It is now Somali opinion that Ethiopia is intent upon depopulating the Ogaden to a point where any future attempt to 'consult the people' would show that those who remained were content to remain under Ethiopian rule.

CHAPTER 8

Refugees

Every war brings its tragic flow of refugees—those who flee either from the fighting itself or from the persecution visited upon them by occupying armies. Somalia has been no exception. By May 1978 the Somali government reported some 500,000 refugees had arrived within Somalia while a further 10,000 had gone to Djibouti. Such a large influx, and obviously with more to come, was more than the government could cope with and an appeal for help was addressed to the United Nations High commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr Poul Hartling in January. Missions were sent by UNHCR to assess the amount of relief required after which a programme budgeted at US \$4.8 million was set to care for 150,000 of the most vulnerable amongst the refugee population.

It is interesting to note that Ethiopia also appealed for help to UNHCR in March 1978 quoting 'more than 500,000 persons directly affected by recent fighting in Hararghe, Bale and Sidamo regions of the Ogaden'.

The immediate programme for refugees in Somalia consisted in the supply of food, shelter material, water tanks, insecticides and transport. The arriving refugees had mostly travelled long distances and suffered from malnutrition and disease and they lacked every basic necessity of life; over 75 per cent of them were women and children.

During 1979 the number of refugees arriving in Somalia continued to grow: 70,000 in July, 380,000 in September and 470,000 by December of that year. By February 1980 the number had increased to 600,000 and it was described by UNHCR as the most serious refugee problem in the world especially when taken with the total population of only four million. This alarming increase caused the United Nations to send an inter-agency mission and its report underlined the extreme gravity of the problem. On 11 February 1980 the Secretary-General sent a note to governments putting the financial requirements for assistance to refugees in camps in Somalia at US \$120 million of which two thirds would be used for food supplies.

Additionally the High Commissioner for Refugees felt obliged to issue a further appeal on 4 March 1980 which was cabled to governments. As an illustration of the situation at that time no better explanation can be given than to quote the text of the cable:

I have the honour to refer to the precarious situation of refugees in camps in Somalia whose number has increased to over 500,000 following major arrivals in late 1979. The Secretary General sent a Note Verbale on this subject to Governments on 11 February 1980 with a copy of a report and projected estimates of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mission which visited Somalia in December 1979. The Mission estimated that US \$120 million is needed to meet the needs, including basic food for the refugees in camps.

In January 1980, UNHCR arranged an airlift of blankets, tents and clothing. Initial funds have been committed for supplementary food, medicines, clothing, household supplies, dispensaries, educational materials and transport. Extra UNHCR staff and sponsored personnel from governmental and voluntary organisations are working on relief distribution, health services and development of water resources.

The majority of the refugees in camps are women and children and many of the men are elderly, ill or handicapped. Food is a vitally urgent requirement particularly in view of an expected food shortage in Somalia. Health services and medicines are equally necessary since the climatic and environmental conditions have caused a high incidence of tuberculosis, malaria and dysentery. Shelter and clothing are urgently needed to provide some protection for the refugees. To ensure adequate water supply and sanitation wells must be dug and water purification measures taken. Polluted water and the lack of drinking water are major causes of illness. The April rains will make any access roads to the refugee camps virtually impassable. Heavy vehicles and temporary road repair work are needed to ensure regular deliveries of relief supplies to the camps. Storage facilities must be provided for food, water, medicines and other goods. Provision is also required for education and self-help projects.

At the request of the Secretary-General, UNHCR will co-ordinate all assistance through the United Nations system. To provide overall monitoring of needs and assistance UNHCR is also ready to co-ordinate bilateral contributions. The World Food Programme has estimated the food requirements and, in co-operation with UNHCR, will be responsible for arrangement and delivery of basic foods such as cereals, edible oil and dried milk.

The immediate needs of the refugees other than food as

estimated by the Inter-Agency Mission amount to US \$40.7 million. UNHCR has been able to make a start with the limited funds available. However, dramatic changes in the refugee situation have created needs of critical urgency. In view of the increasing numbers and the extremely precarious conditions in which the refugees are living, I appeal to the international community for early contributions in cash and/or in kind to permit UNHCR to respond adequately to the immediate survival needs of the refugees in Somalia. Assurances of highest consideration.

Poul Hartling
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

By 29 May 1980 the total of contributions was just over US \$21 million of which over seven million came from the EEC, six million came from the USA, two million was from the German Federal Republic and one million each from Netherlands and Sweden. A further one million came from non-governmental organizations. By the summer of 1980 the number of refugees officially reported by UNHCR had risen to 700,000 in camps with another 800,000 scattered amongst the population and the quoted figure for August was 800,000 in 26 camps by which month UNHCR had increased its field staff in Somalia to 40. Additionally some 125 technical experts were working on the various health, water-supply, agriculture and construction projects. From 16 to 20 September the High Commissioner visited Somalia and congratulated the Somali government and the Somali people for the sacrifices being made to help the still growing refugee population, and he pin-pointed the two main problems as the supply of potable water and the transportation of relief aid—this having been affected through a shortage of fuel caused by the Iran/Iraq war. The Somali government has set up a National Refugee Commission which co-ordinated work in the camps and liaised with UNHCR, the Somali government and the various non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies. In the autumn a further visit to Somalia and the refugee camps was paid by an OAU Ambassadorial Mission led by Mr Goerge Chipampata, the Zambian ambassador to Ethiopia.

Responsibility for refugees in the Somali government comes under the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Major-General Jama Mohamed Qalib, and in September 1980 he had this to say:

The refugee problem in this country is very serious, in terms of

numbers in relation to the indigenous population it is the most serious in the world. For there are now approximately a million and a half refugees in a country whose population does not exceed four million. With the influx of daily arrival of more than 1,000 the situation is worsening . . . One side effect of the situation is that emergency relief plans to help people in the camps are upset as soon as they are made, for they fall short of the target . . . The Somali Democratic Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of about 110 dollars . . . continuity of urgent international assistance is crucial to help us save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people from starvation or disease!

The President also declared a state of emergency and addressing the Central Committee of the Somali Socialist Party he said:

Emergency assistance to the refugees by the citizens is essential because foreign assistance being received for this purpose is not sufficient. Since many of these refugees are completely destitute, it has become incumbent upon the Somali Government to open centres for their care . . .

The People have responded and organized themselves into teams, collecting contributions at work and in homes in all towns. Workers and health personnel have volunteered to work in the refugee camps and women in the areas around the camps have offered to help the women refugees construct or strengthen their improvised huts.

An increasing number of humanitarian organizations came to Somalia's help, and by October 1980 these included: Catholic Institute for International Relief (CIIR), Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF), Swiss Disaster Relief Unit (SDRU), Swedish Special Unit for Disaster Relief (SSUDR), International Christian Aid (ICA), World Vision International, Oxfam, Italian Health Team (AUCI), League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), German Red Cross (GRC), German Emergency Doctors, Centre for Disease Control (CDC), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Tearfund, Africare, Order of Malta (SMOM), German Technical Relief, Save the Children Fund, Association Francaise de Volontaires du Progres, Help the Aged, Swedish Church Relief, Food for the Hungry International.

The National Refugee Commission (NRC) now issues a periodical broadsheet: 'Reforma' and in its first issue for October 1980 it gives a thumb-nail sketch of life in a refugee camp from which the following are extracts:

The refugees in the camps are mostly women and children and most of the men are elderly. There are now 28 refugee camps scattered in four of the main regions of the country (Gedo, Bakool, Hiran and West Galbeed) and their problems are almost identical. To begin with the camps are congested. The daily influx is estimated at over 1,000 . . . the figure for the camp population alone is put at 799,030 as at 31 August (1980) and there may be more than 800,000 living outside the camps . . . One can get a clear picture of the overcrowding by seeing that today every fourth person in Somalia is a refugee . . . Reaching a refugee camp itself is the beginning of the problem for a would-be refugee. He or she may have had to trek for several days or sometimes weeks. The fact that these refugees are weak and famished upon their arrival in Somalia contributes significantly to their situation today . . . Food in general is in short supply . . . Shelter is another problem. The refugees are housed in hastily erected huts made of interwoven twigs or wattle. Roofing material is often insufficient. The construction of the houses has itself contributed to a serious ecological problem. The land around the camps is quickly becoming denuded of vegetation as trees and shrubs are cut for construction and fuel . . . water in many places is still insufficient and not safe. Unsafe water of course can cause dysentery and other diseases. Malnutrition and lack of proper sanitation simply worsen the numerous cases of tuberculosis, bronchitis and malaria . . . The children of the refugees attend improvised classes . . . On the whole the situation in the camps is gloomy and the prospects are dim unless something is done quickly to alleviate the misery of these poor people. . . . The irregular arrival of food to Somalia, transportation costs running into higher and higher sums, difficult and long distances have caused thousands of refugees, especially young children to be placed in a vulnerable position due to insufficient calories.

It is possible, with help, to regulate the lives of refugees in camps, but what of the other 800,000 mentioned earlier as mingling with the local population? It is not easy to find them but the overall increase in national demand for food and services increased by some 20 per cent. A further type of refugee is the one who makes for the large towns like Mogadishu or Hargeisa in the hope of employment, education, financial help or travel documentation. All these drifting people outside the camps are having a serious socio-economic effect on Somalia. As Joseph C. Kennedy, Director of International Development at Africare said in the Boston Sunday Globe (Issue for 13 July 1980):

Somalia is a disaster zone . . . the strain on the economy, the water, the grass, the trees, is destroying everything in the country. To this harsh land refugees are streaming in at the rate of 3,000 per day. Few Americans realize, however, that there are more refugees in Somalia than in any other part of the world—more than the boat people of Cambodia and Vietnam.

Another basic problem for the refugees is malnutrition: a survey of refugees in the Gedo region showed that 17 per cent of all children were below critical 80 per cent height for weight standard and they are exposed to a high death potential. Overall it was shown that some 35,000 children in camps were suffering from malnutrition which is not always apparent to a layman or even to trained medical personnel. Its discovery depends on careful weight for height measurements.

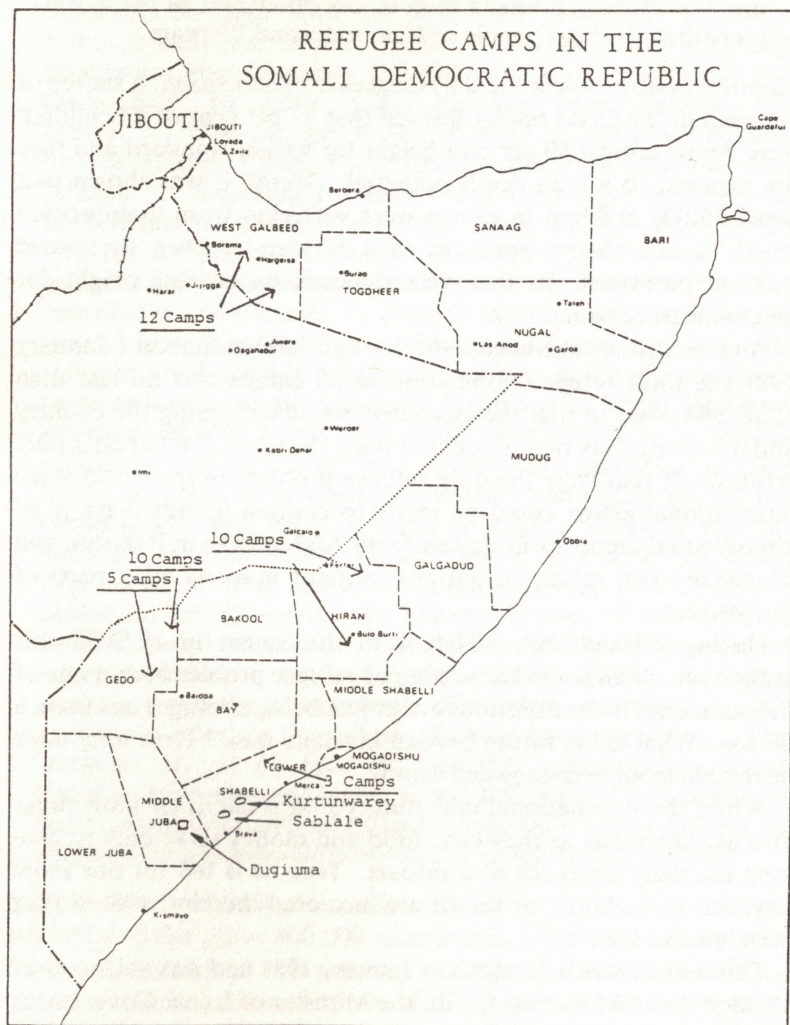
And the influx continued right through 1980 so that on 1 January 1981 the total refugee population in 35 camps was no less than 1,203,984. Add to that the estimated 800,000 roaming the country and it is true to say that Somalia started 1981 with TWO MILLION refugees. If that were the only refugee problem in the world some international effort could be made to contain it, but there is an almost equal number of refugees from Afghanistan in Pakistan and of course lesser refugee situations continue in many other parts of the world.

Having worked with UNHCR in the Sudan in 1972/73 this author can claim some knowledge of refugee problems, and one of the main ones is the deleterious effect just being a refugee has upon a person. What is his future beyond his daily meal? How long must he remain in an over-crowded camp?

While the international community and millions of individuals give as generously as they can, food and money serve only to prolong the daily existence of a refugee. True he is fed for one more day, but is his hope for the future increased thereby? No—it may even become less!

This author was in Somalia in January 1981 and was able to meet General Jama Mohamed Qalib, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development. The minister, in answer to questions, confirmed that Somalia could not take any more refugees, but that they *must* be allowed to come. To refuse them would be to condemn them to death. He also confirmed that the Somali refugee situation had been overshadowed by that in Pakistan, and that continuing bombings and raids by Ethiopian aircraft on towns within Somalia could be aimed at turning local people against the refugees

REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE SOMALI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



and thus cause difficulties for the government. He ended his comment by stressing that the refugee problem was a direct result of Ethiopian colonialism which would not solve itself but must be made the subject of urgent international negotiation.

Somalia was not the only African country to have refugees, and at the beginning of 1981 the total for the continent had risen to *five million*. In April the International Conference of Assistance to Refugees in Africa took place in Geneva, and Somalia prepared a comprehensive report entitled: 'Short and Long Term Programme for Refugees'. The paper was presented by General Jama Mohamed Qalib who, in his introduction, had this to say:

Today short and long term assistance is vital, as is the development of an overall strategy aimed at the resolution of the chronic refugee crises which so greatly hamper the development of some of the least endowed nations of Africa. In this context my Government endorses the recent decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to table an item entitled 'International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees' on its agenda. Let us trust that this step will prove a milestone for it must involve the impartial examination of the root causes of these phenomena. Those causes must be tackled, sooner rather than later. As we concentrate, here in Geneva, as is our undoubted humanitarian duty, on the alleviation of the problem of today's refugees, we must never forget that those problems are a symptom of most serious underlying issues—persistent colonialism, racism, genocide and drought. It is they that are the real problems: refugees flee from persecution and oppressive policies, which a just world should declare unacceptable, and from deteriorating environmental conditions which are not beyond the possibility of amelioration . . . Let me now turn to the refugee problem as it affects North-East Africa. It is not itself new, but its scale today is quite unprecedented. The area which is now the Somali Democratic Republic has for nearly a century been the involuntary host of refugees—ever since the infamous 'Scramble for Africa' in fact . . .

On 4 and 11 March, the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner properly recognized the refugee problem in Somalia as 'the most serious in the world'—a sentiment generally endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the UN on 28 April 1980 . . . Grave concern has also been demonstrated by the Organization of African Unity. Only last month, the President of Sierra Leone, Dr Siaka Stevens, on his 10 nation tour, found time not only to visit refugee camps in the Somali Democratic Republic, but actually to stay overnight in

one of Jalalqsi's four camps to acquaint himself at first hand with the plight of more than 170,000 refugees from Western Somalia who are sheltering there.

What is not so widely known is that, on their part too, the citizens of our country have in effect waived their whole development budget and have now most seriously deflated their natural resources and food reserves, and often their personal ones too, since our inter-relationships are wide. This has been done with the voluntary and generous spirit that government likes to think typical of our people's traditional response to victims of natural and man-made disasters, but the truth is that we have only marginal resources with which to be generous . . .

Our region appears gripped by an as yet not fully understood pattern of climatic change. One thing is certain. Medium and long term adjustments to the economy are called for. Such changes require not inconsiderable investment—but our reserves are spent, caring for the hords of refugees . . . our problems are compounded by current severe restrictions in fuel availability which, since they are already affecting distribution, are also receiving the urgent attention of government . . .

Deafforestation and the destruction of virgin and secondary bushland is already at a totally unacceptable level—with ecological consequences, including desertification, of a most serious nature . . . moreover the transhumantic patterns of the Somali people are seriously disrupted . . .

The overall implications of the refugee crisis are clearly too enormous for my country and my people to be satisfied by hand to mouth assistance. What is needed is a plan of action. It must be comprehensive and cover health services, supplementary feeding, water supplies, health education, sanitation and disease control . . . There must be basic and other education, including provision for adult literacy. Camp facilities and access roads must be improved. Nor should the refugee community—in all our interests as well as its own—be allowed to become parasitic. There must be agricultural development and other self-help schemes. There must be reafforestation, etc.

For all these reasons we are, as a government, submitting the present document.

Full and immediate financial support is vital as of course in the longer run—but still urgently—is a political solution, acceptable to all the peoples involved, for the underlying problems of the region.

Here, at one of the highest world forums, was not only a plea for help, but a repeated and urgent request for a political effort to solve the problem.

In more detail the report went on to state:

The Somali Democratic Republic has an area of some 640,000 square kilometers of which 8.2 and 28.8 million hectares are suitable for agriculture and livestock raising respectively. Most of the country is arid or semi-arid and the sources of water are scattered and unreliable. It has an estimated population of over five million of which over a quarter are now refugees . . . the refugees in Somalia come from one of the poorest regions in the world.

Specifically, projects now being set up include: Strengthening of the Health Service, Supplementary Feeding, Training and Health Education, Disease Control, Sanitation in Camps, Water Supply Facilities, Basic Education for School-age Children, Family Life Education and Day Care Assistance, Functional Literacy and Adult Education, Road Construction, Infrastructure, Community Facilities, Agricultural Production Assistance, Halba Agricultural Settlement, Jalalaqsi Agricultural Settlement, Milk Production, Poultry Production, Afforestation of Refugee camps, Refugee Employment and Sand Dune Stabilization.

In the latter part of 1981 doubts arose as to the real total of refugees and an official enquiry was set afoot later in the year. In February 1982 the official United Nations figure was 700,000.

Even if expediency continues to prompt Europeans to relegate the Ethiopia-Somali dispute solely to the OAU as an 'African matter', surely these statistics must cause them to wish to promote a political solution. This is not a case of 'talks', of protocols or of endless meetings; this is a case of human life counted in millions. Not paper, but *people*—and people who have a right to live, at peace, in their own land.

CHAPTER 9

Ethiopian Aggression

Reference has earlier been made to Ethiopian aggression against Somalia, and albeit that there have been spasmodic references in the press, the facts are not generally known. Bombings and strafing from Ethiopian aircraft on towns and villages inside Somalia have been going on since mid-1978, and yet there is no international indignation or outcry. Imagine, for example, what would happen if, say, Italy were to bomb Switzerland! These attacks are usually made by a few Ethiopian aircraft at a time and the targets are indiscriminate. There is a similarity in the raids and a lengthy catalogue of them would be tedious—suffice the description given later in this chapter.

But air-raids are not all. Somalia has actually been invaded. On 10 October 1980, Ethiopian troops crossed the border near Dolo and remained upon Somali soil until driven out by the Somali army on 19 October. They captured the undefended town of Yed and advanced 20 kilometres; they hoisted the Ethiopian flag. This is no less than an act of war. The civilian population of Yed was subjected to napalm and fragmentation bombs and there were many casualties. An Ethiopian officer was killed, from whose body a secret map was taken which clearly showed a plan for a full-scale invasion of Somalia whereby two columns would advance from Yed and from Dolo to meet at Baidoa, whence they would proceed to Corioli and then to Mogadishu. *Copies of the plan can be obtained from the Somali government* (the document is, of course, in Amharic).

In his address to the nation on 21 October 1980, President Siad Barre said:

With regard to our foreign policy you are no doubt aware of the permanent aggression by Ethiopia against our country on the pretext that Somalia supports the right of Liberation Movements to their inalienable right to self-determination. . . . We are of the view that Ethiopia's aggression does not emanate from that country alone and that we are witnessing the unfoldment of a strategy of greater dimensions not limited to Ethiopia.

The President went on to say that although Somalia continuously calls for a peaceful solution to problems with Ethiopia

... the response to our call has invariably been threats, aggression, the accumulation of arms, the introduction of foreign troops in the Region and a policy of extermination of the peoples concerned by Ethiopia.

But despite appeals to the OAU and informing ambassadors and journalists the raids continue and a glance at some recent attacks serves as a pattern for them all. As reported by the Somali newspaper *Horseed* (issue for 26 December 1980 and 2 January 1981):

A team of journalists has just arrived back from an inspection tour of the Central Region of Somalia where they had a close look at damage to life and property caused by Ethiopian air-raids. The team visited the regions of Hiran, Galgudud and Mudug. They conducted interviews with officials in the area and also had talks with air raid victims in hospital. They took photographs which, beside providing corroborative evidence for the Abyssinian aggression also show in greater clarity the suffering and disruption inflicted upon the innocent nomadic population of the area. The journalists report: 'We initially went to Beledwein, the regional capital of Hiran. Due to its proximity to Ethiopia, lying only 45 km from the provisional border as it is, it has become a major refugee centre. Its one good hospital provides treatment not only for the people resident there but continues to serve the adjacently-lying region of Galgadud. Thus the already scarce city's services have been stretched to the limit. Party Secretary for Beledwein District, Ibrahim Abdulkadir Haji explained the grave situation in which the town found itself. Refugees continue to trickle in with no apparent let-up; 10,000 had arrived in the past week and there were plans to establish a further refugee camp in addition to the existing five now full. The recent air raids have therefore exacerbated the already tragic refugee situation in Beledwein. This was underscored by our visit to the hospital where we were met by the administrator, Dr Ahmed Muhyaddin. He explained that he took only the most urgent cases, numbering about 22 while the remainder stayed at Dusamareb and Adado in Galgadud region. We were fortunate enough to be allowed to talk to the patients themselves which confirmed official reports.

It was difficult to restrain our feelings on seeing such large-scale suffering. A typical case was that of Mohamed Mustafa Sheik Ali, a Dusamareb boy aged five years. Mustafa was

playing ball with five of his mates when the planes first appeared. Mustafa lost his right arm when he was hit by shrapnel. The boy was visibly in pain and when I enquired about his general health Dr Ahmed said that he had lost a lot of blood. Disadvantaged as young Mustafa is, his predicament is shared by many young victims of Abyssinian air raids. We next stopped at Dusamareb where the Ethiopian jets struck and we were shown round by the acting representative of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP), Abdullahi Ugas Mohamoud. We were awed by the sight we saw: houses lay demolished, rubble was here and there and unexploded parts of bombs and rocket shells was scattered around. Abdullahi explained that the planes first came at 8.25 am and were four in number. They continued to drop their payloads for 25 minutes before being chased away by the Somali airforce. By that time 200 houses had been extensively damaged—most of them in the Dayah neighbourhood, 26 people had been killed and 22 injured. A sad feature of the incident was the use of napalm bombs of which severe burns on the victims were evidence. It seems that the bombing was precise from a high altitude and must have been carried out by experienced hands. Did the Ethiopian air force have enough time to master the complicated technical gadgetry of these planes? Or were the missions flown by foreign pilots? If the foreign element were confirmed this would give weight to Somalia's allegations on the unholy alliance against her. I also noticed the large amount of unexploded material and obviously the Ethiopians were not economical with their bombs. Abdullahi told me that the explosions shattered windows in his office 15 km away. In one house in Dusamareb eight people were killed. One of the residents told me that it was impossible to understand the experience unless one had lived through it.

The road wound its way through arid land until we came to Adado, 74 km from Dusamareb on the road to Galkayo and we were shown a devastated area of 2 sq km. The damage was extensive and appeared indiscriminate. Thirty-three people died at Adado and 39 were injured; 374 houses were reduced to rubble. As in Dusamareb four jets struck each delivering a payload of eight rockets. The raid took place at 4.30 pm on Thursday 27 November and District Revolutionary Chairman Said Sheikh Mohamud pointed out a crater 10 m across and 4 m deep where one of the rockets had exploded. The Adado market was completely demolished and most of the victims met their death there, they being women and children. A nearby mosque was also destroyed and the Muezzin killed. An old man near the mosque shook his head and said: 'The Russians and their

Abyssinian friends are fighting us on account of our Moslem faith. But we are sure that Allah is on our side.' We were also shown particles resembling red soil which constitutes the rocket material and boys showed us how easily this could be ignited. We then went to the Mudug regional capital of Galcayo where planes struck on 25 November; again four planes were involved. But the maize factory was partly destroyed and we were told that it would take at least a month to assess the extent of the damage. Bomb fragments were hurled 200 m and struck a woman who lost her arm. We then called at the hospital where Corporal Mohamoud Nur, 30 years of age, had had to have his leg amputated after being struck by shrapnel. We saw some undetonated rockets which were of 500 kg payload and were of Russian make.

This is a general picture of life in the three central regions of Somalia; there is immense suffering, untold pain and constant fear in an area already hit by drought. How much longer would the people and government of Somalia be expected to watch silently as economic lifelines are destroyed and lives of people disrupted? Where are the so-called champions of human rights? Why have they kept silent? Why? This state of affairs has been promoted by Ethiopia and her allies. Nor have these allies of Ethiopia kept a low profile as Somali troops in the area have on several occasions intercepted radio messages in Spanish. Thus a foreign power has aided Ethiopia to violate Somali territory. One of the OAU's basic tenets is at stake! Why have the African countries kept quiet about this? This intervention threatens to undermine the fledgling independence of most African states. At the same time it does not do justice to the issue at hand to make a clear-cut contrast between Ethiopia's aggression in Somalia and the situation in Western Somalia, the latter being essentially one in which a subjugated people have risen up against their oppressors. Here another tenet of the OAU and the UN is at stake.

Abdulkadir Mohamud Issa

On 9 January 1981 a further item appeared in the newspaper *Horseed* which reported an air attack on El-berde which is a border town in Bakol region of south-western Somalia, some 511 km from Mogadishu. The raid took place on 10 December 1980 at midday when three people were killed, 13 were injured and 13 shops were destroyed.

Some of the dead met their fate at the well from which the town derives its name, one being a police sergeant who left behind a family of eight the youngest of whom was four months old. El-berde is an incoming point for refugees who spend some time there

before leaving for more permanent camps inland. These refugees tell of massive hunger in Ethiopia and forced conscription into the Ethiopian army. It seems that whereas these raids are said to be reprisals for continuing fighting by the Somali liberation fronts, observers perceive other motives. Ethiopian troops also invaded and occupied the Somali town of Wakhshen 25 km south of El-berde on 11 December until driven out by Somali defence forces and it is thought that Kenya is well aware of all these happenings.

This author was in Mogadishu on 6 January 1981 when Ethiopian aircraft attacked the village of Wid-Wid in Buhodle district killing nine people and wounding 31 others. They were herdsmen.

This then is the daily pattern of aggression in Somali towns near the Ethiopian border. Enquiries revealed that altogether hundreds have been killed while the wounded run into thousands.

And what is the object of these raids?

Is it just to strike terror into innocent people? Is it to depopulate an area near the border to facilitate an invasion? Is it provocation? Or is it a combination of all three? Suffice to say that these raids are in direct opposition to every law and code of international practice and should be condemned at the highest meetings of the world community. It seems however that no one cares what happens in Somalia or about the sufferings of her people. And this turning away from facts is another form of betrayal.

CHAPTER 10

Strategic Considerations

Some years ago President Brezhnev openly boasted to President Siad Barre of Somalia that he aimed to control both the Gulf and the mineral resources of Central and Southern Africa, and it seems that he was in deadly earnest. Addressing the nation on 21 October 1980, President Barre said: 'We are of the view that Ethiopia is fulfilling a part of an overall wide-ranging and greater strategy of other powers aimed at the countries of Eastern Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf . . .' What other reason could there be not only for the enormous build-up of arms in Ethiopia and the presence of thousands of Russians, East Germans, South Yemenis and Cubans, but their continuing presence there? It could be argued that the Ethiopian's call for help at the time of the 'Ogaden War' was then necessary, but that was all three years ago—and the mercenaries have not left! Somalia has repeatedly urged the West to make a concerted demand for the evacuation of Cuban forces from Africa, but any response has been muted and the OAU can do little in that some of its members are those who invited the Cubans to come in the first place.

President Barre went on to say:

On our part we have exercised maximum restraint and patience. We have called for peace and have cared for the refugees who have been unjustly uprooted from their land. We still remain committed to such a policy. We could not, nevertheless, disregard the paramount importance of safeguarding our Sovereignty and our territorial integrity. It is therefore natural for us to seek co-operation and enter into agreements with those members of the International Community who are concerned with the maintenance of the sovereignty of states and of peace and security in the region. One such Government is that of the United States of America . . . The Ethiopian Government greeted that agreement with unjustifiable uproar and initiated a flurry of activities characterizing the agreement as constituting a 'direct threat' against Ethiopia.

Instead of making false accusations against Somalia, one

wonders why Ethiopia, Libya and South Yemen fail to face the reality in their own countries. Do they not realize that they, in effect, constitute floating military bases themselves?

Are they not the countries where foreign troops are permanently stationed? Are they not the ones who are putting at risk the peace and security of the entire Region by allowing the deployment of substantial foreign forces on their soil, thus paving the way for the counter deployment of similar other foreign forces in the Region?

The question bears repetition: If the Cubans went, as they say, to the 'fraternal' aid of Ethiopia when the Western Somali Liberation Front made such rapid advances in 1977, why are they still there four years later? And why is the arsenal established at a cost of billions of dollars-worth by the USSR still in being when only a fraction of it would be necessary to fight the Somalis? The answer must be obvious: it is a stockpile for further action when the time is politically and strategically appropriate. It is also becoming increasingly obvious that the key to the whole situation in the Region is oil. It is no secret that Russia's own natural supplies are running short, and that an alternative supply must be found to feed the gigantic war-machine which the Kremlin continues to build despite the chimera of 'detente' and the carrot of 'limitation talks'.

Vital to Soviet plans is the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) and the Russians were not slow to establish a presence there practically from the moment that country attained independence from Britain in 1967. Supplies of Soviet hardware started to arrive in South Yemen in 1968 and within ten years Aden and the whole country was another Soviet military base of great strength—and with Cuban pilots and Russian technicians present to use and instruct upon the use of the sophisticated weaponry supplied. Soviet 'advisers' were placed in the Yemeni government to an extent where it is now fair to say that Russia directly controls all aspects of the country's administration and direction. Complete possession of the naval and military base at Aden was taken in time to assist the arms airlift to Ethiopia in 1977-8 and that facility is a clear indication of the extent to which the PDRY is allied to the Soviet cause. In 1979 some 40 Soviet ships logged 110 days in Aden harbour which, however, became too congested so that the Dahlak islands have also been pressed into service for berthing and repair uses.

The Russians have also taken control of Yemen's Socotra Island off the coast of Somalia and included the use of the islands of Abel

Kada, Samha and Darash. From these bases local surveillance and support of the Soviet Indian Ocean fleet are carried out and they act as back-up bases for the Ethiopian operation. These facilities stem from the USSR-PDRY bilateral Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation signed in October 1979, and they have been an integral part of the overall experience the Kremlin has gained in transporting armies and arsenals over long distances—which started with Angola in 1975–6 and continued through the Ethiopian Operation of 1977–8 to the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Like Ethiopia, South Yemen supports the Soviet stance in international politics and sided with Ethiopia in opposing the UN General Assembly resolution of January 1980 condemning the Soviet military aggression in Afghanistan. This move on the part of the PDRY is the more significant in that it broke the solidarity of the Islamic world which was on the side of the Afghan people. Like Ethiopia again, the PDRY is a breeding-ground for international terroristic activities, and there is evidence of a terrorist training-camp at Abyah (some 100 km from Aden) whence the sacrilegious attack was mounted against Mecca not so long ago. The imposition of Soviet dogma has taken its toll amongst intellectuals, and such as have sought refuge tell horrifying tales of torture, both physical and psychological, as well as basic violations of Islamic rights—all of which is a mirror of the 'Red Terror' obtaining in Ethiopia. Both countries are under the iron heel of Soviet control and yet no complaint seems to arise from world humanist or human-rights organizations whose duty it is to publicize and condemn such horrors.

Adjacent to the PDRY, Sultan Qaboos of Oman is continually warning of danger to his country and to the Straits to Hormuz, that vital gateway through which so much middle-east oil travels. A report dated 26 March 1981 tells of repeated South Yemeni border raids since the end of 1980, the latest of which took place in the week commencing 23 March 1981. Omani aircraft patrolling the border have been shot at by PDRY forces whilst over Omani territory. Oman has protested to the Arab League naming Soviets, East Germans and Cubans as having taken part in these raids, which occurred near Mahinet Shihan on the only road to Salalah.

Similarly Somalia frequently warns of danger to the region, albeit that scant attention seems to be paid. Further west there are ominous signs of the Kremlin's master-plan and its increasing strangle-hold on North-East Africa. Libya has taken over Chad in all but name, and on 14 February 1981 there was a report that

Libyan troops were gathering on the Chad-Sudan border. It is well known that Colonel Gaddafi is actively encouraging and financing communist subversion inside Sudan with the aim of overthrowing President Numeiry and replacing him with a left-wing régime in Khartoum. Such a move would effectively surround Egypt. In April Gaddafi went to Moscow and as a result a further meeting in Moscow, held in June, was attended by top-rank Libyan and Soviet military personalities. The subject under discussion was air and naval bases for the Soviets in Libya in return for extra Russian weapons to enable Libya to pursue her expansionist policies. Further, Colonel Gaddafi has succeeded in obtaining Tripoli as the venue for the 1982 OAU meeting—and this will put him in the chair. Gaddafi is also behind subversion in Niger and Mali, and one can but wonder what may be happening in Upper Volta, Mauritania and CAR.

Stability is no longer a reality in Kenya, for in March 1981 a group of Kikuyu Kenyans plotted to topple President Arap Moi (who belongs to the Kalenjin tribe). The plotters have been acquitted, but there may well be more to come. Here it should be stated that whereas it is fashionable to suggest that Somalia might invade Kenya, the reality is that Somalia has repeatedly said she has no territorial claims whatsoever, being content to allow ethnic Somalis in Kenya to solve any problems direct with their government. And Kenya is adjacent to Tanzania, still involved in an unstable Uganda which, in turn, stands on the other side of Zaire from Soviet orientated Angola.

According to the Soviet defector, Major Korolyuk, the Soviets have decided to intensify their 'offensive' against the West during 1981, concentrating on areas not covered by NATO, and especially in the Gulf and both central and southern Africa. It seems that the plan is to install, by covert action, regimes which are pro-Soviet and who can appeal (where necessary) for military support in the name of 'fraternal socialist aid', thus denying NATO any legal or political possibility to take counter-measures. Major Korolyuk also spoke, in his de-briefing, of a possible break-up in Iran which would assist the emergence of an independent 'Republic of Baluchistan' and thus an opening for the Soviets to the Indian Ocean via Afghanistan. The Russians are reported to already have strong links with Abdullah Mollazadeh, a Baluchi leader. Further South, Nato planners are said to be worried about Soviet overtures for a naval base in Madagascar opposite their new base at Maputo in Mozambique.

In the face of all these fast developing situations it is no wonder that the new Reagan administration in America is taking a much more realistic view than in the time of President Carter. The conclusion the Americans have come to is that Europe is doing far too little to help guard mutual interests, there being a dangerous escalation of the suicidal premise of 'Better Red than Dead'. In a speech at a military conference in Munich on 21 February 1981, Mr Frank Carlucci, US Deputy Secretary of State for Defence (and a former deputy chief of the CIA) said that whereas Western Europe's enormous stake in the security of the oil-producing Gulf was well recognized, the great contribution it could make to defending this vital region was not so well understood. He called for an improvement in the relations between Western countries the Gulf States and the deployment of armed forces in the region: 'A much greater Allied effort is required if we are to continue to deter Soviet and other threats to our common and vital interests.' Early in 1981 there were numerous stated opinions that NATO should extend its area of concern from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn, and this was endorsed by the British Prime Minister on 3 March when, after returning from a visit to President Reagan, she said: 'There is an urgent need for a new defence policy beyond the North Atlantic.' Later in that month Mr Nott, British Minister of Defence, was told by Prince Ahmed, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of the Interior, that 'many opportunities had been missed to prevent Soviet penetration of the area, and this had been compounded by lack of understanding'.

This growing awareness in the West was met by increasing Soviet and Soviet-controlled propaganda. One aspect of this was an Ethiopian appeal for £800 million in Western aid coupled with a sudden and unexpected desire by Ethiopia for 'friendship with the West'. All this was backed by a curious rumour that Ethiopia was 'getting tired of her Soviet guests' and that they might shortly leave. Added to this was a hint that there were financial opportunities to be had in Ethiopia, such as the modernization of the port of Assab (so strategically placed across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia). Mr Derek Moule, the British Crown Agents' Director for Africa, said: 'The climate is right for British business to focus more attention on Ethiopia.' But what must be obvious is that this surprising softening, or apparent softening, of Ethiopian attitudes comes at a time when Ethiopia is castigating Somalis for entering into a treaty with America for the use of Berbera naval facilities. However, on 12 March, Mr Caspar Weinberger, the US

Defence Secretary, referred to reports that Russia might soon become an energy importer possibly interested in seizing the Persian Gulf oilfields, and he added that America must have some 'kind of presence' in the area to sustain its new Rapid Deployment Force. Both the British and the Americans (Mr Haig) visited the Middle-East in April, but only in Egypt was Mr Haig able to get a full agreement with US thinking: that Soviet Russia was the main threat to the area; others still feel that the first objective must be the solution of the Arab-Israel conflict.

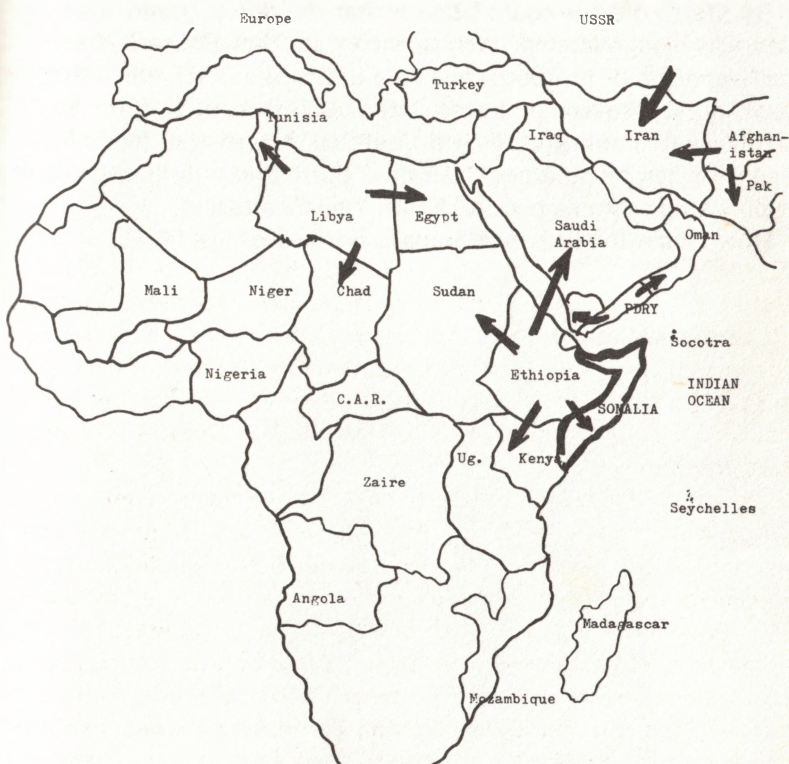
In January 1981 Somalia published a booklet entitled: *The true situation in the Horn of Africa and surrounding region*. This included a sketch-map illustrating military thrusts from Libya into Egypt and Tunis; Ethiopian thrusts into Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Somalis; South Yemeni attacks on North Yemen and Oman, and Soviet penetration of Iran, and Pakistan (see attached).

Taken together, Libya (and Chad), Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan form a ring round middle-east oil while other countries nearby are increasingly at risk: Mali, Niger, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Oman and Pakistan. Even the most cursory glance at the map shows that Somalia occupies a strategic position of enormous importance, but increasing propaganda tends to smudge this by trying to portray Somalia as some kind of aggressor in her own right, or else a country whose problems are best left to the OAU. It is the opinion of this writer that Somalia is vital to Western interests.

This was recognized by America when the Rapid Deployment Force was created, and for which a string of facility bases is required—one such is at Berbera in northern Somalia, and an agreement for its use was made in return for US aid totalling \$40m. The East bloc was not slow to react, and in the summer of 1981 Libya formed an alliance with Ethiopia and South Yemen. Aden, Socotra and Perim were jointly strengthened to act as a 'command post' for the region and, in February an onslaught against Eritrea was launched (in which it is reported that nerve gas was used). By end February this author detected no outcry from the West—obviously the Eritreans were to be left to their fate. Simultaneously, Ethiopia started meddling in South Sudan to stir up trouble amongst the Nilotic peoples: The Dinka, the Shilouk and the Nuer—all in an attempt to destabilize an almost bankrupt country and eventually replace President Numiery with a pro-East bloc regime. If Sudan could be 'taken, it would fill the gap between Libya and Ethiopia and surround President Mubarak in Egypt.

Strategic Considerations

A Somali view-point.



The 'pact of Three' (as the alliance is known) also started a flood of propaganda against Somalia and instigated unrest in the north of that country—significantly near Berbera. Elsewhere so-called dissident cells were established, one such being the self-styled 'Somali National Movement' which is based in London; its members being either malcontents or paid agitators who obtain visas to Britain from radical arab countries, and pose as refugees. A protest to the British government brought only the response that as a 'free country' there was no way to stop the activities of such groups.

By March 1982 it could be seen that the Soviet grand strategic plan was being effected, even to the extent that Polisario (the armed opponent of Morocco) was admitted to the OAU, albeit that it does not have sovereign nation status. At this time, also, the OAU is financially bankrupt but will doubtless be salvaged by Colonel Gadaffi when he becomes Chairman. Further east, Sultan Qaboos again warned about a possible South Yemeni attack.

How long will it be before Somalia is invaded?



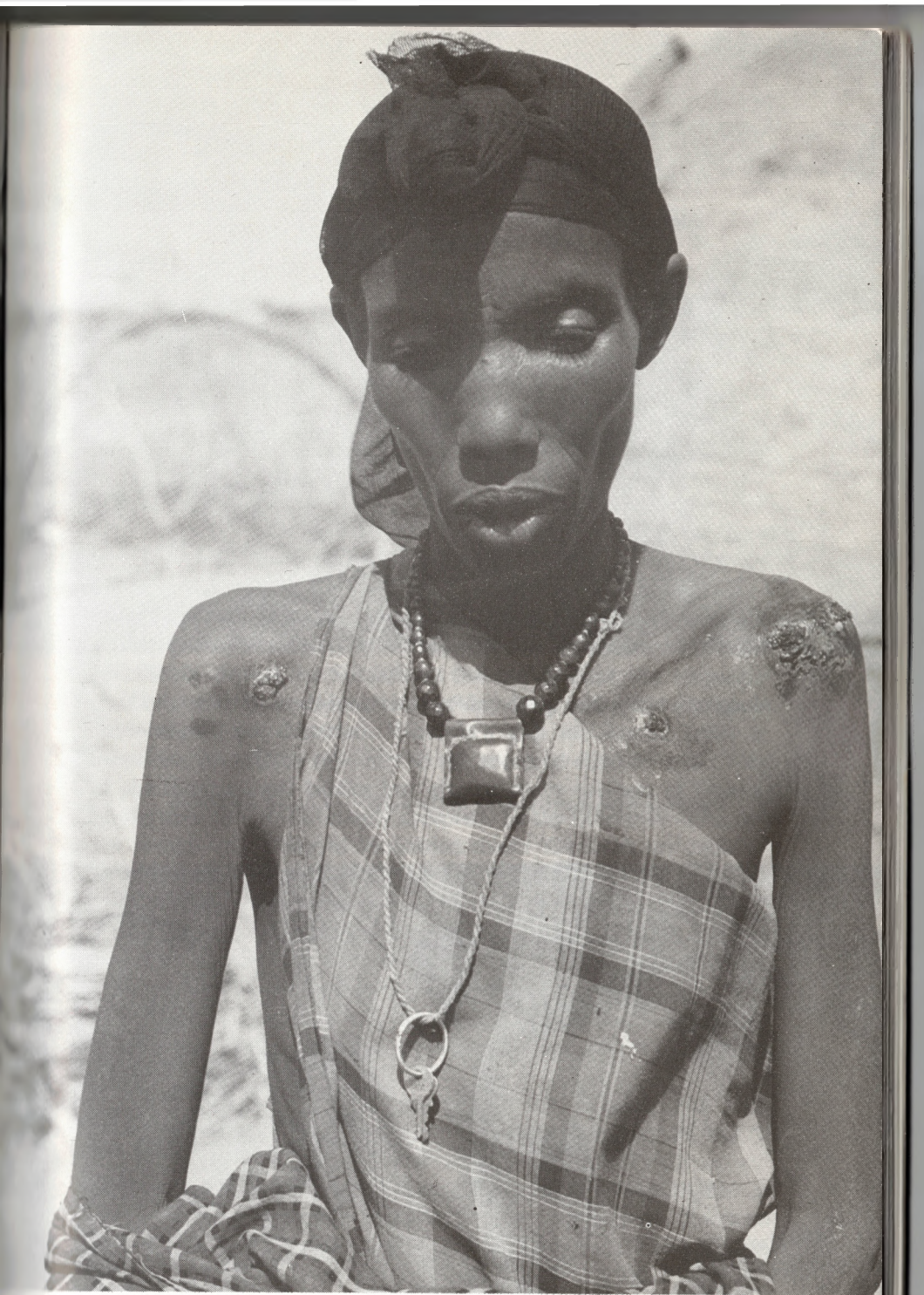
Child victim at Dhusamreb. He lost an arm and was burned by Napalm.



Ogaden Somalis celebrating victory in 1977.

The WSLF flag being raised to replace the Ethiopian flag, Ogaden 1977.



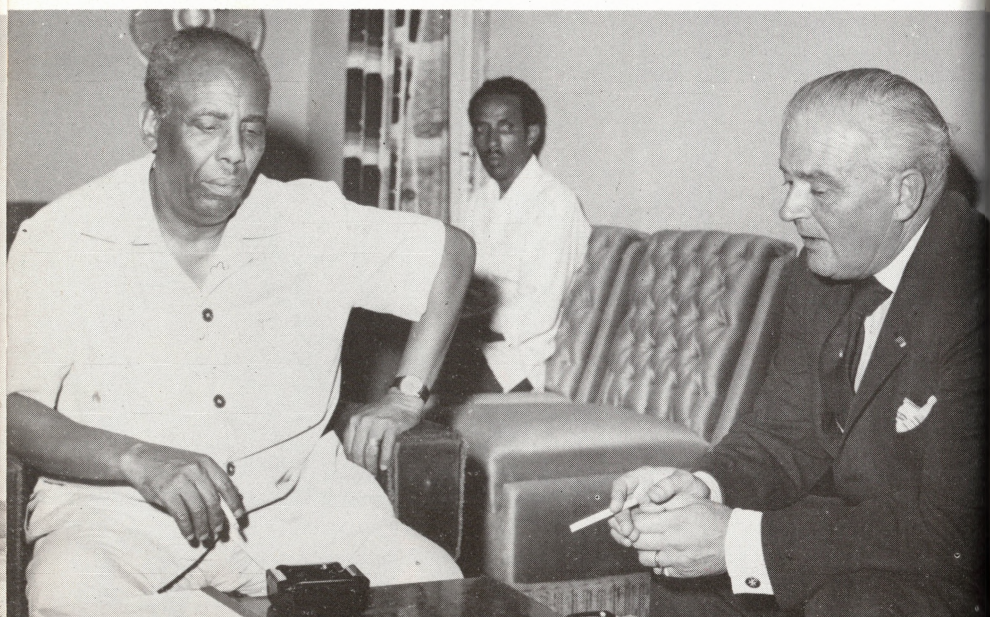


A sick woman at Jalaldaqsi refugee camp.



Unexploded Ethiopian bomb—of Russian manufacture, Ráb Dure 1980.

President Siad Barre talking to the author—Louis FitzGibbon.



CHAPTER 11

Freedom under the Law— Somalia

Few pleas can be more poignant than Chief Luthuli's cry: 'Set my people free!' Yet that is the essence of the Somali message to the world as regards those Somalis entrapped within the hostile lands given to Ethiopia by those who did not have them in their gift. The people of Western Somalia (generally known erroneously as 'The Ogaden') have a right to freedom just as much as have the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia or elsewhere for they are the victims of a rule just as much colonial as those imposed by the Europeans in the last century. If anything that rule is worse in that it is imposed by other Africans and has nothing benevolent in its character. It arrived purely through Abyssinia's possession of arms which were specifically denied the Somalis so that no defence was ultimately possible, and it continues to this day long after the European colonialists have departed. Ethiopia's grip on Somali lands is, therefore, an affront not only to the accepted charters and norms of the international bodies but also to every concept of Human Rights now almost universally accepted. To the Ethiopian occupiers the Somali leader Sayyid Mohamed cried: 'Go from my country' and his call is echoed today by the Western Somali Liberation Front and the gallant men who fight their oppressors. Colonialism is nothing short of 'permanent aggression' and in Western Somalia that aggression is both current and cruel, as witness the two million refugees who have fled from this persecution. In conformity with the principles of justice and international law, frontiers are only secure after the restoration of national integrity through *self-determination*.

This simple principle as applied to the Somalis has been deliberately distorted by Ethiopia which always makes itself out to be in some way more 'civilized' than Somalia and thus sought fellowship with others who ignorantly regarded non-christians as barbarians, pagans and 'Musulmen', all beyond the pale. It was an ingenious manoeuvre of psychological propaganda which fooled many or was used as an excuse when considering other political interests outside the immediate area.

Consideration of the legal aspects through which the inhabitants of Western Somalia claim independence are complicated by the fact that no legal boundaries were established between Ethiopia and Somalia there having been only a 'provisional' line drawn in 1950, the provisionality of which was underlined in Article I of the Trusteeship Agreement of that year until the end of the Trust in 1960 during which period the General Assembly of the United Nations pressed Ethiopia and Somalia to establish a boundary. Further, there are no *binding* treaties for the Somalis are not a party to any treaty ceding parts of Somaliland to Ethiopia as they never authorized any European government to cede their territory. There is thus no true *de jure* border nor was the 'provisional line' considered as *de jure* by the United Nations in the period 1950 to 1960.

As has been seen, the various agreements entered into by the Somali tribes with Britain all expressly spoke of the maintenance of Somali independence and the *protection* of Somali rights and 'lawful performance' requires strict fidelity to the explicit terms, but these were ignored in 1897 when Britain ceded some 25,000 sq miles to Ethiopia in direct contradiction of the terms of earlier protective agreements and, as we know, the Somalis were kept in ignorance of the 1897 agreement which must therefore be entirely illegal. If, therefore, that agreement of 1897 was illegal then so are subsequent Ethiopian claims which are based upon it. The successor to the 1897 agreement was that of 1954 which imposed fundamental obligations on Ethiopia which Ethiopia did not respect to a point when the British Government commented:

. . . any of the actions of the Ethiopian authorities . . . proved to be neither in accord with the letter nor the spirit of the Agreement . . .

Through these breaches Ethiopia lost any legal rights which might have been deemed as it is an accepted principle (International Court of Justice on Namibia) that:

. . . a party which disowns or does not fulfill its own obligations cannot be recognized as retaining the rights which it claims to derive from the relationship.

It can be therefore said that the 1954 agreement was illegal in the real sense as flowing from another illegal agreement and in another in that it was not binding by reason of Ethiopian transgression of the terms.

Ethiopia was also unable to claim possession for the reason that the level of Ethiopian administration was inadequate to claim manifest control. In the *Eastern Greenland* case the Permanent Court of International Justice found that a low level of administration was sufficient due to the absence of inhabitants. The Kingdom of Morocco tried to quote that case in the *Western Sahara* case but failed as the International Court remarked:

But in the present instance, Western Sahara, if somewhat sparsely populated, was a territory across which socially and politically organized tribes were in constant motion and where armed incidents between these tribes were frequent.

Neither was Ethiopia able to point to proper control in the past as 'Tax collecting forays in the Somali Ogaden country were called off as early as 1915 after the massacre of 150 Ethiopian soldiers in January of that year. Since that was the only profitable element in the provincial administration of the Ogaden, this zone, which also included territory to the south of the Somaliland border, was barely occupied by the authorities before the Wal Wal incident.'

At no time has the Somali Republic ever recognized the Ethiopian interpretation of the boundaries; she has consistently denounced them. Nor can Ethiopia claim that lack of argument by the European powers acts as agreement by the Somalis for they were denied procedural access by being kept in ignorance of the various treaties with Ethiopia.

Prior to the installation of the doctrine of self-determination as a fundamental norm, the requisite components for the establishment of a title by occupation were: 'an intention to secure sovereignty and the exercise of continuously effective control, the former being derivable from the latter'. Ethiopia never did nor does now fulfill the condition of 'effective control' from which sovereignty may flow.

Ethiopia's claim under the latest treaty of 1897 also falls to the ground for the reason that there was no competence to make the agreement without the knowledge and permission of the Somalis, and we have seen that Britain acted outside the law in handing over Somali territories in contravention to the agreements to protect them and in the absence of any authority to part with them to another government.

Any transfers of title in territory must, as in the case of private property, derive from some first or basic ownership. In the case of inhabited territory the first authority is the will of the indigenous

inhabitants which is the same as the principle of self-determination. This right has been given prominence by the United Nations Charter, by decisions of the International Court of Justice, by subsequent multilateral agreements exhibiting customary expectations and by numerous resolutions of the General Assembly. Both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirm an identical agreement with the right of self-determination. Article I of each provides:

All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

The Stated Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The most authoritative expression of the right of self-determination is Resolution 1514(XV), the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which the General Assembly adopted unanimously in 1960 and this Declaration is clear on colonialism speaking of it in 'all its forms and manifestations'. It does not therefore limit itself to the subjugation of non-European peoples by Europeans, but rather stresses the very fact of *subjugation* by a racially or ethnically distinct group which need not be European. Clarification of this point was amply provided by Resolution 1541(XV) which was entitled 'Principles Which Should Guide Members in Determining Whether or not an Obligation Exists to Transmit the Information Called for under Article 73e of the Charter.' *Prima facie* there is an obligation to transmit information in respect of a territory which is geographically separate and is distinct ethnically and/or culturally from the country administering it.

Once it has been established that such a *prima facie* case of geographical and ethnical or cultural distinctness of a territory exists, other elements may then be brought into consideration. These additional elements may be, *inter alia*, of an administrative, political, juridical economic or historic nature. If they affect the relationship between the metropolitan state and the territory concerned in a manner which arbitrarily places the latter in a

position or status of subordination, they support the presumption that there is an obligation to transmit information under Article 73e of the Charter.

The same functional approach was confirmed in the General Assembly's Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in 1970:

'By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development, and every state shall have the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

Every state has a duty to promote . . . realization of the principle of equal rights and self-determination . . . in order: . . . (b) To bring a speedy end to colonialism, having due regard to the freely expressed will of the people concerned; and bearing in mind that subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a violation of the principle, as well as a denial of fundamental human rights, and is contrary to the Charter.' In the *Namibia* case the International Court of Justice stressed that the principle of self-determination applied to all non-self-governing territories and embraced all peoples and territories which 'have not yet attained independence'.

Cases arise where the principle of self-determination run counter to existing state structures, the maintenance of whose stability is another goal of international law. In the *Western Sahara* case both Morocco and Mauritania claimed land to which they had legal claims before the Spanish occupation. However the International Court ruled that whereas both countries could demonstrate 'legal ties' it must be the will of the people which should prevail. In short international law now states that (a) Self-Determination is a fundamental right, (b) this right is available to all subjugated people i.e. functionally subjected to colonialism and (c) a situation of subjugation will be inferred from such objective factors as geographical, ethnical or cultural distinctiveness.

The Territory of the Western Somalis is distinct geographically and ecologically from metropolitan Ethiopia, and their racial, ethnic linguistic and cultural distinctiveness from Amhara-ruled Ethiopia is total. *Prima facie*, then, it would seem that the Western Somalis are entitled to the right of self-determination under

international law. In effect this is to say that they have a right to 'freedom under the Law' in the context that the law is the law whether international or national.

Somalia has continuously demanded this right of self-determination for the Western Somalis but, as we have seen, Ethiopia seeks refuge in the resolution of the First Ordinary Session in Cairo of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government by interpreting it other than was the intention of those a party to it and thereby trying to upset the principle of self-determination. Further the resolution of 1964 is concerned with boundaries, but the Somali question is not about boundaries but about human people.

Were it not for the régime of Colonel Mengistu and the presence of the Soviets and Cubans in Ethiopia it might be possible for the Ethiopians to confer with the Somalis about self-determination for the Western Somalis, but the Soviets are not concerned with the Charter of the United Nations and flagrantly flout its provisions whenever they do not suit the Kremlin's purposes.

Thus the international community has two clear duties:

- (a) To call upon the Soviet Union and its satellites to discontinue their intervention in the affairs of the African continent and
- (b) To enable the peoples of Western Somalia to exercise their rights of self-determination.

No doubt to the realistic-minded these aims appear too lofty of ever achieving any success and it is therefore easier to shelve them in the vain hope that, some day, somehow, the Soviets will leave Ethiopia. But this last is vain wishful-thinking. Having gained experience in being ejected from Egypt, Sudan and Somalia the Soviets have seen to it, as they are now doing in Afghanistan, that they are in Ethiopia for as long as they wish. If, for instance, Colonel Mengistu felt inclined to remove the Russians it would be he, and not them, who would leave. Thus something concrete and definite should now be done and here we are forced back to the need to make amends for past betrayal.

In short, it is Britain, France and Italy who should take a lead in seeking to set up talks between Ethiopia and Somalia on self-determination in the true spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations and as the real cause for the present flood of refugees albeit that the reason for them is rooted in so-called agreements a hundred years ago.

If then it were seen that the present regime in Ethiopia was flouting that Charter there would be room to penetrate to the cause

of that and promote a really meaningful demand that the Soviets quit Africa. But irrespective of the outcome of any such moves, it should be clearly stated at the United Nations that the Western Somalis are indeed fully entitled to the right of self-determination by reason of the Charter and thus to Freedom under the law.

APPENDIX I

PETITION OF THE SOMALIS TO THE FOUR POWERS COMMISSION

Petition of the Issa Somalis

22 January 1948

We, the Issa people, are cut up and divided among three sovereign powers—Ethiopia, France and Great Britain. Our grazing and water rights within the areas held by these powers are covered and provided for under Treaties. We now realize that our economic life cannot improve and we cannot advance socially or politically whilst we are broken up by three *de facto* frontiers; as long as we remain separated from others of our race.

We are Somalis and share the same language and religion with other Somalis. We inter-marry freely and have the same mode of life. It is our firm desire to be joined to the other Somalilands. We are convinced that our present state is ruinous to our future and welfare. We can form a geographical and racial entity only with a United Somaliland.

Today after 60 years occupation, the Issa Somalis in British Somaliland and French Somaliland have no improvements to show in development, education or economic well-being. As to the Ethiopian Government, the Amharas despise us as Muslim, they exercise their authority with a harsh hand, they deny us freedom of speech. No attention is paid to our grievances.

There has been no expenditure on our education or welfare. We have no voice in the Government. We are in the position of a backward people subject to a backward 'alien' Government which has no sympathy for us and wishes to keep us for ever subordinate to them. The rulers have no racial, cultural or religious affinity with us. We do not even speak the same language.

It is our considered and confirmed resolve to be united with our brother Somalis under the protection and guidance of a Government which can develop our country and give us the modern education and training necessary until we can take over the administration of our country.

Harar is an integral part of our territory. It is an important economic and commercial link between the Somalis of the west. As

Harar is an important economic unit in our territory we desire its incorporation into a Great Somaliland as such an incorporation is absolutely essential.

We, the undersigned, Sultan Chiefs and Sheikhs of the Issa Somalis do hereby solemnly submit this petition and affix our signatures and marks thereto.

1. Ugas Hassan Hersi, Sultan of the Issa
2. Adan Kawale
3. Haji Ismail Nur
4. Haji Ismail Awaleh
5. Ali Abubakar
6. Hussein Osman
7. Ahmed Gait
8. Haji Abdi Ali
9. Bulali Ainansh
10. Omar Galeh.
11. Alawi Kamil Aqi
12. Ali Bore
13. Kadi Donale Issa
14. Haji Jumali Ibrahim
15. Abdulla Gadid

Petition for Amalgamation from the Jigjiga Area with other Somali Territories.

Mogadishu 22 January 1948

We, the undersigned Sultans, Chiefs and Sheikhs from the Jigjiga area do hereby declare that we want to be united with our brother Somalis. We are bounded on every side by Somalis. Some of our people today are in the unhappy position of being under the jurisdiction of three powers, each having a part of it. We have the control of supplies regulations and restrictions of at least Two powers. We are subject to Custom Dues on every side in addition to Frontier Dues. The currency of one area is not negotiable in the other area. As we are portion only of the population of each territory no Government considers it worthwhile to spend money or energy on the development or education of our people. We are therefore in the unhappy position of being under the authority of all but the responsibility of none. The greater proportion of our people are in the territory under Ethiopia. It is we Somalis who lived and settled in this territory for centuries and the right of occupation of the Somalis to these areas are covered and safeguarded by Treaties between the Powers.

We are no longer content to be nominal Ethiopians.

We are overtaxed, hounded by the Police, denied education suitable for Muslim people, restricted and hampered in trade, refused liberty of word and press and kept out of all important executive posts.

We have been grouped with Ethiopia for a sufficient length of time for its rulers to adjust themselves to the realities of present day life and work out a sensible solution whereby we could live together harmoniously as a member of the same Empire. They have selected to ignore our rights and treat us as vassals of a backward Government. We are not prepared to accept this.

We have come to the final conclusion that it is time the present state of affairs was ended and we make this earnest request to be added to our brother Somalis to form a United Somaliland. In this is centred our aspirations. This forced division under which we exist is denying us the right of normal development as a nation. We can also have no satisfaction in a life without a future. We are asking for the restoration of our birth right and the preservation of our culture. We can obtain this only by the amalgamation of the Somalilands.

1. Sultan Hassan Sheikh Ismail
2. Ugas Dud Ugas Roble.

The Ogaden Petition for Amalgamation with the Other Somali Territories

Mogadishu 22 January 1948

We, the undersigned Sultans, Chiefs and Sheikhs who are the hereditary authorities of the Ogaden Somalis, submit this petition to Your Excellencies, with due respect, for careful and sympathetic consideration. The territory occupied by our people has been Somali territory from time immemorial. It is the geographical centre of the Somalilands. The international division which groups us with Ethiopia is artificial and impractical. Our connection with Imperial Ethiopian Government is purely nominal and cannot be justified on any grounds. On the contrary there is every reason to justify why the Ogaden should not be of Ethiopia.

- (a) The Ogaden is not an integral part of Ethiopia. It is a territory which the Ethiopians have conquered by invasion half a century ago and over which it can exercise authority only by the use of considerable armed forces.
- (b) The Ethiopians dislike the Somali Muslim, treat them as 'outsiders'.

- (c) Ethiopia is not in a position to develop our country.
- (d) We do not want to be under the Ethiopian Government. As we have no voice in their Government and know that it is hostile to the Somali Muslim, we have no confidence in their administration or justice.
- (e) Our country has never been effectively occupied by the Ethiopian Government.

We now want that our country be united with other Somali Territories to form one administrative, political and economic unit. We want freedom from frontier restrictions which are the worst causes of raids and feuds between tribes. We want to be united into one country so that we shall be able to exercise the right to form a Somali nation, instead of being parcelled up into unrecognizable bits. We wish to have a Government which can develop our country and train us to run it. We and the other Somalis of the neighbouring territories are one in race, religion, language, culture, mode of living and geography. We inter-marry freely and are therefore inter-related. Our economic interests and political outlook are the same. We are one in family and we want to be allowed to live together as one.

Signed:

1. Ugas Mohamed Ugas Hersi
2. Garad Makhtal Garad Dahir
3. Ugas Mohamed Ugas Sigal
4. Ugas Abdullahi Ugas Yassin
5. Ugas Hassas Da'is
6. Mukhtar Ugas Mohamed
7. Sheikh Ahmed Nur
8. Sheikh Mohamed Haji Hussein
9. Hassan Sheikh Abdulla
10. Dulane Sultan Rafleh
11. Sheikh Adan Warsame
12. Sheikh Ali Sufi

APPENDIX 2

RESOLUTION OF THE ALL SOMALI CONFERENCE

1 February 1948

The following resolution was passed and forwarded to the Secretary General of the United Nations Organization by the All Somali Conference held in Mogadishu on the future of the Somali nation. The resolution, which was unanimously adopted by all the Somali delegations who participated in the All Somali Conference is as follows:

Whereas we, the undersigned Somali Sultans, members of the SOMALI YOUTH LEAGUE, Central Committee and deputations from various parts of the Somali territories stated under have held an All Somali Conference in Mogadishu on 1 February 1948, where it has been unanimously decided to address the following petition to the United Nations Assembly.

That as we Somalis are all Muslim of the same race and language and have the same mode of living and culture, and are all known by the same name 'Somali' and number only four million, we do hereby resolve that it is against the true interests of our people to remain separately by de facto frontiers; that in as much as we have the natural urge for national self-determination and for the preservation of human right, we wish to live as one with our brother Somalis; that we do hereby record the deeply-rooted desire of the Somali peoples that all the Somali territories, namely Ex-Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland, NFD (Northern Frontier District of Kenya), British Somaliland and Ethiopian Somaliland be united into one political, administrative, cultural and economic unit.

We earnestly appeal for the sympathy and support of the United Nations to help us put an end to the unnatural situation of one race being divided by external influences into five enclosures against its true interest and welfare.

We are, sir,

1. Ugas Mohamed Ugas Hashi
2. Ugas Abdullahi Ugas Casin
3. Ugas Hassan Di'is
4. Mukhtar Ugas Mohamed Ugas Omar

5. Sheikh Ahmed Noor Sh. Yusuf
6. Garad Makhtal Garad Dahir
7. Dulaneh Sultan Rafleh—Representing the Ogaden
1. Sultan Hassan Sheikh Ismail and
2. Sultan Dudi Ugas Rabileh—Representing the Reserved Area
1. Sultan Abdullahi Sultan Deria and
2. Sultan Mohamed Sultan Farah—Representing British Somaliland.

APPENDIX 3

RESOLUTION OF THE ALL AFRICAN PEOPLES CONFERENCE 1958 and 1960

(1) First All African Peoples' Conference, Accra, 5-13 December 1958. Resolution on Frontiers, Boundaries and Federation:

Whereas artificial barriers and frontiers drawn by imperialists to divide African people operate to the detriment of Africans and should therefore be abolished or adjusted.

Whereas frontiers which cut across Ethnic groups or divide people of the same stock are unnatural and are not conducive to peace or stability.

Whereas leaders of neighbouring countries should co-operate towards a permanent solution to such problems which accords with the best interests of the people affected and enhances the prospects of realization of the ideal of a Pan-African Commonwealth of Free States.

Whereas the 20 February 1959 will be an important date in the history of the Cameroons, when a special Session of the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the question of unification and independence of the territory.

Be it resolved and it is hereby resolved by the All African Peoples' Conference that the Conference:

- (a) Denounces artificial frontiers drawn by imperialist Powers to divide the peoples of Africa, particularly those which cut across ethnic groups and divide people of the same stock;
- (b) Calls for the abolition or adjustment of such frontiers at an early date to this problem founded upon the true wishes of the people;
- (c) Calls upon the Independent States of Africa to support a permanent solution;
- (d) Notes with satisfaction that a special Session of the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the question of unification and independence of all the Cameroons on 20 February 1959;
- (e) Invites all Africans to observe that as Cameroons Day.

(2) Second All African Peoples' Conference, Tunis 25-30 January 1960, Resolution on Somaliland

The Conference, after a careful survey of the situation in Somaliland artificially divided:

- (a) Denounces the colonial repression which is dealt with in this country
- (b) Hails and supports the struggle of the people of Somaliland for independence and unity in order to give birth to a bigger Somaliland;
- (c) Requests the immediate liberation of detained patriots.

APPENDIX 4

IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT AND PRESS

Reaction in Britain to what goes on in Somalia can only be publicly reflected in Parliament or in the Press. Subsequent to a visit to Somalia by Mr Julian Amery and Mr Winston Churchill MP in early 1978, articles containing their views appeared in popular newspapers. On 6 March the Ethiopian ambassador, H.E. Ayalew Wolde Giorgis, attacked them both in a letter published by the *Daily Telegraph*. The response of the Somali ambassador, HE Ahmed Mohamed Adan is so germane to the whole issue that it is quoted in full (10 March 1978—*Daily Telegraph*):

I feel I cannot let the extraordinary outburst by the Ambassador for Ethiopia (6 March) pass without comment. He accuses Britain of meddling in the Horn of Africa whereas, alas, the foreign powers involved are Russia and Cuba.

He talks of the re-activation of the 'British idea of Greater Somalia' which he dates from 1946. Allow me to assure your readers that the Somali nation has since time immemorial believed in 'one Somalia' (not greater or lesser) and has aspired to independence and self-determination but not to rule alien peoples.

It was long before 1946 that Somali leaders fought and died for freedom from colonialism—Seyyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan, for example, whose 20 years of militant resistance at the turn of the century led to his being dubbed the 'Mad Mullah' by the British, fought all the colonialist forces which threatened one Somalia—British, Italian and Abyssinian. The Ambassador's claim to opposition to colonialism is curious in view of his country's seizure of Ogaden Somalis, as well as other peoples, during and since the scramble for Africa, although I must admit that his description of the 'people whose lot under colonialism has been abject poverty, human degradation, and all forms of exploitation' is quite accurate at least with regard to the Ogaden Somalis.

The Ambassador implies that Ethiopia is now opposed to persistent colonialism in South Africa. My Government has always opposed colonialism throughout Africa—without regard to colour, race or creed. But he conveniently forgets the part

played by his country in the scramble for Africa in collaboration with the same European Powers to which he now points an accusing finger. And soon after Abyssinia shamefully joined Britain, France and Italy in carving up Somali territory through illegal treaties.

At least those powers have now redeemed themselves in allowing their portions of Somaliland to attain independence. This cannot be said for Ethiopia which today is desperately trying to re-impose her imperialism on Western Somalia with Soviet arms and Cuban regular troops. The Ambassador goes on to deal with 'armed rebellions against inequalities, racial discrimination and imperialist expansion'. He ought to know. His country has much experience of all of them, but in criticizing Britain he might also remember that there is no denying the fact that Ethiopia is an empire.

The Ethiopians themselves have long used the term 'empire' and the adjective 'imperial'. If they have dropped it recently it is *without divesting themselves of those territories which they acquired during the scramble*.

The British (to say nothing of the Americans) have most regrettably left the Somali people to fight alone, and unequipped, for the principles of self-determination, freedom and independence against not just the Ethiopian dergue but the might of the Soviet Union and its mercenaries.

Yet the Commonwealth is said at least to believe in these values and must understand that real peace—and it is only a just peace that the Somalis seek—and true respect and co-operation between nations can only be based on self-determination, freedom and independence. The United Nations and the Organization for African Unity also proclaim this. Why should the Somali peoples suffer on in exception? The last point the Ambassador makes concerns the 'lives of Africans' having 'no value' and he refers to the 'massacre of thousands of Blacks'. We Somalis deplore murder and killing in whichever country these are perpetrated: but on such matters I must defer to his Government. Mine has never sought the relevant experience and expertise. There is no 'terror' in Somalia—'white' or 'red'.

AHMED MOHAMED ADAN
Somali Embassy

From then on there was considerable correspondence in that newspaper including (on 19 May 1978) a letter from Richard Luce MP (in 1982 a minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office). This author visited Somalia twice in the autumn of 1978 and was honoured by an interview with the President, Major-General

Mohamed Siad Barre. On his return he stated in a series of letters, also in the *Daily Telegraph*, and on 8 November Somalia was mentioned for the first time in the House of Lords by the Earl of Kimberley. The *Daily Telegraph* carried further letters from this author and others over the New Year 1978-9 during which the author was attacked by members of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society. The Somali embassy came to his defence with a letter dated 25 January 1979:

Daily Telegraph—25 January 1979

Dr David Hamilton recognizes in his letter (19 Jan) that the division of the Somali people is 'Ill-conceived and unfair'. Yet he attributes to the colonial treaties by which such division was brought about a legality which they do not possess.

In support of his arguments he cites the protectorate agreements concluded between the Somali tribes on the one hand and the European colonial powers on the other during 1884-96 giving 'considerable legitimacy to the negotiations those European powers then conducted with Emperor Menelik as to the inland extent of their coastal colonies'. Dr Hamilton is wrong on three counts.

First, not all the tribes who by treaty placed themselves under European protection were those of the coastal areas; they included hinterland clans such as the Ogaden from which Western Somalia takes its historical name.

Secondly, the protectorate agreements nowhere authorized those European powers to cede to another state territory which they had undertaken to protect. In so far as subsequent treaties between those powers and Imperial Ethiopia purported to transfer Somali territory to the latter without knowledge and consent of the indigenous population, the former acted without authority and in breach of faith. These treaties are, therefore, illegal and not binding on the Somali people who are not a party to them.

Thirdly, the conflict in the Horn is hardly one over boundaries, as Dr Hamilton seems to think. It concerns the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Western Somalia in accordance with the United Nations charter and the norms of international law.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that while Dr Hamilton vehemently opposes the supply to defensive arms to Somalia, he prefers to remain silent on the massive arming for aggression of Ethiopia by the Soviet Union and certain other Socialist countries.

A. F. HASSAN

Second Counsellor

Embassy of the Somali Democratic Republic

On 2 February 1979, Winston Churchill MP raised the question of supplying defensive military aid to Somalia, but was informed that HM Government did not intend to help in this way, and on 22 May Lord Barnby again spoke on Somalia in the Upper House. Intermittent correspondence continued in the *Daily Telegraph* during the rest of that year, and on 8 May 1980 the *Times* published a letter from this author, as under:

The Times—8 May 1980

I have discovered that there are now about one million refugees in Somalia of whom about 600,000 are in camps while the rest are 'living free'. News has also reached me via my brother, Constantine, that the Irish Government has already contributed unilaterally to the EEC Somali refugee relief fund and, further, is now giving urgent consideration to making a bilateral donation to Somalia in this matter.

It is, of course, understood that calls upon our national purse are many and varied, but as one who has served in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I would hope that we could consider making at least some oblation to show that we are not ignoring a people who, in the past, have done a lot for us.

LOUIS FITZGIBBON

The question of aid to Somalia was once more brought to the attention of the House of Lords by Lord Barnby on 15 May and 2 June 1980, and Winston Churchill again broached the subject of military aid in the Commons on 25 June and 3 July. Dissatisfied with replies he had received, Lord Barnby returned to the matter of aid on 9 July.

The summer passed but on 26 November 1980 The Marquess of Ailsa delivered a long and telling speech in which he tried to focus attention to Somalia and her problems.

In the spring of 1981 the *Daily Telegraph* carried a number of items which gave the impression that Ethiopia was trying to improve relations with the West, and on those the Somali ambassador, on 18 March 1981, spoke out in that newspaper in a letter:

Daily Telegraph—18 March 1981

Your newspaper has recently carried several articles (originating in Addis Ababa and Nairobi) which give the impression that Ethiopia is trying to improve relations with the West, and it

Mohamed Siad Barre. On his return he stated in a series of letters, also in the *Daily Telegraph*, and on 8 November Somalia was mentioned for the first time in the House of Lords by the Earl of Kimberley. The *Daily Telegraph* carried further letters from this author and others over the New Year 1978-9 during which the author was attacked by members of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society. The Somali embassy came to his defence with a letter dated 25 January 1979:

Daily Telegraph—25 January 1979

Dr David Hamilton recognizes in his letter (19 Jan) that the division of the Somali people is 'Ill-conceived and unfair'. Yet he attributes to the colonial treaties by which such division was brought about a legality which they do not possess.

In support of his arguments he cites the protectorate agreements concluded between the Somali tribes on the one hand and the European colonial powers on the other during 1884-96 giving 'considerable legitimacy to the negotiations those European powers then conducted with Emperor Menelik as to the inland extent of their coastal colonies'. Dr Hamilton is wrong on three counts.

First, not all the tribes who by treaty placed themselves under European protection were those of the coastal areas; they included hinterland clans such as the Ogaden from which Western Somalia takes its historical name.

Secondly, the protectorate agreements nowhere authorized those European powers to cede to another state territory which they had undertaken to protect. In so far as subsequent treaties between those powers and Imperial Ethiopia purported to transfer Somali territory to the latter without knowledge and consent of the indigenous population, the former acted without authority and in breach of faith. These treaties are, therefore, illegal and not binding on the Somali people who are not a party to them.

Thirdly, the conflict in the Horn is hardly one over boundaries, as Dr Hamilton seems to think. It concerns the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Western Somalia in accordance with the United Nations charter and the norms of international law.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that while Dr Hamilton vehemently opposes the supply to defensive arms to Somalia, he prefers to remain silent on the massive arming for aggression of Ethiopia by the Soviet Union and certain other Socialist countries.

A. F. HASSAN

Second Counsellor

Embassy of the Somali Democratic Republic

On 2 February 1979, Winston Churchill MP raised the question of supplying defensive military aid to Somalia, but was informed that HM Government did not intend to help in this way, and on 22 May Lord Barnby again spoke on Somalia in the Upper House. Inter-mittent correspondence continued in the *Daily Telegraph* during the rest of that year, and on 8 May 1980 the *Times* published a letter from this author, as under:

The Times—8 May 1980

I have discovered that there are now about one million refugees in Somalia of whom about 600,000 are in camps while the rest are 'living free'. News has also reached me via my brother, Constantine, that the Irish Government has already contributed unilaterally to the EEC Somali refugee relief fund and, further, is now giving urgent consideration to making a bilateral donation to Somalia in this matter.

It is, of course, understood that calls upon our national purse are many and varied, but as one who has served in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I would hope that we could consider making at least some oblation to show that we are not ignoring a people who, in the past, have done a lot for us.

LOUIS FITZGIBBON

The question of aid to Somalia was once more brought to the attention of the House of Lords by Lord Barnby on 15 May and 2 June 1980, and Winston Churchill again broached the subject of military aid in the Commons on 25 June and 3 July. Dissatisfied with replies he had received, Lord Barnby returned to the matter of aid on 9 July.

The summer passed but on 26 November 1980 The Marquess of Ailsa delivered a long and telling speech in which he tried to focus attention to Somalia and her problems.

In the spring of 1981 the *Daily Telegraph* carried a number of items which gave the impression that Ethiopia was trying to improve relations with the West, and on those the Somali ambassador, on 18 March 1981, spoke out in that newspaper in a letter:

Daily Telegraph—18 March 1981

Your newspaper has recently carried several articles (originating in Addis Ababa and Nairobi) which give the impression that Ethiopia is trying to improve relations with the West, and it

seems more than coincidental that these overtures come at a time of growing tension in the Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Abyssinian propaganda always obscures the truth in the Horn of Africa, such as denial of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities in the 'Empire', the retention of a huge Cuban Army, and the continuing air and land raids into Somali territory. Instead, the Abyssinians are now promoting the false notion that the Soviets may quit their country in an effort further to confuse the West and delay such moves as America and others may take to safeguard vital interests in the region.

We should be deluding ourselves if we think that the Soviets will easily abandon Abyssinia where they have invested \$2 billion worth of arms and technical assistance.

MOHAMED JAMA ELMU
Somali Embassy

Immediately below there also appeared a letter from Igor Antonov of the Novosti Press Agency, Moscow, in which he attacked the emerging American policy of providing military assistance and, Mr Caspar (Weinberger's US Defence Secretary) complaints at that time that Europe and NATO were not trying to match the warlike apparatus of the USSR. It was an interesting juxtaposition.

Lord Ailsa again raised Somali problems in the Upper House on 25 March 1981, and he was supported by Lords Dartington and Cork and Orrery.

The next Somali matter to be raised was the question of the Government's proposals to cut a number of BBC external broadcasts: that in Somali included. The Lords mounted a concerted attack upon these plans and in the summer the Government was defeated by over 40 votes. Not all the foreign language services were saved, but that in Somali was—thanks largely to the determination of two Liberal peers: Lords Byers and Gladwyn. In October 1981 Lord Ailsa went to Somalia to assess the situation personally and on his return, he made a lengthy and informed speech on 10 November. On 26 November Baroness Airey of Abingdon added her voice to the discussion when she made a specific warning about the dangers of the Libya-Ethiopia-South Yemen alliance.

On 1 February 1982 James Johnson MP was informed that there would be no increase in British aid to Somalia and this author took up the matter through a letter published in the *Times* on 18 February (see later). On that day, also, Lord Kimberley received a reply to a question he had asked concerning the possibility of

Britain promoting international mediation between Somalia and Ethiopia. That reply merely repeated the dull old excuse that the whole case should be left to the OAU. This author also felt impelled to draw further attention to the danger in the Horn of Africa, and his letter appeared in the *Financial Times* for 24 February.

On 27 February the *Economist* magazine carried a report of the OAU Foreign Ministers meeting at Addis Ababa in that week when the self-styled 'Republique Arab Sahraoui Democratique' (known to us as POLISARIO) took its seat. Morocco immediately walked out, as did 10 other delegations—amongst which was Somalia. Earlier in the same week there had been reports of the OAU's financial bankruptcy, and all of this must throw doubt on that body's efficacy to a point where relying upon it to even attempt to mediate between Ethiopia and Somalia is surely nonsense. In the same issue Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan was said to have completed his report for the UN Commission on Human Rights (with a special case study on Ethiopia) in which he advocated a 'Special representative for humanitarian questions' who would act as an international mediator. The sooner he is appointed the better!

As at the date of closing this brief summary of Somalia, as seen in Britain, (1 March 1982) there are other press and parliamentary moves afoot (see later) for it is essential that Britain, Europe and the West generally awake to what is happening in North East Africa—while there is yet time.

The Times, Thursday, 18 February 1982

Aid to Somalia

From Mr Louis FitzGibbon

Sir, In a written parliamentary answer for 1 February it was stated that our aid to Somalia for 1981-2 amounts to £1.5m bilaterally, plus £3m for refugees, a total of £4.5m. If our total disbursements overseas amount to £220m, the sum being allocated to Somalia represents no more than 2.045 per cent. Further, it was said that the bilateral aid was not expected to be increased 'in the coming years'.

Somalia has the biggest refugee problem in Africa, while Somalia herself is one of the least-developed countries in the world. In those circumstances one can be excused from thinking that our contribution is miserly and certainly does not reflect the debt of honour we owe to these people by reason of arbitrary boundaries drawn in the past.

I am sure I am not alone in suggesting that HM Government should examine its conscience in this matter, as it eventually did over the proposed cuts in the BBC external service in the Somali language. The Libya-Ethiopia-South Yemen alliance poses a grave threat to the whole Horn of Africa and Somalia needs every bit of help she can get. Surely we could do more?

Financial Times, Wednesday, 24 February 1982

Ethiopian threat to Horn of Africa

From Mr L. FitzGibbon

Sir, — The small report in your issue for 16 February only touches upon the unfolding action initiated by the recent Libya-Ethiopia-South Yemen alliance. The alleged use of nerve gas in the current onslaught against Eritrea in which the Ethiopians are deploying some 90,000 troops could well be a prelude to a similar attack upon Somalia where dissidents are already trying to cause de-stability. Added to that, Ethiopia is meddling in the affairs of South Sudan for the purpose of replacing President Numiery with an East-bloc-orientated régime. It will not, doubtless, be long before we read of South Yemeni attacks against Oman.

A glance at the map immediately reveals how this game of chess is shaping, with Libya as the paymaster and the Soviets as the grandmaster.

There are some who, for financial reasons, hope that the Soviets will leave Ethiopia and that certain mooted projects (at Massawa and Asmara) may come to fruition. They would do well to abandon any such dreams—the Russians are in Addis Ababa to stay.

LOUIS FITZGIBBON,

See, also, Lords *Hansard*:

Vol. 429, No. 73, 19 April 1982, Cols. 378–380.

Vol. 431, No. 98, 7 June 1982, Cols. 72–90.

APPENDIX 5

A Working Chronology of events in the Horn of Africa

- 1867 Menelik proclaims himself independent King of Shoa
- 1868-89 Yohannes IV, Emperor of Ethiopia.
- 1869 Italians purchase Assab. Djibouti replaced Obock as French coaling station.
- 1871-6 Menelik campaigns against the Wallo Galla tribes.
- 1874 Yohannes IV appeals for Russian help against Muslims.
- 1875 Three Egyptian expeditions against Ethiopia. Egyptians defeated near Gura.
- 1882 Italy established colony of Eritrea.
- 1883 Mahdi defeats Anglo-Egyptian forces at El Obeid, Sudan. Britain decides to evacuate Sudan.
- 1884 Gordon reaches Khartoum to evacuate Egyptians. Menelik signs treaty with Britain against Mahdi. Britain establishes British Somaliland protectorate.
- 1885 Italy occupies Massawa. France occupies Djibouti. Mahdi takes Khartoum—Gordon killed.
- 1886 Sultan of Harar defeats Italian expedition.
- 1889 Yohannes IV killed in battle. Menelik proclaims himself emperor.
- 1891 Menelik denounces Italian claims to a protectorate.
- 1892 Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie) born.
- 1895 Italian troops enter Ethiopia.
- 1896 Ethiopians defeat Italians at Adowa; Italy forced to sue for peace.
- 1897- Ethiopia annexes much Somali territory in various
- 1900 expeditions.
- 1925 Italy completes occupation of Italian Somaliland under terms of 1889 protectorate.
- 1928 Italy signs 20 year Treaty of Friendship with Ethiopia. Coup d'etat in Ethiopia. Ras Tafari takes control and is crowned Negus by Empress Zawditu.
- 1930 Ras Gugsu Wolfie, brother of Empress Zawditu, revolts against Negus Tafari and loses. 2 April, Empress Zawditu dies and 3 April, Ras Tafari proclaimed Emperor Haile Selassie.

- 1931 Ethiopian troops occupy Ogaden
- 1934 Wal Wal incident. Hostilities between Ethiopians and Italians.
- 1935 Italy invades Ethiopia.
- 1936 Italians occupy Addis Ababa and annexes Ethiopia.
- 1937-9 Ethiopian resistance to Italians.
- 1940 Italian attack on British Somaliland. British withdrew.
- 1941 British counter-attack in Ethiopia.
- 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian military convention. Britain retains Ogaden and Reserved Area as military occupied territory. Haile Selassie resumes administration of Ethiopia.
- 1943 British control Somalia. Somali Youth League (SLY) formed.
- 1946 Britain proposes Greater Somalia under British Trusteeship.
- 1948 Four Power Commission (Britain, France, USA, USSR) visit Mogadishu. SLY clashes with pro-Italian Somalia.
Four Power Commission signs Protocol with Ethiopia. Ethiopia resumes administration of Jigjiga and Dhagabur; takes control for first time of Gabridare, Qalafu, Warder and eastern Ogaden. SLY and Somali National League appeal to United Nations for United Somalia.
- 1950 Britain returns Somalia to Italy as UN Trusteeship conditional on independence in 1960.
- 1952 Eritrea federated with Ethiopia.
- 1955 1944 Anglo-Ethiopian agreement revised and Ethiopia takes over Ogaden and Reserved Areas.
- 1959 Haile Selassie makes state visit to USSR and obtains \$100 million loan.
- 1960 Somalia becomes independent with 500 miles of frontier with Ethiopia undefined.
- 1961 Initial Somali-USSR diplomatic accords signed.
- 1963 Organization of African Unity comes into being. Soviets begin military aid to Somalia.
- 1964 Fighting between Ethiopian and Somali troops.
- 1967 Treaty of friendship between Ethiopia and Somalia signed.
- 1969 Military government formed in Mogadishu by Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre.

- 1970 Ethiopia declares state of emergency in Eritrea.
- 1973 Somalia joins Arab League.
- 1974 Haile Selassie deposed as Emperor of Ethiopia and military assume control. Campaign of terror against opposition.
- 1977 Fidel Castro and Nikolai Podgorny visit Mogadishu but fail to bring Somalia into Soviet plan.
Soviets start supplying arms to Ethiopia.
Cuban advisers start to arrive in Addis Ababa, (May).
Djibouti declared independent (June).
Soviets stop arms supply to Somalia (July).
US offers arms to Somalia but withdraws offer—but Somalia WSLF start offensive in Ogaden.
Somalis throw Soviets out of Somalia (November).
Soviet build-up of Cubans in Ethiopia accelerates (December).
- 1978 Somalis withdraw from Ogaden and war ends.
Start of massive influx of refugees.
Ethiopians start indiscriminate bombing of Somali villages.
- 1979 Refugees continue to arrive and Ethiopian bombings continue.
- 1980 Ethiopian bombings continue and Ethiopia temporarily invades Somalia in Dolo region.
- 1981 Refugees affected first by drought and then by flood.
Formation of Libya-Ethiopia-South Yemen alliance.
- 1982 Ethiopian attack on Eritrea.
Official UN figure for refugees given as 700,000 (Feb.).

Bibliography

- The Mad Mullah of Somaliland.* D. Jardine, 1923.
- The Blue Nile.* Alan Moorhead, 1962.
- First Footsteps in East Africa.* Sir R. Burton, rpt. 1966.
- Ethiopia—A New Political History.* R. Greenfield, 1965.
- A Modern History of Somalia.* I. M. Lewis, 1965, 1980.
- My Country—My People.* Collected speeches of President Siad Barre. Mogadishu, 1973.

The Portion of Somali Territory under Ethiopian Colonisation. Mogadishu, 1974.

Memorandum on Colonisation in French Somaliland. Mogadishu, 1975.

Somalia—Five Years of Revolutionary Progress. Mogadishu, 1974.

Somalia Today. Mogadishu, 1975.

A Legal Analysis of Ethiopia's Occupation of Western Somalia. Mogadishu, 1977.

Objectives and Policy of Resettlement. Mogadishu, 1977.

Beautiful Somalia. Mogadishu, 1978.

Horn of Africa, Vol. 1, No. 3. USA, 1978.

The Disastrous Damages of Ethiopian Aggression. Mogadishu, 1978.

Go from my Country. Mogadishu, 1978.

Washington Review—White Paper—'The Horn of Africa'. USA, 1978.

Basis of the Conflict in the Horn of Africa. Mogadishu, 1978.

Background to the liberation struggle of Western Somalia. Mogadishu, 1978.

Readers Digest. Vol. 113, No. 678. 10/1978.

East-West Digest. Vol. 14, Nos. 11 and 14. London, 1978.

War in the Horn of Africa. A firsthand report of the challenges for US policy. Official Report to the Committee of International Relations, US House of Representatives. USA, 1978.

March of the Revolution. Mogadishu, 1979.

Somalia's Arab, African and International Role. Mogadishu, 1980.

Speech delivered by President Siad Barre on 21 October 1980. Mogadishu, 1980.

The True Situation in the Horn of Africa and surrounding Region. Mogadishu, 1981.

Somali Culture, History and Social Institutions. I. M. Lewis. London, 1981.

Refugees, UNHCR. Geneva, 1981.

Short and Long Term Programme for Refugees. Mogadishu, 1981.

Hansard official Reports (Lords and Commons), (as per dates in Appendix 4). 1978–82.

Index

(Names of individuals who signed agreements in
Appendices I and II are not included)

- Abdi Hassan, 46
- Abdulkadir Mohamoud Issa, 75
- Abdullah Mollazadegh, 80
- Abdullahi Hassan Mahmoud, 57
- Abdullahi Ugas Mohamoud, 74
- Abel Kada, 78
- Abyah, 79
- Accra, 43, 98
- Adado, 73, 74
- Adal, State of, 6, 7, 21, 27
- Addis Ababa, 11, 28, 43, 48, 54, 55,
57, 59, 103, 105, 106
- Aden, 10, 12, 15, 18, 22, 29, 37, 78,
79, 82
- Adibaro, 25
- Adowa, 32
- Ahmed, Prince, 81
- Ahmed Al-Ghasmi, 60
- Ahmed Mohamed Adan, H. E., vi,
100, 101
- Ahmed Muhyaddin, 73
- Ahmed Murgan, 18
- Ailsa, Marquess of, vi, 103, 104
- Airey of Abingdon, Baroness, vi,
vii, 104
- Aisha, 43
- Aksum, 11
- Ali Hussein, 57
- Ambos, 25
- Amery, J., 100
- Amhara, 11, 46
- Amoretti, C., 20
- Ankobbar, 12
- Antonelli, Count, 21, 27
- Antonov, I., 104
- Arafale, 24, 25
- Arap, Moi, Pres., 80
- Aratad, 25
- Arbore, 25
- Arussi, 25, 27
- Asmara, 106
- Assab, 81
- Assal, Lake, 25, 27
- Atbara, 25
- Ayalew Wolde Giorgis, 100
- Bab-el-Mendeb, 1
- Baidoa, 72
- Bakool, 66, 75
- Bakri-Al, 6
- Bakri Saleh, 22
- Bale, 27, 62
- Barnby, Lord, vi, 103
- Barros, Joao de, 7
- Battuta, Ibna, 6, 7
- Beledwein, 73
- Benadir, 10, 41
- Bender Abbas, 6
- Bender Alula, 19
- Berbera, 2, 6, 7, 10, 21, 37, 84
- Bertie, P., 23
- Bevin, E., 41, 42
- Biyo-Kaboba, 28
- Borama, 27
- Bosaso, 2
- Borisov, Gen., 56
- Brava, 6, 7
- Brazhnev, Pres., 77
- Brzezinski, Z., 54
- Buhotle, 34
- Bulhar, 10
- Burka, 22
- Burton, Sir R., 8, 9
- Byers, Lord, 104
- Cairo, 44, 90