

Mohamed Siyad Barre as President of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), quickly converted this feeling of relief into the valuable currency of popular support for the regime. Yet, 12 years later, with the SRC disbanded and the President ruling by decree, the regime is without significant support and credibility. It is the purpose of this article to argue that the regime has outlived its usefulness; that it has created more problems than it has solved; that it has led the country into a dangerous political cul-de-sac; that President Siyad, as its unchallenged leader, must accept responsibility therefore and step down; and that no effort should be spared to bring home to him the folly of clinging to empty power. It will also be argued that this form of action cannot be a substitute for existing opposition movements committed to the overthrow of the President by force since, quite plainly, non-violent pressure, no matter how well-organized, is not likely by itself to have maximum effect.

II. The SRC Program & Commitments

The formal program of reforms announced by the SRC on seizing power was presented to the nation in the form of a charter (the First Charter of the Revolution). The program, divided into two main sections, is quoted below:

Internal Policy:

1. To constitute a society based on labor and the principle of social justice, taking into account the particular environment and the conditions of the Somali people;
2. To prepare and orient the economic, social, and cultural development in order to reach a rapid progress of the country;
3. To eliminate illiteracy and to develop the cultural heritage of the Somali people;
4. To constitute, as a matter of priority, the basic conditions for the development of a script for the Somali language;
5. To liquidate corruption, anarchy, tribalism, and every other form of immoral conduct in State activities;
6. To abolish the political parties, and
7. To conduct, at the appropriate time, free and impartial elections.

External Policy:

1. To lend support to international solidarity and national liberation movements;
2. To oppose and fight all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism;
3. To fight for the unity of the Somali nation;
4. To recognize fully the principle of the peaceful co-existence for all peoples;
5. To continue and preserve the policy of positive neutrality;
6. To respect and recognize all legal international commitments undertaken by the Somali Republic.

The announcement of the program was quickly followed by two well-publicized events.

The first was a press conference convened to underline the commitment of the new leaders to clean up the mess created by the civilian leaders and then return to their barracks. The President expressed this commitment thus:

We, jointly as the Armed Forces, here in Somalia, have taken or assumed power after having seen the danger that was threatening our independence and existence. We took power with the aim to normalize, to restore true democracy which was being threatened, to carry on all possible developments which would lead to progress and the prosperity of our people and *to hand over power again to a civilian government at an appropriate time and after that we will return to our barracks.* [Emphasis added.]

The second event was the appointment of a "Government of technicians" (the Council of Secretaries) consisting of 14 civilians and three members of the SRC, including the President who was its Chairman. The principles underlying the selection of the members of the Council of Secretaries were expounded by the President as follows:

As we announced before, these are the principles of the Supreme Revolutionary Council and the friends we called here are those selected to take over the country's leadership. This shows that the Revolution was not a matter purely of

taking over power. We took from Somalis and handed it over to Somalis. This selection has been made according to education, ability, responsibility and moral standing.

The President then went on to outline his own ideas as to how the new secretaries should discharge the responsibilities entrusted to them by the SRC thus:

We have handed over the country to you and we hope that you will fulfill and follow the principles of the Revolution. Our Country as you know, is poor, and its economy and education are backward. *You having the brains and education, and we having the strength and the Somali nation supporting us, let us now jointly work together to take our people and country out of ignorance, begging, hunger and disease.*

Let us first rely on our strength, on our ability and on ourselves. If something is left to be done, or a gap is still left to be filled, it is not then a shame to ask for assistance or help. But assistance should be something to support what you have done yourselves and not, as it used to be, that everything should be done for us by foreigners, or that we should wait for everything to come from foreigners. The government's program shall be worked out, but our principles should be based on the truth. We should not formulate a beautiful and detailed program which is worthless.

If we can cultivate only a single farm well, let us work on that farm and work hard on it. And, if we could do more, let us try. Our plans and projects should be realistic and formulated to the level of our ability and our education. [Emphasis added.]

On explaining that the country had some external enemies, such as imperialism that would work hard to prevent the implementation of the SRC programs he concluded his speech thus:

We should start from self-reliance; reliance on God and reliance on our country. If these three are achieved, God will lighten the burden for us.

Similar exhortations and pledges of support were addressed to civil servants and judges soon afterwards. For instance, sometime in December, 1969, President Siyad addressed a group of judges to explain the attitude of the SRC to justice. He opened his speech as follows:

If we glance at the recent history of our nation, we see that the entire machinery of justice nearly collapsed. But I do not want to put responsibility for that on any particular person or group . . . No matter who was responsible for it, what is clear is that justice was not what it should have been.

Having stressed that a new page had been opened by the Revolution of 21st October, he stated that the SRC did not want the judges "to imprison people for them," but rather "to safeguard justice, to work with confidence and without fear or favor." On defining the "pre-requisites of good justice" as "suitability, nationalism and understanding," the President concluded his speech thus:

The Supreme Revolutionary Council will provide all possible assistance and will bring before you anybody who tries to steal what we have in our coffers. *We want to give such people a fair trial.* [Emphasis added.]

In a speech on 9th November, 1969, in which the President firmly reminded members of the armed forces that they were servants of the people, he said:

Now that we have succeeded in our first step, and the people have supported us, applauded us, and come out in huge demonstrations for the sake of order, we have to work for them in the spirit in which they support us, and we must work for their interests in unity and honesty.

The President was not exaggerating when he referred to the initial popularity of his regime. Disenchanted with the performance of civilian governments, people were genuinely impressed by the pragmatism, good sense and realism of the re-

gime's program of reforms. Moreover, the clarion call to national duty, honor and unity; to justice and morality and to the war against hunger, disease, ignorance and imperialism were strongly reminiscent of the rise of Nassir in Egypt and of his long struggle against colonialism, zionism and local corruption and decadence. The fact that no Nassir could emerge from amongst the junta and that the regime's realistic program would be replaced by one based on Marxist-Leninist doctrine and rhetoric, was not apparant at the time, and the regime continued to be popular throughout the initial years of the 1970s.

III. Consolidation of Power by the SRC

As soon as the SRC came to power, it took immediate control of both central and local administrations. The SRC itself retained the power to enact laws; to approve the annual budget and accounts submitted to it by the Council of Secretaries; and to approve the nomination of all senior civil servants, judges and high officers of the armed forces. The administration of the Ministries was, however, entrusted to the Secretaries. Local administrations were abolished and replaced by Regional and District Revolutionary Councils headed by members of the armed forces directly appointed by the SRC.

Despite this formidable array of powers, the SRC felt in need of further authority in order to deal with any potential internal or external resistance to its plans. The assumption of this power took several forms.

The early nationalization of foreign banks and industries was not motivated by purely nationalistic or ideological reasons. It is certainly arguable that the object of nationalizing them was to remove the possibility of sabotage by their foreign owners and to acquire full control of the financial and economic power in the country. Similarly, the transfer of private schools and printing press into public ownership enabled the regime to supervise what was printed and taught in the entire land. Moreover, all employment by state organizations and private companies was brought under the effective control of the regime in 1972 when it was enacted that secondary school leavers and university graduates who had not undergone the prescribed orien-

tation and military training at Halane School should not be offered work. As the President put it euphemistically on April 10, 1974, "we have announced that those who show their sincere devotion to the cause of the Revolution and contribute their utmost to the fulfillment of its aims should be given preference in employment."

As those who were already in public employment were required to attend Halane, the regime had the opportunity not only to orient or indoctrinate them, but also to grade them on their loyalty to it. Those who were found lacking in this respect were dismissed even if they excelled in their military and ideological training.

It is probably true that Halane was at first designed to "tame" and "humiliate" the arrogant civilians who were apt to look down on the military as ignorant. Certainly, there was a widely-held opinion in the beginning that the members of the armed forces lacked the necessary qualifications to govern. Even Siyad appeared to share this belief as is shown by his remark made on the course of his address (quoted above) to the first "government of technicians" that "... you having the brains and education and we having the strength, let us now jointly work together." But the civilians themselves have not particularly displayed much distinction or achievement and the matter of dividing us into "learned" civilians and "ignorant" soldiers was largely without substance.

For the orientation of the general public, the regime devised the Public Relations Office (PRO)—later developed into the Political Office of the Presidency. One of the tasks of the PRO was to "work for the promotion of closer relations between the broad masses and the SRC." To this end, the PRO constructed national guidance centers known as orientation centers in every quarter of every town. A militia of *guulwadaayaal* (victory pioneers), consisting largely of teenagers of both sexes, was organized to enforce the attendance of the centers by the inhabitants of each quarter. The primary aim of the *guulwadaayaal*, however, was to drum up support for the regime and to ferret out its critics. As the President put it:

The insignia of the *guulwadaayaal* is the watchful EYE which symbolizes the vigilance of the

guulwadayaal in the interest of the nation. The EYE clearly signifies that the *guulwadayaal* can see the dishonest and anti-revolutionary... This EYE can never be deceived by the numerous hues and colors that the reactionary forces may use as a cover, under the burning EYE of the *guulwadayaal* there can be no hiding place for the wicked and no respite for the traitor and the anti-revolutionary.

The *guulwadayaal* who, as the President directed, should be drawn from "those sections of the population who were originally suppressed," were not paid, but they were given every opportunity to be trained and absorbed into the public service.

More sinister and formal than the *guulwadayaal* was the National Security Service (NSS). Relied upon by the regime as its main intelligence agency, it was commanded by a member of the SRC and was given lavish resources. There is some consensus of opinion among observers that the NSS was initially organized on the basis of advice from the KGB. The latter is also said to have provided training for members of the former. At any rate, the NSS emerged not only as an elite force, feared, though not respected, throughout the country, but also as a significant dispenser of patronage, with substantial parts of its secret funds syphoned off into private pockets. It must be said, in fairness, however, that its commandant, a pipe-smoking Sandhurst-trained officer, was no Beria. Nevertheless, the President is said to have made a habit of making direct contact with officers and agents of the NSS without going through the chain of command. This is not, of course, to say that the President approved of excessive zeal or independent action.

These apparatus of state control would be ineffective without the enabling legislation and the supportive judicial machinery. Hence, the abrogation of the constitution which had been initially partially suspended, the abolition of the writ of habeas corpus, the enactment of a security law and the establishment of the National Security Court.

During the civilian era, the Public Order Law of 1963, enabled public order authorities to maintain

basic law and order. Under this law, the Secretary of State for the Interior, the Regional Governors, the District Commissioners and Heads of Sub-Districts, being the public order authorities, could, in the performance of their duties, request the intervention of the army and other military and para-military corps of the state. Moreover, any person suspected of activities contrary to public order could, during a state of emergency, be detained for a period not exceeding 90 days. Such measures were, however, required to be notified promptly to the competent Regional Court for confirmation within thirty days from such notification. An appeal lay to the Supreme Court against confirmation.

Clearly, the Public Order Law was as inadequate in a revolutionary situation. A committed regime, with a program of far-reaching social and economic reforms in a deeply conservative and polarized society, such as ours, will always need to arrogate to itself more powers than would be acceptable under a democratic arrangement.

The new preventive detention law, passed in January 1970 by the SRC, empowered District and Regional Revolutionary Councils, as well as the NSS, to detain individuals who conducted themselves in a manner prejudicial to peace, order or good government, or who conspired against the SRC or acted against the "objectives and spirit of the revolution." Detentions under this law were required to be notified to the SRC, which had the discretion to order indefinite detention without trial or the removal of the suspects from the particular District in which they resided or happened to be at the time of their detention. No appeal lay against the decision of the SRC. In addition, the Penal Code was amended in the same month to bring the new order under the protection of its provisions. Legislation passed in September of the same year made it a capital offence "to harm the unity, peace and sovereignty of the country" and to make false propaganda against the regime and its policies.

The National Security Court, established in April, was given jurisdiction over all offences against the security of the state or against the new order. The stated object of the Court was to safeguard the "aims and objectives of the revolu-

tion." Consisting of a President, a Vice-President and two judges, the Court has its seat in Mogadishu but has Regional and District sections as well. The Court has its own Prosecutor who has power to arrest and detain persons as well as seize property.

The President and Vice-President must be appointed from amongst the members of the armed forces. The other judges may be members of the armed forces or of the Judiciary.

When the Court was first established, it consisted of SRC members and a civilian lawyer who later became a Minister. In the early days, the Court was presided over by the then Col. Mohamed Sheikh Osman, a member of the SRC. An urbane and pacific police officer, who read law at the local university, he endeavored to observe legal procedure and displayed proper judicial temperament. Acquittals were common in his Court and harsh sentences were seldom handed down. Unfortunately, his stay was not long and when the mercurial Col. (later General) Mohamoud Ghelle, a member of the SRC and army officer without any legal training or background, arrived, the Court was transformed into a veritable chamber of horrors. Seldom are the accused or their counsel or witnesses properly heard. Speed is the essence of the proceedings. Acquittals are rare, and savage sentences are the rule rather than the exception. General Ghelle's total loyalty to President Siyad as his leader and superior officer has impaired his judicial detachment and independence and there seems to be little doubt that under him the Court has become an effective instrument of control in the hands of the President.

The decisions of the Court are final. Originally, only a petition for mercy could be addressed to the SRC, but later a law was enacted which allowed appeals to be filed not only against the judgements of the Court but also against any final decision of any court.

Finally, the Security Court exercises jurisdiction over all civil controversies to which the State or the Government is a party. In other words, the regime has removed from the competence of the ordinary courts all judicial disputes in which it has the remotest interest. The uses to which this unprecedented concentration of powers first in the hands

of the SRC and then in those of the President will be discussed in the following sections.

IV. President Barre's Bid for Personal Power

Running parallel to the process of the consolidation of power by the SRC was President Siyad's bid for personal power. Since the SRC had already secured absolute power, as outlined above, the main task for the President in his quest for ascendancy was the emasculation of the members of the SRC and the retention of the army's allegiance. Given his position as the President of the SRC, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, his readiness to use the patronage of state without restraint and his undoubted cunning and sense of timing, he had obvious advantages to start with.

In his first overt move against the members of the SRC, he carefully chose his victims. Maj. Gen. Jama Ali Korshel, Vice-President and Secretary of the Interior, was arrested in April 1970 for an alleged involvement in a counter-coup. A group of civilian notables with diverse political, social and professional backgrounds and outlook were arrested with him. No members of the armed forces were apprehended.

The President might have chosen Gen. Korshel as first victim for one or more of several reasons.

First, the perennial friction between the police force and the national army, exacerbated by the personal rivalries between their early respective commandants, Gen. Mohamed Abshir, in detention most of the time since the takeover, and Gen. Mohamed Siyad Barre, meant that the removal of Gen. Korshel, Gen. Abshir's successor as commandant of the police force, would not be resented by the army.

Second Gen. Korshel, being an officer of equal rank and of a separate force, had never been a subordinate of Gen. Siyad as most other members of the SRC had. By ousting him the President would achieve the removal of a potential source of independent thinking, if not opposition, which could set a dangerous example to the military officers in the SRC.

Third, the removal of the General could have been intended simply as a warning that the Presi-

dent had the will and the means to deal with potential challengers of authority or leadership.

Fourth, Gen. Korshel was a pro-Western officer who had been appointed by a pro-Western government. His apprehension as an alleged tool of Western imperialism seeking to overthrow the revolution, could generate considerable support for the regime, as it could justify, in the eyes of the people, the projected development of closer relations with the Russians and the declaration of scientific socialism. Whatever the truth of the matter might be, the alleged conspiracy was blamed on Western imperialism, and the President embarked on a campaign of hatred and vituperation against the West. In one speech delivered to a crowd assembled in May 1970 to demonstrate the people's support for the regime in the wake of the alleged plot by Gen. Korshel and his civilian co-conspirators, the President warned:

To achieve our noble aims, there are many conditions that have to be fulfilled:

1. We must wage a relentless struggle against the colonialists and their puppets. This can only be done by uniting our forces and cooperating with each other.
2. To forget the imperialist designations that make some of us royal families and other slaves. I assure you that the Somali people are equal. There are no slaves. That is a myth. . . . I can only conclude my speech by saying "down with colonialism and neo-colonialism." *But I would like to remind you that the colonialists never leave they prey, unless they are forced to.* The remedy lies with us. [The emphasis added.]

Neither Gen. Korshel, nor the civilians arrested with him were brought to trial. Instead they were kept in isolation at an outpost detention center (Wajid) for some years and then released. The General was offered the Embassy at Lagos but turned the offer down.

A year later, the President was ready to take on the military officers in the SRC and in May 1971 another plot was announced by the Government to have been uncovered. This time Generals

Ainanshe, Vice President, and Gavere, a member of the Cabinet, were said to have led the alleged conspiracy. As both were senior army officers and members of the SRC, some care had to be taken to give the allegation a semblance of truth. Accordingly, a large number of influential civilians and army and policy officers were rounded up and accused of conspiring against the independence, unity and security of the state. Even former army officers were said to be involved: Major Abidkadir Dhel who was not a member of the armed forces at the time of the alleged plot was the most notable example.

The National Security Council, presided over by President Siyad's judicial hatchet man, Gen. Ghelle, delivered its long awaited judgement a year later (May 1972). The two Generals and Maj. Dhel were sentenced to death and 26 others to long prison terms. The death sentences were carried out publicly in July amid loud publicity intended as a warning to other army officers. There was no need to punish the civilians any further as they had already performed their function of providing the backdrop against which the conspiracy could be alleged to have been staged by the military officers, and they were released. Local observers of the tribal scene could detect in the arrests and executions a definite attempt by the government to apportion the blame amongst the clans but scant evidence of treason.

Mr. Abdirasak Haji Hussein, a former civilian Prime Minister, advances an interesting explanation of President Siyad's actions when he states: "You tried to get rid of all those who know you and your treacherous past in order to project yourself through false propaganda as a messenger from Heaven to the Somali nation." (See the text of his letter of resignation as Somalia's chief representative to the United Nations in the *Horn of Africa*, Vol. 4, No. 2 pp. 52-55.)

With the removal of Gen. Ainanshe, one of the three oldest military officers on the SRC, around whom younger disaffected officers might be tempted to gather, and Gen. Gavere, who was widely believed to have planned and presided over the execution of the first coup, the President translated his design to dominate the SRC into reality.

Consequently, none of the members of the SRC with the exception of Col. Mohamed Yusuf (Bashir) has been arrested¹ ever since although for the rest of the people arrests and executions continued unabated. These culminated in the execution of the ten *wadaads* (men of religion) and the long prison sentences passed against the others in 1975.

By July 1976, the President felt secure enough to disband the SRC and to announce the establishment of a socialist party purporting to be founded on the principles of scientific socialism. Although the former members of the SRC and the Council of Secretaries became automatically members of the central committee of the new party, the center of power was the five-member politburo under the effective chairmanship of the General. This was possible because the membership of the politburo was confined to the former members of the SRC who, as indicated above, had already been emasculated. At any rate, President Siyad took no chances and reinforced his position by law. Thus, Article 8 of the Third Charter of the Revolution enacted that "with effect from 1 July 1976 the Supreme Revolutionary Council shall have transferred to the political committee of the Somali Revolution Socialist Party, such powers relating to the government and direction of the country as were conferred upon it by Law No. 1 of 21 October 1969." Article 10 thereof provided that during the transitional period (five years) "preceding the promulgation of the constitution, the central committee of the Party shall confer the power to legislate on a special committee presided over by the Secretary General or his representative."

Under the constitution promulgated in 1979, the office of the President was assigned very wide powers. Among the powers thus conferred are: the power to appoint and dismiss Ministers, Under-Secretaries, the President of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and "senior officials of the State;" to preside over the joint meeting of the organs of the Party and of the State; to be the Head of State, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the President of the Defence State Committee and of the Higher Judicial Council. Furthermore, he has the power to dissolve the People's Assembly and to declare an emergency, in which case, he

may rule by decree. The President is also, of course, the Secretary General of the Party. This concentration of powers has made President Siyad Bare the supreme authority in the land.

As if to underline this fact he declared a state of emergency a year after the promulgation, suspended those provisions of the Constitution which were inconsistent therewith, and imprisoned such members of the Party Central Committee as had the temerity to comment adversely on the regime's legislative proposals during the debates of the People's Assembly.

The declaration of the state of emergency came as a complete surprise as did the stated ground therefore. Equally unexpected was the decision relating to the former members of the SRC "who have been recalled to correct the distortions in the progress of the Revolution of 21st October, 1969."² However, a cursory glance at the relevant Presidential decrees providing for the emergency reveals:

1. that the President has not, as he claims, re-constituted the SRC but has appointed former members thereof to boards of enquiry without executive or legislative powers;
2. that by removing former members of the SRC from their ministerial and civil service posts on the ostensible ground that they would then devote their energies to their duties on the said boards of enquiry, he demoted them further and acquired more powers. Thus, Gen. Mohamed Ali Samater lost the defence portfolio to Gen. Omar Masalle whose chief qualifications for the office appear to derive from Gen. Siyad Barre's confidence in his loyalty.³ Similarly, Gen. Ahmed Suleiman Abdalla relinquished his office as commandant of the NSS to Gen. Mohamed Jibril. Gen. Ismail Ali Abokor was also removed as President of the People's Assembly and was given the empty title of 3rd Vice-President of the Republic. Four other former members of the SRC lost their ministerial posts; those who held party briefs were also replaced. The President did not have to face the political embarrassment of appointing their successors, since he simply decreed that their deputies should take over from them. Of course, he had taken the precaution of appointing trusted officials as deputies in the first place, particularly in sensitive departments such as Defence and the NSS.

The reason for the declaration of the state of emergency may be gathered from a perusal of the

provisions of the constitution; although as explained above the President enjoys enormous powers under the constitution, yet it is axiomatic that every constitution, by the mere fact of delimiting the powers and duties of the organs of the state, introduces certain constraints on the powers of the chief executive. President Siyad Barre gave himself one year to accustom himself to such constraints when he included in the constitution the transitional provision that "laws in force now shall continue to be applicable provided that laws incompatible with the constitution shall be amended or abrogated within a year," and that "until the organs specified in this constitution are established, their powers shall be exercised by the organs now existing in the country" (Article 113). No legislation giving effect to this provision has hitherto been enacted, although the President of the People's Assembly publicly urged the government to submit for approval the relevant draft legislation.

Thus although the constitution was promulgated towards the end of 1979, its provisions were virtually suspended for a year as the President omitted to introduce the enabling legislative instruments. Instead of accepting the modest limits to his authority envisaged by the constitution, he declared a state of emergency and suspended the constitution itself within about a year of its promulgation. Yet, the circumstances cited by the President as the justification for the declaration of the state of emergency were undoubtedly present when the constitution was first promulgated. Those who are accustomed to absolute power seldom volunteer to give it up and the General is no exception.

V. The Use and Abuse of Power

What are the uses to which this unprecedented concentration of powers, first in the hands of the SRC and then in those of the President, have been put?

It seems reasonable to say that in the initial years when the President had to reckon with the SRC as a force independent of his authority, some useful work was done and the regime appeared serious in its effort to carry out the program inaugurated in the First Charter of the Revolution. Certainly, in

many ways, the first three years were years of hope and excitement. The writing of Somali, the literacy and the anti-tribal campaigns, the self-help and rural projects, all seemed to release in the people enthusiasm, energy, and national consciousness, especially in the young. Moreover, the regime quickly put on the statute book all the legislation necessary to provide the legal framework for its program.

Thus, Law No. 67 of 1 November 1970, declared illegal all associations of a tribal character, abolished all tribal titles (e.g. sultan) as well as tribal rights relating to land and water resources, and ended the collective responsibility of the *diya*-paying group for the delicts of its individual members. As soon as the law came into force, all liability for wrongful acts became that of the individual offenders and the main prop of tribalism was removed. It is true that the law was loosely drafted and therefore open to abuse, but it sought to terminate, at least in theory, the divisive aspects of that ancient curse, *abtirsiimo* (genealogy), which had been handed down to us from generation to generation like a genetic disease. Corruption and *afmiin-shaarism* (political brokerage and financial wheeling and dealing) were equally prohibited. Commissions for auditing public accounts (*xisaabi xil male*) were established. The declaration of scientific socialism, though not well-received, and the speeches of the President calling for political, social and economic change seemed initially to indicate a true desire on the part of the leaders to lay down the basis for a de-tribalized and dynamic society. Mr. Ibrahim Meygag Samater, a disillusioned former Minister in General Barre's Cabinet, refers to the policies of this period thus: "The policies and the work of the first few years of the Revolution, up to the tackling of the serious drought of 1974 were remarkable." (See his letter of resignation as ambassador in Bonn and from other governmental duties, in the *Horn of Africa* Vol. 4, No. 2 pp. 57-58.)

Of course, every regime is bound to do *some* good and President Barre's is no exception. But the brutal fact is that his regime has done far greater harm than good and has actually aggravated the problems it set out to solve in the first place. Thus tribalism, nepotism and corruption are not only

much more persistent and widespread than they were when he first came to power, but are also actually used as instruments of public policy. (This has been specially true since the Ogaden war.) The President's fulsome attacks on these evils and their denunciation in almost every major legislative and administrative acts of the regime have been used as a cloak to conceal the fact.

Nepotism under President Barre has been fully documented elsewhere (see, for example, the *Horn of Africa* Vol. III, No. 4 pp. 61-67) and no more than a passing reference will be made here to his practice of appointing "fellow clansmen" to positions of power in the army, civil service, agencies and government. The most notorious example of his nepotism was the appointment of his half-brother, Mr. Abdirahman Jama Barre — a man universally held to be incompetent and unfit for high office — as Foreign Minister at a time when the country needed to muster all its diplomatic resources. This appointment is a vivid illustration of the President's tendency to subordinate the public interest to that of the kith and kin. Mr. Samater gave us one of the grounds for his resignation (see above) what he described as the "irrational and insulting behavior of your Foreign Minister towards the handling of diplomacy of the nation." Most diplomats would express in private conversation their dismay at the extent of the harm the Foreign Minister is doing to the national interest.

Perhaps the most worrying instance of the President's policies was the punitive raids directed at certain inhabitants of the Mudug and Nugaal Regions in the wake of the attempted coup of April 1978. The main reason for this crude form of collective punishment was that its victims were said to belong to certain clans presumed to be dissident by the President. Both lives and property were deliberately destroyed in these raids. Not even Italian fascism would be so cynical as to destroy water ponds in a dry area and season. The fact that he offered compensation later on does not affect the enormity of conceiving and executing the measure in the first place. Is it not ironical that one of the regime's claims to achievement rests on its tackling of the 1974 drought?

The President's ambivalent attitude towards corruption is well known. The award of govern-

ment contracts, trading licences and state patronage in favor of fellow "clansmen" and of what he euphemistically calls "supporters of the Revolution" is not, for instance, corruption in his eyes — even if the said beneficiaries are not professional businessmen, and real businessmen with the proper machinery or network are excluded.

Every manifestation of corruption known under civilian governments exists today in an aggravated form and new ones have come into being. As a matter of fact, new terminology has been invented to reflect this development. Thus, "*hawlfududayn*" (that which facilitates work, or inducement fee) has replaced the more censorious terms such as *laaluush* (bribery). There is no need to expatiate on the recent upsurge of corruption. However, the cynicism must be remarked upon of a regime which executes minor functionaries and aids influential officials and *af-miinshars* to grow fat on state patronage and to loot public resources. In 1975, the President issued a famous circular in which he stated, among other things, that he was "aware" that prominent leaders and persons of high standing in the government and their wives, had been regularly using customs, airports and government aircraft for smuggling and racketeering purposes. So far, not a single senior civil servant, let alone members of the SRC and the Council of Secretaries, has been prosecuted for those offenses. Yet, according to legal resources, not less than nine minor public servants have been tried by the Security Court for corruption under the 1975 anti-corruption law and executed. Incidentally, this oppression of the weak and the dissident, and enrichment of the influential and the loyal, makes a mockery of the first objective of the regime's initial program, namely "to constitute a society based on labor and the principle of social justice . . ."

The central theme of the initial program is development of the "cultural heritage of the Somali people." This objective is expressed in the constitution as a duty on the state to "develop the progressive traditions and culture of the Somali people . . ." (Article 51). The provisions of Article 52 thereof also require the state to "preserve sound customs" and to liberate "society from reactionary customs and those inherited from colonialism, in

particular tribalism, nepotism and regionalism, etc.”

Some of the most positive elements of our culture are: individual liberty, equality between adult men and open and free judicial proceedings. The erosion of liberty and equality and the institution of group elitism has already been discussed. Traditional judicial procedures and their abridgement by President Barre's regime will be briefly discussed below.

Under customary law, an individual has the right to be heard by a panel of elders. If the members of the panel have an interest in the proceedings and fail to disqualify themselves, either party to the proceedings may object. Similarly, the right to object to interested witnesses is recognized. The right to be represented by counsel and the right of appeal to other panels are guaranteed, too. Moreover, no time-limit is set for filing suits, preferring appeals or addressing the panel. Proceedings are open and decisions are announced in public.

Clearly, we had nothing to learn from our colonial masters in so far as substantive rights relating to judicial proceedings are concerned. What we had to borrow from them were certain procedural rules designed to protect those rights, to introduce into our system discipline and time-saving devices, and to safeguard the interests of the new state. Thus the concept of an open court had to be qualified to allow proceedings to take place in camera for reasons of state security and of public health. The right to address the court and to file suits and appeals without any reference to time-limits had to be abridged to expedite proceedings and to discourage endless and unnecessary controversies.

Under President Barre's rule almost all traditional rights relating to justice have been set aside. Thus, in the case of the army officers (see above) who were accused of conspiring to overthrow the government (i.e. the SRC), the Judges of the Security Court who heard the case were members of the SRC. When the lawyers raised the issue, the Court summarily dismissed their objections as being based on foreign concepts. Yet, as pointed out above, the right to be heard by impartial adjudicators who have no interest in the proceedings is a fundamental rule of indigenous law.

Similarly, when some years later, the members

of the government overthrown by the SRC were being tried by the Security Court, the trial Judges were members of the SRC. The trial of the Ministers was so outrageously unfair that the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Igal, whose own trial was to follow immediately, decided not to submit to the trial procedures of the Court as it had no moral or legal authority to try him. He was not even allowed the chance to speak. He was promptly convicted and sentenced. The entire trial and deliberation took twenty minutes.

Perhaps the most scandalous trial in the entire history of Somalia is that of the *wadaads*. Sometime in early January 1975, the President delivered a speech to introduce the 1975 Family Law. Anticipating the hostility of the religious establishment to the provisions of this law which purported to amend certain clauses of the Holy Quran, he attempted to explain the attitude of the relevant *sura* (*Suurat-u-Nisaa'i*) to women. The President who prided himself on not reading his speeches from prepared texts, made the most outrageous and ill-informed statements about the Holy Book of the people. The nation was scandalized and the *wadaads* — its leaders in matters spiritual — sought to set the record straight.

The right to confer with one's advocate has also been abolished as a representative of the Prosecutor of the Security Court is by law required to attend all meetings between the accused and his counsel.

Moreover, another fundamental rule of customary law, namely the right of appeal to an independent panel has been abolished in respect of cases tried by the Security Court. Thus in the beginning, decisions of the Court were subject to appeals although petitions for mercy could be addressed to the President. Later, when law No. 38 of 1972 was enacted *all* final decisions of *all* courts, as explained above could be appealed to the SRC in theory and to the President in practice. Consequently men convicted of charges of conspiring to overthrow the government by Gen. Guelle, a senior member of the regime, have the only remedy of appealing to the very man who is the absolute leader of the very government alleged to have been conspired against.

What, in any case, is Somali, or for that matter

Islamic, about constituting oneself as the chief magistrate, the chief executive and legislator of the nation? Is the essence of Islamic government not *shura* or consultation? Was not the ruling body of the group in our pastoral life the *shir* (i.e. the council) which was open to all men who had reached the age of majority (15 years)? Is it not un-Somali and indeed blasphemous to call oneself the "Father of Knowledge?" Is Allah not the font of knowledge? Is the President not claiming the attributes of the Almighty when he forces all public employees — including Ministers — to open their morning duties at their various places of work and orientation centers with a hymn of praise to him collectively sung? Mr. Hussein — in his letter of resignation (see above) — does not mince his words when he comes to consider the President's divine pretensions:

You forced the people to worship you and to adulate you as the *Aabihii Aqoonta iyo Aabihii Ummadda* (The Father of Knowledge and the Father of the People) and to call you *Guul Wade Siyad* (Victory-bearer, Siad). What a vainglory and megalomania!!! Only a sick person can invest himself with such divine attributes.

The President is very sensitive to charges of exercising dictatorial powers. He points to the putative distribution of power among the People's Assembly, the Council of Secretaries, etc. The concentration of powers in his hands have already been discussed, but it is germane to mention here the nation's opinion of the People's Assembly and the opinion of a former Minister of the Council of Ministers in particular and on the President's autocratic tendencies in general. Popular view of the People's Assembly was succinctly and caustically expressed when it was dubbed "Golihii Sacabka," (The Assembly of Applause). Mr. Samater, a former member of the Council of Secretaries and the Central Committee of the SRSP, in his letter of resignation (see above) makes the following comment:

A few years later, the path you have chosen became obvious to all intelligent people; that you wanted to become the embodiment of all opinions, decisions, and law in the country; that

those around you and the people as a whole were to be reduced to mere instruments tuned to your whims and wishes. (Of the most painful, sad and indelible of my experiences were the council meetings: a collection of men on whose shoulders lay immense responsibilities; instead of meeting to debate and decide, honestly and truthfully, on the critical issues awaiting them, they were confronted with harangues, threats and insults and consequently meetings with no order and agenda. They would then disperse with gloom, with no solution for the problems of the nation. It was a pitiable scene and with no end in sight!)

The economic problems of the country are well-known and need not be discussed at length. Some, to be sure, stem from external factors while others (such as the pricing system which has virtually obliterated the banana industry) are of the regime's own making. The President blandly admits that the fall in production in the country is due to what he calls "the complexity of the economic structure." He might have added that the rampant corruption, black marketeering and the obsession of the urban Somali with making a "fast buck" inspired by his lavish dispensation of state patronage and of trade licenses in favor of his supporters have sapped the people's will to produce.

The President announced in October 1970 that scientific socialism would be the "cherished ideology" of the people. This doctrine was said to have been adopted because it was thought to be the only basis for a rapid economic and social development of the country. With the benefit of hindsight, we now know that the adoption of scientific socialism had more to do with the President's search for a powerful patron than with its intrinsic qualities as an instrument of social and economic development. In any case, now that the President is seeking another patron who does not look kindly upon this doctrine, he avoids any reference thereto in his speeches although he has not repealed all those public acts of the regime (the Second and Third Charters of the Revolution, the statute and program of the SRSP and the Constitution for instance) which unmistakably, purport to be founded on the principle of scientific socialism.

Of course, the adoption of scientific socialism

must primarily be seen as an abandonment of the initial program of the regime which, because of its pragmatism and good sense, the people seemed to support when the SRC seized power in the country.

The last item under the heading of "Internal Policies" in the program is the regime's promise "to conduct, at the appropriate time, free and impartial elections." A little later, the President solemnly undertook that after "restoring democracy" and carrying out "all possible developments" he would "hand over power to a civilian government" and the armed forces would then "return to our barracks." (See Section II above for the full text of his statement.)

The elections referred to were held in 1979. Not only no significant developments had been carried out before the election, but a major war had been lost and all the problems and social ills described in the preceding sections had been present. The elections were neither free nor impartial as the candidates were nominated by the SRSP and the electoral proceedings were supervised by party officials. Article 5 (f) of the Electoral Law enacted that a citizen could only be eligible for election as a deputy if he "adhered to the principles of the Revolution and to the party statute and program" (unofficial translation of the Somali text). Article 8 (1) thereof provided that "candidates in the election of the People's Assembly . . . shall be nominated by the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party."

Small wonder that the names of all the members of the Central Committee of the SRSP and of the Council of Secretaries appeared on the list as a matter of course and that of a total of 3,985,830 votes said to be cast, 99.91% were in favor. Incidentally, the estimated number of the population is generally put at 4 million. Somali official figures for 1975 were given as 5,200,000.

In any case, the President did not go back to the barracks as promised, but instead moved into the Presidential palace (Villa Somalia) which had been left vacant since 1969. This should have been foreseen for soon after making his famous promise he allowed his media and orientation centers to broadcast incessantly that familiar song, "*Caynaanka Hay*" (i.e. Keep Power). The refrain of this song runs: *Hay, hay, hay, Weligaa Hay*" (i.e. Keep, keep, keep; Keep (power) for Ever).

The same self-serving and irresponsible attitude is evident in the field of external relations.

Before October 1969, Somalia was obtaining aid from diverse sources. From the USSR it was obtaining substantial, industrial and military aid; from the West little military aid but appreciable economic assistance. And although on the whole the political leaders were pro-Western and the army pro-Russian, the country pursued a strict policy of positive neutrality. (Mr. Hussein, for example, calls the policy he had pursued as Prime Minister "a narrow but a secure path that permitted us to pursue a policy of strict non-alignment and to take position of international issues on their merit and case-by-case basis . . . without ever subordinating ourselves to would be 'benefactors' from abroad" (see above).

When President Barre came to power he undertook to continue this policy of positive neutrality; to fight imperialism; to seek the unification of Somali territories and to support liberation movements.

It has already been indicated on Section IV that the President identified the West, particularly the United States, as the imperialists he had undertaken to engage in battle. The formal adoption of scientific socialism in October 1970 added astringency to his already vituperative attacks on the Americans in particular and on the West in general. This early abuse of the West was matched by a lavish praise of the Russians. The world was no longer seen as consisting of sovereign countries among which Somalia was endeavoring to take a non-aligned stand in accordance with its best interests. Instead, it was viewed as being divided into ". . . broad divisions following two separate ways and opposing roads, namely the group represented by the capitalists, imperialists, colonialists and reactionaries on the one hand, and the camp of socialist countries . . .", on the other. (See the program of the SRSP, pp. 1 — unofficial translation.) The logic of this division dictated, not only that the SRSP should ". . . relentlessly oppose the imperialism, colonialism, racism, zionism and any other form of exploitation of man by man . . ." but that it should also foster ". . . co-operation and friendly relationship . . ." with the ". . . revolutionary movements of the world and the socialist

countries . . ." (see the statute of the SRSP, pp. 3 — unofficial translation of the Somali text).

A bizarre example of the practical application of this policy was an early Presidential circular which forbade Ministers and public employees to have social and cultural contacts with, or attend the official functions of Western embassies or Western businessmen or journalists without the prior approval of the President, in the case of Ministers, and of the Minister concerned in the case of civil servants. Similar restrictions to social, cultural or political intercourse with diplomats and experts from the "socialist camp" were not imposed.

In the end, the President's overzealous attempts to carry out this principle of his foreign policy to its natural conclusion led him to present a frail chest to Mr. Brezhnev's crushing bear-hug as his abject present pursuit of American influence and friendship is expected to lead him to put a weak hand in the merciless grip of Uncle Sam's handshake.

The President's decision to switch patrons was of course the outcome of the Russian support for Ethiopia in the Ogaden War. But, surely, he was so committed to his policy of friendship and co-operation with the Russians and of war with the Americans, that he is totally disqualified to effect the switch. The only honorable course open to him was to resign to give other leaders the chance to work out alternative policies.

As to his declared policy of working for the ultimate unification of Somali territories, the loss of the Ogaden war, the diplomatic war and of significant sources of arms have severely limited Somalia's ability to translate that objective into reality.

In these circumstances, it is fair to conclude that the President has been pursuing a program of clan and personal aggrandizement instead of implementing the formally declared policies of the regime, and that of all the declared "isms" he has been claiming to believe in, nepotism has turned out to be the only one genuinely embraced and actively practised.

Even in his program of clan-aggrandizement, he cannot be said to be wholly successful. The reason is simple. The majority of Somalis, including those who are said to share their kinship ties with the

President, (80% is a figure officially quoted) lives in rural areas and has not benefited from the regime's policies. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of those purportedly nourished by the President as clansmen, are as much exposed to the vicissitudes of the climate, such as droughts and floods, and the brutalities of external aggression as the rest of us. They are also victims of the consequences of his calamitous policies, being themselves members of the Somali nation. It is only a tiny minority of urban sharks who are busy exploiting Mr. Barre's penchant for nepotism. These monopolize Ministerial, senior civil service and army posts, government contracts and licences, overseas scholarships and medical facilities in European and American clinics at public expense. This has caused great envy and animosity, and it is likely that they will be at the receiving end of political reprisals in the future unless effective steps are taken *now* to remove the President and bring about national reconciliation.

The President and his advisers are quite wrong to believe that by the unprincipled use of state patronage, divisive policies and armed force, they can divide the Somali people for long and impose clan supremacy.

It is quite possible that his policies will take us to the brink of national catastrophe and ruin, but it is utterly impossible that his bid for permanent clan and personal ascendancy will succeed. It is, therefore, submitted that it is in the ultimate interest of those who consider themselves as the President's clansmen to seek his early removal from office.

VI. The Scope of the Opposition

It is to the credit of our people that individuals and groups have attacked the President in his pursuit of the policies outlined in the preceding sections.

Members of the religious community have paid with their own lives (see above) for their outright opposition to the regime's policies. Students in the country have also shown their opposition by distributing anti-government leaflets (e.g. in Erigavo, where many of them were tried by the Security Court and sentenced to long prison terms) and by donning Muslim dresses instead of the prescribed

school uniform (e.g. in Mogadishu, where many of them were detained for questioning).

There has been constant unrest within the army in spite of the fact that the President has purged and repurged it. The latest evidence of this unrest is the report in *The Manchester Guardian* (February 12, 1982) to the effect that the Eighth Army in Northern Somalia mutinied after the summary execution last month of several senior officers . . ." and that "11 officers were executed without trial." From the magnitude of the casualties (85 killed and 105 wounded — see *The Guardian* February 13, 1982) the mutiny appears to be a major one.

The President is so apprehensive that the slightest initiative on the part of individuals is interpreted as political opposition. For instance, the attempt of certain individuals to clean up Hargeisa hospital on a self-help basis recently has been blown up by the authorities into a big political incident. Anyone even remotely connected with the initiative has been detained and held incommunicado although there is a constitutional duty on the State to "encourage the principle of self-help." (Article 40). Amnesty International which puts the number arrested at 40 has published the names of thirty of them. They include teachers, doctors and businessmen and they face trial by Gen. Ghelle of the Security Court, where, as Amnesty International puts it, "internationally accepted standards for a trial are not observed." The organization is so concerned "that they may be ill-treated while in detention" that it has issued an urgent action memorandum (AI Index: AFR 52/01/82). The memorandum states that "all these were arrested following their participation in a voluntary self-help community project which started in early 1981 with the aim of improving the conditions in Hargeisa hospitals and schools."⁴

Mention must be made of the part played by poets, playwrights and song-writers who have openly commented in their works on the unscrupulousness and inadequacy of the regime's policies. There is, of course, the famous "Siinleey", a series of interconnected poems expressed in riddles and contributed to by a number of people, the most famous of whom are Mohamed Ibrahim, "Hadrawi", a university lecturer, and Abdi Qays and Gaarriye, also a university lecturer. The

first two were detained for a number of years. Hadrawi's plays have also been banned. "Deeleey", a similar series more recently composed, has been resented by the regime, which has arrested at least one of its contributors.

Two plays were staged, one in Hargeisa and one in Mogadishu by the official Radio artists, Waberi. "Xorriyo Nin Geyaa Ha Guursado" (Let freedom be Married Only to the Eligible) was staged in Hargeisa in 1980 in the presence of the President. The President who understood that the copious symbolism of the play was referring to him and his clan policies walked out of the theatre in such anger as could only be interpreted by his hatchet men that this effort by Waberi should be nipped in the bud. The play was instantly banned! "Muufaan Rabaa, Muffo Xalaalaan Doonayaa (I want Bread, Legitimately Earned Bread) was staged at Mogadishu in 1981. The irony of the situation is that the play was written by Abdi Muhumed who had composed in the early 1970s some famous songs extolling the Revolution and its leader including "Caynaanka Hay" — ie. Keep (Power) For Ever (see above). The fact that Mr. Muhumed now belongs to a guerrilla group organized abroad against the regime shows how deserted Gen. Barre's camp must be.

However, for obvious reasons, the most effective and open opposition so far organized is outside the country. There is of course the Somali Salvation Democratic Party (SSDF), an armed opposition group operating a radio station and preparing an invasion of Somalia from Ethiopia. The SSDF also publishes a periodical in English and Somali. There is also the Somali National Movement (SNM), a more recently established opposition group which publishes the monthly *Somalia Uncensored* in London.⁵

The Somali community in Britain, most of whom seem to belong to the SNM now, stage periodical demonstrations against the regime outside the Somali Embassy in London. Student bodies have also been vocal in the criticism of the regime. The United Somali Students Union in Western Europe publishes *Waberi* in Germany. *Waberi* is a relentless critic of the President. So is the Somali Students Association of North America which publishes a newsletter in the United States. The Association also conducts workshops, semi-

nars and other studies which seek, *inter alia*, to expose the fraudulent policies of the Somali leadership.

There is also the anonymous leaflets and publications periodically circulated outside the country which violently attack the regime. There are, for instance, *Waraf* (The Sling), a quarterly, believed to be published in Italy for the "Ururka Dib u Dhiska Bidixda Sommaaliyeed" (The Organization for the Reconstruction of the Somali Left); *Damal*, a leaflet published in Rome which is the official organ of the "Movimento Somalo per la Democrazia Popolare", the New Message which is published in London for the Somali Avant Garde League. All three organizations are underground organizations and cannot be officially contacted.

All groups are opposed to the granting of bases to the US, since they believe that President Barre's courtship of the Americans is not designed to serve the fundamental interests of the country; his main concern being how to stay in power at any cost.

Mr. Nurrudin Farah, the well-known Somali novelist and exile, has emerged as a major critic of the President and his regime. In his last two novels, *Sweet and Sour Milk* and *Sardines*, he has categorized the regime as a clan and fascist dictatorship. Mr. Farah insists that his novels are documentary and that the last two are a true account of events which have actually taken place in Somalia. If this is true, then the President may be said to be guilty of ordering or covering up torture, rape and murder.

The Horn of Africa, a learned quarterly published in America, has undoubtedly also proved to be a serious critic of the Somali regime. That its objective criticism has drawn blood is demonstrated by the extraordinary manner in which the Somali permanent representative to the United Nations, Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Adan, is said to have tried sometime ago to influence the Somali members of the editorial board. The ambassador who had apparently threatened to cause them to be deported from the United States and to cause their journal to be banned, was politely but firmly instructed in an editorial on the differences in obtaining deportation and banning orders in New York and Mogadishu.

The SNM and the SSDF are both committed to

the violent overthrow of the regime. The preparation of an external invasion of any country is a difficult, dangerous and laborious affair. Where there exist special problems, as in the case of Somalia, the matter is complicated even further. At the best of times, the timing and execution of an external invasion is dependent on the governments whose territories and financial or logistic backing are being used. When the invasion is undertaken in the absence of popular support and of unity among opposition groups, the price exacted by those governments for their backing becomes prohibitive.

In any case, any overthrow of the regime, violent or otherwise, should be preceded by strenuous efforts to reconcile the Somali people and unite opposition groups. This will not only facilitate the desired change but will also make such change less dangerous. This is why this article confines its proposals to those which are likely to command the support of a cross-section of the Somali people and to provide the basis for preliminary discussions.

VII. The Gullible and/or Guilty Men

There are many officials in the public service of all ranks who have refrained from participating in the general scramble for riches which is now in progress in the country and who either criticize the regime's policies in the course of their duties or actually seek to prevent them from being carried out. Some of the more senior officials pointedly express to the President their concern about his policies.

Many of them believe their presence within the Cabinet, People's Assembly, party hierarchy or civil service helps reduce the damaging effects of his presidency. Mr. Ibrahim Megag Samater was one of those who had held such belief before he resigned. In his letter of resignation (see above) he explains how men of intelligence and integrity can convince themselves that their continued presence in high office is desirable in the public interest in spite of evidence to the contrary.

While they cannot be accused of deliberate collaboration with the President in his destructive policies, those who hold political office must bear political and constitutional responsibility for the acts and policies of the regime of which they are members. When these acts and policies were on

the whole reasonable, as in the early days of the regime, such responsibility was not onerous. Now that the country has been brought to the brink of ruin because of those very policies they cannot seek comfort in the notion that, although they hold high office, they have no power to stop them and that they oppose them in private, in any case. It is an inescapable fact that by accepting high political office without real power they have allowed the President to use their name and prestige to conceal his monopoly of power.

The former members of the SRC, for instance, bear great responsibility for the judicial murder of the ten *wadaads* (see above). Not only was the arrest and trial ordered in their name by the President, but, under the terms of Law No. 38 of 1972, they were the court of final appeal which rejected the *wadaads'* appeal against the decision of the Security Court. The fact that some of them learnt of the execution from Radio Mogadishu news bulletins, is not a mitigating circumstance as none of them publicly protested his exclusion from the deliberations or resigned. Even now, by remaining silent when the President is committing the fraud of pretending that he has reconstituted the SRC (see above) when he has not, they are aiding him in his scheme.

The above is only one of the many examples of collective responsibility which results when men in public life, no matter how well-meaning, allow the power of the offices they hold to be exercised elsewhere and in the private interest of others.

In these circumstances it is submitted that their stay in power is detrimental to public interest and that whatever good they are doing is far outweighed by the harm they are causing. Indeed, it is their national duty not only to desert the President but to force him out of office also.

VIII. Conclusion and Proposals

From the above discussion the following conclusions may reasonably be deduced:

1. That the Presidency of Gen. Mohamed Siyad Barre constitutes an attack on the honor, unity and interest of the Somali nation and must, therefore, be recog-

nized as a national catastrophe which should be terminated;

2. that the many men who continue to hold high office without power are not, contrary to their beliefs, in some cases honestly held, salvaging anything from the ruinous rule of Mr. Barre, but are instead maintaining him in power and must therefore be held to share the moral and, in some cases, the political, constitutional and legal responsibility therefore;
3. that the existing opposition groups, themselves being polarized on clan lines, are unable to forge a united front strong enough to challenge the General's authority, and that in view of their commitment to his overthrow by force they have neglected to explore less dramatic modes of opposition as well;
4. that only a broad-based national movement seeking national, just and honorable ends can hope to unseat him and to contribute to the creation of a viable alternative leadership;
5. that Somali clan politics as traditionally and recently practiced is a threat to the existence of the nation and unsuited to the needs and complexity of a modern state; and
6. that the exploration of ways of regenerating national consciousness and effecting national reconciliation in place of the polarization and sectional strife engendered by Gen. Barre's irresponsible and divisive policies can no longer be left to the government and must be treated with the urgency it deserves.

The light of the above conclusions, the following modest proposals are put forward as starting points for the national discussions envisaged in this article:

1. The President must be urged in no uncertain terms to step down and to open immediate negotiations with a view to dismantling his clan-based regime.
2. Senior Somali officials should equally be urged to resign their offices and to contribute to efforts designed to force the President out of office.
3. Existing opposition groups should be called upon to endeavor to widen their membership so as to remove the polarization that exists between them and to declare their commitment to a national rather than a sectional program.
4. Adequate arrangements must be made for the maintenance of pressure on the said President, individuals and groups.
5. There ought to be devised general guidelines for a future program of action should the President dismiss, as he is expected to do, the call on him to resign.

For these modest steps to have effect, they must be supported by a cross-section of opinion. For this

reason, it is believed that national figures of good repute as well as students and others should be invited to consider the above proposals. Persons who have become notorious for their tribal attitudes or for anti-national activities should not be approached. Nevertheless, no one should be invited or excluded on clan grounds as the object of the whole exercise is the rejection of tribalism as a valid basis for public policy. Active members of opposition groups ought not to be invited as this might create the impression that they are being enticed away, but their organizations should be informed of the proposed action. This is vital because what is envisaged is not the creation of a rival opposition group and any misunderstanding on that score must be avoided.

Notes

For a listing of the names of the authors of this article, please see the end of the article. (Appendix IV).

1. This is no longer true, Gen. Ismail Ali Abokor and Col. Isman Jeelle, both members of the SRC, have recently been arrested, along with other senior members of the regime, on a charge of conspiracy to commit a "nation-destroying scheme." The details of these arrests and their significance are given in both Appendices I & II.

2. The SRC was again disbanded and the emergency lifted only to be re-imposed in areas adjacent to Ethiopia, where SSDF forces claim to have recently occupied.

3. President Barre's trust in Gen. Masalle has proved short-lived as the latter has been arrested along with Gen. Abokor and Col. Jeelle as co-conspirator (see Appendices I & II for details). Gen. Mohamed Ali Samater has regained the President's confidence and thus has been reinstated as the Minister of Defence.

4. They have been tried since and given long prison sentences, the maximum being 30 years. Allegations of torture have intensified and one of them, Mr. Mohamed Barud, is said to have been paralyzed as a result of torture. Many arrests have since taken place throughout the country — the most notable being that of the senior officials referred to above.

5. The SNM moved to Ethiopia and ceased publication of *Somalia Uncensored*, while SSDF has claimed that the forces which have recently invaded certain areas in Somalia belong to it. President Barre, who has so far failed to dislodge them completely, claims that they are Ethiopian forces. The Western media appears to support his version. Ethiopia denies any involvement by her forces. However, one report sent to the BBC from Addis Abeba suggest that Ethiopian forces engaged in a retaliatory raid are involved. In his capacity as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the President's failure to defend the national territory has been accompanied by murmurs of disbelief and disillusionment (both inside and outside the army) and he has embarked on his customary routine of purges and arrests.

APPENDIX I

An Open Letter To Major-General Mohamed Siyad Barre, President of Somalia

Mr. President,

You will no doubt recall that during your American visit in March, you met with a few Somali students in Washington, the majority having refused to meet you; that one of those present wanted to know why you should not leave office as most of your major policies had failed and that you replied you had tendered your resignation on many occasions but your colleagues wouldn't hear of it.

Mr. President, *you* know and *we* know that this is not true; that most members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), the Politburo of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP), the Central Committee (CC), and the Council of Ministers are not your colleagues but puppets and that going through the motions of tendering your resignation in the course of a secret huddle with your henchmen does not amount to a genuine offer to relinquish power and may reasonably be dismissed as mere gimmickry. If, for instance, you had openly resigned on our defeat in the Ogaden war, as Nassir had done at the end of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, you could have effectively refuted any suggestion that you love power for the sake of power. But, then, you are no Nassir, Mr. President, and your propensity to cling to office is well documented and widely known.

It is, of course, possible, indeed probable, that you have come to believe the fulsome praise heaped upon you by your propaganda machine and sychophants, and that you see yourself as the Father/Teacher of the Nation. The fact that you are neither the "Father" nor the "Teacher of the Nation" but its tormentor is briefly explained in this "Consultative paper." (You will see that in the interest of brevity we have refrained from discussing in detail your disastrous economic policies.)

Our object in addressing this open letter to you and in proposing to organize further petitions from Somalis whose objection to your regime is primarily based on public/national than private/sectional grounds, is to demonstrate — not least to you —

the absurdity of your claim that your regime enjoys the support of the nation.

The main source of danger at the present time is the army — sections of which might stage a sudden and bloody coup. You will probably dismiss this as arrant nonsense and feel reassurance in the assumption that since you have packed the army with your "tribesmen" it is unlikely to unseat you. We agree that you have indeed so packed the army. How successfully you have done that is pointed out in a recent article in the *Horn of Africa* (Vol. 4, No. 3, 1981) by Osman Mohamoud (a pen-name), where it is said that in 1969 the army officers from your "clan" numbered only 4 whereas today "it is estimated that about 60% of the officer corps are from his clan." The article further points out that "the Mogadishu sector's tank and rocket units are essentially a tribal force organized to prevent and put down any military coup attempts."

Why then, should your "kinsmen" topple you? Why shouldn't they be grateful for all that you have done for them and show their gratitude by maintaining you in power? We shall set out below only a few of the many reasons why we believe your "kinsmen" constitute a greater source of danger to you than of protection:

1. Tribal loyalties in the Somali traditional system has no permanently fixed point of reference and travels up and down the scale of kinship like a yo-yo. And power founded on such unstable base is vulnerable to both gradual erosion and sudden disintegration. Thus in the initial years of your rule you undoubtedly had a national power-base with a cross-section of the Somali people supporting your policies. As the hypocrisy of those policies became increasingly apparent your support in the country took on the character of clan solidarity. In other words, you became a clan leader.

As time went on, it became clear that you were not even a committed or an impartial clan chief. The various sections of your clan began to be suspicious of your motives. One of the grounds usually cited as the basis of this suspicion is the appointment of your half-brother, Mr. Abdirahman Jama Barre (a man universally accepted as incompetent) as Foreign Minister when there were other members of your clan with far better credentials.

As a matter of fact, it is often said that the reason why Mr. Samater (better known as Ga'alliyeh), the former Ambassador to France and Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs, has chosen self-imposed exile in Paris is that he sees himself as a better candidate for the job than your half-brother. Whatever his real credentials, Mr. Samater is certainly the more competent and experienced of the two.

The conflict within your own clan is evidenced by your recent arrest of two of its prominent members, namely Dr. Mohamed Adan Sheikh and Gen. Umar Haji Mohamed, both also senior members of your regime, on the grounds that they have been plotting a coup. If, in fact, they have conspired against you, then our present contention is proven, but if they have not, our other argument that you accuse and execute people on false charge of conspiracy is established.

2. Traditional clan politics has undergone a substantial change and is no longer what you understand it to be. An almost quarter of century of independence and advancement has had its effects, and although, admittedly, the overwhelming majority of Somalis are still nomads the affairs of the country are conducted by the urban minority exposed to the said influences. Consequently, many members of your clan do not see themselves as "tribesmen" and are prepared to support you only on a national basis. This means that although you, in your pastoral perverseness, insist on considering them as a source of automatic and "natural" support, they do not feel bound to you in any way — especially if your policies are manifestly detrimental to the interests of the nation.

3. Even those members of your clan who are prepared to support you for tribal reasons are fully aware that your policies are isolating them from the rest of the people for dubious gains. They, moreover, know that they cannot put the future of the clan in the balance by committing themselves fully to a moribund regime led by an unpopular and ageing despot. In particular, they do not want to be associated with your deliberate persecution of other sections of the Somali people on tribal grounds. An example of this victimization which no one will endorse is the punitive raids ordered against certain inhabitants of the Mudug and Nu-

gaal regions after the attempted coup of April 1978. In these raids which were tribally motivated both lives and property (including water-ponds) were destroyed (see Section V of this paper). You will recall, Mr. President, how your subsequent offer of compensation for the murder of innocent women and children failed to assuage the pain and anger aroused by this outrageous measure.

4. Another example of your cynical policies which your "clansmen" cannot back up is the arming of certain clans so that they may attack others presumed to be hostile to the regime. (Although this stratagem has fortunately failed, there remains to be solved the difficult problem of disarming the population in the future.)

5. The army officers and men on whom you rely for the defence of your regime merely because they are your "clansmen" do not have a community of interest with the urban sharks who drum up tribal support for you in return for government contracts, trade licences and other forms of state patronage. Why should they suffer loneliness, hardship, danger and guerrilla attacks in the outposts of the country in order to protect a tiny band of affluent men enjoying the "good life" in the capital city and the big towns. The fraying ties of tribal kinship cannot bind these two categories of people together. There must be a tangible and substantial common interest to inspire such self-sacrifice.

6. Patriotic army officers and men, whatever their clans, are motivated more by their professional pride and loyalties than by some hazy notions of clan solidarity. They will find it difficult to forgive you for the avoidable defeat inflicted on our forces during the Ogaden war and for your near destruction of an army which had been the pride of the nation before your divide-and-rule policies set the nation against it.

Similar considerations equally apply to the rest of the people. Even the new elite you have created are anxious to be rid of you because they want to enjoy their new wealth and status in peace, freedom and safety.

That no one wishes to be associated with you is evidenced by the recent arrest of seven very senior members of your regime who were once loyal and trusted aides: Gen. Ismail Ali Aboker, Vice-

President, Politburo and SRC member; Col. Isman Mohamed Jeelle, Senior Party official and member of the SRC; Omar Arteh Ghalib, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of the CC; Mohamed Yusuf Weyrah, former Minister of Finance and member of the CC; Gen. Umar Haj Mohamed, Minister of Health and former Minister of Defence; Dr. Mohamed Adan Sheikh, former Minister of Information and a member of the CC; Warsame Ali Farah, member of the CC. An official statement on the arrests asserts that they have been engaged in plotting "a nation-destroying scheme." We do not believe that they have been so engaged since they do not have anything in common which can form the basis for the mutual trust needed for hatching a conspiracy. On the contrary, we maintain that you are the one who is engaged in "a nation-destroying scheme."

In these circumstances, we feel it our duty to call upon you to relinquish the leadership of the country in the interest of your nation, family and personal safety and to start to negotiate for a safe exit before it is too late. If, in spite of the efforts of the Somali people you persist in self-delusion, we shall not be disheartened. Failure to persuade you to resign will merely reinforce the people's resolve to seek your removal from office. However, we sincerely hope that you will see that your continuation in office will imperil not only the integrity of our nation but also your personal safety and the future of the members of your family.

APPENDIX II

An Open Letter to all Ministers, Undersecretaries, members of the Central Committee (CC) of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) and of the People's Assembly (PA) in Muqdisho, Somalia.

Dear countrymen and women,

We address you collectively because you have political and constitutional functions and responsibilities in common. It is true that not all members of the People's Assembly (171) are Ministers or members of the Central Committee (74, disregarding defections and detentions). It is, however, also true that Ministers are members of the CC and that all members of the CC are members of the PA.

Moreover, you are all members of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party and as such adhere to the Party Statute and Program — Article 5(f) of the Electoral Law (Law No. 43 of December 1, 1979).

In any case, you have all taken the following oath of office under Articles 73 & 90 of the Constitution:

I swear in the name of God and the country that I shall faithfully, loyally and completely serve the Somali people, carry out the principles of the 21st. October Revolution, observe the provisions of the Constitution and the law of the land, promote the principles of socialism, safeguard the general interests of the Somali people and State, defend to the best of my ability the freedom, independence and unity of the country.

Furthermore, Article 9 of the Constitution have sworn to uphold, establishes the principle of collectivity in the conduct of State functions. Thus, the members of the PA, the members of the CC and the Ministers are required in their deliberations to act collectively. Paragraph 2 of this Article goes even further when it enacts that "within the organs of the Party, the application of this principle requires unity in doctrine, in consciousness and will and in action."

Article 7 of the Constitution confers on the SRSP "supreme authority over the leadership of the political, economic and social affairs of the Somali Democratic Republic" while Article 8 thereof provides that the country's "leadership shall be based on the unified political leadership of the Party and of the State shall be exercised on the basis of the principle of democratic centralism."

Under Article 67 of the Constitution, the members of the PA (i.e. all of you) are collectively responsible, among other things, for electing and for removing from office the President of the Republic; for approving the budget and development programs of the Government and for enforcing "the doctrine of accountability within the Government and its members."

Article 11 of the Constitution gives formal recognition to the Statute of the SRSP. Under Article 8 of the said Statute, the members of the CC exer-

cise control over the Politburo, which should submit to it periodical reports on its activities.

Furthermore, the members of the CC are responsible for proposing the "candidate for the Presidency of the Republic" — Article 80 (1) of the Constitution — and for electing the Secretary General of the Party under Article 13 of the Statute.

Finally, the Ministers are collectively responsible for the decisions and the actions of the Council of Ministers under Articles 86 & 87 of the Constitution as read with the above mentioned provisions.

So, you have taken an oath before God and before the country to safeguard the present constitutional system which maintains President Siyad Barre in power and to promote scientific socialism. More directly you have actually proposed his candidacy and/or elected and re-elected him and you have failed to turn him out of office.

Quite plainly you are, therefore, collectively responsible for his public acts. The fact that he is a despot and that you have, therefore, very little control over public policy does not diminish your collective responsibility, but exposes you to the further charge that by staying in office you enable him to get away with his false claim that he is operating under a constitutional system when in fact he is exercising absolute power.

Moreover, your argument (originally apparently of some substance) that you stay in office in order to minimize the damaging effects of President Barre's policies is not now supported by the facts of the situation. Your former colleagues Messrs. Ahmed Mohamed Siilaanyo and Yusuf Mohamed Abu Raas have now resigned on the grounds that to continue holding office is tantamount to deceiving the nation. At least Siilaanyo said so on a recent BBC interview in London. Both men spoke against the regime at a 26th June celebration party in East London. (For much earlier and more detailed explanation of resignations by Mr. Abdirasaak Haji Hussein and Mr. Ibrahim Meygaag Samater, see their letters in *Horn of Africa*, vol. IV, no. 2.)

Finally, we wish to draw your attention to the fact that by remaining in office (note we never say "in power"), you actually expose yourselves to an eventual purge by the President. Section IV of this article discusses his progressive persecution of

loyal colleagues. The latest instance of this is the recent arrest of seven very senior colleagues of yours:

1. Maj. Gen. Ismail Ali Aboker, Vice-President, Deputy Secretary General of the SRSP, Member of the Politburo and of the disbanded SRC and former President of the PA;
2. Col. Isman Jeelle, former member of the SRC, head of a Party bureau and member of the PA;
3. Omar Arteh Ghalib, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, member of the CC and a senior committee member of the PA;
4. Dr. Mohamed Adan Sheikh, a former Minister of Information, and member of the CC;
5. Mohamed Yusuf Weyrah, A former Minister of Finance and a member of the CC;
6. Gen. Umar Haji Mohamed, Minister of Health, recent Acting Minister of Defence and member of the CC;
7. Warsame Ali Farah, member of the CC.

A formal official statement asserts that they have been plotting "a nation-destroying scheme" and that they will be brought to trial in due course. All of them have at one time or another been trusted and loyal supporters of the President. None of them are believed to have conspired against the regime or the nation. They have no political, professional or "social" views or interests in common. What they probably share is the stunned silence and seething resentment at the President's excesses now felt by most Somalis, including the overwhelming majority of you. Yet they have been unceremoniously tossed into prison for the flimsiest of reasons. We sincerely believe that a similar fate is awaiting most of you. That is why we maintain that it is safer to be out of office than to be a member of President Barre's regime.

For the reasons stated above we put to you: that you are in no position to influence the policies or curb the abuses of the President; that you bear collective constitutional, political and, in some cases, personal responsibility of those policies and abuses, and that by your continued membership of his regime you are exposing yourselves to be almost certain eventual purge as well as to probable indictment by subsequent administrations.

Of course, we realize that it is very well for outsiders to make moral judgments in the relative safety of exile. We also recognize that serious per-

sonal and family issues are involved in resigning, particularly from dictatorial regimes. Moreover, we agree that some of you have carried out distinguished and selfless public service and have resisted the temptation to use your offices to enrich yourselves and your families. Nevertheless, we believe that you will serve your people and yourselves better outside the regime than in it.

Accordingly, we call upon you, in all humility and with great reluctance, to relinquish all your present responsibilities and thereby rid yourselves of the burden of an oath of office, the terms of which you cannot meet under existing arrangements.

APPENDIX III **An Open Letter to all Somali Diplomats**

Dear countrymen-and-women,

The purpose of this letter to you is not to lecture you on how to go about your business, but to demonstrate that, although you belong to a noble and rewarding profession, your official activities far from pursuing the accepted ends of diplomacy serve one paramount purpose: that of maintaining President Mohamed Siyad Barre in power at all costs. The presentation of our argument requires a brief discussion of the functions and methods of modern diplomacy and of the qualities diplomats must have if they are to succeed in the performance of their duties. Any impression of lecturing in our letter is purely incidental and unintended.

Diplomacy, in the broad view, seeks to perform four main functions: (a) It determines the objectives of its own state, having regard to the actual and potential power available for the pursuit of national objectives; (b) it assesses the objectives of other states and the actual and potential resources available for the pursuit of those objectives; (c) it ascertains the degree of affinity or conflict among the various objectives; and (d) it uses the most appropriate means for the pursuit of the said objectives.

Failure to carry out any of these functions may cause the breakdown of foreign policy and may eventually lead to war. The most recent and spectacular example is the failure of British diplomacy to foresee or take seriously Argentinian plans and

preparations for the invasion of the Falkland Islands, and the failure of Argentinian diplomacy to discover in advance the determination of the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, and the British people to recover the Islands by force. Argentinian diplomacy also overestimated Argentina's ability to defend the Islands in the event of British counter-attack. The disastrous results of these miscalculations are well-known and need not be set out here.

The methods used to perform the functions of diplomacy are said to be compromise, persuasion and the threat of force. One of the most important prerequisites of successful diplomacy is the ability to put the proper emphasis on the right method at the right time.

The machinery at the disposal of diplomats for executing their tasks consists of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the capital of the country concerned and the diplomatic representatives that country sends abroad to gather and evaluate information. It has been said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the brains of policy while diplomats are its eyes, ears and finger-tips.

But the activities of diplomatic envoys are not confined to the gathering and evaluation of information, although this constitutes a vital aspect of their responsibilities. Their activities are usually classified by textbook writers as representation, protection, negotiation, reporting and promoting friendly relations.

It is not necessary for us to discuss these activities in detail. We will merely say, in passing, that it is the accuracy of the diplomat's reports to his country, the quality of his judgment and his ability to "sell" that country's foreign policy to the leaders of the state to which he is accredited, on which depends the success of the said foreign policy. The function of protecting his fellow citizens who are within the boundaries of the host state has assumed added importance (in the case of Somali diplomatic missions) since many thousands of Somalis who have fled President Barre's oppressive rule now live outside the country.

Faced with the complexity of his tasks, an Ambassador, for instance, must be well-informed on the affairs of the host country. He also needs to have specialists, e.g. military and commercial at-

taches, to assist him with work. Furthermore, there should be mutual trust and cooperation between the staff of the Embassy. He and his diplomatic staff, moreover, must possess many important qualities of character and mind. The writers, Henry Wriston (*Diplomacy In a Democracy*) and John Wood (*Diplomatic Ceremony and Protocol*) have, for instance, specified thirteen qualities. Of these, we mention below only several:

1. The ability to grasp a situation and possession of the necessary general knowledge to guide his response thereto;
2. the ability to maintain a cool judgment in the face of a problem;
3. a good grasp, but not necessarily specialist knowledge, of economic affairs;
4. the ability to engage in an intellectual and understanding discussion and to avoid controversial debates;
5. the ability to speak foreign languages;
6. the ability to accomplish fair and peaceful settlements; and
7. the discipline to resist using immoderate language.

Of course, in addition to the acquisition of the "technical" skills, the diplomat must possess the "moral" qualities. Without these, his professional abilities will never achieve the desired results. Thus, it is a fundamental assumption of the diplomatic profession that the word of an Ambassador is to be believed. After all, one of his chief aims is to get, and retain, the confidence of the host country's government. This means that a diplomat must refrain from making false statements whether on his own initiative or on the orders of his government, for when he does make them he puts his government in a position where it assumes full responsibility therefore. A diplomat has the option of side-stepping, or of refusing to answer any awkward questions. It is only in time of war that the practice of withholding the truth may be justifiable for reasons of fundamental national interests (e.g. the recent Falkland Islands' conflict in which both sides, though to varying degrees, manipulated the delivery of information). This, incidentally, is not only our view but that of scholars and diplomats such as Dr. Seif El-Wadi Romahi. This noted Arab scholar and diplomat, on whose recent book, *Studies in International Law and Diplomatic Practice* (1980, published in Tokyo by Data Labo

Inc.) we have gratefully relied on in our statement of the above principles. It may, therefore, be assumed that in stating them we are not quoting just Western notions of diplomacy culled from dusty and dry tomes on international relations but generally accepted rules of diplomatic practice. Indeed, the moral standards of Islamic diplomacy (also discussed in Dr. Romahi's book) were no less rigorous than those expected of modern diplomats.

So much for the objectives, methods and values of diplomacy in general. We now examine the extent to which Somali diplomacy and diplomats are committed to these objectives, methods and values.

We maintain that the chief preoccupation of current Somali foreign policy is the retention of President Mohamed Siyad Barre in power. This subordination of the pursuit of national interests to the preservation of the personal and political fortunes of the Barre has distorted the functions, objectives and values of our diplomatic corps.

Thus, the four principal functions of normal diplomacy outlined above have been superseded by others more suited to the pursuit and accomplishment of this new overriding aim. Of the others we will mention only three: to find a foreign patron, preferably a superpower, willing and able to protect the regime; to discover, dissuade, punish or neutralize the critics and opponents of the regime; and to reward its supporters.

In the early days of the regime, when it enjoyed the full support of the Russians, the President had no need of other patrons and could afford to be abusive and hostile to Western countries, especially the United States, and what he used to call the fascist and reactionary regimes of the Third World. Then he proclaimed scientific socialism on every roof-top or tree-top he could climb. The price he had to pay, and willingly paid, for this patronage was the formal establishment of scientific socialism in the country and the leasing of Berbera as a base to the USSR.

The whole resources of Somali diplomacy appeared to be directed towards the affirmation of the Soviet connection, the establishment of friendly relations with socialist countries and the abuse of Western imperialism and reaction as well as what was termed American client states such as Iran

under the Shah. Nevertheless, considerable efforts were made at the same time to present the President as a moderate leader devoted to the ideals of Islam and the principle of non-alignment for the benefit of conservative Arab countries and non-aligned states. An illustration of these activities was the persistent pressure put, in various forms, on Western and Arab journalists and broadcasters to play down in their despatches the regime's Marxist image and to support the President's desperate and clamorous denial of American allegations that Berbera had been leased to the Russians as a base. (The supreme irony is that he would, at a later date, equally desperately and clamorously deny Soviet assertions that the Americans were given base rights at Berbera.)

When the Russians switched their support to the Ethiopians during the Ogaden war, the resources of Somali diplomacy were redeployed to find a substitute patron. The very diplomats who earlier had been directed to embrace and defend all things Soviet and socialist, and to shun and impeach everything connected with Western imperialism and reactionary regimes, were now rebriefed to pursue American favors and the friendship of Emperors such as the late Shah, and to assail Soviet imperialism. The local media and foreign broadcasters and journalists who had succumbed to the charms of President Barre's attentions were re-oriented and reinstructed in the light of his new public relations priorities. Thus, although the 1979 Constitution reaffirmed Somalia's commitment to scientific socialism and non-alignment in no uncertain terms, the new directives issued for their guidance called for playing down the regime's socialist image, on the one hand, and underlining its readiness to cater for America's big-power needs in the region, on the other.

This formal commitment to scientific socialism and the practical need for American protection has led to great ambivalence in Somali foreign policy and has caused considerable problems and embarrassment for our diplomats. To take only one example, it is not uncommon for Somali Ambassadors to be instructed to explain to Western officials and leaders of conservative countries that President Barre, in proclaiming scientific socialism, is not expressing his personal ideology,

and that because of his age and traditional background as a camel-herder and a Muslim, he can neither be revolutionary nor a Marxist. On the contrary, they argue, he is the one who puts the brakes on his colleagues' radical policies. But to revolutionary leaders and regimes, they emphasize his modest background and his espousal of socialism in numerous speeches. This has, of course, only succeeded in presenting the President and our diplomats, nay our nation, as devious people whose word is not worth much and whose principal stock-in-trade is, at best, pure rhetoric.

Another outcome of this determination to bag a superpower at all costs has removed from our diplomacy one of its chief functions and challenges, namely to negotiate. Thus, the grovelling manner in which President Barre has been cultivating the Americans has thrown away not only any bargaining power we might have had but also our national dignity and honor. To him, however, this is not a serious consideration as long as he accomplishes his chief goal which is simply to secure their agreement to maintain him in power. This statement is given substance by his earlier subservience to the Russians. You will no doubt recall his famous statement that Soviet-Somali relations "are a true example of what natural relations and interests should be" and that "anyone who doubts this is a traitor to his country."

The second function of our diplomacy under the present regime, namely to discover, dissuade, punish or neutralize the critics of the regime has had perhaps the most harmful effects. Thus, the duty of our diplomats to acquaint themselves with the affairs of the host countries, and of reporting thereon to their government has been replaced by the task of identifying the actual and potential critics of the President (officially all classified as "anti-revolutionary elements") and of reporting their activities. The term "critics" in this context includes those who maintain social contacts with known critics of the President. Here one recalls his favorite maxim that "those who are not *with* us are *against* us."

Of course, we do recognize that diplomats have a legitimate interest in being alert to all threats to national interests originating in the host countries. We also concede that it is immaterial whether those

threats are posed by foreigners or by Somali nationals. But we do believe that there is a clear and vital distinction to be drawn between national interests and the narrow political interests of the regime of the day, and that while diplomats should strive to protect the former, they are not called upon to serve the latter except in the rare cases when the two coincide, e.g. in the event of an enemy invasion designed to topple the government of the day. In other words, diplomats should endeavor to safeguard the general interests of the nation, but should avoid interfering in the clash of sectional interests and at all events maintain strict neutrality in the political struggle of the government and the opposition. It is surely naive to hold that because diplomats represent their governments legally, politically and symbolically in foreign countries, they are under an obligation to assist it in controlling, or settling accounts with, its critics. This would not only be an intolerable extension of diplomatic activity, but would also make a mockery of diplomatic privileges and immunities. Quite obviously, these privileges and immunities are not granted to enable diplomats to maintain in power such despots as our President. It would also be an unacceptable misuse of public money to maintain costly diplomatic missions to shore up the political fortunes of unpopular local leaders.

Although some of you are undoubtedly able diplomats discharging their duties in accordance with the highest standards of the profession, the majority of you are willing tools of President Barre. The dedication and zeal with which you abuse, harry and spy on his critics exposes you to a charge not only of interfering in the political quarrels of the country, but also of failing in your duty of protecting Somali nationals abroad. Examples of your zeal are: the cancellation or withholding of passports or refusal to renew them without reasonable cause; pressure brought by some of you on foreign immigration authorities to deport resident or immigrant Somali workers who do not show much enthusiasm for the policies of General Mohamed Siyad Barre, and the setting up of puppet groups among Somali communities abroad to drum up support for him, and the harassment and abuse of those who refuse to join. The Somali Embassy in London is one of the worst offenders in this re-

spect. Its zeal in carrying out its divisive and slanderous campaigns against the Somali communities in the United Kingdom has affected its diplomatic language as shown by the following press release issued by it on the occasion of a fairly-sized demonstration staged on 23rd May, 1982 against the Somali regime by members of the said community:

A small number of Somalis mainly formed of retired seamen, drunkards and habitual vagabonds have demonstrated outside the Somali Embassy today. They were led by paid hirelings who have recently returned from Ethiopia where they received instructions and advance payment from a radical Arab country.

This colorful language attracted the attention of *The Manchester Guardian* which published the text of the above press release and commented: "Nice to see the language of diplomacy alive and flourishing" (*The Guardian Diary* of May 27, 1982). No one could confirm at the time that the esteemed Embassy did not take this as a compliment.

There seems to be little doubt that many Somalis have suffered from your pseudo-diplomatic activities. It is probable that many of them have been tossed in jail as a result of your "spying" and reporting activities. Many of them who come out of the country on short visits are also "panicked" into self-imposed exile by your clumsy snooping attentions. Some of those you persuade to avail themselves of the bogus amnesties periodically announced by President Barre are also imprisoned as soon as they go back. A great number of the Somali immigrant workers have been deported from the Gulf countries as result of your unwarranted interventions, while others are also either imprisoned or drafted into the army. Consequently, their families lose their livelihoods and the country the hard currency your victims would have remitted had they been left alone working.

To those of you who are guilty of these abuses we say two things: (1) President Barre's days are numbered and those who persist in collaborating with him will surely be punished in the end; (2) although our people have long memories and do not easily forget, they, as Muslims, nevertheless,

forgive the repentant. We believe there is time for you to repent. The clearest way of doing so is to resign your diplomatic and government posts; but if you do not want to do so, you can demonstrate your contrition by ceasing your harassment of Somali nationals abroad and by offering them the support to which they are entitled.

But to those of you who try to perform their duties properly, we simply say resign for two reasons:

1. President Barre's unremitting search for loyal and trusted personnel, and his penchant for rewarding clansmen and others for past services with diplomatic appointments has led to a dramatic fall in the quality of our diplomats. Thus, you find attaches and secretaries who are totally illiterate being accredited in order that they may learn foreign languages; or ambassadors being accredited to enable them to benefit from the medical facilities of the host countries. The most famous instance of the subordination of quality to "loyalty" was the replacement in 1976 of Mr. Omar Arteh Ghalib (now held on a charge of conspiracy "to commit a nation-destroying scheme") as Foreign Minister by Mr. Abdirahman Jama Barre, the President's half-brother. Moreover, the trust and cooperation among the staff of our missions and embassies necessary for the success of their business have been destroyed by the fact that some of the said staff are "planted" in order to spy on colleagues. Indeed, some of the junior staff members are actually superior to the Ambassadors and can, and do, overrule them.

We submit that, in these circumstances, it is impossible to discharge your duties properly. What, in any case, is the use of gathering and evaluating information and sending it to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it will be either ignored or ill-digested — unless, of course, it concerns "disidents."

2. Your continuation in office enables President Barre to benefit from your good names and reputations. We believe it would be a mistake to imagine that your resignations would not hurt him. Furthermore, whatever good you are doing for the nation is cancelled by the harm done by your serving its greatest enemy — the Barre regime.

Should you decide, for understandable reasons,

to stay in office you would do well to redouble your efforts to give Somalis abroad the protection they are entitled to.

To all of you, we say that we find no pleasure in addressing this letter to you and that we have been impelled to do so by a sense of painful duty.

APPENDIX IV Obligations of Signature

We, the undersigned — signatories of the article "A Transfer of Power in Somalia", and subscribers to the principles contained therein — hereby declare that we do not belong, secretly or openly, to any existing political party or movement whose objectives are designed to bring about or prevent political change in Somalia, or whose objectives are in conflict with principles set out in the said article, and in particular we are not past or present members or subscribers to the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM).

We believe that the time has come to forcefully speak out and resist President Barre's policies. Our aim is to organize related committees of concerned Somalis wherever there're Somali communities and to coordinate their activities on the basis of the principles set out in the article. These committees are designed to be mere pressure groups and are not political parties. Persons with large political ambitions are therefore advised to look elsewhere.

The main purpose of the committees will be: to maintain pressure on President Barre until he is forced to leave office; to maintain pressure on his collaborators until they're persuaded to withdraw their cooperation; to work for the unification of all principled forces of the opposition; to lobby foreign leaders and organizations not to help the President to stay in power; to monitor the excesses

and abuses of power by the Somali regime; to fight all forces of division; and to institute research regarding the nature of power and government best suited to Somali conditions.

The above activities must be carried out within the limits of the law, and in accordance with the principles set out in the final section of the article. They are therefore bound to be laborious and personally unrewarding, and are not for those looking for quick results and dramatic developments. If, however, you're genuinely interested in, and if you're committed to, the said principles, please contact any of the signatories below.

We further declare that in signing this document we undertake: (a) to defend the unity of Somalia; (b) to expose and identify President Mohamed Siyad Barre as the real threat to the said unity; and (c) to combat the forces of division, exploitation, tribalism and corruption in Somali society.

(A word about the preparation of the article. Many people have contributed to its preparation in various ways and some of them may not be named for obvious reasons. Finally, we thank the editors of the *Horn of Africa* for deciding to publish the article and accompanying appendices in their entirety to make them available to a wider public.)

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The opinions expressed in this article and Appendixes are those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.